

Carbon Impact Assessment Report: Concessionary Travel Scheme Arrangements 2023-24

Background

The Local Transport Plan for Greater Nottingham aims to deliver a world-class, low carbon, sustainable transport system for Nottingham, to support a thriving economy and enable growth. To help realise this vision, the Council provides concessionary travel for Nottingham's elderly and disabled residents, enabling those residents to access work, training, health, shopping and leisure facilities.

The Council is a Travel Concession Authority (TCA) and has a duty to provide free travel at restricted times on local bus services for holders of a valid English National Concessionary Travel Scheme (ENCTS) pass for journeys that commence within the Council's administrative boundary. Concessionary travel passes for bus use are available to those who qualify on the grounds of age or disability. Transport operators have a duty to accept these travel passes on the local bus services they operate and travel is permitted under the terms of carriage of each operator. Pass holders can travel for free on buses between 9.30am and 11.00pm on weekdays, and all day at weekends and on bank holidays.

ENCTS free travel is largely funded by central government via the Local Government Finance Settlement (LGFS) grant provided annually to each English Council. The Council is responsible for reimbursing bus operators for all statutory free concessionary travel commencing within Nottingham, irrespective of which TCA issued the pass, and arrangements are agreed with operators on an annual basis.

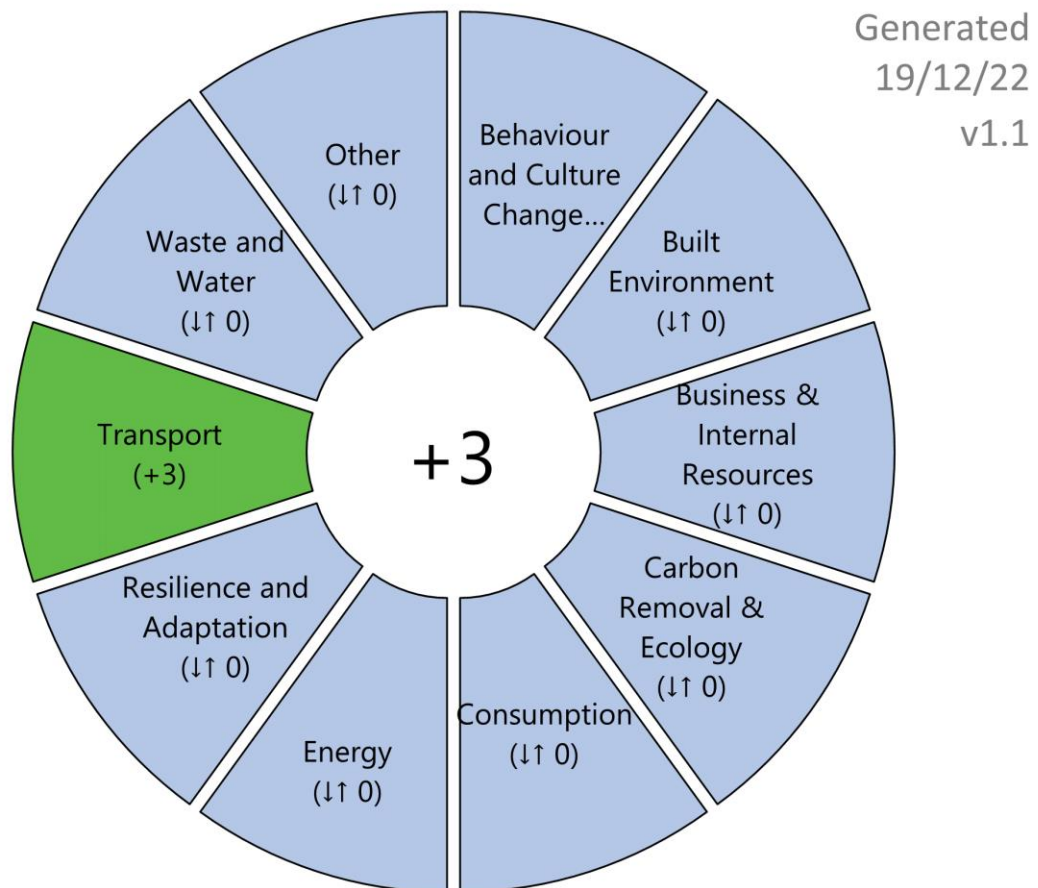
TCAs can offer, and locally fund, additional travel entitlements using discretionary powers from Section 93 of the Transport Act 1985. The Council currently offers three additional travel entitlements for Nottingham residents; these are;

1. free travel on the tram during the same period as per the ENCTS conditions (weekdays 9:30am to 11:00pm and all day at weekends and on bank holidays);
2. a companion travel facility attached to passes issued for certain disabilities and;
3. free travel on the bus or tram for disabled city residents before 9:30am on weekdays, from start of service. The free travel before 9:30am on weekdays is presently funded using Bus Services Improvement Plan funding provided directly by the government until March 2025.

An Executive Board reports is being drafted to request approval to continue offering the additional travel entitlements relating to free travel on the tram and the companion travel facility from 1st April 2023 using existing revenue budgets.

Carbon Impact Assessment Results

Fig 1 - Infographic showing relative costs and benefits



Nottingham is aiming to become the first carbon neutral city in the country by 2028 (5 years and 0 months away).

The infographic shows the relative costs and benefits of the decision on 10 different categories with respect to the climate:

- Behaviour and Culture Change, no net effect.
- Built Environment, no net effect.
- Business & Internal Resources, no net effect.
- Carbon Removal & Ecology, no net effect.
- Consumption, no net effect.
- Energy, no net effect.
- Resilience and Adaptation, no net effect.
- Transport, plus 3.
- Waste and Water, no net effect.

Other, no net effect.

This policy decision continues to encourage full or partial modal shift from private car/taxi to bus and tram. There are around 1m concessionary pass holder trips per year made on the tram and approximately 20,000 trips on bus and tram that are made by companions of city residents that qualify for a mobility + companion concessionary travel pass.

There is a loose assumption that 80% of the tram trips made by Nottingham City Council issued concessionary pass holders would migrate over to bus if free travel wasn't permitted on the tram as it would remain free for pass holders on the bus. The remaining 20% would be a mixture of those not travelling at all or travelling by other means, such as private car/taxi or walking.

Regular surveys are undertaken with public transport users but no recent ones include any questions relating to asking users what they would do if the additional travel benefits were no longer provided. This will be more of an area of focus in coming months as public transport passenger numbers continue to recover post the pandemic.