

2022 Supported Passenger Transport and Concessionary Travel Consultation

About your response

Is this a personal response, or are you responding on behalf of an organisation, group or business or as a democratically Elected Representative? (Please select one option)

<input type="checkbox"/>	I am responding as an individual
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	I am providing the official response of an organisation, group or business
<input type="checkbox"/>	I am responding as a democratically Elected Representative of a constituency (e.g. as a county, district, borough, parish or town council Member or MP)

Please provide details about the organisation, group or business that you represent:
The name of the organisation, group or business:

Eastleigh Borough Council

The postcode of the organisation, group or business:

SO509YN

Your name:

Cali Sparks

Your position in the organisation, group or business:

Sustainable Transport Planner

Which of these best describes the function of your organisation, group or business?
(Please select one option)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Charity, voluntary or local community group
<input type="checkbox"/>	Local business or business representative (e.g. BID)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Local authority (e.g. county, district, parish, town or borough council)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Nursery, school, college or place of education
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other public sector organisation (e.g. Police, Fire, Health Authority)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other

For 'other' please specify in the box below:

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Does your organisation provide or regularly use any of the following services in Hampshire? (Please select all that apply)

	We provide this service	We regularly use this service	No
Call & Go			
Dial-a-Ride	X – Funded jointly with HCC		
Local bus services	X – Both funded jointly with HCC and		

	independently		
Minibus Group Hire	X – Funded jointly with HCC		
Taxishare	X – Both funded jointly with HCC and independently		

If you provide local bus services, are any of these supported by Hampshire County Council? (Please select one option)

X – Some jointly funded	Yes
	No
	Not applicable

How often does your organisation use the services below in Hampshire? (Please select one option per row)

	Every day	At least once per week	At least once per month	Less than once per month	Never
Call & Go					n/a
Dial-a-Ride					n/a
Local bus services					n/a
Minibus Group Hire					n/a
Taxishare					n/a

In which areas of Hampshire does your organisation operate? (Please select all that apply)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Basingstoke and Deane	<input type="checkbox"/>	Gosport	<input type="checkbox"/>	Rushmoor
<input type="checkbox"/>	East Hampshire	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hart	<input type="checkbox"/>	Test Valley
X	Eastleigh	<input type="checkbox"/>	Havant	<input type="checkbox"/>	Winchester
<input type="checkbox"/>	Fareham	<input type="checkbox"/>	New Forest	<input type="checkbox"/>	None of these

How we propose funding passenger transport services

This consultation's proposals have been developed with the aim of limiting service reductions by introducing and increasing charges to support the transport services that the County Council does not need to provide by law.

How do you feel about this principle? (Please select one option)

X- only at an affordable level	The County Council <u>should</u> charge service users more where it is allowed to do so, to help fund passenger transport services
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The County Council should not charge service users more where it is allowed to do so, which may mean more reductions to passenger transport services

Don't know

The County Council is proposing to reduce funding for:

- supported bus services, and
- community transport services (such as Call & Go, Dial-a-Ride, Minibus Group Hire, and Taxishare services).

This would mean reduced availability, or withdrawal, of some services. As mentioned, costs of using these services could also increase.

The County Council is also proposing to reduce discretionary funding for concessionary local bus travel, which is explained later in this Response Form.

The County Council is looking at ways to reduce its budget for transport services. Where do you think that the County Council should prioritise spending? (Please select one option)

	Prioritise spending on supported bus services
	Prioritise spending on community transport services
X	Don't prioritise either of these services over each other
	Don't know

Possible changes to supported bus and community transport services

There are different ways that supported bus services, and community transport services (such as Dial-a-Ride, Call & Go, and Taxishares) could be run at a lower cost:

- They could make fewer stops by only visiting busier areas
- They could make fewer journeys on the days that they operate
- They could run on fewer days of the week

This proposal is explained on pages 10-11 of the consultation Information Pack.

Thinking about where supported bus and community transport service routes visit, which of these options would you prefer? (Please select one option)

	To reduce the number of destinations that services visit
X	To reduce the number of trips that services make
	Don't know

Thinking about the days and times when supported bus and community transport services operate, which of these options would you prefer?(Please select one option)

X	To reduce the number of times per day that a service operates
	To reduce the number of days per week a service operates

Don't know

If you would like to explain the reasons for your views, or tell us about the impact these possible changes to supported bus and community transport services could have on you, then please do so below. *(Please do not include any personal details in your response)*

Possible changes to supported bus and community transport services

Hampshire County Council (HCC) have adopted a target to achieve the reductions in carbon emissions required to be carbon neutral and resilient to the impacts of climate change by 2050. At a time of environmental and climate emergency, Eastleigh Borough Council (EBC) considers this target to be unambitious and would support a faster pace of change, however, to achieve this target significant changes in travel behaviour are required in addition to a shift to zero emission vehicles.

