

REPORT TO: PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE, 13 AUGUST 2007

REPORT ON: DUNDEE TAXICARD SCHEME - VARIATION TO ANNUAL TRIP ALLOWANCE

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF PLANNING & TRANSPORTATION

REPORT NO: 373-2007

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report seeks to prevent budget overspend in future years as a result of significant increase in demand for the Dundee Taxicard Scheme.

2 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee approve the variation of the annual trip limit of the Dundee Taxicard Scheme to a maximum of 104 trips per annum effective from 1 April 2008.

3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 Taxicard expenditure during 2006/2007 was approximately £260,000.
- 3.2 The proposed change will reduce the expenditure to ensure that it remains within the current Revenue Budget allocation for the Taxicard Scheme of £250,000.

4 SUSTAINABILITY POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Quality passenger transport systems help to reduce dependence on private motor car, thus bring environmental benefits. Access to suitable transport empowers the wider community to participate and has positive implications for access to employment and reductions in poverty.

5 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Appropriate passenger transport enables access for all.

6 BACKGROUND

- 6.1 The Dundee City Council Taxicard Scheme commenced on 01 April 1996 with each scheme member being entitled to 104 subsidised trips per annum (subsidy being half the meter fare up to a maximum of £2.50 per trip, the subsidy level has not changed).
- 6.2 As of 01 April 2004, Dundee City Council, with the agreement of Dundee Mobility and Access Partnership, increased the number of subsidised trips to 156 per annum. This increase was funded by reallocation of the former Accessible Taxi Grant budget (circa £15,000 per annum).
- 6.3 The above increase, in trips, coupled with the Scottish Executive directive to allow disabled persons to hold both a Taxicard and a Disabled Person Bus Pass (prior to 30 September 2002 you were only permitted to have one or the other) resulted in a significant increase in Taxicard holder usage and hence subsidy. The table below

details the changes in membership, usage and reimbursement between 2001/02 and 2006/07.

Table 1 - Membership Trends 2001 - 2007

| | 01/02 | 02/03 | 03/04 | 04/05 | 05/06 | 06/07 |
|------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Taxicard Membership | 2,200 | 2,591 | 3,062 | 3,871 | 4,262 | 4,788 |
| Annual Number of Trips | 50,725 | 49,275 | 49,524 | 89,622 | 112,617 | 119,355 |
| Annual Expenditure | £105,000 | £102,000 | £104,000 | £190,000 | £241,000 | £259,000 |

- 6.4 The maximum subsidy per trip is £2.50, the actual average subsidy per trip in 2006/07 was £2.17. Each taxicard holder is entitled to 156 subsidised trips per annum. This equates to a potential annual expenditure of £1.621m which is well in excess of the allocated revenue budget.
- 6.5 All taxicard holders, if able to access suitable public transport services, also benefit from free bus travel through the Scottish Executive's free travel scheme for elderly and disabled.
- 6.6 The variation to annual trip allowance of 104 will impact on less than 10% of taxicard holders as shown below in Table 2. This would result in 362 customers being affected, reducing annual trips from an average of 140 to 104. Equating to a reduction of circa 13,000 trips per annum (362 customer x 36 trips). At an average subsidy per trip of £2.17, this equates to an annual saving of £28,279.

Table 2 - Trip Analysis Of Taxicard Journey 01 April 2006 - 31 March 2007

| Annual Trip/ Bands | Number of Cardholders within Annual Trip Band | Average Number of Trips made by Cardholder in this Band | % of Total Trips made by this Group of Cardholders |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| 105-156 | 362 | 140 | 43% |
| 53-104 | 487 | 76 | 32% |
| 1-52 | 1,717 | 17 | 25% |
| Nil | Approximately 1,500 | 0 | 0% |

- 6.7 The emergence of Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) systems will address the door to door transport requirements for citizens with significant mobility difficulties.
- 6.8 In January 2007, the Scottish Executive announced that in future years the DRT funds were to be transferred to Regional Transport Partnerships (RTP). Therefore, from 2008/09, it is anticipated that DRT services in Dundee will be delivered by Tayside and Central Scotland Transport Partnership (TACTRAN).

- 6.9 Currently TACTRAN operates as a Model 1 type partnership which means that it has not sought the powers necessary to deliver these services.
- 6.10 The Council, through its nominated TACTRAN Board Members, should therefore seek to ensure that any transition period from a Model 1 to a Model 2 or a Model 3 RTP is as short as possible.

7 CONSULTATIONS

- 7.1 The Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Support Services), Depute Chief Executive (Finance) and Assistant Chief Executive (Community Planning) have been consulted and are in agreement with the contents of this report.

8 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 8.1 Planning & Transportation Committee, 23 February 2004 Report 180-2004.
- 8.2 Planning & Transportation Committee, 18 March 1996 - Travel Concession Scheme Taxicard

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