

OFFICER DECISION RECORD

Decision Title: Diamond Travelcard Scheme to revert to its usual start time 09.00 from 15 June 2020

Decision reference number: 01.06.20

Decision date: 5 June 2020

Background / reason for decision:

In March 2020, the start time for using the Diamond Travelcard scheme was relaxed to allow pass holders to travel free at any time, in order to enable access to essential food shops and medical appointments. This was possible as general use of buses had dropped to around 8% of normal. From 15 June, when non-essential shops are proposed to reopen, the demand for using buses is expected to increase as shop workers and shoppers who have no alternative means of transport seek to travel into city and town centres. Social distancing measures mean that the capacity of buses is significantly reduced – to around 25% of their normal level. Reverting to the usual 09.00 start time will give additional capacity when this is most needed. Over the last few weeks, although only 4% of the concessionary pass uses occurred outside the normal hours, of those that did 62% occurred between 08.00 and 09.00 which is expected to be the busiest period of travel for workers once non-essential shops reopen. The services most used were the ones where capacity is likely to be most under pressure, including the 75 and 76 services in Bristol.

The decision is urgent as the Government has only recently announced the relaxation in lockdown restrictions and expects Local Transport Authorities to manage demand to meet social distancing guidelines. The next WECA Committee is not until 19 June, after the date when capacity problems are likely to start to arise on buses.

Options considered: *(as relevant/applicable)*

Option 1 – Maintain the Diamond Travelcard scheme with no restrictions on the time passes can be used – this is considered likely to compromise bus capacity as usage increases when non-essential shops reopen.

Option 2 – Revert to the 09.00 start time – this is the option delivered through the decision set out in this decision record.

Decision: To revert the start time for the Diamond Travelcard scheme to 09.00 from 15 June 2020

Consultation:

West of England Mayor; officers and Cabinet members at the four West of England unitary authorities were informed of the proposed decision on 29 May 2020.

Officer making decision: Patricia Greer

Position: Chief Executive

Report / appendices / background documents: None