

Norwich Park and Ride fare changes

Report by the Director of Planning and Transportation

Summary

This report advised members of a change to the Norwich Park and Ride fare structure to be implemented in January 2009. Only the Airport Park and Ride site falls within the geographical boundary of the Norwich Highways Agency Joint Committee and price amendments at this site only are required to be formally noted by the Committee. A separate Traffic Regulation Order is completed for the Airport site by Norwich City Council.

1.0 Background

- 1.1. The strategic aim of Park and Ride is to give visitors to Norwich an attractive alternative to the car. The development of the most extensive Park and Ride network in the country has enabled the council to reduce the number of cars travelling into Norwich to levels lower than 1998. On an annual basis around 2.2m fewer car trips are made across the inner ring road helping to improve air quality and congestion, saving over 6,000 tonnes of CO₂. This helps the authority to meet the broader objectives of the Local Transport Plan.
- 1.2. The current fares structure was devised during an extensive new build programme for Park and Ride and an explicit need to grow the market, converting car drivers travelling into Norwich for work or shopping to use a new “park and ride experience”. Fares have always been very good value and been pitched at a level less than average commercial bus fares and car parking tariffs. Customers of the service have paid to park, with all occupants travelling on one ticket.
- 1.3. Park and ride services are intended to reduce the number of single occupancy car journeys into the city to reduce congestion and carbon emissions. This is our agreed policy outlined in the Norwich Area Transport Strategy (NATS). Our historic passenger data shows that the average vehicle occupancy is 1.8 people per car, rising from 1.67 in 2003. Therefore to meet the aims of the NATS we need to make the service more attractive for people travelling alone.
- 1.4. There is a very competitive car parking sector in Norwich. Park and Ride has around 33% market share, Norwich City Council around 30% and private operators the remaining 37%.

We are developing a spatial access strategy for the Greater Norwich area with Norwich City, Broadland and South Norfolk councils. The change to Park and Ride fares will help to shape and influence parking policy and better align tariffs to promote public transport access to the city centre in accordance with NATS.

1.5 On 10 November 2008, Norfolk County Council's Cabinet formally agreed to the change the fare structure to pay on bus, rather than pay to park. The new fare structure will come into effect in January 2009 and will :

- a) Better align with the Norwich Area Transport Strategy to reduce sole occupancy car journeys, reduce congestion and carbon emissions by making an adult return journey only £2 (a reduction from £3.30);
- b) Not impact on the majority of users (60% are season ticket holders) who will be unaffected by the changes;
- c) Provide a more equitable service as we will be able to accept concessionary passes for older people allowing free travel;
- d) Enable us to promote bus travel to young people to develop greener travel habits and greater awareness of public transport;

2.0 **New fares**

2.1 Our new fare structure is:

- Adult daily return (plus up to 3 children to travel free) £2.00
- Adult off-peak return (available weekdays after 1230 and weekends, includes up to 3 children travelling free) £1.60
- Family off peak ticket (2 adults plus up to 3 children) £3.20
- Additional adults travelling with above £1.00
- Additional children travelling with above 50p
- 6 trip ticket (13% discount – one trip free) £10.00
- 25 trip ticket (20% discount) £37.50
- Annual ticket £375.00
- Concessionary pass holders FREE
- Unaccompanied children daily return £1

2.2 By switching to pay per person, the all day costs for parking for single occupancy vehicles will be reduced. For example:

6 trip ticket £15 now, reduced to £10 with pay per person
25 trip ticket £46 now, reduced to £37.50 with pay per person
Annual ticket £440, reduced to £375 with pay per person

3.0 **Concession fares**

3.1 There has been significant change to concessionary fares legislation for over 60 year olds and disabled people during the past three years. In 2006 Government announced a half fare scheme for local areas (i.e. within the Norfolk boundary) and then a revised free national scheme was introduced from April 2008. Norwich Park and Ride cannot accept concessionary passes because we operate a "pay to park" system. Park and ride is an alternative to City Centre parking and whilst its foremost role, therefore, is as a form of parking, there are regular and frequent comments from people living across Norfolk about the inequity of access to this mode of public transport.

3.2 Accepting concession passes on Park and Ride services will lead to some shift from the local bus network. However there is no evidence to suggest that this

will be detrimental to the overall network, indeed it may help where some services are experiencing overcrowding at peak travel times.

- 3.3 There is limited data on the use of park and ride services by concessionary pass holders across England. However we have used evidence from our family group of authorities, as well as experience from park and ride services elsewhere to provide a detailed analysis to inform our estimates.

Based on our experience, the historical patronage data and age profile of Norwich Park and Ride users, our “worse case scenario” suggests that additional costs on the Transport Concessionary Authority (TCA) could be £75k per annum. However this assumes that 8 out of 10 journeys are entirely “new” and would not have been made before. On balance it is likely that the impact will be less but some headroom has been allowed in reaching the final estimate.

- 3.4 The TCA received a Special Grant of £3.413m in April 2008 to assist them implementing the nationwide scheme, over and above the funding allowed for in the Revenue Support Grant. The Special Grant is formula based but some 41% is directly attributable to the number of bus journeys that take place within the county, which includes over 3million Park and Ride journeys. As a result, the value of the grant given by the Department for Transport was uplifted by around £168,000. Because Park and Ride services have not previously accepted concessionary fares, there have been no claims for any reimbursements on the scheme to date. The Special Grant will also be paid in 2009/10 and 2010/11.

