

For information

Public Transport Fare Concession Scheme for the Elderly and Eligible Persons with Disabilities

Extension to Green Minibus Services by Phases

PURPOSE

This paper briefs Members on the inclusion of 5 more green minibus (GMB) operators involving a total of 16 routes in the Public Transport Fare Concession Scheme for the Elderly and Eligible Persons with Disabilities (the Scheme) starting from **20 September 2015**.

THE SCHEME

Present Position

2. The Scheme enables elderly people and eligible persons with disabilities¹ to travel on the general Mass Transit Railway (MTR) lines², franchised buses³ and ferries⁴ any time at a concessionary fare of \$2 per trip. It aims to help build a caring and inclusive society by encouraging these groups to participate more in community activities. The Scheme has been implemented on MTR, franchised buses and ferries in three phases since June 2012, August 2012 and March 2013 respectively. It has also been extended to eligible children with disabilities aged below 12 since May 2014.

3. To date, the total number of eligible beneficiaries under the Scheme is around 1.21 million, with about 1.07 million elderly people aged 65 or above and about 140 000 eligible persons with disabilities. The average daily passenger trips under the Scheme is at present around 897 700, with around 787 200 trips (88%) made by the elderly and the remaining 110 500 trips (12%) made by eligible persons with disabilities.

¹ Elderly people refer to those aged 65 or above, whereas eligible persons with disabilities are persons aged below 65 with severe disability as defined under the Disability Allowance receiving the allowance and those with 100% disabilities receiving Comprehensive Social Security Assistance in the same age group.

² Including all heavy rail services (excluding Airport Express, East Rail Line to and from Lo Wu, Lok Ma Chau and Racecourse Stations, and first-class service of East Rail Line), Light Rail services and MTR bus services.

³ Excluding "A" and "NA" routes to and from the airport, racecourse routes and routes of New Lantao Bus on a pre-booking and group hire services.

⁴ Designated ferry services excluding deluxe class.

Extension of the Scheme to GMBs by Phases

4. The Labour and Welfare Bureau and the Transport Department (TD) issued two papers to Members of the District Councils in March and June 2015 respectively setting out the details of extending the Scheme, by phases, to GMB services. To date, there are a total of 146 GMB operators (91% of the total) included in the Scheme, providing altogether 464 routes (91% of the total). Details of these routes are shown in **Annex I**.

5. TD has been closely liaising with the remaining GMB operators which are not yet included in the Scheme, encouraging and offering assistance to these operators, with a view to including them in the Scheme as and when they are ready.

6. There are now 5 more GMB operators willing and technically ready to join the Scheme as from 20 September 2015. These operators are providing 2 routes serving Kowloon and 14 routes serving the New Territories. Details of these 16 routes are shown in **Annex II**. Together with these 5 operators, there will be a total of 151 operators (94% of the total) joining the Scheme, providing altogether 480 routes (94% of the total).

7. For the remaining 9 operators (providing 28 routes), some of them have indicated interest in joining the Scheme and are carrying out the necessary preparatory work, while others still need some time to reach a consensus among different shareholders and/or to sort out their own financial, operation and management arrangements. The Government will continue to encourage and offer assistance to these operators, with a view to including them in the Scheme as and when they are ready.

8. The Government will continue distributing logos to those GMBs which have joined the Scheme for them to carry on their windscreens, next to their side doors and atop their Octopus readers. The GMB operators concerned will also put up posters at GMB termini to help publicise and promote the Scheme. Information on the GMB routes included under the Scheme will be disseminated to the 18 District Offices, elderly centres, and service centres for persons with disabilities, etc. for reference. Details are available on the dedicated website of the Scheme set up by the Labour and Welfare Bureau (http://www.lwb.gov.hk/fare_concession/index_e.html) and Transport Department (http://www.td.gov.hk/en/gov_public_transport_fare_concession/index.html). The Government will also arrange publicity, including issuing press release, broadcasting television and radio announcements, etc.

Government's Financial Commitment

9. The total Government expenditure on the Scheme will be around \$900 million in 2015-16. This includes, among others, the cost of reimbursing GMB operators under the Scheme which is estimated to be around \$200 million.

CONCLUSION

10. The Scheme has been well received by the community. The Government looks to Members of the District Council for their continuing support for the Scheme.

**Labour and Welfare Bureau
Transport Department**

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