

**SELECT COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC REGENERATION – 16<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2006**

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF URBAN ENVIRONMENT**

**USAGE OF BUS PASSES AND BUS PATRONAGE**

**PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. Following recent press reports about the decline in bus patronage and use of concessionary passes, this report summaries the current levels of bus use, the use of concessionary passes and identifies possible future changes.

**BACKGROUND**

**Bus passenger trends**

2. In recent years the number of bus passengers has fallen locally and nationally, with the exception of Greater London, which has experienced a significant increase in bus passenger journeys. This trend is also the case for Dudley which has seen a reduction in passenger journeys; however, the rate of reduction is slowing. This trend can be identified on the table shown in Appendix 1.
3. In summary, from the period 2002-3 to 2004-5, the total number of passenger journeys in the West Midlands has fallen from 332 to 315 million. This change is also reflected in a similar reduction in the extent of bus services being operated. Over the period mentioned, the total bus service operational distance within the Dudley borough has reduced from 250,000 to 243,000km.

**Concessionary fare passengers**

4. There is currently no record held of the use of concessionary passes specifically for the Dudley Borough, this is only recorded on a West Midlands basis. Usage has been assumed to correspond with the extent of bus service distance in the borough. As shown on the table in Appendix 1, over the three financial years, the use of concessionary passes has been relatively stable, a slight fall in 2003-4 and a subsequent rise in 2004-5. It is also the case that when compared to the reduction in bus journey kilometres, the use on concessionary passes per service has increased. The overall slight decline in bus patronage can be more greatly attributed to a reduction in non-concessionary passengers.

**Remaining issues**

5. It is the case that as the population of over 60's become more affluent and with greater access to the private car, this could result in a reduction in use of the senior citizens travel pass. It is uncertain at present whether this will result in a

longer term decline in the use of the pass in general since the population of over 60's is growing. It may also be suggested that continued traffic growth, congestion and associated costs of motoring, coupled with increased and continued public transport investment, this could lead to a growth in the use of the pass in future years.

## **FINANCE**

6. The contents of this report provide information only and do not have any impact upon or require a decision affecting the authority's finances.

## **LAW**

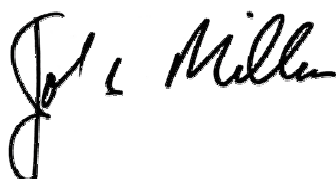
7. This report has no legal implications.

## **EQUALITY IMPACT**

8. This report does not raise any issues regarding the equality of access to public transport

## **RECOMMENDATION**

9. It is recommended that:-
  - The trends in bus patronage, both concessionary and non concessionary are noted.
  - The Authority seeks to continue in its role of promoting the use of bus services forming a part of its wider transport objectives as set out in the West Midlands Local Transport Plan.
  - The Authority continues to work effectively with the Passenger Transport Executive (Centro) and bus operators to achieve improvements in service quality and availability to encourage modal shift to public transport.



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## Appendix 1

### Trends in Bus patronage for passenger types

<b>Passenger journeys</b>	<b>2004-05</b>			
		Concessionary	Non-Concessionary	Total
Annual Bus Passenger journeys West Midlands (millions)		102.0	212.5	314.5
Dudley Bus service kilometres (000's)	243	9.53	19.85	29.4

<b>Passenger journeys</b>	<b>2003-04</b>			
		Concessionary	Non-Concessionary	Total
Annual Bus Passenger journeys West Midlands (millions)		100.3	224.7	325.0
Dudley Bus service kilometres (000's)	244	9.56	19.93	29.5

<b>Passenger journeys</b>	<b>2002-03</b>			
		Concessionary	Non-Concessionary	Total
Annual Bus Passenger journeys West Midlands (millions)		104.0	228	332.0
Dudley Bus service kilometres (000's)	250	9.8	20.42	30.2