

CABINET – 14th December 2006

Report of the Director of Development

ITEM 9 Options for the Concessionary Travel Scheme for 2007/08

Purpose of the Report

To set out options for possible improvements to bus travel concessions available to people over 60 and disabled residents of Charnwood and to advise on the financial implications and risks.

Recommendations

- 1 That approval is given for the introduction with effect from 1st March 2007 of a Borough Council administered scheme providing, in addition to the statutory minimum, free travel by bus throughout the scheme area after 9:30 am and at weekends and half fare travel within the same area before 9:30 am plus half fare travel by rail and community transport at all times and vouchers, with reimbursement based on revenue displacement.
- 2 That an allocation is made within the budget for 2007/08 in the sum of £1,112,500 to meet the estimated costs of the preferred scheme, funded from the Reinvestment Reserve.
- 3 That an appropriate contingency provision in the sum of £170,000 is reserved within the budget for 2007/08 to be funded from the Reinvestment Reserve.
- 4 That £31,500 currently allocated as a contingency within the Concessionary Travel budget for 2006/07 is directed towards the funding of the new scheme.
- 5 That in issuing new travel passes to concession holders measures are taken to ensure that they might be designed so as to afford access to wider locally negotiated benefits and concessions.

Reasons

- 1 To ensure the delivery of an enhanced discretionary concessionary travel scheme which responds to the preferences expressed by customers participating in the questionnaire survey of concessionary pass holders..
- 2 To ensure adequate budget provision to fund the estimated costs of the preferred scheme.
- 3 To ensure adequate funding in the event of operators successfully appealing against the reimbursement formula, and possible additional operator costs.
- 4 To ensure adequate funding is set aside within the approved budget to permit the commencement of the scheme with effect from 1st March 2007.
- 5 To utilise the opportunity to introduce wider benefits and concessions for elderly customers and people with disabilities, provided or negotiated by the Borough Council, facilitated by the local administration of the concessionary travel data base.

Policy Context

The Corporate Plan to 2011/12 desired outcomes include reliable and convenient public transport serving the Borough (Clean, Safe and Healthy Environment aim) and improved, value for money public services (Excellent Council aim).

Background

After 1st April 2002 the Borough Council in partnership with the County Council and other districts provided half fare bus travel to people over 60 or with certain disabilities within the county of Leicestershire and main destinations over the border (eg Derby and Nottingham), and on rail to those destination post 09:30 am. The scheme was supported by a grant to District Councils for *half* fare within the District after 09:30 am. The County Council gradually reduced its contribution from 65% of the total cost in 2002/03 to 50% in 2005/06 when their contribution was £800,000.

From 1st April 2006 the statutory minimum scheme was extended to *free* bus travel within each District, but in February 2006 the County Council decided not to contribute any funding for 2006/7.

In February 2006 our Cabinet resolved in relation to the new concessionary travel scheme for Charnwood for 2006/07:

- 1 that the preferred option for the Leicestershire District Councils Concessionary Travel Partnership be approved for implementation from 1st April 2006;
- 2 that budget provision be made for £703,700 (*since adjusted to £735,000*) in 2006/07 to cover the anticipated costs of the scheme;
- 3 that the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader be authorised to continue negotiations with other District Councils in order to agree arrangements for the administration of the scheme, monitor take up and review content of the scheme for 2007/08 onwards;
- 4 that if required, the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader, submit a report to Council in order to obtain authorisation for such arrangements.

The scheme, operating since 1st April 2006, provides residents of Charnwood aged over 60 or those with qualifying disabilities with:

- the statutory minimum of free in district bus travel after 09:30 am on Mondays to Fridays and all day at weekends and bank holidays; plus,
- half fare in district bus travel before 09:30 am Mondays to Fridays, and,
- half fare bus, rail and voluntary sector travel at all times to places outside Charnwood within the scheme area of Leicestershire and nearby urban centres.

This is, therefore, a combination of the statutory minimum free fare within District post 09:30 am with the addition of the previous half fare scheme countywide and pre 09:30 am. Financial considerations, in particular the withdrawal of £800,000 annual funding by the County Council, seriously constrained the ability of the District Councils Partnership to offer more generous concessions.

