

Decision Session – Executive Member for
Transport & Planning

9 December 2015

Report of the Acting Director of City and Environment Services

Free Weekend Bus Travel for Young People in January & February 2016

Summary

1. During the 2015 budgetary process, the Council identified awareness of bus travel options for young people as an issue they would like to address. As a result, a one off sum of £100,000 was allocated for the provision of incentives which would make bus travel more attractive for young people.
2. Following a period of commercial negotiation, the Council and officers have worked to agree an in principle offer which will apply every Saturday and Sunday for the month of January 2016. The offer will provide free local bus travel within the City of York administrative area for children and young people up to the age of 18 years old. Subject to the cost of the initiative, it may be extended for a more sustained period.
3. The free travel offer will be available for all children and young people who present a valid 'YOzone' card when boarding the bus.

Recommendations

4. That the Executive Member grants approval for the weekend free travel for an initial period of January and February 2016. It is then recommended that a report reviewing the cost and benefit of the initiative is then brought for the Executive member's consideration.

Reason: In the short term, to encourage young people to make greater use of the local bus network. In the longer term, to persuade young people to apply for a 'YOzone' card which will encourage and embed sustainable travel habits in the months and years ahead.

If the initiative proves successful, the elected member could then recommend that the residual revenue allocated for this purpose be used in March and in to the financial year 2016/17 (April 2016 until the funding is exhausted).

Background

5. Unlike bus travel for elderly and disabled bus passengers, local authorities are not required to deliver a concessionary travel scheme for young people. As a result, the provision of public subsidy made available to support concessionary travel for young people varies considerably across the United Kingdom. York, in common with North Yorkshire and East Riding of Yorkshire councils does not have a scheme for the funding of discounted bus travel for young people.
6. In 2013, the York Youth Council made strong representation to the Council that more needed to be done to make local bus services attractive, accessible and affordable for young people across the City.
7. Following engagement with bus operators through the York Quality Bus Partnership, the 'YOzone' proof of age card was re-launched with a new card for 16-18 year olds. All discounts to the standard adult fare provided by bus operators in the York area are undertaken on a commercial basis. Bus operators generally receive no re-imburement from the Council for the provision of such concessionary offers.
8. The Council funds and manages production and distribution of the YOzone cards and ensures that all recipients are of qualifying age and residence.
9. The discounts provided by bus operators for young people vary considerably. Table 1 (below) demonstrates the concessions offered in the York area.

Table 1 - Operator youth concessions

Bus company	YOzone 11-16 fare	YOzone 16-18 fare
Arriva	Half adult fare.	Half adult fare.
Coastliner (Transdev York)	80p single journey tickets.	80p single journey tickets (other fares one-third off adult price).

Bus company	YOzone 11-16 fare	YOzone 16-18 fare
Connexions	Half adult fare.	<i>Adult fares apply to over 16's.</i>
East Yorkshire Motor Services	Half adult fare.	20% discount with EYMS Go Card.
First York	£1 single journey tickets, £2 day ticket, £5 weekly ticket.	Maximum £1.40 single journey tickets, £3 day ticket, £10 weekly ticket (for other fares see First's website).
Reliance Motor Services	Half adult fare.	<i>Adult fares apply to over 16's.</i>
Stephenson's	Half adult fare.	<i>Adult fares apply to over 16's.</i>
Utopia Coaches	Half adult fare.	Young person's ticket (one-third off adult fare).
All York bus companies	£2.30 off-peak day ticket (All York Young Person's Day).	<i>Adult fares apply to over 16's.</i>

10. The free offer proposed for January and February will serve to make more young people aware of the local bus travel options available to them.

Consultation

11. Bus operators have been consulted through the York Quality Bus Partnership over a period of time to establish an offer and reimbursement arrangement which is acceptable to all of the York bus operators.
12. Ahead of the promotion, a targeted marketing campaign will advise young people of how they can obtain a YOzone card, market the free travel offer and provide comprehensive information about bus travel options across York. This will be devised and delivered in partnership with the City's bus operators.

Options

13. The Executive Member has four deliverable options to consider:

Option 1: To approve the funding of the free weekend bus travel initiative in early 2016 to a maximum financial commitment for the Council of £100,000.

Option 2a: To approve the funding of the free weekend bus travel initiative for the months of January and February 2016 only.

Option 2b: To approve the funding of the free weekend bus travel initiative for the months of January and February 2016. Further, to request officers to bring a report to an Executive Member Decision Session summarising the costs and benefits of the initiative before proposing a further extension of the scheme.

Option 3: To determine not to proceed with the free weekend travel offer proposed.

Analysis of Options

Option 1

14. Options 1 and 2 both provide the Council and bus operators with an excellent and timely opportunity to promote bus travel and its benefits for young people. Option 1, however, does not give the opportunity for a pause for consideration to be given to the costs and benefits of the initiative before continuing expenditure until it is exhausted.

Option 2a

15. The estimated cost of option 2a is £31,000. This option would deliver the Council's initial objective, but may not provide sufficient time for new travel habits to become embedded.

Option 2b

16. The estimated initial cost of option 2b is £31,000. This option would provide the opportunity for officers to review the actual cost of the initiative to the Council and the increase in youth and children's bus travel over the initial period.
17. It is proposed that officers would present a report in mid-February 2016 to the Executive Member, summarising the outputs of the initiative. This would then provide the Executive Member with the evidence required to consider whether the initiative should be continued for the month of March 2016. Subject to budget availability, the Executive Member may then wish to request that the Council considers carrying forward the residual budget for this initiative in to the budget for 2016/17 in order

that the total sum allocated in the 2015 summer budget can be expended.

18. It should be noted that it will be necessary to consult again with the bus operators after the initial period of operation to ensure that they are content to continue with the free travel offer.

Option 3

19. Option 3 does not fulfil the commitment made in the Budget of July 2015 to encourage greater take up of local bus services by young people.

Council Plan

20. The potential benefits for the aims espoused in the Council Plan are:
21. A prosperous city for all – Efficient and affordable transport links enable residents and businesses to access key services and opportunities
22. A focus on frontline services - Every child has the opportunity to get the best possible start in life

Implications

This report has the following implications.

23. **Financial** – A one off budget of £100,000 has been allocated to this initiative. It is projected that the cost of delivery is unlikely to reach the budgeted sum in 2015/16.
24. **Human Resources (HR)** – None.
25. **Equalities** – To ensure fairness of provision and opportunity, free travel is provided on the services of all eight of York's bus operators. This initiative will make it easier for young people to access leisure, retail and employment opportunities. The offer is available for all under 18s, irrespective of their ability to pay.
26. **Legal** – The City of York Council in its role as Local Transport Authority is allowed to introduce such concessions in line with the provisions of the 1985 and 2000 Transport acts.
27. **Crime and Disorder** – None.
28. **Information Technology (IT)** – City of York Council is party to an ongoing contract for the provision of smart tickets. This includes

production of YOzone passes. The Council's supplier will be able to manage the expected temporary increase in YOzone applications.

29. **Property** – None.

30. **Other** – None.

Risk Management

31. In compliance with the Council's risk management strategy, no significant risks associated with the recommendations in this report have been identified.

Contact Details

Author:

Andrew Bradley
Sustainable Transport
Manager
Transport Service
Tel 01904 551404

Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

Neil Ferris
Acting Director of City and
Environmental Services

Report
Approved



Date: 30/11/2015

Specialist Implications Officer(s)

There are no specialist implications

Wards Affected: *All*

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

There are no background papers