

FILE COPY

Appendix A

01695 585229  
kim.webber@westlancs.gov.uk

Raymond Brookfield Esq.  
Secretary of the West Lancashire  
Pensioners' Forum

19th November 2010

[REDACTED]

KW/CMT

Halsall  
Ormskirk  
West Lancashire  
L39 [REDACTED]

Ms. K. Webber  
01695 585005  
5005

Dear Mr. Brookfield,

Petition – Off Peak Rail and Bus Concession for Over 60's/Disabled People who are in need of Medical Services, or are Socially Excluded from Rail or Bus Services by virtue of being in a Low Income Group such as State Pensioner

Thank you for your petition in relation to the above received by the Council on 19th October 2010. I refer to Mrs. Denning's acknowledgement letter to you of 20th October, and subsequent letter of 9th November 2010 advising that the Council would provide a written response setting out its views about your request.

The Council has for many years provided support for groups at potential risk of social exclusion by providing funding for a range of travel options, beyond those which are required statutorily. This support has included:

- Providing an annual grant to Dial-a-Ride, alongside that provided by the County Council to this organisation, to enable demand responsive transport system to be available to people unable to use other forms of transport. Recently, this arrangement has been superseded by a tender exercise conducted by LCC, in which the Borough Council was a partner, and which has enabled continued direct financial support to this service.
- Allowing the use of bus passes on Dial-a-Ride services and County Car Schemes, a facility not available in all parts of Lancashire, and which enables travel as a visitor to a number of destinations including Southport General Hospital at Kew, Ormskirk and District General and Wrightington Hospitals.
- Allowing the use of bus passes prior to 9.30 a.m. and post 11 p.m., Monday to Friday for a flat rate 50p fare, and the use of passes on Blackpool Trams and Knott End Ferry.
- Offering an option of travel tokens or a senior railcard instead of a bus pass to those eligible; the tokens can be used on most local taxi, bus or rail journeys including throughout Merseyside.
- In addition, eligible people who choose either a bus pass or travel tokens can also purchase a discounted railcard.

The above arrangements go beyond the statutory scheme requirements, of a free national bus pass for eligible residents, which is administered through the Lancashire Joint Concessionary Travel Scheme. The arrangements are more favourable than in many other parts of Lancashire, and are currently funded by the Council with an associated cost to local taxpayers, as the Council has sought to cater for a wide range of travel needs within its community.

However, as you may be aware, there are some changes pending with regard to the administration of concessionary travel from 1/4/11. From this date responsibility for administering concessionary travel will shift to upper tier authorities and as a result it is anticipated that funding associated with this function will be re-allocated by Government to Lancashire County Council.

Furthermore, you may be aware that the Government has recently announced reductions of 28% in the amount of grant funding that will be made to Councils such as our own over the next four years.

In the light of these changes it is not considered likely, at this point in time, that an enhanced concessionary travel scheme such as the type described within your petition will be affordable in the future. Indeed, it is likely that the Council, and other Councils, are going to be facing some very difficult decisions in future years as to which existing services it can continue to offer, and at what level. However, we are awaiting the Government's detailed grant announcement in December and will be looking closely at the details and considering the implications of this over the coming months.

Thank you once again for taking the time to submit your petition.

Yours sincerely,

**Kim Webber**  
**Assistant Chief Executive**

c.c. Peter Blakey, Exchequer Services Manager  
Jacky Denning, Assistant Member Services Manager