

Thorndon Parish Council 6.12.2012
County Councillor Report

Concessionary travel decision to be reconsidered

Suffolk County council cabinet are to reconsider a decision on how a national concessionary bus pass scheme will be made available in Suffolk.

Suffolk County Council cabinet members will reconsider whether or not to enhance the basic scheme which provides free travel between 09:30 and 23:00 on weekdays, and all day at weekends and bank holidays, for older people and those with disabilities.

Options include:

1. Allowing pass holders eligible due to age to travel free from 09:00 (rather than 09:30).
2. Removing all time restrictions for free travel for those eligible due to disability.
3. Increasing the value of travel vouchers (given instead of the passes) from £50 to £100.

It follows an earlier decision taken in July this year in which we opted to double value of travel vouchers but not extend eligibility times over and above the government-funded minimum. That decision was later 'called in' by the council's Scrutiny Committee because of concerns over how much consultation had taken place and whether or not a full Equality Impact Assessment had been carried out. Following the meeting, the committee asked the Cabinet to reconsider the decision in light of the concerns raised.

The estimated extra annual cost of these enhancements are:

1. 09:00 start time for elderly users: £144,000 to £180,000.
2. Remove of all time restrictions for disabled users: £71,000 to £345,448.
3. £100 travel vouchers: £60,000 to £90,000.

In 2011/12, it cost £7.85 million to operate the scheme.

Preferred Highways Contractor Named

Following a nine month process in which tenders from five contractors were assessed against a range of performance and value for money criteria (save £2000,000 pa)

The contract is due to start on 1 April 2013 and will be in place for at least five years. Cabinet will be recommended to authorise the award of a contract to maintain Suffolk's highways to Balfour Beatty Living Places at a meeting on Tuesday 11 December 2012.

If approved by Suffolk County Council's Cabinet, and subject to the formal legal procedures for awarding the contract, it will mean Balfour Beatty Living Places will be responsible for the design and implementation of highway maintenance and improvement works, winter gritting, street lighting, traffic signals and bridge works throughout the county.

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