

REPORT TO: POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE - 14 NOVEMBER 2005

REPORT ON: SCOTLAND-WIDE FREE BUS TRAVEL SCHEME FOR OLDER AND DISABLED PEOPLE ON THE NATIONAL ENTITLEMENT CARD

REPORT BY: ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE (COMMUNITY PLANNING)

REPORT NO: 659-2005

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The report advises elected members on the change to free travel concession scheme and the introduction of the national entitlement card.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 To note the proposed changes to the free bus travel scheme to be Scotland-wide and the Dundee discovery card re-issue to include the national entitlement card.
- 2.2 To instruct the Assistant Chief Executive (Community Planning) to arrange briefings for all elected members

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The cost of the registration process for these Scotland-wide cards is included in the Modernising Government Fund allocation to Dundee City Council to support the Customer First Strategy.

4. LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

None

5. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

This is a significant additional benefit to support social inclusion for senior citizens and people with disabilities.

6. BACKGROUND

- 6.1 The Scottish Executive's new Scotland-wide free bus travel scheme will be introduced in April 2006. The scheme will be available to everyone over 60 and people with disabilities. To enter the scheme, those entitled need to show a valid card.
- 6.2 As the free bus travel scheme covers any journey in Scotland the card has to be recognised across Scotland. To achieve this a Scotland-wide design for local authority smartcards has been agreed. This is shown on Appendix 1. The Scottish Executive has decided that the scheme will be delivered on the national entitlement card. This is based on the smartcard projects being introduced by a number of Scottish local authorities as part of the Modernising Government Programme.
- 6.3 Dundee City Council has been at the forefront of introducing multi-application cards to its citizens. There are now almost 44,000 Dundee Discovery Cards issued. This includes almost 26,000 to senior citizens which covers the current Dundee free travel concession scheme. These cards therefore need to be reissued to incorporate the Scotland-wide entitlement card design.

- 6.4 As described in Report 400-2005 to the Policy and Resources Committee (15 August) the entitlement card is now part of a national Customer First strategy. This strategy aims to join up customer services for the benefit of citizens. This includes sharing data so that the customer only needs to inform the Council once of key information such as a change of name or address. To facilitate this the process of issuing the new entitlement card for the Scotland-wide free bus travel scheme for older and disabled people will include information about data sharing. This will include consent to share information across the public sector in Scotland to join up services.
- 6.5 The Dundee Discovery Card Team in the Corporate Planning Department manages the card registration and issuance process for a range of services in conjunction with the Corporate Customer Service Team. They will be managing the process of registering anyone entitled for the free bus travel scheme. Briefings are being arranged for elected members to go through the scheme and the card issuing process.
- 6.6 The aim is to provide all existing Dundee Discovery cardholders entitled to free bus travel with a pre-filled form. When this is the case the customer only needs to sign and return the form. Customers who do not have a Dundee discovery card can register at Customer Services in Tayside House or any of the four Community Libraries set up to handle card registration. Direct mailing plus local and national advertising will be used to promote the scheme. The application process is described below.
- 6.7 There are 3 separate groups of citizens
- Existing concessionary fare cardholders. People who currently hold a card for reasons of age or reasons of disability. This includes holders of travel passes and those citizens who already live in a Council area that issues multi-application smart cards (the equivalent of an Entitlement Card).
 - Non-cardholders who qualify for reasons of age but had previously chosen not to take up a travel pass or multi-application entitlement card.
 - Non-cardholders who may qualify for reasons of disability but have chosen not to go through the assessment process.
- 6.8 Eligibility Criteria
- The Scottish Executive Transport Division will determine the final criteria for the national concessionary fare scheme, but everyone who has a card before 1 April 2006 will continue to have a card after 1 April 2006.
- 6.9 Someone who gets a card before 1 April 2006 for reasons of disability will keep that card after 1 April and up until a re-assessment is required, even if they would not qualify under the disability eligibility criteria in place after 1 April.
- 6.10 Some of the criteria in place before 1 April such as second-home owners may not be in place after 1 April. The Scottish Executive Transport Division will determine this.
- 6.11 This process only applies for the national concession i.e. free national bus travel. Local concessions and the eligibility criteria for these will continue to be defined by the local authority.

6.12 Publicising the new Concessionary Fare

The Scottish Executive Transport Division is responsible for publicising - nationally and locally - the new concessionary fare. The National Customer First Programme will support this process by providing information relating to the Entitlement Card. Each Council has to promote how it is managing the registration process.

7. **CONSULTATION**

The Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Support Services), Depute Chief Executive (Finance) have been consulted. The Director of Planning and Transportation, the Disability Access Group and the Dundee Blind and Partially Sighted Society have been consulted on this scheme. The Head of Public Relations has been consulted on the communication plans.

8. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Entitlement Card Information release (1 July 2005)
MGF3 Letter, Scottish Executive 1 February 2005
Report 400-2005, Customer First Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee
Report 216-2005, Modernising Government Fund 3, Policy and Resources Committee

Chris Ward
Assistant Chief Executive (Community Planning)..... 09/11/2005

National Entitlement Card Front

The concessionary symbols will be standard across Scotland.



The national entitlement card other side

This features the current Dundee discovery scheme logo.