The County Council have not been the concessionary travel authority since 2002. Since April 2006 the County Council's role has been limited to administration of the current scheme at a total annual cost of about £70,000 to be met in full by District Councils

In May 2006 the County Council resolved to, "provide a maximum £500,000 additional contribution to cover the period up to 31st March, 2008". Leicestershire District Partnership met, but unanimously agreed that the restoration of £500,000 to 2008 would not be sufficient to service a free fare scheme across the County, the extra funding required being in the region of over £1million per year.

A counter offer was made, eventually persuading the County to offer £750,000, but agreement between Districts could not be reached until 10th August by which time the County had withdrawn its offer. The County Council announced that it would only contribute to bilateral district by district schemes.

Further details of those discussions are set out in the Report to Cabinet on 2nd November 2006 responding to the motion referred by Council on 9th October 2006. After consideration of the issues Cabinet resolved:

1. that having regard to the need to deliver a county wide Concessionary Travel Scheme, particularly to some of the most vulnerable residents within Charnwood living close to Leicester and the boundaries of the Borough such as Anstey, Syston and Thurmaston, the administration seeks to engage in partnership working with the County Council and learns from what has already been achieved by five other Borough and District Councils within the County. This, (i.e. the motion), be accepted on the basis that the Borough Council is already actively engaging with the County Council in an effort to identify an affordable partnership based option.
2. that a further report be submitted to the Cabinet on 23rd November 2006 to enable consideration of all options in the light of information gathered from our customers and service providers.

On 20th November the County Council indicated there would be no new funding to support extra bus travel concessions for Charnwood users. This disappointing response has significant implications for the assessment of options. It had been assumed the County Council would contribute £183,000 over 12 months proportionate to the contributions offered to other districts.

Further work has been undertaken to:

- assess the risks and financial implications associated with a range of options for extended bus travel concessions without funding support from the County Council;
- improve our understanding of how concessions are used and user expectations of Borough Council services.

New Legislation

The Concessionary Bus Travel Bill was published on 28th November 2006. The main purpose of the Bill is to enhance social inclusion for older and disabled people by allowing them greater freedom to travel, for free, by local bus. The Bill would introduce guaranteed free off peak local

bus travel anywhere in England for these groups from 1st April 2008. Off peak is the same as presently used, that is between 09:30 am and 11:00 pm on Mondays to Fridays and all day on Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays.

Concessionary Transport Authorities, District and Unitary Councils, would reimburse bus operators for any concessionary local bus travel within the parameters of the national concession that starts within their area. Authorities would still be able to offer additional concessions for other modes or travel at different times or for additional groups of people.

The Delegated Powers Memorandum supporting the Bill indicates that under the Bill, as drafted, existing arrangements will apply until such time as powers are used by the Secretary of State. Authorities will be obliged to reimburse operators for any journeys made by people in their area regardless of where in England the pass holder lives. It is recognised that in areas with high tourist use this could impose additional costs on the administrative structures and finances of local authorities. In addition the national scheme is almost certain to lead to increased take up adding to the level and complexity of claims.

Clause (9) gives the Secretary of State powers to make changes to allow reimbursement to be administered on a wider geographical area (ie countywide) or potentially centrally. Such changes are viewed as providing greater consistency in reimbursement to operators and helping reduce the potentially greater burden on local authorities.

These powers are not included as primary legislation as the Secretary of State wishes to evaluate current arrangements before deciding whether there is a need for change and what changes might be. It is also considered prudent to have flexibility to amend them in this way in the light of experience of operating the new national concession.

In the interim the level of service which might be provided supplementary to the statutory minimum remains at the discretion of the local travel concession authority, the Borough Council, subject to the identification of a workable and affordable option.

Consideration of Borough Council User Survey Responses

The high response rate to the October 2006 User Survey demonstrates users' interest in future scheme development. Appendix 1 sets out the analysis of over 6000 of the 10,000 plus responses. This represents a response rate of about 50%. The Tables at Appendix 2 indicate the changes in trip patterns and levels of weighted average pass use by postcode areas that may happen if free bus travel is extended.

The main findings from the initial analysis are:

- The only Borough Council service considered more important than Concessionary Travel is actions for Safe Communities.
- The majority of respondents are people over 60 with a travel pass. However there is important feedback from people with disabilities who use concessions to access work, services and facilities and travel more by rail and community transport than the over 60's.
- Shopping is by far the most popular activity undertaken by people using concessions.

