



# Consultation on proposed changes to the disabled person's NoWcard scheme

Consultation report

[www.lancashire.gov.uk](http://www.lancashire.gov.uk)



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# 1. Executive summary

This report summarises the response to Lancashire County Council's consultation on proposed changes to the disabled person's NoWcard scheme.

For the consultation, paper questionnaires were made available at libraries and transport interchanges. The consultation questionnaire was also available online at [www.lancashire.gov.uk](http://www.lancashire.gov.uk) in PDF, Microsoft Word, large print and easy read versions.

The fieldwork ran for eight weeks between 26 March 2018 and 21 May 2018. In total, 179 completed questionnaires were returned (48 paper questionnaire responses and 131 online questionnaire responses).

## 1.1 Key findings

### *1.1.1 Respondent's use of disabled person's NoWcards*

- Over half of respondents (53%) said that they have a current disabled person's NoWcard.
- Of those respondents who said that they have a current disabled person's NoWcard over two-fifths (43%) said that they have used their disabled person's NoWcard every or most days in the last 12 months. A further fifth of these respondents (20%) said they used it a few times a week in the last 12 months.

### *1.1.2 Respondent's use of disabled person's NoWcards for travel before 9.30am from Monday to Friday*

- Of those respondents who said that they had used their disabled person's NoWcard in the last 12 months about three in every ten (29%) said that they had used their NoWcard for travel before 9.30am from Monday to Friday every or most days in the last 12 months. About a further one in six of those respondents (16%) said that they used their NoWcard for travel before 9.30am from Monday to Friday a few times a week in the last 12 months.
- Of those respondents who said that they had used their disabled person's NoWcard for travel before 9.30am from Monday to Friday in the last 12 months nearly three-fifths (58%) said that they generally spent 50p each day on their disabled person's NoWcard for travel before 9.30am from Monday to Friday.
- Respondents who said that they had used their disabled person's NoWcard for travel before 9.30am from Monday to Friday in the last 12 months were then asked why they travel before 9.30am from Monday to Friday using their disabled person's NoWcard. The most common responses to this question were for medical appointments (64%), for leisure (31%) and for shopping (30%).

### ***1.1.3 Views on the proposal***

- About two-fifths of respondents (42%) agreed with the proposal to increase the flat fare per journey from 50p to £1 for disabled person's NoWcard travel before 9.30am from Monday to Friday. However, about half of respondents (49%) disagreed with the proposal.
- Respondents were asked to explain how the proposal would affect them. A quarter said it won't/very little (25%) and about a fifth (19%) said money is tight/less money for other essentials.
- A fifth of respondents (20%) said that if the proposal happened it would mean that they would travel less often by bus/tram.
- About two-fifths of respondents (38%) said it is important for them to be able to pay their bus fare with one coin.
- When respondents were asked if there was anything else that they thought we needed to consider or that the proposal could do differently, about a fifth (18%) proposed an alternative way of changing the NoWcard scheme.

## 2. Introduction

We are committed to providing the best services we can to the people of Lancashire, particularly to the most vulnerable in our communities. However, the council's financial position remains extremely challenging, with a forecasted funding gap of £144m in 2021/22. Because of this, we still need to make some difficult decisions in order to make further savings.

We operate the mandatory English National Concessionary Travel Scheme (ENCTS). In Lancashire this scheme is called NoWcard.

The NoWcard scheme allows free bus travel (and free travel on Blackpool Tramway to Wyre residents) for NoWcard pass holders from Mondays to Fridays between 9.30am and 11pm and all day on Saturdays, Sundays and bank holidays.

At our discretion, the scheme also allows holders of a disabled person's NoWcard to travel at a 50p flat fare on journeys on local bus/tram services that begin before 9.30am on Mondays to Fridays.

On 18 January 2018 the county council's Cabinet agreed to consult on proposals to increase this charge from 50p to £1.

## 3. Methodology

For the consultation, paper questionnaires were made available at libraries and transport interchanges. The consultation questionnaire was also available online at [www.lancashire.gov.uk](http://www.lancashire.gov.uk) in PDF, Microsoft Word, large print and easy read versions.

