

GREATER MANCHESTER INTEGRATED TRANSPORT AUTHORITY**REPORT FOR RESOLUTION**

COMMITTEE: Policy and Resources
DATE: 19th March 2010
SUBJECT: Young Persons' Concessionary Travel Pass
REPORT OF: Information Systems Director, GMPTE

PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to provide Members with a progress report on the implementation of the Young Persons' Concessionary Travel Pass scheme (YPCTP) and the approach for the branding associated with the scheme.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are recommended to:

- Note the progress to date and the plans to take the project forward.
- Delegate authority to the Chief Executive, IS Director and Communications & Customer Services Director to review and approve the final pass design.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

- GMPTA 11th April 2008 - Proposed Changes to the Young Persons Concessionary Fares Scheme
- GMPTA 1st August 2008 - Concessionary Travel Reimbursement Arrangements
- GMITA 11th September 2009 – Policy & Resources Committee Young Person's Concessionary Travel Pass

CONTACT OFFICERS

David Hytch 0161 244 1023 david.hytch@gmpte.gov.uk
Steve Loxam 0161 244 1355 steve.loxam@gmpte.gov.uk

1. Background

1.1 Extract from the GMPTA report of 11th April 2008:

'GMPTA's Young Persons' Concessionary Fare Scheme offers unrestricted bus travel for the reduced fare of 70p to all children under 16. After their 16th birthday, children still in full time education are able to apply for a Scholars' Permit, which allows bus travel at the concessionary fare for all journeys to and from school. No form of identification is needed to benefit from the concessionary fare scheme. Although GMPTA produces an 'Under 16' Card for those children wanting to prove their age, take-up is low and it is generally left to individual bus drivers to decide if a passenger is eligible.'

1.2 The following limitations of the existing scheme were identified within the GMPTA report of 11th April 2008:

'Under the current concessionary fare scheme, eligibility to participate expires on the day of the individual's 16th birthday, regardless of when this falls in the academic year. After this date, the full adult fare is payable. Therefore those young people whose birthday falls early in the academic year are liable to pay the full adult fare even though they remain in compulsory full time education.'

To mitigate against this, the GMPTA Scholars' permit allows 16 to 19 year olds in full time education to travel to and from school at the concessionary rate. However, the full adult fare is still payable for all other journeys, including journeys to and from extra-curricula events, or social, recreational or personal journeys. This places a financial burden on young people when they are still in compulsory education and often still financially dependent on parents. Moreover, it acts as a disincentive to using public transport for a range of journeys which, at a time when young people are particularly impressionable, and on the cusp of being able to make their own transport choices, could prompt long-term car dependency.'

Conversely, because use of the 'Under 16' card is optional, the scheme is open to abuse by older children claiming the concessionary fare illegitimately, with no enforceable means of prevention. This has revenue implications for GMPTA/E at a time when there is already pressure on the budget. The lack of a compulsory card also leaves it up to bus drivers to decide a persons eligibility to travel at the concessionary rate, which has in the media led to press stories of eligible children being refused passage on a bus due to their inability to prove their age.'

- 1.3 Extract from the minutes of the GMPTA meeting of 11th April 2008 (item PTA/07/279):

Resolved - 'That approval be given for the recommendations in the report to change the scheme's eligibility criteria to provide:

- a) that the concession for 11-16 year olds be available to Greater Manchester residents and to non-residents who attend school within Greater Manchester only, and that the concession for these groups be available on production of a concessionary permit issued by GMPTE**
- b) that a concessionary permit be withdrawn if the permit holder is in breach of a good conduct protocol, and**
- c) that eligibility for the child concession is extended until the 31st July following the child's sixteenth birthday.'**

It was further resolved 'That GMPTE should develop a programme for the issue of the new concessionary permits'.

- 1.4 It is estimated that there are between 175,000 and 200,000 young people currently eligible for the proposed scheme, with 35,000 to 40,000 'new entrants' each year and an equivalent number leaving at the end of each school year.

2. Current Status

- 2.1 The project is fully mobilised with positive progress being made on all work packages to ensure that the scheme goes live later in the year. End-to-end business processes for new card applications and replacements have been agreed and are now with suppliers who are actively developing and testing the IT systems to support them.
- 2.2 Consultation has taken place with the Greater Manchester Local Authorities to understand their requirements for the non-transport related usage of the pass. These have been collated and are currently subject to analysis to quantify the requirements against scope, cost and timescales. Options for data sharing have also been examined to identify the opportunities to enhance the validation of new applications by introducing checks against the pupil information held by the Local Authorities. We will explore the practicalities of sharing this data on whether it will be possible and desirable to use the information to support an online validation option for the scheme.
- 2.3 After discussions with young persons' representatives, GMTL representatives and GMPTE internal teams, a behaviour protocol has been drafted and is currently being reviewed by the Bus Operators before it is presented to representatives of the Local Authorities for their review.

2.4 Working with the Bus Operators, a GMPTE team has started to develop the policy for the fare that young people will be charged if they are not in possession of a Young Persons' Concessionary Travel Pass.

2.5 Work has commenced on the development of the design for the pass itself together with the associated branding for the scheme. A focus group of young people from across Greater Manchester was consulted to ensure young persons' views were included in the design brief. A design team drawn from internal and external staff is in the process of developing a set of designs which will be tested on further focus groups of young people, bus drivers and inspectors before being reviewed by Members. Given the short timescales involved, it is requested that authority to carry out this final review is delegated to the Chief Executive, IS Director and Communications & Customer Services Director.

3. Implementation

3.1 The project is still on target to go live for the start of the 2010/11 school year, subject to the design of the card being approved by the end of April 2010.

4. Recommendations

See front sheet of report for recommendations.

David Hytch
Information Systems Director