Reductions in bus and community transport services levels, by limiting the number of daily trips, the number of trips per week or the number of locations served will make public and community transport services less attractive to passengers, which will undoubtedly lead to an increased reliance on the private car and in turn increased levels of air pollution and congestion on the road network.

In 2020 the average trip length of a bus journey is just over 5 miles and journey time was 39 mins¹, making it less likely that many trips currently made by public transport would transfer to an alternative active travel method. There has been little change in these figures over last 3 years despite the impact of the pandemic.

A number of routes within the Borough already operate on limited timetables such as the X15 operated by Xelabus; this service which operates on a commercial basis between Eastleigh and Hedge End, is supported by both HCC and EBC between Hedge End via Bursledon and Netley to Hamble. This is the only bus service that provides a north / south link between the peninsula and Hedge End. EBC is aware of additional demand for services particularly to provide links to local schools within the Botley and Boorley area, proposed savings should be considered alongside possible service improvements and services supported through developer contributions.

The most common purpose for local bus travel in 2020 was commuting (24%) closely followed by shopping (23%), leisure (20%) and education (19%)². Reducing the number of locations served by passenger transport services restricts people's choice of destination. This may limit people's ability to find or get to work, access education, healthcare, libraries, banking, post offices and other services and facilities.

Limiting destinations will require people to make trips in multiple stages, connecting with other transport services in order to make longer journeys. Overall journey times are a significant factor when people are deciding how to travel, and additional inconvenience is likely to lead to a reduction in patronage.

During a time of significant strain on services, the reduction of such supported bus and community transport services will impose further burdens on services and negatively

¹ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1030718/annual-bus-statistics-year-ending-march-2021.pdf

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-travel-survey-statistics>

impact our most vulnerable groups such as older people living in areas of socio-economic disadvantage in rural and semi-rural areas.

The pandemic has disproportionately impacted older people and our most vulnerable groups who have struggled to access the community since the pandemic, having a significant impact on their mental health and wellbeing, increasing social isolation and loneliness. Although it is noted that there has been a decline in service usage over the last few years, bookings are beginning to recover and there is a significant risk that services will struggle to meet demand, having a negative impact on people's health and wellbeing. Recent figures from HCCs Health Places Report 2022 indicate that people living in Eastleigh Town, Hedge End and Botley are among the most isolated in the borough and who are at the highest risk of experiencing vulnerable mental health.

EBC note that HCC have provided passenger journey figures from 2019/20 to 2020/21 to support and justify the need for a reduction in service provision to make savings. EBC feel this is not a fair reflection of real passenger figures as this was over the course of the pandemic when restrictions were in place and people were using the service significantly less compared to years prior to covid. EBC is concerned that using this data to support this decision does not present a true picture of actual usage of services and that, as confidence increases, passenger numbers will return to normal and people will seek to access the community more, without necessary transport available to them.

It is essential that support that has been available does not diminish, as a reduction of service provision risks undoing all of the good work organisations have achieved to develop these support networks for people who are vulnerable.

The proposed savings and subsequent reductions in passenger transport services may disproportionately impact on people from:

- Households without access to a private car - Who make on average over 4 times as many local bus trips than those with access to a car¹
- Young people - In the age group 17-20, who make the most trips per year
- Older people who rely on service in the borough as a primary way of accessing healthcare services and the community impacting on mental health, social isolation, and loneliness.
- Ethnic minority backgrounds - In the five year period of 2015-2019, on average, black people made the most local bus trips (148 trips per person per year) and local bus trips accounted for 19% of all trips made by black people, the highest percentage out of all ethnic groups¹

Prioritising spending

Savings should be balanced across passenger transport services, rather than by prioritising one form of service over the other. This would enable a robust methodology to be applied taking into account a range of factors including cost per passenger, patronage levels, journey time, reliability, accessibility, the level of alternative provision as well as demographic data.

Patronage levels are still significantly lower than pre covid – with commuters and students returning at a faster rate than leisure travel. Therefore, retaining a regular service in the morning peak and evenings to support journeys to work and education should be a high priority.

