



COFNOD O BENDERFYNIAD WEDI'I DDIRPRWYO GAN SWYDDOG
RECORD OF DELEGATED OFFICER DECISION

Penderfyniad Allweddol | Key Decision ✓

PWNC | SUBJECT: SUBSIDISED BUS TRAVEL SCHEMES ACROSS RHONDDA CYNON TAF DURING THE 2023/24 FINANCIAL YEAR

DIBEN YR ADRODDIAD | PURPOSE OF THE REPORT:

- i. To seek approval from the Director of Highways, Streetcare and Transportation Services to introduce a £1 maximum single bus fare for travel between 12th and 18th February 2024 (inclusive), for all journeys that start and terminate within the Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT) county boundary.
- ii. In accordance with the Council's Scheme of Delegation, the report has been prepared to accompany the intended officer decision of the Director of Highways, Streetcare and Transportation Services.

PENDERFYNIAD WEDI'I DDIRPRWYO | DELEGATED DECISION:

AGREED

- i. To introduce a £1 maximum single bus fare for travel between 12th and 18th February 2024 (inclusive), for all journeys that start and terminate within the Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT) county boundary.

Llofnod y Prif Swyddog
Chief Officer Signature

S WILLIAMS

Enw (priflythrennau)
Name (Print Name)

08.02.24

Dyddiad
Date

Mae'r penderfyniad yn cael ei wneud yn unol ag Adran 15 o Ddeddf Llywodraeth Leol 2000 (Swyddogaethau'r Corff Gweithredol) ac yn y cylch gorchwyl sy wedi'i nodi yn Adran 5 o Ran 3 o Gyfansoddiad y Cyngor.

The decision is taken in accordance with Section 15 of the Local Government Act, 2000 (Executive Functions) and in the terms set out in Section 5 of Part 3 of the Council's Constitution.

YMGYNGHORI | CONSULTATION

A. Morgan

_____08.02.24_____

LLOFNOD YR AELOD YMGYNGHOROL O'R CABINET
CONSULTEE CABINET MEMBER SIGNATURE

DYDDIAD | DATE

Blair

_____08.02.24_____

LLOFNOD SWYDDOG YMGYNGHOROL
CONSULTEE OFFICER SIGNATURE

DYDDIAD | DATE

RHEOLAU'R WEITHDREFN GALW-I-MEWN | CALL IN PROCEDURE RULES.

A YW'R PENDERFYNIAD YN UN BRYN A HEB FOD YN DESTUN PROSES GALW-I-MEWN GAN Y PWYLLGOR TROSOLWG A CHRAFFU?:

IS THE DECISION DEEMED URGENT AND NOT SUBJECT TO CALL-IN BY THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:

YDY | YES

Rheswm dros fod yn fater brys | Reason for Urgency:

For the scheme to begin on 12th February 2024.

Os yw'n cael ei ystyried yn fater brys - llofnod y Llywydd, y Dirprwy Lywydd neu Bennaeth y Gwasanaeth Cyflogedig yn cadarnhau cytundeb fod y penderfyniad arfaethedig yn rhesymol yn yr holl amgylchiadau iddo gael ei drin fel mater brys, yn unol â rheol gweithdrefn trosolwg a chraffu 17.2:

If deemed urgent - signature of Presiding Member or Deputy Presiding Member or Head of Paid Service confirming agreement that the proposed decision is reasonable in all the circumstances for it being treated as a matter of urgency, in accordance with the overview and scrutiny procedure rule 17.2:



.....
(Llywydd | Presiding Member)

.....09.02.24.....
(Dyddiad | Date)

DS - Os yw hwn yn benderfyniad sy'n cael ei ail-ystyried yna does dim modd galw'r penderfyniad i mewn a bydd y penderfyniad yn dod i rym o'r dyddiad mae'r penderfyniad wedi'i lofnodi.

NB - If this is a reconsidered decision then the decision Cannot be Called In and the decision will take effect from the date the decision is signed.

AT DDEFNYDD Y SWYDDFA YN UNIG | FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

DYDDIADAU CYHOEDDI A GWEITHREDU | PUBLICATION & IMPLEMENTATION DATES

CYHOEDDI | PUBLICATION

Cyhoeddi ar Wefan y Cyngor | Publication on the Council's Website:- _____ 09.02.24 _____

DYDDIAD | DATE

GWEITHREDU'R PENDERFYNIAD | IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

Nodwch: Fydd y penderfyniad hwn ddim yn dod i rym nac yn cael ei weithredu'n llawn nes cyn pen 3 diwrnod gwaith ar ôl ei gyhoeddi. Nod hyn yw ei alluogi i gael ei "Alw i Mewn" yn unol â Rheol 17.1, Rheolau Gweithdrefn Trosolwg a Chraffu.

Note: This decision will not come into force and may not be implemented until the expiry of 3 clear working days after its publication to enable it to be the subject to the Call-In Procedure in Rule 17.1 of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules.

