



Media Release

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TRAVEL CONCESSIONS 'ON TRACK' FOR IMPROVEMENT

Residents who are eligible to take up Harrogate Borough Council's half fare travel concessions have welcomed the news that the scheme is to be extended to train travel.

Cabinet Member for Public Works, Julian Sturdy, yesterday cleared the way for an increased contribution of £56,000 towards the scheme, which will allow eligible residents to apply for a half fare rail pass as an alternative to a bus pass or travel tokens.

This funding has come from on-street car parking income, which is ring fenced to fund transport improvements and is subject to the approval of the county council. Harrogate Borough Council currently contributes over £400,000 a year to the *North Yorkshire Concessionary Fares' scheme.

Councillor Sturdy, said: "We plan to bring in the half fare train concession this summer on a one-year trial basis. Unlike bus companies who are required by law to take part in the half fare scheme, train operators are not obliged to. Arriva Trains Northern, who operate the line between York and Leeds, are working with us to bring in this extension but have required a time restriction to avoid conflict with full fare paying passengers at peak times."

Holders of the rail pass will be able to board at any railway station in the Harrogate district – Weeton, Pannal, Hornbeam Park, Harrogate, Starbeck, Knaresborough, Cattal and Hammerton. They will be entitled to half fare concession on journeys within the district or on a single or return journey to other destinations on the rail line between York and Leeds. The pass will not be valid between 6am and 9.30am and 4pm and 6pm on weekdays. But it will be valid at all times on weekends and Bank Holidays.

"We believe that this extension will be a great benefit to elderly and infirm users of the half fare concession, particularly those in the rural areas who have easier access to trains than they do to buses, but this will give all pass holders the choice, added Councillor Sturdy. "This is just one of a number of measures we are bringing in to improve our scheme, which already well exceeds that required by government as a statutory minimum."

*The North Yorkshire Concessionary Fares' Scheme is a partnership between all local authorities in the North Yorkshire County area. ENDS

FURTHER INFORMATION: Councillor Julian Sturdy is available for comment on 07836 692010. Further technical information is available from Mrs Paula Newson Smith, Assistant Director, Department of Technical Services on 01423 556502.