413 stakeholders were emailed at the beginning of the consultation to inform them that the consultation had started and that they could respond online. Some local forums were also invited to take part in the consultation and different versions (eg braille and audio CDs) were made available to them.

The fieldwork ran for eight weeks between 26 March 2018 and 21 May 2018. In total, 179 completed questionnaires were returned (48 paper questionnaires and 131 online questionnaires).

The main section of the questionnaire included ten questions. It covered two main topics: respondent's use of disabled person's NoWcards and respondent's views on the proposal to increase the flat fare per journey for disabled person's NoWcard from 50p to £1 for travel before 9.30am from Monday and Friday. The questions about the proposal asked respondents: how strongly they agree or disagree with the proposal; how the proposal will affect them; if the proposals will mean they will travel by bus/tram less often; if it is important for respondents to be able to pay their bus fare with one coin; and if respondents think there is anything else that we need to consider or could be done differently.

The remaining questions asked respondents for information about themselves. For example, if they are a Lancashire resident, or a private sector company/organisation. This information is presented in appendix 1.

In this report respondents' responses to the open questions have been classified against a coding frame to quantify the qualitative data. Coding is the process of combining the issues, themes and ideas in qualitative open responses into a set of codes. The codes are given meaningful names that relate to the issue, so that during close reading of responses it can be seen when similar issues relate to a similar code. As the analysis process continues the coding frame is added to and refined as new issues are raised by respondents. All responses to open questions are then coded against the coding frame, and can be subsequently analysed as quantitative data.

### 3.1 Limitations

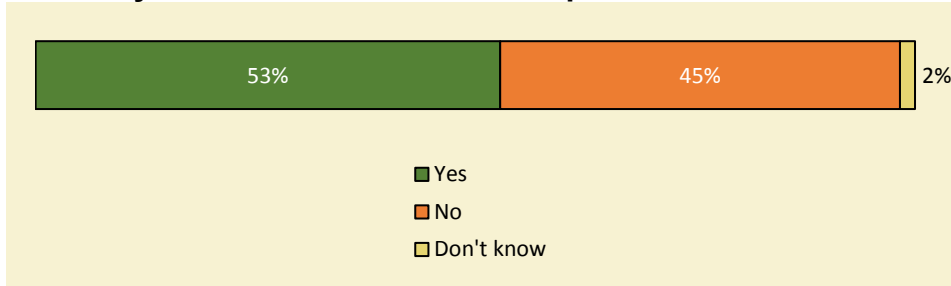
In charts or tables where responses do not add up to 100%, this is due to multiple responses or computer rounding.

## 4. Main findings

### 4.1 Respondent's use of disabled person's NoWcards

Respondents were first asked if they have a current disabled person's NoWcard. Over half of respondents (53%) said that they have a current disabled person's NoWcard.

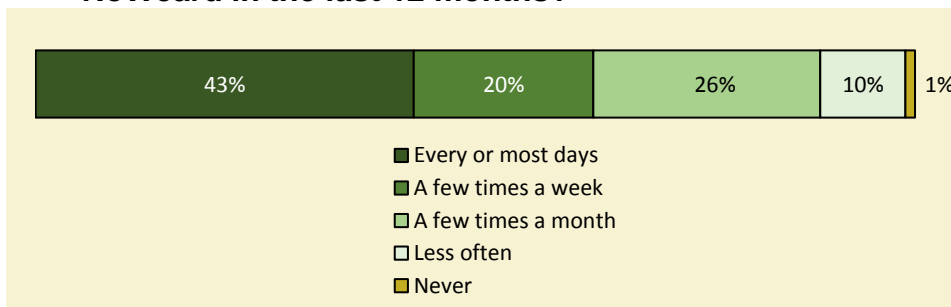
**Chart 1 - Do you have a current disabled person's NoWcard?**



Base: all respondents (177)

Respondents who said that they have a current disabled person's NoWcard were then asked generally how often they have used their card in the last 12 months. Of those respondents, over two-fifths (43%) said that they had used their disabled person's NoWcard every or most days in the last 12 months. A further fifth of these respondents (20%) said they used it a few times a week in the last 12 months.

