

**BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**FROM:** Head of Customer and  
Office Services

**REPORT NUMBER**    **E83**

**TO:** STRATEGY COMMITTEE

**DATE OF MEETING**    4 August 2005

**CONCESSIONARY TRAVEL – VOUCHER SCHEME**

1.    **SUMMARY**

Consideration to be given to increasing the value of vouchers to eligible persons from 1 April 2006.

2.    **RECOMMENDATION**

That feedback be given through the County-Wide Concessionary Travel Scheme Group that Babergh would in principle approve a level of £100 worth of vouchers per annum to eligible persons in the scheme.

The Committee is able to resolve this matter.

3.    **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 There has been a very low take-up of this scheme so far and the current cost for the 100 registered persons is £4,000, which is well within the budgetary provision.
- 3.2 If the annual value of the vouchers increased to £100, and the number of beneficiaries increased to 200, the annual cost would increase to £20,000 which is only £3,000 more than the current budgetary provision.
- 3.3 That increase needs to be seen in the context of the change to free travel for concessionary bus fare users and as part of the additional cost to be met by additional Government grant.

4.    **KEY INFORMATION**

- 4.1 The Concessionary Voucher Scheme was created in 2003 to ensure that all eligible persons for concessionary travel can benefit. For those persons who have physical mobility impairment and are unable to travel on a bus, financial assistance can be gained for travel through the Voucher Scheme. At present, despite publicity through Babergh Matters and other sources, only 100 people have registered under the voucher scheme for the £40 per annum benefit.
- 4.2 That level of benefit needs to be increased in the light of the change to free travel from 1 April 2006 for concessionary bus passes (Suffolk Saver). The value of their bus passes to those users will at least double.
- 4.3 In order to align the Voucher Scheme with free concessionary travel for persons with a bus pass it is proposed that to the value of the vouchers issued should be increased from £40 to £100 from 1 April 2006. It is hoped that will increase the number of people who currently use the Voucher Scheme.

- 4.4 As the Voucher Scheme is part of the Suffolk-Wide Concessionary Travel Scheme, ideally all members of the scheme would issue vouchers to the same level. The county-wide group meet again in October 2005 at which meeting all districts will give their members' guidance on the value of the vouchers and hopefully a consistent approach can then be achieved across the county.

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25 July 2005

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