- The responses suggest people travel widely. The main current destinations are Loughborough, other places in Charnwood and Leicester, with Leicester the most frequently mentioned single destination. People living in the south of the Borough visit the City more frequently by a ratio of about 70-30 over north Charnwood.
- The results suggest that with extended bus concessions travel patterns could change. Users would tend to make longer trips which will offer bigger savings on current half fares.
- Local travel within the Borough, currently the most popular destination, could increase by over a quarter. Trips to Leicester could increase by 40%. The most significant increases are travel outside the county which could rise by over 350%, and travel elsewhere in the County more than double.
- The largest increase in average pass usage is indicated for trips to places outside the County, followed by trips to Leicester and then in the local area. There is only a slight increase in pass use for trips elsewhere in the County.
- In terms of frequency highest current usage is an average of 12 trips in four weeks in the local area by users in Loughborough. The next most significant is trips within Charnwood by users living throughout the Borough. Were free travel extended the responses suggest pass use would increase for all destinations with the highest increase for trips within Charnwood.
- The largest increase in trips using extended concessions is suggested for trips outside the County. They could rise to the level of trips elsewhere in the Leicestershire area.
- The responses suggest bus use could rise significantly if concessions were extended. Over 60% of respondents indicate they would travel more with free off peak bus travel extended to places outside Charnwood.

Consideration of Options to provide additional bus travel concessions

Faced with failing negotiations between County and District Councils in August 2006, and to ensure against all eventualities, the Borough Council engaged consultants who have considerable experience in the delivery of concessionary travel schemes on behalf of local authorities. JMP Consulting have advised on potential costs for a range of 12 free bus travel options all of which assume that half fare concessions for rail, voluntary sector travel plus vouchers (for those living remote from public transport services or unable to use service vehicles) would continue as at present.

To date reimbursement of the operators has been based upon a “Revenue Displacement” formula. Considering the options at either end of the cost continuum identified by JMP the highest cost scheme, at an estimated £1,112,500 per annum would provide an independently administered scheme identical to that currently being operated by five other Leicestershire authorities through the offices of the County Council. That is, in addition to the statutory minimum, free travel by bus throughout the scheme area after 9:30 am and at weekends and half fare travel within the same area before 9:30 am.

At the opposite extreme the lowest cost option, at an estimated £1,001,731 per annum, would provide in addition to the statutory minimum, only free travel into Leicester after 9:30 am and at weekends.

Common to both options is half fare travel by rail and community transport at all times and the provision of vouchers for those unable to access public transport.

In summary the difference in cost between the schemes amounts to approximately £110,750.

The survey of travel pass holders demonstrates a complex pattern of journeys. Although Leicester was among the most frequently named destinations, travel pass holders clearly rely upon the bus service to access a wider range of destinations both within the County and neighbouring city centres. They expressed also a clear preference for a concessionary travel scheme which would deliver free travel to all destinations within that wider scheme area. On that evidence alone there is a compelling argument in favour of adopting the scheme which delivers the higher level of service and the consequent costs.

Method of Delivery

a) Transparency and Accountability in the Delivery of the Service

From work undertaken it is evident that a scheme administered by the County Council may offer benefits on grounds of cost. However, in the event of an appeal by the operators against the reimbursement proposed the potential benefit of strength in numbers afforded by a residual linkage to the former consortium of Leicestershire authorities may no longer be as great as expected. Each district is understood to have accepted a restriction on partnership working with other districts in exchange for County Council funding support.

In addition the administration of the current scheme has not been free from criticism. In particular the service was the subject of an internal audit report in September 2005. That investigation concluded:

- 1 Little monitoring or promotion of the scheme is taking place or planned. This is not seen as a high priority by the service and only limited resources are currently allocated to this.
- 2 Little information is received by Charnwood BC to enable them to assess the efficiency of the service.
- 3 It has not been possible to audit the administration of the scheme as responsibility for this lies with Leics. County Council.

The apportionment of costs between the district Councils has been based upon a percentage split, advised by the County Council, but then negotiated between the former partnership authorities. The information underpinning those percentage splits has not been shared with the districts and they have not always proved accurate, necessitating later adjustments between the partners to compensate for over payments. With the escalating costs of the scheme, probity and good practice in public accountability creates a need for greater transparency in public expenditure informed by details of how individual contributions from districts are matched to the costs of the operators. Despite several requests for that level of detail the County Council has been unable to furnish the information and consequently the Borough Council can not be confident that the 26.8% share of the County scheme costs levied upon the Borough reflect properly the costs of reimbursing bus operators for the delivery of services in Charnwood. By way of illustration a 1% deviation on the overall budget of £3.8m amounts to £38,000. Any inaccuracy may be costly.