Where possible regular bus services should be retained, however if savings are required then consideration should be to reduce the number of timetabled journeys rather than reduce the number of locations served or the days of the week on which services are available.

Please indicate below if any impacts you have mentioned above relate to any of the following characteristics or issues: (Please select all that apply)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Age	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Race	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Rurality
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	Religion or belief	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Environmental impact
<input type="checkbox"/>	Gender reassignment	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sex	<input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know
<input type="checkbox"/>	Marriage and/or civil partnership	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sexual orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	None of these
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pregnancy and/or maternity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Poverty		

Proposed changes to concessionary bus travel

As part of the English National Concessionary Travel Scheme, the County Council issues eligible people with an Older Person's Pass, or a Disabled Person's Pass. The County Council **does not** propose changing how these bus passes work on buses, but **does** propose reducing funding for some of the other benefits that these bus passes provide.

These proposed changes are to discretionary services and would not affect services that the County Council has to provide by law.

Proposed changes to concessionary travel

The Dial-a-Ride, Call & Go, and Taxishare services are funded by the County Council and, where applicable, their funding partners. In addition to this support, holders of an Older Person's Pass or a Disabled Person's Pass also get an extra discount, paid for by the County Council, when using these services.

It is proposed that these extra discounts are removed, which would mean that fewer service reductions would be needed to deliver a balanced budget. Keeping these discounts may result in much larger reductions to these services. This proposal is explained on pages 15-16 of the consultation Information Pack.

What is your preference for each of the following? (Please select one option per row)

	Removing this extra discount and seeing fewer service reductions	Keeping this extra discount, which may result in additional service reductions	Don't know
25% discount on Dial-a-Ride and Call & Go services for holders of an Older Person's Bus Pass or a Disabled Person's Bus Pass	X – older persons bus pass	X – disabled persons bus pass	
Free travel on Taxishare services for holders of an Older Person's Bus Pass or a Disabled Person's Bus Pass	X – older persons bus pass	X – disabled persons bus pass	

The County Council also offers the option for those eligible for a Disabled Person's Bus Pass to claim £36 of travel vouchers per year, which can be used for taxis, instead of a bus pass.

It is proposed that these travel vouchers would no longer be available as an alternative to a Disabled Person's Bus Pass. However, eligible service users would still be able to apply for a Disabled Person's Bus Pass. This proposal is explained on page 14 of the consultation Information Pack.

If you have ever claimed travel vouchers as an alternative to a Disabled Person's Bus Pass, or you know somebody else who has, how do you think that they/you would travel if the travel vouchers were no longer available? *(Please select all that apply)*

<input type="checkbox"/>	Not applicable - have never claimed these travel vouchers, and know nobody who has done so	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Private vehicle (car, motorcycle, etc)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Taxi, self-funded	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Active means (wheelchair, mobility scooter, walking, etc)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Bus	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Lifts from family, friends, or other acquaintances
<input type="checkbox"/>	Another mode of public transport besides taxi or bus (please describe below)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Another means not listed above (please describe below)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Dial-a-Ride or Call & Go services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Would not make these journeys
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Taxishare	<input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know

Please describe these other means of transport here:

If you would like to explain the reasons for your views, or tell us about the impact that these proposed changes to concessionary travel could have on you, then please do so below. *Please do not include any personal details in your response*

Removal of 25% discount on Dial-a-Ride and Call & Go services for holders of an Older Person's Bus Pass or a Disabled Person's Bus Pass

EBC is concerned that at a time when households are struggling with rising inflation, driven by the cost of living crisis, that HCC are proposing savings that will impact on those in most need.

The removal of the disabled persons bus pass discount should be reconsidered - The disabled persons bus pass is means tested rather than universal provision. People with disabilities are more likely to live in a low-income household, less likely to be in employment and more likely to be lonely or isolated. The use of the disabled persons bus pass discount provides an important link for people who may otherwise not be able to afford to travel, particularly for individuals with additional or complex needs. This could have a significant impact on peoples ability to access crucial healthcare provision and further exacerbate existing mental health issues.

Removal of Free travel on Taxishare services for holders of an Older Person's Bus Pass or a Disabled Person's Bus Pass

The proposed introduction of a £1 flat fare on taxi shares is reasonable and is not considered to present a significant barrier to passengers.

