



Nottingham
City Council

Making smartcards work for you Improving Accessibility Beacon Workshop Jury's Inn, Nottingham NG2 3BJ 21 January 2009

Chair: Chris Carter, Transport Strategy Manager, Nottingham City Council

Welcome - Nottingham City Councillor Brian Parbutt

- Councillor Parbutt expressed the view that negative press coverage can influence people's perception of local government, but there is a lot of good work and many local authorities lead the field in some specific areas. Nottinghamshire County Council and Nottingham City Council are nationally recognised for their excellence in transport planning. This is not just about getting the services and infrastructure right but about looking at how people need to use the buses to access employment, learning, shopping, leisure and health, and giving them the confidence to use the service to improve their life-chances and opportunities.

Greater Nottingham ticketing progress and strategy - Andy Gibbons, Public Transport Manager, Nottingham City Council

- People want simpler, cheaper and more time-efficient travel. There are no cross-city routes and integration with services outside the area covered by the Nottingham City Transport (NCT) buses could be improved. Also it can be more difficult to change operators between tram, buses and rail. The City Council are looking to improve integration through smartcard technology which reduces boarding time, could allow integration of any number of tickets or passcards for work or leisure facilities and can personalise journey information and discounts most effectively. The technology is progressive and developments are being made all the time as information fed back by the smartcards show how people travel and where future investment need to be targeted. Funding for the scheme comes from grants that are already in situ and from efficiency savings.

The Citycard concept - Jay Clifford, Public Transport Team, Nottingham City Council

- The smartcard technology is wide-ranging with incredible functionality, but it is also flexible and can be adapted to the requirements of the partners in the scheme as well as those of the user, by allowing the use of different chips or barcodes where chip readers aren't yet available. The aim is to have everything on one card so that transport is integrated into an individual's daily activities and bus travel becomes second nature.
- Nottingham City Transport had already invested in smartcard technology for season tickets and Nottingham City Council has piggybacked on this. Other authorities could invest in the backup systems themselves or get a private investor. Efficiency savings cover labour costs as outlets do not need additional manpower, libraries and leisure centres continue doing what they have always done!

- There are a number of chips currently in use. ITSO have a national standard which all local authorities have to comply with, but commercial operators do not. TrentBarton, the other main public transport operator serving Nottingham with longer distance services, are also progressing their own smartcard. Inter-ticketing is currently by voluntary arrangement, smartcards cannot force this as it requires legislation, but once the equipment is in place on all tendered bus services, with the tram integrated and continual additions to the card along with concessionary fares, the Citycard will become more attractive to the user and therefore also to other partners. It is not considered to be too great a problem to have 2 tickets, it is more important to check the discounted fare, which can be done with back office facilities
- It is not known how many Citycard holders travel daily on TrentBarton buses, when they are fully smartcarded there will be the facilities to offer more. A pilot study showed that the introduction of smartcards led to a 3% increase in bus travel evenly distributed among the housing stock in an area with a mix of residents where bus travel, although at a high percentage, had flat-lined. The increased awareness also led to a growth in the cash element. The pilot card was disposable and limited; it was not a conversion across from season tickets.

Bus season-ticket salary sacrifice scheme; GreenTravel2Work - Daniel Nugent, Business Development Director, P&MM Ltd. Lynn Griffin-Pearce, Nottingham City Council. Helen Humphries, HH Consulting

- P&MM work nationwide with both public and private sectors in the area of motivation and reward. This is the third annual contract the City Council has had with P&MM.
- The salary sacrifice scheme means tax and NI free travel for employers and employees; a significant financial benefit for the employees with low cost to the organisation. It can be used for both work and leisure travel, but is currently restricted to the bus network only due to legislation. The scheme has good green credentials all round, and P&MM smooth the path to make it easy to use from both employer and employee's perspectives.
- The employer can take ownership of the scheme once all sections involved are working coherently, making the smartcard as much of an advertisement for the company as a travel scheme. Keeping the set up and use easy for the employee ensures it will be used regularly and well advertised incentives schemes like WorksPerks encourage continued take-up among the employees. The public sector has traditionally been badly off for benefit salary enhancements but the City Council has won a number of awards for this scheme, becoming an attractive employer in the city.
- One delegate raised concerns that legislation in relation to maternity has changed and employers can no longer take the deductions for this scheme from statutory maternity pay. This has caused a number of employers, who at the moment have to absorb the costs, to pull out of the scheme. It is hoped that the Mendelsohn Review will clarify the situation.
- The salary sacrifice scheme does not need any additional staff to run. It is possible to project how many are likely to take up the scheme based on the size of the organisation; it may only amount to 3-5 new applications per month.
- There currently is no direct price comparison for individual travel plans with a cost analysis, but P&MM said that this could be considered. The scheme is annual with an annual contract, only a life-changing circumstance, for example a change of job or move from the area would allow withdrawal from the scheme.