

**Petition requesting that young people be able to ‘ride
around for £1’ on buses in York**

Summary

1. Improving York’s local bus services is one of six key measures identified for delivering the Council Plan priority to ‘Get York Moving’.
2. A majority of local bus services in the City of York area operate on a commercial basis and are not controlled by City of York Council (CYC). Where CYC identifies gaps in the bus network, it procures local bus services to operate at times of the day (or week), or in parts of the Authority area, where no commercially viable bus service exists.
3. The fares charged on buses are determined by the bus operators, with the exception of Council funded services and on York’s Park & Ride network where fares are determined in consultation with CYC.
4. A petition (attached at Annex A) was presented to the Council requesting a scheme to provide unlimited travel for young people to ‘ride around for a £1’ on York’s bus network at weekends and during school holidays.
5. This report outlines steps which have been taken since the petition was submitted last year to make improvements to the cost of bus travel for young people in the York area.

Recommendations

6. The Cabinet Member for Transport, Planning and Sustainability is recommended to note that:
 - a. Bus operators agreed to the introduction of a discounted multi-operator ‘All York’ day ticket for 11-18 year olds for

August 2013 (£1 cheaper than the normal All York 11-16 price).

- b. In line with long held and widespread ambitions, CYC will introduce and distribute a 16-18 year old 'YOzone' proof of age card to enable operators to deliver a discount to this age range.
- c. CYC will continue to work with bus operators and other partners (eg the York Youth Council) to establish opportunities for further possible bus service and ticketing improvements.

Reason: This course of action will allow the Council to continue to work towards its stated aim of delivering a step change improvement to the bus network and will support the use of bus services by young people.

Background

- 7. City of York Council subsidises bus travel for two groups of young people:
 - a. Those who have a qualifying disability entitling them to a national concessionary bus pass
 - b. Those who, because of the distance from their nearest place of education or as a result of hardship, qualify for free home to school transport
- 8. Nationally, the picture is extremely varied, with some local authorities offering significant subsidies for young people and others offering no subsidy. The discounted offer for young people made by commercial bus operators also varies from place to place, as does the age at which young people cease to qualify for discounted travel. The most generous scheme is in London, where all under 18s in full time education travel for free on the Capital's bus network.
- 9. In Parliament on 3rd June 2013 Transport Secretary, Norman Baker, was asked what consideration the Government had given to introducing a national discount scheme for bus fares for young people. In response, the Minister said:

'...I think that a simpler fare structure would help—and in some areas bus operators could be doing more to offer discounted fares to young people. Cheaper fares could make buses the mode of choice at an early age, locking in patronage for the future and helping to reduce car travel. That is why, at the Bus Partnership Forum in January, I asked the bus industry to consider offering travel discounts to all those aged 18 and under—and not just to those in education.'

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201314/cmhansrd/cm130603/text/130603w0008.htm>

10. For a number of years, bus operators in York have offered discounted travel to 11-16 year olds (some operators have extended this offer to 16-18 year olds as well). A decade ago, CYC introduced the 'YOzone' proof of age card to assist operators to prove that 11-16 year olds were the age they claimed they were and therefore qualified for discounted travel.
11. The 'YOzone' cards are distributed on an annual basis in schools by CYC. All production and distribution costs are borne by CYC but any discounted travel offers provided by bus operators on presentation of a valid YOzone card are entirely at the operator's discretion. Bus operators do not receive any subsidy or reimbursement for providing discounted travel.
12. Reflecting the national picture, parents of York students about to embark on further education (post 16) have often complained about the lack of discounted travel offered to 16-18 year olds. Students (or more accurately, their parents) have faced daily travel price increases of up to £2.
13. York Youth Council has worked in partnership with CYC and the bus operators to increase understanding of young peoples' views concerning various elements of the bus network. Representatives of the Youth Council have attended meetings of York's 'Quality Bus Partnership' and have raised their concerns about the price of bus travel for young people.

'Ride around for a £1'

14. In 2011, North Yorkshire County Council worked with bus operators in the District of Craven to deliver a 'Ride Around for a £1' scheme which entitled young people to a day's worth of unlimited travel on the bus network within that area during the summer holidays.