The withdrawal of travel vouchers as an alternative to the disabled persons bus pass

Whilst the alternative provision of travel vouchers may make a significant saving to HCC, EBC is concerned that people living in areas with limited or no community transport provision and limited or no access to public transport will be left isolated and cut off from key services, facilities and their communities. An alternative method of qualification should be developed for those that are unable to access regular community and passenger transport services.

Please indicate below if any impacts you have mentioned above relate to any of the following characteristics or issues: *(Please select all that apply)*

X	Age		Race	X	Rurality
X	Disability		Religion or belief	X	Environmental impact
	Gender reassignment		Sex		Don't know
	Marriage and/or civil partnership		Sexual orientation		None of these
	Pregnancy and/or maternity	X	Poverty		

Proposed charges for passenger and community transport services

Charges for Dial-a-Ride and Call & Go services are different in different parts of Hampshire. The County Council proposes a more common approach to charging, which would mean that most fares would rise. This proposal is explained on pages 19-20 of the consultation Information Pack.

In situations where current fares are already above the level set by this common approach, they would stay the same and would not be reduced.

If a common approach to charging is agreed then passengers would make a greater contribution to costs than they currently do, which would limit the reductions needed to these services. However if the current approach continues, with different charges being applied in different areas, then additional service reductions may be required to balance the budget.

Which of these approaches to charging for Dial-a-Ride and Call & Go services do you think is better? *(Please select one option)*

X	For passengers to make a greater contribution to costs through a more consistent fare structure, which would limit the need for reductions to these services
	For the County Council to continue making its existing contribution to costs through the current, less consistent, fare structure, which may mean that there would be greater reductions to these services

The County Council proposes the following charges which would make a tangible contribution towards service costs and thereby help to avoid additional service reductions. These proposed charges are explained on pages 17-20 of the consultation Information Pack.

Please indicate how you feel about the following proposed charges *(Please select one option per row)*

	It should be lower than this amount	It is about right	It should be higher	Don't know
A new £1 charge for all Taxishare journeys		X		
A standard return fare of £6 for local journeys on all Dial-a-Ride and Call & Go services		X		
A standard return fare of £8 for longer journeys on all Dial-a-Ride and Call & Go services		X		

It is proposed that the charge for replacing lost or damaged bus passes would rise from £14 to £20 in order to better cover costs. There would be no charge for replacing stolen bus passes. This proposed charge is explained on page 21 of the consultation Information Pack.

How do you feel about this proposed £20 charge? (Please select one option)

<input type="checkbox"/>	It should be lower than £20
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	It is about right
<input type="checkbox"/>	It should be higher than £20
<input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know

Where you feel that the charges proposed should be higher or lower, what do you think would be a reasonable charge (£) for...

...a Taxishare journey? (£1 proposed)	
...a local Dial-a-Ride and Call & Go journey? (£6 proposed)	
...a longer Dial-a-Ride and Call & Go journey? (£8 proposed)	
...replacing a lost or damaged bus pass? (£20 proposed)	

If you would like to explain the reasons for your views, or tell us about the impact that these proposed charges for passenger and community transport services could have on you, then please do so below. Please do not include any personal details in your response

EBC has been working with HCC over recent years to move towards a new ticketing structure that would increase the contribution that is paid by community transport users, however, this was to be achieved over a number of years rather than all at once. Consideration should be given as to how fare increases could be introduced over time to minimise the impact of the proposal.

The definition of both 'local journey' and 'longer journey' should be provided as the way in which this is applied is likely to disproportionately impact on people living in more rural areas will be required to travel greater distances to access their nearest town or village centre.

The introduction of a standard fare is simple and easy for users to understand. Whilst some passengers travelling short distances may pay a higher rate it is felt that overall, a standard fare is beneficial.

The introduction of a £1 standard fare for taxi share services is considered reasonable. However, this cost may increase significantly in future years if index linked to inflation. In real terms passenger transport costs have been increasing in recent years at a much faster rate than private motoring. Keeping passenger transport costs at a reasonable level, especially when compared to the cost of motoring, is critical in order to retain and grow patronage levels, particularly following the pandemic.

It should be noted that community transport providers are also facing increased fuel costs as they are not sheltered from the cost increases seen in recent months. It may be possible to adopt alternative methods of fuel or to provide them with access to bulk fuel purchase arrangements that would benefit the operator.