The Audit Commission's Partnership Management Questionnaire provides a useful framework for evaluating the effectiveness of partnership schemes. Against that framework the operation of the current partnership demonstrates significant concerns in respect of the adequacy of measures to ensure added value, proper performance management and effective measures to ensure financial management, all of which stem from the present asymmetry in information.

The delivery of the service through an independent contractor, albeit at some additional cost, affords the opportunity to remedy those uncertainties and to set in place all of the processes and procedures required to ensure proper transparency in the use of public funding related to contractually agreed performance standards.

The Borough Council has never rejected participation in a scheme with the County Council but rather wished to undertake further work on the risks associated with this scheme and other options before committing to any arrangements.

b) Opportunities for Enhanced Concessions

The development of a locally "branded" scheme also opens up the way to extend the concessionary travel scheme to offer greater value added benefits through the targeted delivery of a wider range of services and concessions to our elderly customers and people with disabilities. In much the same way as younger residents of the Borough are able to access leisure services and secure discounts for a wide range of attractions across the region through the "Wild Card" scheme, the opportunities afforded by a Charnwood branded component of the concessionary travel scheme linked to the database required for its administration, provides the essential machinery to engage with and provide for the particular needs of people who fall within the most vulnerable within our community. The initial analysis of the customer survey indicates over 50% of respondents would be happy to be contacted directly by the Council.

c) Options Appraisal

The customer questionnaire establishes a clear preference for the maximum levels of free concessionary travel and the difference between the least and most costly options hardly warrants adjustments to strip away concessions in the interests of reducing costs. There is then a persuasive case for the adoption of a scheme which offers the most comprehensive range of concessions.

Two options meet that expectation: a scheme administered by the County Council at an estimated annual cost of £1,093,000 or an independently administered scheme in the region of £1,112,500 per annum. Neither sum is insubstantial and it is incumbent upon the Borough Council to ensure transparency and accountability in the use of public money. The experience gained in operating the partnership scheme with the County Council indicates that we cannot be confident that the contributions asked of the Borough Council properly reflect the costs of reimbursement of operators for the delivery of services within the Borough. The independent administration of the scheme provides the opportunity to monitor more closely costs falling to the Borough Council and to call operators to account for the levels of reimbursement requested, delivering at one and the same time greater transparency and accountability on the part of the Borough Council.

Finally the opportunity through the administration of a Borough Council “branded” concessionary travel scheme to introduce complementary concessions and benefits adds further weight to the adoption of an independently administered scheme, tipping the overall balance of advantage in favour of that approach.

Methods of estimating operator reimbursement

It has been noted that the estimates considered above are based on the “revenue displacement” formula for reimbursement. However, in entering into any agreement with the operators it is necessary to recognise the implications for the alternative method of reimbursement, “pay on use,” and the differing risks which attach to the two approaches. The respective methods are described below, but the following principles are common to both:

- An operator should be no better or worse off than if a concessionary travel scheme did not exist
- All costings are estimates based on operator data that may not be reliable over time. Predictions of future levels of travel may not be borne out by actual activity
- Additional costs proven by operators as a result of the impact of concessions need to be met.

a) Revenue Displacement

As access to free off peak local bus travel is extended to more services operators will receive significantly less revenue from fares. This lost revenue needs to be replaced by additional reimbursement from local authorities.

Options are costed using information supplied by Leicestershire County Council based on revenue displacement. A County Council administered scheme for free off peak bus travel in the scheme area for 2007/08 was estimated to cost about £3.8m overall countywide. Charnwood’s contribution agreed with other District Councils would be £1,018m. The overall reimbursement would be the sum of:

- reimbursement for 2006/07 updated for fares and changes in usage from the current scheme. For the 2006/07 scheme the District Council Partnership agreed a 7% increase with operators to cover extra operator costs; plus
- revenue lost by operators from passengers having free fares.

