



NORTHAMPTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET REPORT

Report Title	Response to Government Consultation on Proposed Changes to Concessionary Fares Administration
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AGENDA STATUS: PUBLIC

Cabinet Meeting Date:	15 July 2009
Key Decision:	NO
Listed on Forward Plan:	NO
Within Policy:	YES
Policy Document:	NO
Directorate:	Finance and Support
Accountable Cabinet Member:	David Perkins
Ward(s)	Not Applicable

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This report presents the response to the Department for Transport consultation on changes to the administration of the statutory concessionary fares scheme.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Cabinet to confirm the consultation response and the potential impact on the medium term financial strategy.

3. Issues and Choices

3.1 Report Background

- 3.1.1 The Department for Transport has invited local authorities to consider proposals for changing the level at which the statutory concessionary fares scheme is administered with a view to addressing a number of issues with the current district level administration.

3.1.2 The options considered are:

- To leave the administration at district level as at present
- To make the administration of the scheme an upper tier (county) function.
- To centralise the whole scheme and run it nationally.
- To set up an administration for the scheme at regional level.

3.2 Issues

3.2.1 Should the administration of the scheme remain with the authority, the risks of continuing increases in demand, with funding levels that are not rising at the same pace will remain with the authority.

3.2.2 It is recognised that the funding of the scheme can never match the actual pattern of expenditure, and there is a significant risk to authorities as demand rises as a result. NBC does feel the impact of this problem.

3.2.3 In addition, there are some authorities who self fund discretionary enhancements to the statutory scheme. These enhancements, if any, vary by authority. This can give rise to confusion among operators as to entitlements of the concessionary customers.

3.2.4 Service operators have identified the number of negotiations required in the district administration as burdensome and time consuming, and, as a result, costly.

3.2.5 Proposals are therefore being considered with a view to changing the level at which the scheme is administered, with the Department for Transport's preferred option (according to Settlement Working Group – SWG – papers) being county level, with funding re-apportioned on the basis of expenditure.

3.2.6 The consultation response at annex A sets out the council's views on the proposals set out.

3.2.7 Note that any changes to funding will be the subject of a separate consultation in summer 2010, as this will depend on the outcome of this consultation and the option chosen.

3.3 Choices (Options)

3.3.1 Cabinet is invited to consider the report and note the potential implications of any change of administration to the statutory scheme.

4. Implications (including financial implications)

4.1 Policy

4.1.1 There are no policy issues arising from this report.

4.2 Resources and Risk

4.2.1 There are no specific risk and resource issues arising from this report.

4.2.2 There are risks, particularly financial risks, associated with the outcome of the consultation, depending on the course to be pursued. However this will be

the subject of a separate consultation in July 2010 in accordance with the DfT timetable.

4.3 Legal

4.3.1 There are no specific legal implications arising from this report.

4.4 Equality

4.4.1 There are no specific equalities implications arising from this report.

4.5 Consultees (Internal and External)

4.5.1 Colleagues in Regeneration with expertise in this area have been consulted.

4.6 How the Proposals deliver Priority Outcomes

4.6.1 Not applicable

4.7 Other Implications

4.7.1 Not applicable

5. Background Papers

5.1 Department for Transport consultation paper 'Possible Changes to the Administration of Concessionary Travel'

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