Please indicate below if any impacts you have mentioned above relate to any of the following characteristics or issues: (Please select all that apply)

X	Age		Race	X	Rurality
X	Disability		Religion or belief		Environmental impact
	Gender reassignment		Sex		Don't know
	Marriage and/or civil partnership		Sexual orientation		None of these
	Pregnancy and/or maternity	X	Poverty		

Making operational changes to Minibus Group Hire schemes

Minibus Group Hire schemes provide affordable long- and short-term accessible minibus hire for local community groups in Hampshire, including voluntary or charitable organisations, with support from the County Council. Use of these Minibus Group Hire schemes is reducing and the County Council wishes to improve the value for money offered by these services that it supports. This proposal is explained on pages 12-13 of the consultation Information Pack.

If you have any suggestions as to how the Minibus Group Hire schemes in Hampshire could be run more efficiently, then please summarise these in the box below.

Please write your suggestions in the box below. Please do not include any personal information in your response

EBC works with HCC and the local community transport provider, One Community, to continually review and assess the efficiency of group hire activities. Over the pandemic One Community refocused efforts to provide a valuable service to people who have been sheltering, or in need of additional support. Where possible savings have been made for example taking vehicles off the road, however some costs cannot be mitigated such as vehicle maintenance.

Patronage levels are still low, particularly for group hire, with many groups and clubs not yet back to full capacity and with covid levels still high within the population. However, bookings are increasing and in time may recover to pre pandemic levels. It would be disappointing to see services withdrawn or reduced at this stage as future demand may not be able to be met.

It may be possible for operators to secure sponsorship funding from businesses however these options have been explored in the past.

Investment into back-office systems such as booking platforms may help to achieve greater savings over the coming years, this would also provide a better customer experience and reduce the amount of staff time taken to manage bookings, changes and cancellations.

One Community holds a fleet of vehicles, which are used for both dial-a-ride and group hire services, many of which are beginning to incur high maintenance costs due to the age of the vehicles. Both HCC and EBC invest in a vehicle replacement fund which could be utilised to replace older vehicles and minimise maintenance costs to the operator and help to reduce the impact of the proposed HCC savings.

Impacts, suggestions, and further comments

If you would like to tell us more about the impacts of the changes outlined in this consultation, have any further comments, or would like to make any alternative suggestions as to how the County Council could achieve a saving of £10.3 million to its Economy, Transport and Environment budget, then please summarise these in the box below.

Please write your suggestions in the box below. *Please do not include any personal information in your response.*

The recently adopted Hampshire Enhanced Partnership Plan states that the County and operators shared vision for bus service is:

*'Within Hampshire, the County Council and bus operators recognise that the bus has huge untapped potential to cater for a larger share of everyday journeys. Through a programme of co-ordinated and sustained investment, over the next decade we will deliver a renaissance in bus passenger travel, which will see the number of journeys made by bus increase year-on-year.'*³

Clearly, the failure to secure central government funding is going to considerably impact on HCC's ability to realise this ambition and to meet the 10 commitments made within the plan, particularly:

- Commitment 5 - To extend the reach of current services;
- Commitment 8 - To meet and exceed the needs and expectations of bus passengers; and
- Commitment 9 - To support operators as they respond to the challenges of short term inflationary pressures and the need to increase revenues by attracting back customers who have stopped travelling by bus during the pandemic.

It may be appropriate for HCC to review the plan in light of the proposed changes.

HCC should continue to lobby the Department for Transport for additional funding to support passenger transport services and take advantage of all funding opportunities that come forward.

EBC wishes to continue to work closely with HCC to plan service changes, in order to minimise the impact on our communities and to add value to the network through EBC investments in services and infrastructure.

³ <https://democracy.hants.gov.uk/documents/s91773/Appendix%201.pdf>

And finally...

Finally, to help us improve access to future consultations, please tell us where you first heard about this survey/consultation: *(Please choose one option)*

<input type="checkbox"/>	On social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, etc)	<input type="checkbox"/>	In a resident's newsletter (e.g. printed or e-newsletter)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Online	<input type="checkbox"/>	Through my employer
<input type="checkbox"/>	In a public space (e.g. library, civic centre)	<input type="checkbox"/>	By word of mouth
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Via an email or letter sent to you	<input type="checkbox"/>	Reported in the press (e.g. radio, newspaper)
<input type="checkbox"/>	On a consultation poster or leaflet	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other

This consultation will close at 11:59pm on Sunday 24 July 2022. Any responses received after this date will not be included in the findings of the consultation.

Please click '**submit**' below to complete your response. You will then be taken to a webpage where you can sign up to take part in future engagement and consultations by Hampshire County Council.