Revenue displacement may not be a long term reimbursement solution because of the complexity of physical and commercial network changes to be taken into account. Arrangements may be legally challenged by operators if they believe they will be worse off. Significant changes to a scheme are likely to encourage a move away from revenue displacement.

b) Pay on Use

A ‘Pay-on-Use’ calculation enables operators to be reimbursed according to actual journeys made by pass holders. Reimbursement is based on the number of journeys undertaken, with an estimate or actual record of the fare that would have been paid, less a factor to take into consideration travel generated.

Estimates should be made for individual services because of likely variations in the average fare due, for example, to variations in tickets available using a formula:

(Average single fare x discounted fare factor x generation rate)

By taking into consideration the effect of discounted fares, manipulative changes to commercial fares structure in future years may be guarded against.

The generation rate is a measure of the proportional increase in trips that result from a reduction in fares below full fare level. Early indications from new free travel schemes suggest a generation rate of 55% is not unreasonable, and that actual generation may be slightly higher.

With pay on use the average fare, discounted fare factor and generation rate all need to be agreed with operators. A proposed formula may be legally challenged by operators if they believe they will be worse off.

In October 2006 the national and transport press reported mounting pressures on public finances in England and Scotland for statutory free bus travel schemes. There is a potential cash gap estimated at £50 million above the £350m government funding for all schemes in England next year. Audit Scotland have indicated that higher than expected use of Scotland's free national pass could 'exhaust the schemes budget' for this year.

This situation has been triggered by the popularity of free off-peak bus travel for the over-60s, with far more people using it than predicted. Older and disabled people tend to be more price sensitive because their average income levels fall below those of the general adult population. As an example, in the Bristol area use has risen by 106% since April, compared to a predicted 28% rise. Local authorities are considering reducing the £1.06 per journey payment to bus operators at a time when operators are appealing for a higher amount.

It is known that over 60 appeals have been lodged by bus companies with the Department for Transport since 1st April 2006 on grounds they are worse off under proposed reimbursement arrangements. A particular concern of operators is that generation rates used by local authorities are too high and are seeking to discount too much of the free travel generated by free travel schemes. These appeals have yet to be determined. Were they to be upheld local authority costs could increase substantially, hence the need in approving any interim scheme for 2007/08 to make adequate provision in contingencies for potential additional service delivery costs in the wake of any successful appeal.

Financial Implications

The Table below contrasts the estimates for the two options calculated on a revenue displacement basis. All figures are for a 12 month scheme. Both the options include existing half fare concessions for rail and community transport, plus vouchers.

A Borough Council free off peak bus travel in the existing scheme area is estimated to be £19,500 more expensive than the equivalent County Council administered option with the difference reflecting a smaller scheme that has to be set up and administered separately. Both these estimates apply revenue displacement.

Explanation of costing	Estimated cost of Scheme with free off peak bus travel in the existing scheme area £	Estimated cost of Scheme with bus concessions restricted to free off peak travel within district and into Leicester. £
12 month estimated costs	1,112,500	1,001,731
Release of CTA contingency required in 2006/07	31,500	22,300
Reinvestment Reserve funding required in 2007/08 budget	270,000	160,000

A Borough Council scheme offering free off peak bus travel in the existing scheme area based on pay on use reimbursement would cost an estimated additional £92,000.

The figures set out in this report assume a 12 month period, but it is intended to commence the operation of the new scheme with effect from 1st March 2007. There is within the approved budget for 2006/07 for concessionary travel a contingency provision from which £31,500 may be allocated to meet the additional costs of the enhanced service level within the current financial year. It is proposed that the amounts in 2007/08 should be met from the Reinvestment Reserve.

Whichever option is selected an additional contingency needs to be allowed for.

For a revenue displacement option this would need to cover:

- The increased cost of pay on use reimbursement. The estimated cost for pay on use is estimated to be about £90,000 pa higher than an equivalent revenue displacement;
- Higher operator costs to cover the scheme's impact;
- The costs of challenging operator appeals that may be lodged if reimbursement arrangements cannot be agreed.
- The costs of setting up a Borough Council administered scheme including the potential issue of new passes affording access to wider locally negotiated benefits and concessions.

Having regard to all these factors a contingency of about £170,000 pa is considered appropriate.

All expenditure in 2007/08 will be subject to the approval of the draft budgets in February 2007.

Next Stages

At present local authorities and operators have agreed reimbursement arrangements until 31st March 2007. Operators are understood to have allowed the free off peak countywide bus travel operating in five districts since 13th November 2006 to be accounted for by adjusting current arrangements for the 2006/07 scheme.