Yn amodol ar y drefn "Galw i Mewn", caiff y penderfyniad ei roi ar waith ar / Subject to Call In the implementation date will be

_____ N/A _____
DYDDIAD / DATE

WEDI'I GYMERADWYO I'W GYHOEDDI: ✓ | APPROVED FOR PUBLICATION :✓

Rhagor o wybodaeth | Further Information:

Cyfadran Directorate:	Frontline Services
Enw'r Person Cyswllt Contact Name:	Geraint Roberts
Swydd Designation:	Integrated Transport Manager
Rhif Ffôn Telephone Number:	07825 424679

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

KEY OFFICER DELEGATED DECISION

8TH FEBRUARY 2024

**SUBSIDISED BUS TRAVEL SCHEMES ACROSS RHONDDA CYNON TAF
DURING THE 2023/24 FINANCIAL YEAR**

**REPORT TO ACCOMPANY A DECISION OF THE DIRECTOR OF HIGHWAYS,
STREETCARE AND TRANSPORTATION SERVICES**

Author(s): Geraint Roberts

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 The purpose of the report is to:

- (i) To seek approval from the Director of Highways, Streetcare and Transportation Services to introduce a £1 maximum single bus fare for travel between 12th and 18th February 2024 (inclusive), for all journeys that start and terminate within the Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT) county boundary.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that the Director of Highways, Streetcare and Transportation Services notes the contents of the report and approves the proposals to:

- (i) Introduce a £1 maximum single bus fare for travel between 12th and 18th February 2024 (inclusive), for all journeys that start and terminate within the Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT) county boundary.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 The Council has been successful in bidding for money through the UK's Shared Prosperity Fund to introduce initiatives that will help reduce the cost of living for residents, through measures that improve energy efficiency and combat fuel poverty and climate change. £500k had been awarded for the 2022/23 financial year, with further awards of £1.1m for 2023/24 and £1.2m for 2024/25.

4. BACKGROUND

4.1 The Wales Transport Strategy 2021 recognises the need for an accessible, sustainable, and efficient bus transportation network with specific attention to reliability, frequency, and geographical reach. Together with the review of mandatory and voluntary fares, the scheme looks to encourage modal shift from private car use towards sustainable travel.

- 4.2 The Council's 'Making Rhondda Cynon Taf Carbon Neutral by 2030' strategy, agreed by Cabinet on 22 June 2022, states 'Working with Cardiff Capital Region and Cardiff Capital Region Transport Authority (CCRTA), Transport for Wales and Welsh Government to develop public transport infrastructure and services to enable sustainable travel across the region that will meet future demand. Reducing the user cost of public transport would support this commitment and incentivise bus patronage.
- 4.3 Changing travel patterns associated with the evolving Covid-19 pandemic, highlighted the need to promote a public transport system that is reliable, affordable, and easy to use, as a low carbon alternative to the motor car. Reduced public transport patronage has also necessitated a review of the way bus travel is funded in Wales.
- 4.4 As a result of these evolving travel patterns, local bus services in Wales are currently financially supported through the Welsh Government's (WG) Bus Transition Fund (BTF). This support addresses the loss of farebox revenue by operators and the additional costs associated with responding to the COVID 19 pandemic. Under the terms of the agreement, operators provide bus services that meet local needs under the direction of the lead authority for each region, working with and on behalf of its constituent local authorities.
- 4.5 With the expected continuation of WG bus funding beyond 31st March 2024, although through a different funding mechanism, this initiative will encourage greater sustainability within the bus network by encouraging the return of patronage that was lost during the Covid-19 pandemic.

5. PREVIOUS £1 MAXIMUM SINGLE BUS FARE SCHEMES

- 5.1 During the periods of 24th July to 3rd September 2023, and 1st to 31st December 2023, RCTCBC introduced a £1 maximum single bus fare for all users in accordance with the terms of the SPF Grant funding, operating alongside the existing WG concessionary fare scheme.
- 5.2 These initiatives offered reduced fare travel on all scheduled bus services (regardless of operator) that started and terminated within the county boundary. Services that started or terminated outside the county boundary were excluded and subject to the full regular fare.
- 5.3 There were no time restrictions applied, and free travel was available from the first to last service each day, with wider benefits for social interaction and supporting economic activity across the county borough.
- 5.4 Passenger data for both previous schemes demonstrated growth during what are normal quieter periods of the year, and feedback from the bus operators has been very positive, with all operators stating that it was encouraging to see the Council introducing schemes with the aim of increasing patronage and achieving a more long-term sustainable bus network.

5.5 It should be noted that all operators reported a significant increase in youth travel across the county borough during the free travel scheme in March 2023, which resulted in issues of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) on buses and at bus stops/stations. This experience was not as prevalent during the 6-week summer holiday or December schemes.

