

CONCESSIONARY FARES AND PARK AND RIDE CONSULTATION – FAQs

Q: Is this consultation proposing wider changes to concessionary pass use on buses?

A: No. This consultation only relates to the use of the older people's concessionary pass on **Park and Ride services in Essex**.

Local authorities are required to provide the concessionary pass scheme by law. Essex currently allows three discretionary areas of travel in addition to the legal requirements – including use on the Park and Ride. The other two discretionary areas are to permit passes to be used after 9am (rather than 9.30am as the law requires) and to allow a companion pass for those unable to travel alone. There are no proposals to change these other two discretionary provisions.

Q: Does this consultation affect the disabled person's concessionary pass?

A: Yes. It is proposed that holders of disability - based passes should continue to be able to use their free pass on these services after 09:00 on weekdays (and at all times at weekends and on public holidays) but should also be able to buy a £1.50 fare when showing their bus pass before 09:00.

Q: Is the £1.50 proposed fare a charge for a single or return ticket?

A: This is a day fare, which can be used as often as required over the course of the day.

Q: Why are you making this change?

A: No decision has been made yet. However, given the current financial pressures and the annual £18m cost of the whole concessionary pass scheme to taxpayers, it is only right that we consult on this discretionary element of the scheme.

Q: Haven't you already decided?

A: No. The whole point of consultation is to enable us to assess impacts in greater detail and to enable decisions to balance the wishes of individuals against the costs to the taxpayer.

Q: What is the cost of allowing concessionary passes to be used on Park and Ride services?

A: The current cost to the taxpayer of allowing concessionary pass use on Park and Ride services is £447,000 annually

Q: What do other local authorities do?

A: The picture across the country is variable. A large number charge a reduced fare for concessionary travel rather than permitting free travel. Others do not charge passengers to travel on the bus but charge customers to park in their car.

Q: Isn't the assumption that people who can afford to run a car can afford to pay for P&R unfair? What about people getting lifts?

A: Concessionary passes can still be used on local bus services after 9am. Financial changes means that all budgets are coming under pressure – and other budgets, such as Community Transport and supported local bus often offer services to those who have no alternative form of transport.

Q: Won't this increase congestion, air quality problems and CO2 emissions.

A: Only if current users of the service choose to drive into the city or town centres rather than pay for their journey. The reduced fare will still offer good value compared to parking and Park and Ride will remain a stress free, environmentally friendly and high quality choice.

Q: Why don't you charge for parking instead of a bus ride?

A: We continually review the fare structures of our Park and Ride services. The aim is to provide a good value service with an easy to purchase ticket that reduces the number of low occupancy commuter vehicles entering the city and town centres.

Q: Do the Park and Ride schemes cost taxpayer lots of money?

A: The Park and Ride services do require taxpayer investment in the beginning as the scheme gets up and running. As patronage grows the investment each year reduces. It takes around 10 years for a park and ride scheme to break even.

Q: Why aren't users charged more to cover the cost of running the service?

A: The price of the fare is continually being reviewed. The price is determined by the cost of providing the service and the cost to the customer of using commercial bus services and parking in the town and city centres.

Q: Will the Broomfield Hospital Shuttle Bus be affected?

A: Yes. The proposals include the Broomfield Hospital Shuttle Bus

Q. How long does the consultation last?

A: The consultation will run for **12** weeks and will close on **31 July 2019**

Q Where is this consultation questionnaire on line?

The direct URL to the survey: www.essex.gov.uk/park-and-ride-fares-consultation

Q. How do I get paper copies of the questionnaire?

A: Either

- Ask at the Colchester, Sandon or Chelmer Valley Park and Ride Sites
- Email passenger.transport@essex.gov.uk

Paper copies **will not** be available in your local library.

Q. If I have questions about the consultation, where can I get more information?

A: Please email passenger.transport@essex.gov.uk

Q. What happens after the consultation finishes?

We will collate the responses from the survey and summarise them as part of our report regarding the renewal of these contracts. Essex Insight will publish the findings of the consultation.

Q. When will the services change?

Once this consultation is closed the outcomes will be considered.

The outcome will be available in **Autumn 2019** and via the Transport & Travel communications and the information teams web page:

<http://www.essexhighways.org/Transport-and-Roads/Getting-Around/Bus/Bus-timetable-changes.aspx>

Any changes to the services will commence from **April 2020**.

10. Equality and Diversity Questions – why are they included?

Our Equality Impact Assessment has highlighted some groups who may be affected by changes to our strategy. Questions are asked to ensure we have identified any specific issues for equality groups. It is not compulsory to answer these questions but it would be helpful in our analysis of the results.