- 3.5

Ring fenced special grant in addition to sum included in RSG (£m)			
Code and authority name	2008/9	2009/10	2010/11
R201 Breckland	0.296	0.303	0.311
R202 Broadland	0.225	0.23	0.237
R203 Great Yarmouth	0.801	0.82	0.843
R204 North Norfolk	0.486	0.498	0.511
R205 Norwich	0.889	0.91	0.935
R206 South Norfolk	0.212	0.217	0.223
R207 Kings Lynn & West Norfolk	0.504	0.516	0.53
Special grant total £m	3.413	3.494	3.59

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The point of origin of a journey determines which district will fund the reimbursement.

Journey starts from	District Council for reimbursement
Norwich Bus Station to each park & ride	Norwich City Council
Airport park & ride	Norwich City Council
Sprowston park & ride	Broadland District Council
Postwick park & ride	Broadland District Council
Harford park & ride	South Norfolk Council
Thickthorn park & ride	South Norfolk Council
Costessey park & ride	South Norfolk Council

This means that Broadland, Norwich City and South Norfolk councils will be

required to fund Park and Ride fare reimbursements. It would be helpful if all districts did pool this element of the Special Grant, given that residents from all districts use Norwich Park and Ride, but this would need to be determined between the Districts themselves.

Assuming that the fares reimbursement reaches the maximum estimate of £75k per annum in 2009/10, the costs would be apportioned as follows:

Norwich 58% i.e. up to £43.5k (no shortfall from Special Grant, surplus of £500)

South Norfolk 25% i.e. up to £18.75k (shortfall of £8.75k from Special Grant)

Broadland 17% i.e. up to £12.75k (shortfall in Special Grant of £1.75k)

Whilst the 'park and ride' element of the special grant is potentially sufficient to provide for the marginal cost of providing free travel (at least on a pooled basis), the TCAs have had to include growth in their 2008/09 budgets (£200,000 in the case of Norwich City Council) to pay for concessionary travel in the absence of park and ride. Therefore in reality any inclusion of free travel on park and ride will represent further budget growth for the TCAs.

3.7 County and District Officers of Broadland, Norwich City and South Norfolk have met to discuss the impacts of the scheme. This has been very useful and there is much better awareness and understanding of the robustness of County's estimates and the level of funding Districts have available, including the apportionment directly attributable to Park and Ride.

3.8 County has offered the following to help share the risk on concession passes:

- a) That County accept a cap on reimbursement at the level of the Special Grant contribution for Park and Ride i.e. £168k in 2008/9, £175k in 2009/10 and £180k in 2010/11;
- b) That Park and Ride accepts concessions from 0930, rather than 0830 on weekdays. This will help to limit demand at peak times;
- c) That the County forego any management and administration costs (operators normally add around 5% to reimbursement claims).

These proposals are presently being considered by the TCAs.

4.0 **Other impacts**

4.1 **Legal Implications:**

The price increases will be advertised in accordance with Section 35C of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 for the Airport site.

4.2 **Equal Opportunities:** Accepting the older person and disabled persons travel pass will mean that the park and ride service becomes more accessible and

inclusive.

4.3 **Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) :**

Norwich Park and Ride has undergone a full Equality Impact Assessment. By accepting concessionary passes and offering incentives for young people to use the service we will be promoting access and inclusion.

4.4 **Communications :**

A detailed promotion and marketing campaign will be required to explain the changes to the fares structure for existing users in particular. This can be accommodated in the period allowed and will be a useful opportunity to promote the service.

5 **Section 17 – Crime and Disorder Act**

5.1 There are no specific crime and disorder implications. However, the provision of high quality public transport and a safe, secure parking environment are identified as key reasons for attracting users to the Park and Ride service.

6.0 **Conclusions**

6.1 By amending the Park and Ride fare structure the service will:

- maximise our impacts on reducing congestion and emissions
- be more equitable for older people
- give us greater opportunities to grow the market

6.2 Park & Ride is a high quality bus service and generates very good levels of customer satisfaction from users, whilst making a major contribution to tackling the city's congestion. The challenge is to maximise income from charges, reducing the subsidy but at the same time continue to grow the usage of the service.

6.3 Negotiations between authorities has been helpful and the level of risk for District councils in relation to the concession fares scheme has been set at an affordable level, within the financial envelope provided by the Special Grant.

Members are asked to comment on the report and:

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| (i) | Note the amendments to the fares structure, with changes taking place in January 2009. |
| (ii) | Agree to amend the existing Traffic Regulation Order at the Airport Park and Ride site to meet the operational requirements of the shift in fares structure. |

Officer Contact

If you have any questions about matters contained in this paper please get in touch with:

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If you need this report in large print, audio, Braille, alternative format or in a different language please contact Tracy Jessop on 0844 800 8003 minicom 01603 223833 and we will do our best to help.

Training given to new and existing drivers

Konectbus

All drivers have completed an NVQ which includes customer care, legal aspects of bus operation, dealing with passengers with disabilities and health and safety. Drivers had to undertake a written project as part of the qualification. Konect have an induction process for new drivers which takes around two weeks. Konect will continue to deliver this training over and above the requirements of the CPC

First

All new drivers receive a days customer services and disability awareness training as part of their induction. All existing drivers will undertake the same training by September 2009 as part of the driver CPC.

Anglian Bus and Coach

Provide in house training at present is a general induction which includes customer care also do an annual half day session will give extra training if complaints received , but with the introduction of CPC Anglian are looking to get accreditation to do in house training for new CPC, the course would include defensive driving, eco driving, and customer care.

Sanders

All new drivers undertake a general induction before commencing driving duties. All new drivers undertake a customer care training course in their first year and existing drivers attend the same course as a refresher. All drivers will undertake Customer care training as part of the new drivers CPC