



## **STRATHCLYDE CONCESSIONARY TRAVEL JOINT COMMITTEE SCHEME**

### **BRIEFING NOTE**

#### **1. PURPOSE**

- 1.1 The purpose of this briefing note is to outline the terms, role and responsibility of the Joint Committee in relation to the policy and delivery of concessionary travel within the Strathclyde area.
- 1.2 To put the current Scheme into perspective, some background information relating to the recent Scheme changes has been included.

#### **2. SUMMARY OF ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

- 2.1 In summary, the Joint Committee has responsibility for:
  - determining the concessionary fare and criteria applicable for concessionary travel on subway, rail services and on ferry services where the card holder is a resident, all within the Strathclyde scheme area;
  - determining which of those services and routes qualify for a concessionary fare within the Strathclyde area; and
  - complying with all statutory requirements arising from being a Joint Committee, including the setting of a legal balanced budget.
- 2.2 The remainder of the note outlines in more detail the current position and role of the Joint Committee.

#### **3. LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The current scheme is founded on the provisions of the Transport Act 1985 which allows transport authorities to make concessionary transport schemes in certain circumstances, e.g. for the elderly and disabled.
- 3.2 From 1986, the point of bus deregulation, the Strathclyde Concessionary Travel Scheme was administered by SPTE on behalf of the former Strathclyde Region. At the point of local government re-organisation in 1996, SPTE undertook the administration of the concessionary scheme on behalf of the 12 councils that formerly made up the Strathclyde area. The responsibility for managing the Scheme

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has transferred during subsequent re-organisations and is now managed by SPT, the successor body to SPTE and SPTA.

- 3.3 A Minute of Agreement between all 12 authorities was signed in 1999 which outlined the mode of operation of the scheme, the headlines of which are:
- the Joint Committee is made up of one representative of each member council, with one vote each should that be necessary;
  - the Chair of SPTA (now SPT) is also represented;
  - that SPTE (now SPT) will undertake the administration of operator reimbursement and travel card issue;
  - the costs of the Scheme would be shared between all 12 councils on an agreed formula; and
  - the Scheme would be clerked by Glasgow City Council as lead council (subsequently amended to SPT).
- 3.4 In summary, the Joint Committee is responsible for determining the travel modes, conditions and any concession travel fare for those modes which meet the needs of the area.
- 3.5 The Scheme now specifically excludes bus concessionary travel as this is explicitly the responsibility of Transport Scotland as part of the national concession scheme. The Strathclyde Scheme is a supplement to this.

## 4. SCHEME COSTS

- 4.1 The Scheme has undergone a number of significant changes since the Minute of Agreement was signed in 1999.
- 4.2 In the period up to October 2004, the cost of the Scheme was approx. £56m per annum, the vast majority relating to bus travel. The Joint Committee agreed a fare for concessionary travel at this stage on the following basis:
- Bus travel – 40p flat fare
  - Subway – 40p flat fare
  - Rail – 40p flat fare for journeys up to ten miles in length and half fare for journeys in excess of ten
  - Ferry – no fare charged.
- 4.3 In recognition of the fact that concessionary travel is aimed at vulnerable members of society, the Joint Committee also agreed to a companion entitlement for certain groups – this gave half price travel to companions of card holders who had the entitlement.
- 4.4 In October 2004 the then government introduced free bus travel within current Scheme boundaries. Consequently, the cost of the Scheme rose to over £72m per annum. In effect this removed the ability of the Joint Committee to set a

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concessionary fare for bus travel or control demand. At the same time age equalisation for male and females aged 60+ also took effect. The demand for bus travel at this time grew significantly and it was necessary for the Joint Committee to make representation to the then government for additional resources to fund the costs arising from the increase in demand resulting from this central government policy.

- 4.5 April 2006 was the last significant change when the government introduced Scotland Wide Free Bus Travel for Older and Disabled People. This is now administered by Transport Scotland, although SPT continues to be involved in the issue of travel cards (national entitlement cards) on behalf of the 12 councils.
- 4.6 A number of concessionary fare increases have been approved by committee since the flat fare introduction in 2004 (including re-introduction of a concession ferry fare in 2010). The fare changes have helped off-set reimbursement costs resulting from operator fare increases and has helped ensure the Scheme continues to be managed within budgets.
- 4.7 In 2012, the committee recommended changes to the economic formula used to calculate reimbursement payments to operators.
- 4.8 The current Scheme costs, which now excludes all bus travel, but includes subway, rail travel within the Scheme boundaries and ferry travel for those resident on the islands and peninsulas within the Strathclyde Scheme area, is now estimated to be around £5m. The vast majority of this relates to operator reimbursement for rail, subway and ferry travel.
- 4.9 The current Scheme fares, applicable during 2017/18 are:
  - Rail Concession – £1.00 single/£1.40 return for travel up to 10 track miles. For travel beyond 10 miles a fare discount of 50% applies. A morning and evening peak restriction applies when concessionary travel is not permitted with the exception of travel to hospital appointments, or holders of a disabled card, ferry card holders and certain rural services.
  - Subway Concession – £1.00p single/£1.40 return. A weekday morning peak (before 9am) travel restriction applies. There is no evening peak restriction.
  - Ferry Concession – £1.00p single/£1.40 return for travel on routes up to 10 nautical miles. For routes greater than 10 nautical miles, a capped return fare of £2.80 applies. No peak restrictions apply