**Chart 2 - Generally, how often have you used your disabled person's NoWcard in the last 12 months?**



Base: respondents who have a current disabled person's NoWcard (94)

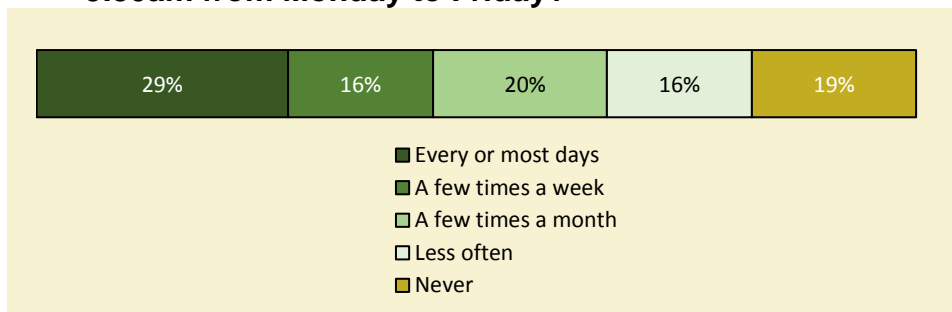


## 4.2 Respondent's use of disabled person's NoWcards for travel before 9.30am from Monday to Friday

Respondents who said that they had used their disabled person's NoWcard in the last 12 months were then asked generally how often they had used their card before 9.30am from Monday to Friday in the last 12 months.

Of those respondents, about three in every ten (29%) said that they had used their NoWcard for travel before 9.30am from Monday to Friday every or most days in the last 12 months. About a further one in six of these respondents (16%) said that they used their NoWcard for travel before 9.30am from Monday to Friday a few times a week in the last 12 months.

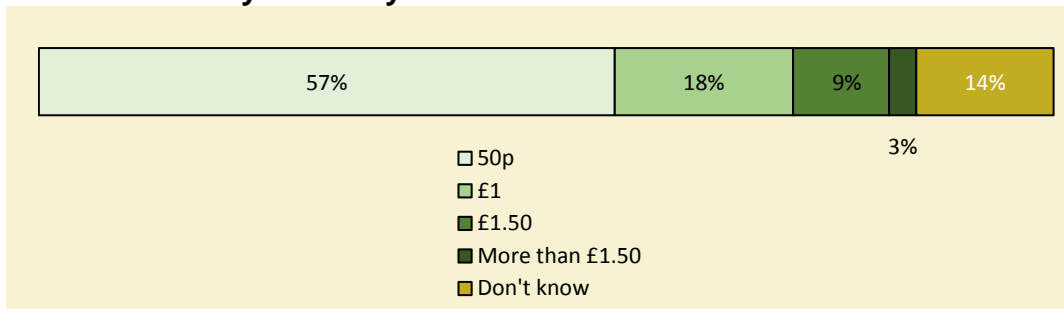
**Chart 3 - And generally, how often have you used your disabled person's NoWcard in the last 12 months for travel before 9.30am from Monday to Friday?**



Base: respondents who have used their disabled person's NoWcard in the last 12 months (92)

Respondents who said that they had used their disabled person's NoWcard for travel before 9.30am from Monday to Friday in the last 12 months were then asked how much they generally spent each day using their NoWcard before 9.30am from Monday to Friday. Of these respondents, nearly three-fifths (57%) said that they generally spend 50p.

