

Title of Report:	Concessionary Fares Travel Tokens - Recommendations following Call-In of Executive Decision	Item 3
Report to be considered by:	Executive	
Forward Plan Ref:	EX0778	

Scrutiny Report To Executive

Environment and Public Protection Select Committee

Chairman of Select Committee:	Councillor Brian Bedwell
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Purpose of Report:

To make recommendations to the Executive arising from the meeting of the Environment and Public Protection Committee held on 25th May 2004.

Recommended Action:

That the Executive makes decisions on the Concessionary Fares scheme in the light of the recommendations of the Select Committee as outlined in this report.

Reason for decision to be taken:

The original decision of the Executive was called in for scrutiny in accordance with the Council's Constitution.

Key background documentation:

- Executive Decision Notice
- Executive Report of 26th May 2004

Supporting Information**Background**

- 1.1 On 13th May 2004, the Executive made a decision to remove the existing three band values of tokens and replace them with one single value of £30 per annum as an interim measure for 2004/5.
- 1.2 Following publication of the decision monitoring form of the 13th May Executive meeting, the Council received notice calling-in the decision, in accordance with Procedure Rule 6.5.4. The reasons given for the call-in were as follows:
- "there was a lack of clarity on the budget for Concessionary Fares. The report should have included a full breakdown of the budget and actual spend for 2003/04, and a full budget breakdown for 2004/05 for all expenditure related to Concessionary Fares;
 - the inequitable decision to increase tokens for those in Band A by 7% while decreasing Bands B and C by 33% and 51% respectively. The Executive's proposal is unrelated to need;
 - a misleading description of a 'cut' to the Concessionary Fares budget when in fact the budget had been increased."
- 1.3 The Select Committee met on 25th May 2004 and debated the issues raised by the call-in. The Select Committee made the following recommendations to the Executive:

Recommendation 1 – Amending Executive's proposal to move to a flat rate for tokens to the following interim bands for travel tokens.

Band	Current	Proposed
A	£28.00	£20.00
B	£44.50	£40.00
C	£61.50	£60.00

Recommendation 2 – That an urgent review be undertaken of the whole Concessionary Fares Policy within the next year by the Executive member. This review should include consideration of whether to target tokens at those who need them most. The review should ensure consultation with all groups likely to be affected by any proposed significant change.

Recommendation 3 -That Executive fund any failure to meet the £150,000 savings target from the “Tokens fund” for this financial year only, accepting that this introduces an element of risk to this ‘insurance’ against all tokens being cashed in.

1.4 In making these recommendations, the Select Committee took account of the following factors:

- the public concern that residents in rural areas would be more adversely affected by the proposed single band of tokens;
- that the current bandings are in need of urgent review;
- that Councils are required to offer half fare bus passes to all those people eligible for Concessionary Fares, whether or not the residents of the Council have any access to regular bus routes;
- that many other Councils offer their residents only half price bus passes;
- that the Council ratified a £150,000 saving in the Concessionary Fares scheme for the 2004/05 financial year;
- that moving to the bandings outlined in Recommendation 1 above would result in an estimated saving of around £102,000;
- that a “Tokens fund” exists to insure the Council against the reclaiming of travel tokens and that use of this fund for other purposes could put the Council at financial risk.

Appendices

None.