

Uttlesford District Council

Full Council meeting 17 December 2024

Member Motion on the Bus Fare Cap

To be proposed by Councillor Sell and seconded by Councillor Dean:

This Council believes that:

- i. Buses are one of the most affordable and sustainable modes of public transport, especially in rural areas like Uttlesford. *Buses are heavily used by people who have felt the brunt of the cost of living crisis. Yet public funding to support bus fares in England is far lower than in countries across continental Europe.*
- ii. Buses are relied upon by key disadvantaged groups unable to afford a car like the low-income workers needing to get to work and the elderly needing access to medical appointments and other local services;
- iii. The £2 maximum single fare ticket, introduced nationally in 2021, has been fundamental to that growth by offering affordable travel to low-income groups and encouraging (re-) trial of improved bus services;
- iv. The Government has announced that the £2 cap on single fares will now be withdrawn from Jan 2025 and a £3 cap put in its place; a 50% increase in one go; and
- v. Increasing bus usage is a critical part of making transport in Uttlesford more accessible, especially for some disadvantaged groups, and more sustainable;
- vi. The £2 cap has had the biggest benefit for low income and disadvantaged groups like low income workers and elderly residents without access to a car;
- vii. The government subsidy per ticket required to retain a £2 single fare in rural areas like Uttlesford is small and outstanding value for money, helping both bus users and all residents in the district through helping tackle congestion and improve air quality;
- viii. The government's blanket increase from £2 to £3 for a capped single fare from January 2025 has not been properly thought through and poorly executed; and
- ix. A 50% increase from £2 to £3 in a single jump is far too aggressive.

This Council therefore is RESOLVED that:

- (i) The Leader of the Council should write to the Prime Minister expressing our concern that the increase from £2 to £3 for a single capped fare will undermine Uttlesford's attempts in promoting bus travel, negatively impact disadvantaged groups and have a negative effect on its efforts to tackle congestion and air quality; and
- (ii) The Council should seek to join forces with other like-minded Councils of all political colours to campaign to reverse the national Government's changes in policy and give higher priority to supporting bus services.