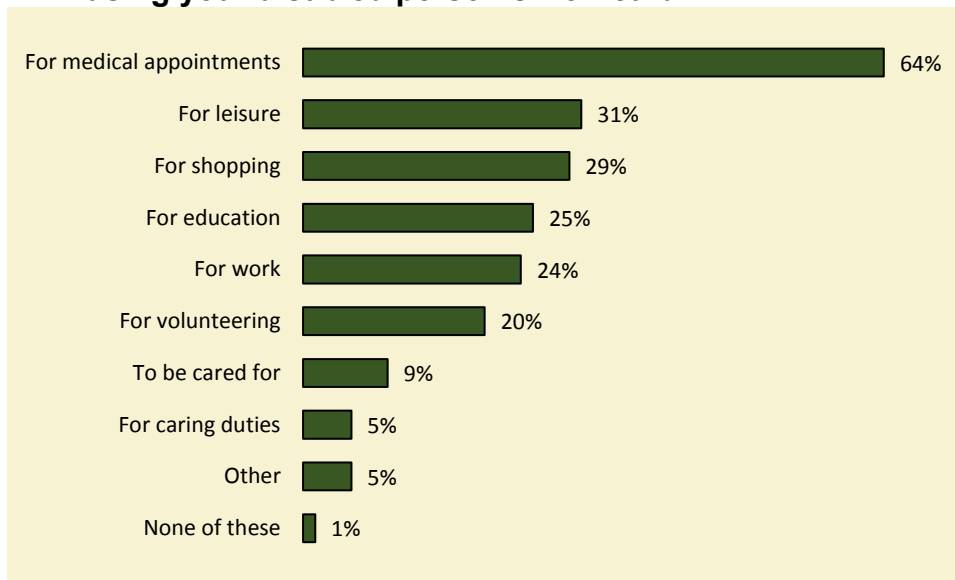
**Chart 4 - How much do you generally spend each day on your disabled person's NoWcard for travel before 9.30am from Monday to Friday?**



Base: respondents who have used their disabled person's NoWcard for travel in the past 12 months before 9.30am from Monday to Friday (74)

Respondents who said that they had used their disabled person's NoWcard for travel before 9.30am from Monday to Friday in the last 12 months were then asked why they travel before 9.30am from Monday to Friday using their disabled person's NoWcard. The most common responses to this question were for medical appointments (64%), for leisure (31%) and for shopping (29%).

**Chart 5 - Why do you travel before 9.30am from Monday to Friday using your disabled person's NoWcard?**



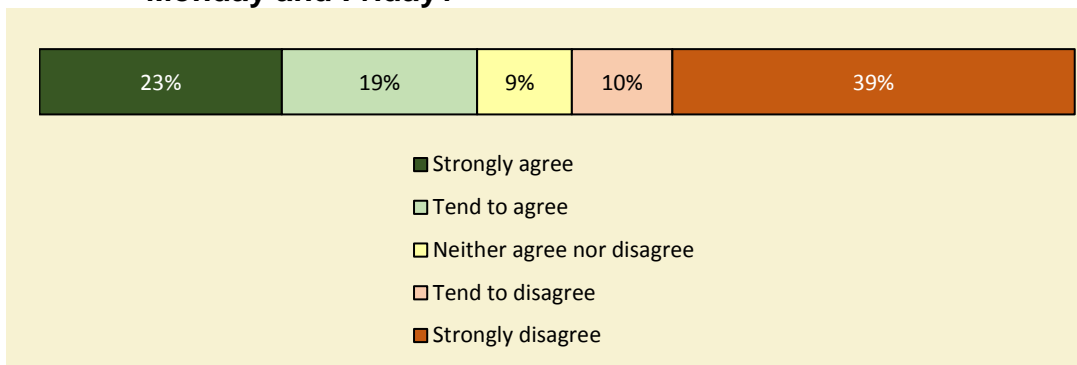
Base: respondents who have used their disabled person's NoWcard for travel in the past 12 months before 9.30am from Monday to Friday (75)

### 4.3 Views on the proposal

Respondents were then asked how strongly they agree or disagree with the proposal to increase the flat fare per journey for disabled person's NoWcard from 50p to £1 for travel before 9.30am from Monday to Friday.

About two-fifths of respondents (42%) agreed with the proposal to increase the flat fare per journey from disabled person's NoWcard for travel before 9.30am from Monday to Friday. However, about half of respondents (49%) disagreed with the proposal.

