

78/05 - **THE CONCESSIONARY FARES SCHEME:** The Head of Transport submitted a written report in relation to the government's new free fare concessionary fare scheme, which was to be introduced on 1 April 2005. Additional information regarding the scheme was also tabled. The government's new scheme was aimed towards disabled people and those aged 60+ and covered local journeys. The Head of Transport advised that approval was sought for the continuation of the countrywide scheme following the introduction of the government's free fare scheme. He added that the Human Resources Committee, at its meeting of 13 October 2005, had agreed to the funding of one full-time and two part-time posts. Members discussed the additional posts, to deal with the implementation of the scheme, and it was stated that the appointments should be made on an initial temporary basis bearing in mind the uncertainty over government funding. The Head of Transport commented that there would be difficulty in recruiting to the posts on a temporary basis.

The Director of Resources emphasised the high spending (around £4m) projected for concessionary fares across the Partnership and the importance of attracting suitably experienced staff given the general recruitment difficulties experienced by the Council.

RESOLVED:

That (1) following the introduction of free fares in April 2006, the continuation of the "countrywide" concessionary fares scheme be approved;

(2) approval be given to the creation of three new temporary posts in the concessionary fares team. If, after advertising the posts, there were no suitable candidates then the Cabinet Member (Transport) be given delegated authority to approve making the posts permanent; and

(3) a review of the concessionary fares scheme be brought back to Cabinet in one year's time.

Reason for making decisions:

The continuation of the countrywide concessionary fares scheme complies with the Corporate priority of improving transport in rural parts of the District.

Alternative option considered and rejected:

To offer transport concessions on local journeys only.

(5.56 pm – 6.10 pm)

(D)