If the Borough Council decided to work with the County Council to provide free off peak bus travel in the existing scheme area this could probably be introduced in Charnwood within 6 weeks to give adequate time for notification of operations and users.

Timetable for introduction of new schemes

Procedures for schemes involving changes to reimbursement arrangements for the statutory minimum concessions need to be in line with the Transport Act 2000:

- a) Partnership scheme with County Council administration from 1st April 2007
- o By 1st December 2006 County Council publish reimbursement proposals. Discussions follow with bus operators with a view to agreeing arrangements.
 - o By 3rd March 2007 operators must be notified of final arrangements
 - o On 1st April 2007 extended free travel introduced
 - o Until 29th April 2006 operator has opportunity to appeal to Secretary of State.

Discretionary concessions are covered by the Transport Act 1985:

- o Before 3rd March 2007 variations to discretionary concessions which are to become mandatory are published
- o By 3rd March 2007 serve Participation Notice.
- o By 1st April 2007 Participation Notice takes effect

b) Scheme administered by the Borough Council or its agents from 1st March 2007, the earliest possible start date for a new scheme

- o Procedures as for a) but all stages brought forward by one month. Operators were notified by 1st November 2006 of possible reimbursement arrangements should this scheme proceed.

Risk Management

Risk Identified	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Management Actions Planned
1 Take up of extended free travel scheme may be higher than estimated	H	M/H	<ul style="list-style-type: none">o Design reimbursement arrangements to contain as far as possible the likelihood of additional costs. As an example seek to negotiate higher generation rate with operators.o Include a contingency in budget estimate.
2. Government assumes Districts can meet costs of countywide scheme without further subsidy	L	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none">o Maintain dialogue with other local authorities and government to argue case that arrangements for the national scheme in 2008 do not disadvantage

Risk Identified	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Management Actions Planned
in 2008			concessionary travel authorities.
3. Uncertainties about the reliability of operator data	M	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Write into operators notification document our data requirements. ○ Ensure data is properly scrutinised. ○ Consider undertaking surveys to validate data. ○ Assess viability of Smartcard ticketing.

Key Decision: Yes
Background Papers:

Department for Transport: Concessionary Fares for Older and Disabled People - Local Authority Guidance (Nov 2005)

County Council Papers

Nationwide Free Bus Scheme For Over 60's And Disabled People from 2008

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Appendix I

Initial Analysis of Users Survey October 2006

A survey of about 21,000 travel concession users resident in Charnwood undertaken in October 2006 sought to collect information on where, why and how often people use concessions. In addition users were asked for views on possible improvements to the scheme and how important travel concessions are relative to other services.

The full results of the survey will not be available before late December as analysis is taking longer than expected due to a response rate of about 50%. This is excellent for a postal survey as average responses rates are usually between 10 – 30% (approx).

10,434 completed forms were received, and another 578 reported as being invalid. This gives a response rate of 48% which is far in excess of expectations, showing the strength of feeling amongst concessionary travel service users. Due to the unexpected size of the response, questionnaires continue to be analysed but for the results of a survey to be statistically reliable the nationally recognised minimum response rate is 1100 and the analysis of responses to date is far in excess of this at over 6,000. Whilst nothing is ever guaranteed, these responses alone allow us to say with a high level of confidence that (with an margin of error of 2-3% either side) the results expressed in percentages would be the same if every member of the scheme had responded.

This should be borne out when the full results are available.

The main findings from the first 6,000 forms are:

Q1: Please identify which type of concession you currently use

- The majority of respondents (just under 90%) have an over 60's travel pass. 4% have a disabled persons travel pass and 3% use vouchers.
- The percentage of bus pass holders is very similar across the Borough.

Q2 What is your post code?

- Just over half of respondents who gave their postcode live in north Charnwood, and just under half in the south of the Borough.
- Responses appear in broad terms split equally between the north and south of the Borough with just over a quarter from Loughborough (LE11 postcode)

Q3: How many times have you used your travel pass for bus travel in the last four weeks?

- About 52% of respondents have travelled by bus up to 10 times in the last four weeks. 18% have used the bus between 11 and 20 times in the same period. The higher levels of use apparent for respondents from Loughborough probably reflects the network of town services and the town's location as a hub for the wider bus network.
- About 20% of users have not used their pass at all in the past four weeks. Low levels of use are more apparent for people with disabilities.

