

## APPENDIX 2

### Executive Summary

#### Nottinghamshire Young Persons' Concessionary Travel Scheme

In order to help meet its policy objectives in respect of transport, education and social inclusion, Nottinghamshire County Council has been interested in investigating the potential for a concessionary travel scheme for young people aged 11-19.

There is currently a confusing mix of different types of support and subsidy, ranging from commercial concessions and targeted support by colleges through to the County Council's post-16 travel scheme. This situation is unhelpful in an environment where there are key aims to:

- Increase usage of public transport and reduce car dependence
- Develop a school travel strategy aimed at promoting more sustainable travel modes
- Promote social inclusion amongst particular groups by improving accessibility to key services and facilities (through measures aimed at increasing service availability, physical access, or making access more affordable).
- Create more educational choice and move forward the 14-19 education agenda with collaborative education programmes
- Develop extended school provision, with before and after school activities.

The County Council therefore commissioned this study to look at the current situation, practice elsewhere, and to develop proposals for how a concessionary travel scheme for young people might work. The study has involved discussion with a number of different stakeholders, and an on-line survey of 400 young people across the county aimed at understanding their perceptions and needs.

Agencies such as Connexions and the Learning & Skills Council have been supportive of such a scheme, and the members of the Nottinghamshire Youth Assembly were positive about a concession card, particularly if it served a number of additional functions over and above reduced cost travel. Overall, people want to see a scheme that is simple and easy to use and understand, provides proof of age, and offers some additional benefits such as retail discounts. This very much follows the type of scheme already in operation in Derbyshire (b\_line) and Suffolk (Explore).

The study has considered a number of different options and it is important to understand how well each of these might work within the current context of public transport provision in the county. Whilst a range of commercial products already exist, these have a tendency to be targeted more at urban areas and are clearly aimed at encouraging use on one operator only. Variations mean there is a lack of equity across the county; rural areas do not enjoy cheaper tickets, and there is a no benefit for those making more complex journeys involving more than one operator.

Any scheme based on a zonal fare or flat fare would be complex to understand, operate and administer. Therefore, a simple, multi-operator ticket is recommended, which will provide added value over and above standard single

operator commercial ticketing products. This would provide a number of basic and enhanced features. In its basic form it will:

- Act as proof of age
- Provide entitlement to travel at half the normal adult single or return ticket price, on all operators' services

An enhanced feature will be the ability to purchase, for a fixed price of £10 per week, say, unlimited travel on the county's entire bus network.

The card would use smartcard technology, which is already in operation and being further developed for other applications by the County Council. Discounts on public transport would be available at all times of day and throughout the week to encourage greater use of off-peak services and cater for students attending evening courses. With a photo and date of birth shown, the card would be a formal proof of age card, and there would be an opportunity to have it formally recognised and accredited under the national 'PASS' scheme. As well as travel discounts it would be the intention to provide retail discounts to the card holders, linked to a dedicated website with news, information, offers and competitions. Overall, this would help to make an attractive package of benefits for young people.

Available to young people aged 11 to 19 years inclusive, three options for eligibility have been developed to match the likely level of resources, depending on which groups have the highest priority for assistance.

	Number of young people eligible	First year cost (million)	Annual cost (million)
Option 1 Students only	56,537	£1.01	£0.85
Option 2 Students, unemployed and economically inactive	72,537	£1.85	£1.75
Option 3 All groups	83,280	£2.50	£2.45

Of the options put forward, Option 2 would have the best balance of assisting people suffering from social exclusion within the likely level of resources available. The main group excluded in this option would be those in employment, which could be justified on the basis that they will be receiving a wage with which they can pay their own travel costs. However, it needs to be remembered that many young people in work are likely to receive a low wage and those with higher transport costs are likely to suffer a greater barrier to employment. More targeted provision for people in this group could be a topic for further discussion with organisations such as EMDA and JobCentre Plus.

Implementation of such an ambitious scheme would take some time and it is likely that the earliest it could be introduced would be September 2008. This timescale would fit well with other factors. It will be possible to understand the impact of the introduction of the national concessionary travel scheme for elderly and disabled people in April 2008, which if funded centrally, may release County Council funds for the proposed young people's scheme. By this date all operators in Nottinghamshire will have buses equipped with smartcard ticketing facilities. Also, the implications of the Education & Inspections Act 2006 will be known; if

the County Council chooses to take up Pathfinder Status, this may provide other funds towards a concessionary fares scheme. A School Travel Strategy would be in place and more progress will have been made on extended school and 14-19 education initiatives.

The introduction of a concessionary travel scheme for young people in Nottinghamshire is a significant step for the County Council, requiring financial commitment. It will, however, offer significant benefits to young people and will contribute positively to a range of policy areas.

M19C1751b