**Chart 6 - How strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposal to increase the flat fare per journey for disabled person's NoWcard from 50p to £1.00 for travel before 9.30am from Monday and Friday?**



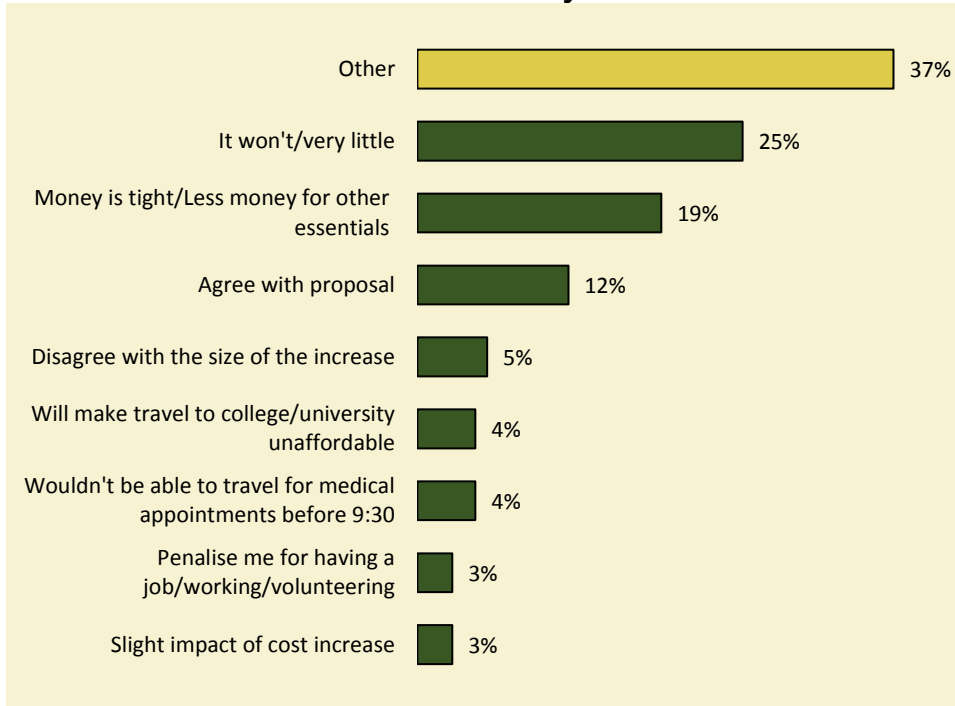
Base: all respondents (176)

Respondents who said that they had used their disabled person's NoWcard for travel before 9.30am from Monday to Friday in the last 12 months were more likely to disagree with the proposal (63% disagree).

Respondents were then asked to explain how the proposal would affect them. Over a third of respondents (37%) provided a comment that has been coded as 'other'. This is because these responses didn't directly answer the question, or because they occurred with such a low frequency that giving them their own code wasn't justified.

Of the responses that could be coded, the most common responses given were: it won't/very little (25%); and money is tight/less money for other essentials (19%).

**Chart 7 - Please tell us how this will affect you?**

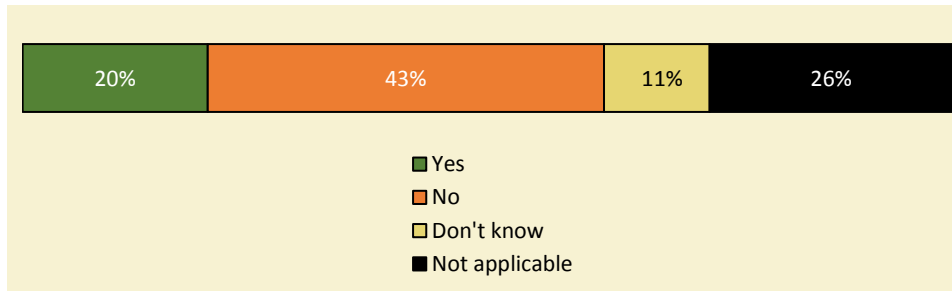


Base: all respondents (112)

Respondents were then asked if they would travel by bus/tram less often if the proposal happened.

A fifth of respondents (20%) said that if the proposal happened it would mean that they would travel less often by bus/tram. However, over two-fifths of respondents (43%) said that if the proposal happened it wouldn't mean that they would travel less often by bus/tram.