6.1 £1 MAXIMUM SINGLE BUS FARE SCHEME: 12th to 18th February 2024

6.1 This report outlines the proposal to introduce a further £1 maximum single bus fare for travel between 12th and 18th February 2024 (inclusive), for all users in accordance with the terms of the SPF Grant funding, operating alongside the existing Welsh Government concessionary fare scheme.

6.2 The proposed initiative offers reduced fare travel on all scheduled bus services (regardless of operator) that start and terminate within the county boundary. Services that start or terminate outside the county boundary would be excluded and subject to the full regular fare.

6.3 There would be no time restrictions applied, so reduced fare travel would be available from the first to last service each day, with wider benefits for social interaction and supporting economic activity across the county borough.

6.4 The proposal prioritises people, the climate, and offers increased opportunity for the economy and local businesses due to increased town centre footfall.

6.5 With transport being responsible for 17% of Welsh Greenhouse gas emissions, the need to encourage transport modal shift has never been greater, with private car use emitting 62% (2018).

6.6 The proposal supports longer term objectives to encourage the use of more sustainable modes of travel as supported by the Wales Transport Strategy.

6.7 It also makes transport services accessible, fair, and inclusive through the removal of economic barriers, which potentially prevent people from using sustainable public transport and encourage increased usage of public transport for retail and leisure activities. Over 30% of households in RCT do not have access to a private motor car.

7. EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

7.1 An Equality and Socio-Economic Impact Assessment has been prepared for the purpose of this report. It has been found that a full report is not required. There are limited negative or adverse equality or diversity implications associated with this report, which can be easily mitigated.

7.2 Under the Public Sector Equality Duty as set out in the Equality Act 2010, Local Authorities are required to have due regard to the need to:

1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination.

2. Advance equality of opportunity.
3. Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

7.3 The Council is committed to meeting the requirements of the Equality Act and in doing so contributing to the national Well-being goal of a more equal Wales, required by the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

8. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no Welsh language implications as a result of the recommendations in this report.

9. CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT

9.1 There are no consultation implications aligned to this report.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

10.1 The estimated cost of the £1 maximum single bus fare for travel between 12th and 18th February 2024 (inclusive) initiative is in the region of £85,600, which will be wholly underwritten by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund grant funding.

10.2 The Council will agree the costs of these initiatives with operators in advance by using a historical level of “on bus” revenue (May 2023). This arrangement simplifies administration and removes any financial incentive for operators to inflate claims; and has been endorsed by the lead regional bus funding group, responsible for managing the WG bus funding scheme. It also provides parity between bus operators and does not cross subsidise or unduly increase the WG bus funding national agreement.

10.3 These initiatives will operate alongside the WG concessionary bus pass scheme, and concessionary pass holders will need to present their pass to ensure the correct level of funding is obtained from the Welsh Government.

11. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

11.1 The Council can provide reduced cost or free bus travel for RCT residents under its general powers of well-being, provided that the way in which it operates does not breach any of the competition requirements or other statutory provisions relating to local transport provision in the various Transport Acts.

11.2 As such, the proposal would apply to all bus operators in RCT, but only to journeys starting and terminating within the county boundary and on routes already registered. This would ensure no unfair competitive advantage for specific operators or cross-subsidising out of area passengers.

- 11.3 This additional voluntary agreement between the Council and the RCT bus operators would operate alongside the WG bus funding national agreement, with the Council underwriting the revenue that the operators would have received from the paying passengers.
- 11.4 As the current WG bus funding contract caps each operator's profit, there would be no financial advantage or disadvantage to operators if the scheme was introduced.
- 11.5 The Transport Act 2000 requires authorities in Wales to issue statutory travel concession permits to any applicant resident who is aged 60 or over or meets the eligibility criteria, with regard to disability as set out in Section 146 of the Act. In Wales, this is the All-Wales Concessionary Travel Scheme.

12. LINKS TO CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT

- 12.1 The Council has committed to reducing our carbon footprint. This supports the priorities of the Council's Corporate Plan 'Making a Difference' – 2020-24.
- 12.2 Public transport supports and promotes the Council's Corporate Plan priorities for People – are independent, healthy, and successful; Places – where people are proud to live, work and play and Prosperity – creating the opportunity for people and businesses to: be entrepreneurial and fulfil their potential and prosper.
- 12.3 These in turn support the seven well-being goals of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. This proposal contributes to the Well-being Goals and is consistent with the five ways of working, as defined within the sustainable development principle in the Act.

13. CONCLUSION

- 13.1 This further initiative to reduce travel costs by public bus will make transport services accessible, fair and inclusive through the removal of economic barriers that potentially prevent people from using sustainable public transport and encourage increased usage of public transport for retail and leisure activities.

Other Information: -

Relevant Scrutiny Committee

Climate Change, Frontline Services and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee.

Contact Officer

Geraint Roberts – Integrated Transport Manager