

**Special Meeting of the Children, Young People and Healthy Communities
Overview and Scrutiny Committee - 21 November 2007**

CONCESSIONARY TRAVEL

Item 6

LEAD OFFICER: Paul Robson
REPORT AUTHOR: Neil White

Recommendation – that the Committee considers how the Council should respond to the Government’s consultation on Concessionary Travel funding.

1. BACKGROUND

The Government is currently consulting all local authorities on the distribution of special grant funding to Travel Concession Authorities (TCAs) and London authorities to meet the costs of the new national bus concession in England, commencing on 1 April 2008.

The new concession will guarantee free off-peak local bus travel anywhere in England for people aged 60 and over and eligible disabled people, who are resident in England. This will apply to travel from 9.30am to 11pm on weekdays, and all day at weekends and on bank holidays.

The previous statutory minimum concession guaranteed free off-peak bus travel but only within an individual local authority’s area. The new concession, enabled by the provisions set out in the Concessionary Bus Travel Act 2007, will cover travel across England and the Government is making available £212 million in 2008/9 to cover the additional costs of this new concession.

The Government funding will be allocated on a formula basis by special grant and there are four possible options. These are based on data that is likely to closely correlate with the key drivers of the extra cost of the concession. The Government is seeking views on how this funding should be distributed.

The consultation also seeks answers to the following questions:

1. Which distribution option is your preferred formula and why?
2. Which would be your second preference formula and why?
3. Do you agree that PTAs should be paid the special grant direct?
4. Do you agree that a single payment should be made for London?
5. Do you agree that payments should be made to a single authority in a county where all authorities concerned within that county agree?

The Cumbria and Lancashire Concessionary Travel Group which is an officer based group is considering the best way for this funding to be distributed in Cumbria. Paul Robson the council's representative on this group will advise the committee on the group's recommendation and the effect that will have on Copeland.

2. CONCLUSION

The Government's consultation period ends on 23 November 2007 and the Committee is requested to consider how the Council should respond to the Government's consultation on Concessionary Travel.

List of Appendices

None

List of Background Documents:

None