

## **EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**

### **DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE – 27 AUGUST 2002**

#### **NATIONAL CONCESSIONARY TRAVEL SCHEME FOR THE BLIND**

##### **Report By Director of Development Services**

### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

#### **1.1** The object of the report is to:-

- (i) ask the Committee to agree to continue the operation of the Scottish National Concessionary Travel Scheme for Blind Persons in its current form without limit of time; and
- (ii) ask the Committee to support the extension of the Scheme to include travelling companions of the blind and partially sighted subject to the extension being cost neutral to the Strathclyde Concessionary Travel Scheme.

### **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1** In the White Paper 'Travel Choices for Scotland', the Government stated the following policy objective "We will work with COSLA and the transport operators to develop a Scottish National Concessionary Fares Scheme for Blind People".
- 2.2** The COSLA Concessionary Fares Task Force produced proposals for a voluntary scheme in respect of Scottish National Concessionary Travel for Blind Persons. This scheme was launched on 1<sup>st</sup> December 1999 for a trial period of three years. These proposals were endorsed by the Scottish Executive, the major transport operators, the Confederation of Passenger Transport UK (CPT), and the Scottish Councils.
- 2.3** At its meeting on 22 October 1999 the SPT Concessionary Travel Joint Committee confirmed the Strathclyde Concessionary Travel Scheme Joint Committee participation in the voluntary scheme that provides free Scottish National Concessionary Travel for Blind Persons for the three year period from 1 December 1999 and approved the various related administration matters required to operate Scottish National Concessionary Travel for Blind Persons.
- 2.4** The Scottish Executive has requested in a letter issued to all the stakeholders of the Scottish National Concessionary Travel Scheme for Blind Persons seeking their agreement to continue the operation of Scheme without limit of time as the scheme has been well received by all concerned.

**2.5** In addition the Scottish Executive state that they are seeking views on the possible extension of the Blind Scheme to enable travelling companions of the blind and partially sighted to be included in the Scheme because they have received a number of representations from members of the public and MSPs to include companions.

### **3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

**3.1** The additional costs for the extension of the Blind Scheme to include travelling companions of the blind and partially sighted would require to be funded from the Council's budget unless additional funding is made available by the Scottish Executive. It is proposed that whilst there is support for the extension in principle, this should be subject to evaluation of the financial implications.

### **4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

**4.1** Nil

### **5. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**5.1** The Committee is asked to:-

- (i) give its agreement to continue the operation of the Scottish National Concessionary Travel Scheme for Blind Persons in its current form without limit of time; and
- (ii) support in principle the extension of the Scheme to include travelling companions of the blind and partially sighted subject to full evaluation of the cost implications for the Strathclyde Concessionary Travel Scheme.

**Stephen Chorley**  
**Director of Development Services**

KC  
12 August 2002

### **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS** **Nil**

For further information please contact Kerr Chalmers on 01563 555715.

**Implementation Officer: Kerr Chalmers**

**AGENDA**