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**WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

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Sadiq Khan
 Mayor of London
 Transport for London
 London

Dear Mr Khan,

Engagement to Withdraw Day Travelcards

Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) is writing to you to express concerns about your proposal to withdraw Day Travelcards. Whilst the Council understands that the impacts of the pandemic have been significant for public transport and that Transport for London is required to develop and implement changes that will generate up to £1bn per year of additional income, WBC does not see how the proposed changes to Day Travelcards will achieve this.

WBC shares your vision and ambition of the Mayor's Transport Strategy for a good public transport experience where public transport is the most efficient way for people to travel distances that are too long to walk and cycle. WBC also agrees that a seamless 'whole journey' experience will provide an attractive alternative to using the car. WBC does not agree that the Mayor's proposal will support this vision and ambition.

Wokingham Borough has six rail stations, five of which directly link to London and one of which, Twyford Station, is served by the TfL Elizabeth line. Residents in Wokingham Borough travel to London for many purposes including peak travel for employment and off-peak family leisure travel.

You mention that withdrawing Day Travelcards would mean customers travelling in a single day would have to use pay as you go (PAYG) using contactless or Oyster or buy paper tickets to travel on TfL services. For residents travelling from Twyford Station the Oyster ticket option is not available. For residents travelling from all Wokingham Borough stations, especially families with children, the proposal will mean making multiple purchases and more than likely additional paper ticket purchases. Inevitably journeys will become less seamless and less convenient between Wokingham and London than they currently are.

We truly understand the challenges which the pandemic has had on the economic viability of all public transport provisions, as Wokingham Borough has faced similar challenges. However, increasing the cost of travel significantly is likely to have a detrimental effect on the demand for rail travel and therefore amplify the financial situation not improve it.

The current cost for an adult to travel off-peak from Twyford Station to London with a Day Travelcard is £26.40, and the cost of an equivalent journey from Wokingham Station to London with a Day Travelcard is £32.40. Whilst the cost of travelling to underground stations in Zones 1 and 2 may be slightly cheaper, for travel in zones beyond these the cost increases by 27% from Twyford Station and by 29% from Wokingham Station should the Day Travelcard be removed.

Adult Off-Peak Return Journey

Journey from	To Paddington	Underground	Whole Journey
Twyford	£18.60	£2.70 contactless (Z1-2)	£21.30
		£6.70 cash (Z1-2)	£25.30
		£8.10 daily cap (Z1-2)	£26.70
		£14.90 daily cap (Z1-6)	£33.50 (+£7.10)
Wokingham	£26.80	£2.70 contactless (Z1-2)	£29.50
		£6.70 cash (Z1-2)	£33.50
		£8.10 daily cap (Z1-2)	£34.90
		£14.90 daily cap (Z1-6)	£41.70 (+£9.30)

Cost increases of 27-29% are significant, especially set against the backdrop of the current increases in cost of living which have resulted in residents having less disposal income. Off-peak leisure travel is likely to be non-essential travel and therefore any increases in cost are more likely to disproportionately reduce demand for travel or cause residents to look for other ways to make their journeys. It is thought more than likely residents who do wish to travel will look to do so by driving to stations closer to London where rail journeys are cheaper, even after accounting for the cost of parking.

WBC is committed to increasing active and sustainable travel, not only because it is more equitable but also because it helps tackle the climate emergency, improve air quality, and reduce congestion. The borough has ambitious plans as part of its Local Cycling and Walking Improvement Plan (LCWIP) and Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP). The plans look to increase accessibility to stations for those that walk, cycle and use buses. If demand for rail travel reduces, this puts at risk the viability of these future schemes. Furthermore, it facilitates a continued cycle of increased car travel.

It is for the above reasons that WBC is unable to support the Mayors proposal to withdraw the Day Travelcard and urges the Mayor to reconsider the true impacts of scheme.

Yours sincerely,

Councillor Paul Fishwick
Executive Member for Active Travel, Transport and Highways