

ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Tuesday 17th September 2019
Report Subject	All Wales Concessionary Travel Scheme – Replacement of Travel Cards (Bus Passes)
Cabinet Member	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Countryside
Report Author	Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation)
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Transport for Wales (TfW) have been consulting with all national stakeholders and local partners on their intention to re-issue around 750,000 Concessionary Travel Cards across Wales by the end of December 2019. TfW is managing the re-issue on behalf of Welsh Government (WG), who are acting as Agents for each of the 22 local Councils in Wales.

The new-style cards have been issued to all new applicants since June 2019, with the full roll out of replacement cards (to all existing card holders) commencing in early autumn 2019.

Current card holders will be required to reapply for their new cards and a detailed, national public information campaign will be rolled out to support the re-issue and ensure existing card holders are aware of the process to follow in order to receive their new card.

This report provides Cabinet with an update on the process and timelines for the card replacement project.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That Scrutiny note the process to re-issue Concessionary Travel Cards to all eligible residents of Flintshire
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	BACKGROUND TO THE PROCESS
1.01	<p>The free concessionary travel scheme was introduced in April 2002 for all eligible residents in Wales. At that time it enabled free travel on any local bus service in Wales and on some cross border bus services (but not onward travel using bus routes starting in England).</p> <p>At the time, the eligibility criteria was as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Disabled people within certain eligibility criteria:• Women aged 60 and over and• Men aged 65 and over <p>In April 2003, the age of entitlement was standardised for women and men to age 60 and over.</p>
1.02	<p>There are currently in excess of 37,400 passes in circulation within Flintshire, many of which are now not being used (for a variety of reasons) with no mechanism available to recall the passes, when they are no longer in use. All existing passes have an expiry date of December 2019 and TfW and WG have been consulting with the Council on their proposal to issue the new cards across the County by the end of December 2019.</p>
1.03	<p>The new style cards have been issued to all new applicants since June 2019 and existing card holders will be asked to apply on-line for their new-style replacement card later in the year. A public information campaign, managed by TfW, will be launched in September to help publicise the new scheme and the proposed application process and ensure that existing card holders are aware of what they need to do to receive their new card.</p>
1.04	<p>The cards will offer the same free travel rights and benefits as the current cards and, from a user perspective, there will be little noticeable difference, apart from the appearance of the new style card. The process of issuing the new cards also remains the same, once the bulk replacement project is completed. Old style cards will still be valid for travel and will continue to be accepted until 31 December 2019.</p>
1.05	<p>For those residents unable to access the on-line application process, assistance will be provided through Council Libraries and Connects Centres. TfW will also be providing helplines and additional support within the Council Contact Centres to deal with any enquiries resulting from the project.</p>
1.06	<p>Flintshire County Council will also be supporting TfW's publicity campaign and further updates will be provided to all elected Members and Town and Community Council's ahead of the campaign going live. This will include copies of promotional literature produced in connection with the renewal. Separate communication about the changes is also being issued to local bus service operators by TfW.</p>

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	Staff resource - it is anticipated that during the initial launch of the campaign there will be a high number of calls to Council Contact Centres and a significant increase in residents visiting Libraries and Connect Centres to seek assistance in the application process.
2.02	Flintshire currently contributes £173k towards the provision of the Concessionary Travel Fare Scheme.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	With Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member (Streetscene and Countryside).
3.02	Consultation will be required with Libraries, Contact Centres, bus operators, current bus pass holders and new applicants.

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	The Council would be at risk of reputational damage, should the consultation and re-issue of Concessionary Travel Cards not be adequately communicated and conducted.
4.02	The re-issue will significantly reduce the number of cards in circulation, particularly those which are no longer used or needed by the original applicant. This in turn will reduce the risk of fraudulent activity utilising these cards which may in turn impact on the reputation of the Council and WG.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	None

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	Contact Officer: Stephen O Jones, Chief Officer, Streetscene and Transportation Telephone: 01352 704700 E-mail: stephen.o.jones@flintshire.gov.uk

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	None.