Q4 How many times have you used your travel pass for rail travel in the last four weeks?

- Rail is used less than bus reflecting access to rail being generally restricted to users living in settlements with stations (Loughborough, Barrow, Sileby and Syston). Only about 14% of respondents have travelled by rail in the last four weeks with most travelling up to 4 times in that period. The main and more regular rail users are people with disabilities.

Q5 How many times have you used your travel pass for Community Transport in the last four weeks?

- Community transport tends to serve the needs of people with limited mobility and services have limited capacity. Only about 3% of respondents have made use of community transport. Users are mainly disabled people and voucher holders and respondents are spread broadly across the Borough.

Q6 Which of the following times of day would you say you actually start your journey on each of the following?

- Most users start their journeys after 9.30am. (About 80% of all bus users, 75% of all rail users and 86% of those travelling by community transport)
- Levels of pre 9.30 bus travel are highest in the south of the Borough and lowest for Loughborough respondents. Pre 9.30 trips are likely to be made by people travelling to work and timed appointments.

Q7 In the last four weeks how many bus journeys would you say have been to each of the following destinations (in your local area, another town/village in Charnwood, another town/village outside Charnwood, the City of Leicester, Outside Leicestershire)?

- The most popular destinations were places in Charnwood (assumed to be the sum of responses to local area + other places in the Borough (4256 respondents)). Here off peak bus travel is already free. Leicester (2631) where travel is currently half fare is the most frequently mentioned single destination. Less significant were other places in Leicestershire (892) and outside Leicestershire (584) where trips are half fare.
- In all cases most people travel up to 10 trips to a destination, although for trips in their local area 17% of respondents who travel did so between 11 and 20 times.
- The responses show highest levels of use for trips within Charnwood where off peak bus travel is free. The only other category with similar levels of use is trips made to Leicester by people living in the south of the Borough. Travel to Leicester is split broadly 70-30 in favour of people living in the south Charnwood.
- In terms of frequency highest current usage is an average of 12 trips in four weeks in the local area by users in Loughborough. The next most significant is other trips within Charnwood by users living throughout the Borough.
- Travel to places outside the county is slightly higher for users living in the north of the Borough. This is likely to reflect proximity to Nottingham and Derby.

Q8 Please tell us the three locations you visit most at the moment?

(Update not available at present due to large dataset. Comments are for 1500 sample)

- The most mentioned places for present trips are Leicester (28%), Loughborough (26%) and other county destinations (26%). Only 9% of respondents indicated places outside the county.

Q9 If you could travel for free please estimate the number of journeys you think you would make.

- The results suggest that if free off peak bus travel were extended there would be a significant overall increase in the number of trips and higher average pass use.
- Travel locally within the Borough, currently the most frequently mentioned destination, would increase by over a quarter even though bus travel is free already.
- Trips to Leicester currently the most popular single destination would increase by 40% Boroughwide but by 100% for Loughborough respondents. The lower increase for users living in south Charnwood suggests users have not been reducing travel into the City because they have to pay half fare.
- However for the wider destinations beyond Charnwood and Leicester increases are more significant albeit from lower current levels of activity. Responses suggest travel outside the County would treble and travel elsewhere in the County more than double.
- Overall the responses suggest users are likely to travel further than they do at present if free fares are extended as these trips are significantly better value than at half fare.
- The largest increase in pass usage indicated using the weighted average is for trips to places outside the County followed by trips to Leicester and then in the local area. The lowest increase is in pass use for trips elsewhere in the County.
- The highest level of usage (14 trips in four weeks) is indicated for trips in the local area by people living in Loughborough, closely followed by trips in the local area. The data suggests there could be significantly greater pass use within Charnwood than to places outside. Pass use for trips to Leicester could be higher than to places elsewhere within and outside the County.

Q10: If free cross boundary bus travel was made available to places outside Charnwood would you be likely to use it?

- Over 80% of respondents would use free cross boundary travel if it were available. The responses are very similar for all postcode areas.

Q11 Please tell us which three locations you would most visit if you had a free pass. (Update not available at present due to large dataset. Comments are for 1500 sample)

- Responses showing travel to places within the Borough have been discounted as off peak bus travel is already free.
- On this basis the three most popular destinations if free off peak cross boundary bus travel were made available would be Leicester (41%), places outside the county (35%) and elsewhere in the county (24%). Leicester is the most frequently mentioned single destination.