**Chart 8 - If the proposal happened, would this mean you travel by bus/tram less often?**

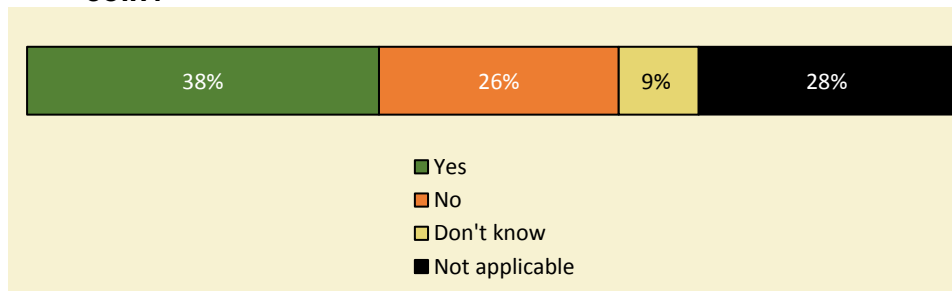


Base: all respondents (176)

Respondents were then asked if it is important for them to be able to pay their bus fare with one coin.

About two-fifths of respondents (38%) said it is important for them to be able to pay their bus fare with one coin.

**Chart 9 - Is it important for you to be able to pay your bus fare with one coin?**



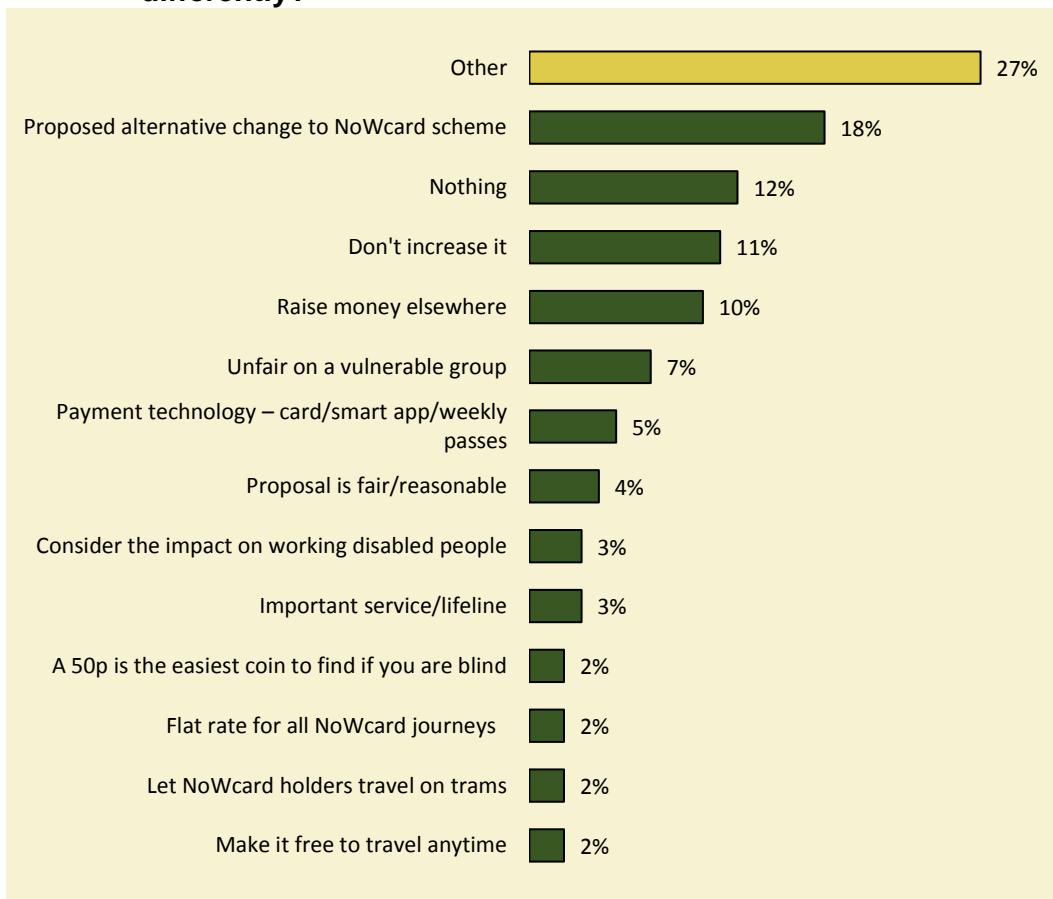
Base: all respondents (174)

Finally respondents were asked if there was anything else that they think we need to consider about the proposal or could that we could do differently.

