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| Briefing | |
| Title | Response to GMPON Feedback – Valeska Matzoil |
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1. Concessionary travel
   1. Central government determines who is eligible and the time of validity for concessionary travel within England in accordance with The Transport Act 2000. The national scheme supports free off-peak travel on all local buses, allowing ENCTP holders to travel between 09:30 and 23:00 Monday to Friday and all day at weekends and public holidays.
   2. Local authorities are able to use discretionary powers to extend the ENCTP scheme or offer additional concessions but any extensions must be funded locally.
   3. In Greater Manchester, the Transport for Greater Manchester Committee (TfGMC) has decided to use its powers to provide free travel on rail and Metrolink for ENCTP holders and has also introduced a concessionary scheme for young people, known as the igo card. In addition, these local extensions provide further concessions to ENCTP customers who hold a pass on the grounds of having a disability, which includes half fare prior to 09:30. Free travel during the morning peak is granted to those with more severe disabilities, who TfGMC feel would have great difficulty in handling money. A Travel Voucher scheme is also in place, providing discounted travel by taxi and private hire vehicles for those with poor mobility and this is also funded entirely by Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM).
   4. Due to the limited budget which TfGM has to fund extensions to local concessions, it is likely that in order to include further concessions, for instance free travel for refugees, asylum seekers and all pass holders prior to 09:30, TfGMC would have to consider removing one of the concessions outlined above. This is because there is a significant cost to concessionary travel as local authorities must reimburse commercial operators for each concessionary journey made.
2. Bus reform
   1. In Greater Manchester the bus market is deregulated unlike London. 80% of the network is provided on a commercial basis by privately owned and operated bus companies who are free to determine their own services, routes and fares. In practice, this means that the bus operators serve routes that they believe to be commercially viable.
   2. Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) does provide financial support to provide routes where there is no commercially available service, but have a limited budget to do so.
   3. The Greater Manchester Combined Authority has asked Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) to explore new opportunities for the reform of the bus market provided to combined mayoral authorities by the Bus Services Act 2017, which was introduced into law last year. This includes preparing an assessment of a proposed franchising scheme (the system used in London and other cities globally), as well as new engaging with bus operators about partnership options. The Act gives the elected Mayor of Greater Manchester the option to reform the bus market, subject to public consultation.
   4. This could bring significant benefits for residents and passengers, allowing for greater local control over routes, frequencies, timetables, fares and quality standards for all buses across the Greater Manchester network.
3. Smart ticketing
   1. TfGM are continuing to explore ways in which we can develop the smart ticketing offering in Greater Manchester which is currently available on ITSO smart card and the mobile app under the getmethere brand; this will include an upgrade of the on-stop ticket vending machines to allow the purchase and fulfilment of smart products on ITSO smart cards in the first half of 2018.
   2. TfGM are investing in a more fully “smart” ticketing system that will include a “back office” capable of more complex and powerful processing (rather than storing information on the card itself). This will allow for pay-as-you-go and price capping, using either a contactless bankcard or another form of “token” to travel – which could be a smartcard, or a mobile phone, watch etc. This will allow us to deliver a “fair price promise” - a guarantee that customers will be sold the best value ticket for the journeys they’ve made, without having to pre-plan, and however many trips you make in a day/week you won’t be charged more than if you had purchased a day/week saver in advance.
4. Timetable information in other languages
   1. The limited space available at bus stops, timetable display/shelter case/bus stop pate makes it difficult to accommodate other languages in the form of printed information.
   2. However, the TfGM journey planner does have alternative language options.
5. Centralisation of public transport
   1. TfGM recognises that transport that enables residents to travel through districts without moving through the city centre is important. However, transport infrastructure investments carry a substantial cost.
   2. The GM 2040 Transport Strategy highlights ways in which the provision of orbital travel around Greater Manchester could be covered through bus services (in partnership with other modes) that offer a variety of option for passengers including rapid transit buses and slower community services. However, to offer the best services for passengers we believe the transport network needs to be better integrated, enabling easy changes between modes. The integration of services across the network is one of the key ambitions in the 2040 Strategy and will be something we work towards in the short- and long-term.