Q12 If free travel was introduced which of the following reasons would you use for the most?

- 62% of respondents indicate shopping would be the main reason for trips if more free bus travel were available. It is the most frequently mentioned activity across all users and from all parts of the Borough. Shopping is most popular with the over 60s. Visiting friends and family at 17% and for recreation and leisure at 11% are the other activities most frequently mentioned. Although travel to work is low at 3% of all respondents it is mentioned by 13% of disabled users.

Q13 If free travel were introduced how often would you use it outside Charnwood?

- Over 66% of users would travel more if free cross boundary bus travel were available, 25% would travel about the same as at present and only 2% less than now. Responses are similar from users across the Borough.

Q14 Please tell us which of the following is most important to you and which is least important.

- A Safe Community is rated as a very important/ important service by 76% of respondents. Equivalent ratings for other services are Travel Concessions (59%), Clean Streets (58%), Parks and Open Spaces (32%) and Youth Provision (25%).
- Responses are broadly similar regardless of where people live and are almost uniform across the Borough for travel concessions.

Q15 no question

Q16 Please tell us how important you think each aspect of the current travel scheme are to you.

- Being able to travel outside Charnwood is rated very important or important to 77% of respondents. Equivalent ratings are 49% for being able to travel before 9.30am, 53% for rail concessions and 17% for vouchers. The low percentage for vouchers reflects their restricted availability.
- The only significant locational responses are that the ability to travel outside Charnwood is slightly more important to respondents from the south of the Borough and rail slightly more important to people from north Charnwood.

Q17 If we decided to operate our own concessionary pass we would like to contact people.... Is this something you would be happy for us to contact you?

- About 50% of respondents have indicated they could be contacted. The response rate is higher at 60% of disabled pass holders and less at 40% of those using vouchers. There are no significant differences by postcode area.

Q18 Which of the following methods would you prefer we use to contact you?

- Letter would be the preferred form of communication for 81% of respondents answering this question. 12% of responses indicate telephone and 7% e-mail.

Respondent Details

- 60% are female. 74% are over 65 and 19 % 60 to 64 years old.

- 80% of male respondents are over 65 and 16% between 60 and 64, Equivalent figures for females are 77% and 21%

Any long standing illness, disability or infirmity?

- 42% of respondents answered yes. Geographically there are no significant variations

Does the illness or disability limit your activities in any way?

- 34% answered yes. Geographically there are no significant variations

Ethnicity

- 91% are White British. The only other group in excess of 1% is Asian Indian (2%), White Irish (1%) and other White (1%).

Appendix 2

Key summary data from analysis of User Survey responses (at 12th December 2006)

A) Trip destinations by postcode areas for current scheme and for scheme with extended free off peak bus travel

Postcode area	Current scheme				Scheme with extended free bus travel				Change %				
	Nr Leicester	L'boro	N Charnwood	Total	Nr Leics	L'boro	N Charn	Total	Nr Leics	L'boro	N Charn	Total	
Destination – To:	Number of Trips indicated in responses												
											%		
Local Area	778	941	470	2189	1015	950	594	2559	30	0		26	17
Elsewhere in Charnwood	977	249	941	2167	1391	483	1020	2894	42	94		8	34
Other County	429	199	264	892	1017	445	611	2073	137	124		131	132
City of Leicester	1629	419	583	2631	1854	836	1006	3696	14	100		73	40
Out of County	197	204	183	584	859	608	660	2127	336	198		360	364
Total / Generation Rate	4010	2012	2441	8463	6136	3322	3891	13349	53	65		59	58

B) Average weighted use of travel pass in four weeks by postcode area for current scheme and for scheme with extended free off peak bus travel

Postcode area	Current scheme			Scheme with extended free bus travel			Change with extended bus travel		
	Nr Leics	L'boro	N Charn	Nr Leics	L'boro	N Charn	Nr Leics	L'boro	N Charn
Destination – To:									
Local Area	8	12	8	9	14	8	+1	+2	0
Elsewhere in Charnwood	5	4	7	5	5	7	0	+1	0
Other County	4	3	4	5	4	4	+1	+1	0
City of Leicester	6	3	4	7	4	5	+1	+1	+1
Out of County	3	3	2	4	4	3	+1	+1	+1