Over a quarter of respondents (27%) provided a comment that has been coded as 'other'. This is because these responses didn't directly answer the question, or because they occurred with such a low frequency that giving them their own code wasn't justified.

About a fifth of respondents (18%) suggested an alternative change to the NoWcard scheme (eg change time to 9am instead of 9.30am, allow travel across multiple buses for £1, exempt people traveling for work, education or medical appointments from charge, allow payments by card).

**Chart 10 - Thinking about this proposal, please tell us if you think there is anything else that we need to consider or that we could do differently?**



Base: all respondents (97)

## 5. Other responses

### 5.1 Response from 50+ assembly

"The 50+ assembly considered the proposal at its meeting on Tuesday 15th May.

With the current budget pressures on LCC the Assembly believes that after such a long period of no increase it is not unreasonable to increase the before 0930 hrs fare to £1.

This will be a considerable jump in one go and will have an adverse impact on those users who have restricted income and by the limiting nature of some disabilities many of those still working may be on low wages. They will need to travel before 0930 hrs and not have an option to travel later in the day.

The Assembly supports the concept of seeking to be able to pay with one coin. This is a considerable benefit to passengers who struggle to cope with coins or the ability to mentally add up values of different coins. To help address this the Council could consider alternative payment methods of electronic or prepayment that would not require on vehicle coin handling.

There was concern that current publicity about the disabled Nowcard scheme did not provide enough information about the range of eligible disabilities. An illustration would be those suffering from profound deafness. The availability of the disabled card has increased importance now that the age of eligibility for the older persons national concession has been raised.

The Assembly, and its local forums, would be happy to be involved in assisting in promoting the scheme in their local district area and reviewing future publicity for the scheme."

### 5.2 Parish Council responses

#### ***5.2.1 Response from Bretherton Parish Council***

"The Parish Council would not object to the proposed changes."

#### ***5.2.2 Response from Charnock Richard Parish Council***

"The Parish Council have no objections to proposed increase in charges."

#### ***5.2.3 Response from Wrightington Parish Council***

"The Parish Council have no objections to proposed increase in charges."



## Appendix 1 - Demographic breakdown

**Table 1 - Are you responding to this consultation as...?**

	%
A Lancashire resident	85%
A member of a voluntary or community organisation	21%
Parent/carer of a disabled NoWcard holder	17%
An elected member of a parish or town council in Lancashire	11%
Other	8%
An elected member of a Lancashire district council	2%
An elected member of Lancashire County Council	2%

Base: all respondents (175)

**Table 2 - Are you...?**

	%
Male	40%
Female	53%
Prefer not to say	6%

Base: all respondents (173)

**Table 3 - What was your age on your last birthday?**

	%
Under 16	1%
16-19	3%
20-34	7%
35-64	53%
65-74	18%
75+	11%
Prefer not to say	7%

Base: all respondents (175)

**Table 4 - Are you a deaf person or do you have a disability?**

	%
No	34%
Yes, physical disability	28%
Yes, visually impaired	19%
Yes, learning disability	16%
Yes, other disability	13%
Yes, mental health condition	12%
Yes, deaf	7%
Prefer not to say	7%

Base: all respondents (175)

**Table 5 - Which best describes your ethnic background?**

	%
White	89%
Asian or Asian British	1%
Other	1%
Prefer not to say	10%

Base: all respondents (175)

**Table 6 - Are there any children or young people in your household aged under 20?**

	%
No, but expecting	4%
Yes, aged under 5	2%
Yes, aged 5-8	4%
Yes, aged 9-11	4%
Yes, aged 12-16	10%
Yes, aged 17-19	7%
No children aged under 20	65%
Prefer not to say	13%

Base: all respondents (167)