

Agenda Item IMD10

INDIVIDUAL EXECUTIVE MEMBER DECISION

REFERENCE IMD: IMD 2023/10

TITLE	WBC Response to Consultation on Mayor of London's Proposed Withdrawal of Travelcards
DECISION TO BE MADE BY	Executive Member for Active Travel, Transport and Highways - Paul Fishwick
DATE, MEETING ROOM and TIME	23 May 2023 LGF3 at 12:15
WARD	None Specific;
DIRECTOR / KEY OFFICER	Director, Place and Growth - Simon Dale

PURPOSE OF REPORT (Inc Strategic Outcomes)

To gain approval for Wokingham Borough Council's response to the Mayor of London's public engagement to withdraw Day Travelcards. Day Travelcards can be purchased from any station within Wokingham Borough when travelling to London as an "add-on" to a standard national rail ticket. The Day Travelcard permits unlimited daily travel across Transport for London's (TfL) transport networks. TfL's transport network supported by the ticket includes the overground, underground, Elizabeth line, bus, tram, and docklands light railway. The tickets can also be used to get one third off River Services fares.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Executive Member for Active Travel, Transport and Highways agrees that Wokingham Borough Council's is unable to support the Mayor's proposal to withdraw the Day Travelcard, and urges the Mayor to consider the wider impacts of scheme, especially on areas outside of London, as set out within the letter of representation to the Mayor of London (Annex A to the report).

SUMMARY OF REPORT

The Mayor of London is exploring the option of withdrawing Day Travelcards and as a result Transport for London are engaging with key stakeholders as part of the development of the impact assessment for the potential changes.

It is likely that the removal of the Day Travelcards will have a detrimental effect on Wokingham Borough residents who travel into and around London. The proposal will impact residents financially and have the potential to increase congestion, reduce air quality and amplify the climate emergency in Wokingham Borough if it goes ahead. The scheme may also put at risk the viability of schemes which the Council wishes to bring forward to improve walking and cycling in the borough. Furthermore, it is questioned if the likely increase in travel costs of up to 29% would result in the savings which TfL are striving to make or simply reduce demand for rail travel from areas such as Wokingham Borough.

For these reasons it is recommended that Wokingham Borough Council puts forward representations that do not support the withdrawal of Day Travelcards.

Background

The Mayor of London is exploring the option of withdrawing Day Travelcards. The proposal is because of the impact of the pandemic on TfL's finances and their funding agreement with the government. The government requires TfL to develop and implement changes that will generate up to £1bn per year of additional income.

Day Travelcards can be purchased as add-on tickets to national rail tickets for unlimited travel across TfL's tube, tram, bus overground, underground, Elizabeth line and docklands light railway services. The tickets can also be used to get one third off River Services fares. By withdrawing the Day Travelcard provision this will increase the cost of travel in and around London for Wokingham Borough residents by up to 29%. Furthermore, the removal of the Day Travelcards provision will make travel to London less convenient and more difficult, by requiring the purchase of additional tickets on arrival in London.

Where travel is non-essential the reduced convenience and increased cost is more likely to disproportionately reduce demand for travel or cause residents to look for other ways to make their journeys, including driving to stations closer to London.

The wider impacts of the proposal are likely to be increased congestion, reduced air quality and amplification of the climate emergency in Wokingham Borough. Reduced demand for local rail travel will also affect the viability of future walking, cycling and public transport schemes which the Wokingham Borough Council aims to bring forward.

For these reasons it is recommended that Wokingham Borough Council puts forward the attached letter of representation that explains the Council's concerns and urges the Mayor to reconsider the wider impacts of scheme.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council faces unprecedented financial pressures as a result of; the longer term impact of the COVID-19 crisis, Brexit, the war in Ukraine and the general economic climate of rising prices and the increasing cost of debt. It is therefore imperative that Council resources are optimised and are focused on the vulnerable and on its highest priorities.

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	n/a	n/a	n/a
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	n/a	n/a	n/a
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	n/a	n/a	n/a

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

The future viability of walking, cycle and public transport schemes which connect with local rail stations in Wokingham Borough.

Cross-Council Implications
It has the potential to affect the Council's ability to bring forward future schemes which may provide benefits to a number of other Council departments including Childrens Services, Adult Services, Climate Emergency Team, Environmental Health and Public Health Team.

Public Sector Equality Duty
An equalities assessment is not required as this IMD relates to representations to Transport for London on the withdrawal of one of their ticketing products. It would be for Transport for London to undertake an all-encompassing equalities impact assessment in relation to this change.

SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES	
Director – Resources and Assets	Any comments to be updated at meeting
Monitoring Officer	Any comments to be updated at meeting
Leader of the Council	Any comments to be updated at meeting

Reasons for considering the report in Part 2
N/A

List of Background Papers
Letter of Representation to Mayor of London

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