15. The take up was relatively conservative given the (comparatively) sparse network of bus services in the district but provided young people with the opportunity to travel around affordably.
16. This summer, North Yorkshire County Council has worked with a number of operators across the North Yorkshire area to introduce a number of 'Ride for a £1' schemes, where each trip costs the young person not more than £1 per individual bus journey.
17. CYC officers worked with operators to explore the possibility of a 'ride around for a £1' scheme. Unfortunately operators were of the view that this would be too generous a discount when set against the average adult fares charged in the area.

Analysis

All York

18. Ten operators provide local bus services within the City of York area. For many years efforts have been made to introduce a multi-operator bus ticket. In July 2012 the 'adult day' variant of the product, branded 'All York' was introduced priced at an introductory £4.50 (the current price). In May 2013, an 11-16 year old variant of the ticket was introduced priced at £2.30.
19. Following negotiation between CYC and the operators at the 'All York Board' an August 2013 only, 11-18 year old, 'All York' ticket was agreed priced at £1.30. CYC agreed to reimburse the operators 20p for each ticket sold.
20. For some 16-18 year olds, this summer discount represented a discount of £3.20 off the normal daily cost of travel.
21. At the time of writing it is not known how many of the summer tickets have been sold. This is crucial to understanding whether the promotion has achieved its principal ambition, namely to encourage more young people to travel by bus. The outcome of this trial will form the basis for discussions at the Autumn All York Board to determine whether the trial will be repeated for future holiday periods or, as requested by the petition, at weekends too.

'YOzone 16-18'

22. In September 2013, CYC will launch and distribute the 16-18 variant of the 'YOzone' proof of age card in York's colleges and schools.
23. The reason for issuing the new age-specific card is to enable bus operators to offer a discount on adult fares, but not as large a discount as that given to the 11-16 year olds if they so choose. Both the 11-16 and 16-18 'YOzone' will be 'ITSO' smartcards.
 - 'ITSO' is the Government-backed organisation which defines and develops the UK-wide technical specification for smart ticketing.
 - Smart ticketing is the name given to the system where an entitlement to travel (or ticket) is stored electronically on a microchip rather than being printed on a paper ticket. In most smart ticketing schemes, the microchip on which a ticket is stored is embedded in a smartcard.
24. The advantage of smartcard introduction means that CYC, or operators could use the cards to store period passes, stored travel rights (pay as you go) or 'carnets' – a number of single tickets or day passes which are not time restricted - electronically. CYC will be discussing the opportunities presented by this transition with operators over the coming months.

Corporate Objectives

25. Support for bus services in York contributes to the following Council plan priorities:
 - **Get York Moving** – The introduction of discounted fares for young people will enable greater use of the bus and reduce the number of car trips required.
 - **Create Jobs and grow the economy** – Increased public transport opportunities through the summer discount opens up a range of holiday work and leisure activities across the City for young people.
 - **Build strong communities** – Helping to develop more inclusive communities and supporting young people to access opportunities.

Implications

- **Financial**

The total projected cost of introduction of the YOzone smartcards is anticipated to be £12k. This is an area of identified expenditure in CYC's Better Bus Area Fund programme.

The total projected cost of the discounting of All York 11-18 August tickets is projected to be not in excess of £10k. This is identified as an area of expenditure in CYC's Better Bus Area Fund.

- **Human Resources (HR)**

There are no HR implications

- **Equalities**

There are no Equalities implications

- **Legal**

There are no Legal implications

- **Crime and Disorder**

There are no Crime and Disorder implications

- **Information Technology (IT)**

The production of the YOzone smartcards will be undertaken by Novacraft who are currently contracted to produce all of CYC's concessionary passes. No internal card production or internal card management system will be required.

- **Property (*Contact – Property*)**

There are no Property implications

- **Other**

There are no other implications

Risk Management

26. Measured in terms of impact and likelihood, the risk score for all risks has been assessed at less than 16. This means that at this point the risks need only to be monitored as they do not provide a real threat to the achievement of the objectives of this report.

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**Report
Approved**



Date 22.08.13

Wards Affected: All

All



For further information please contact the author of the report

Annexes

Annex A: Petition received requesting 'Ride around for a pound'