

Annex 2: Options considered

Option	Verdict	Advantages	Disadvantages
A: Maintain current pricing (do nothing)	Not recommended or viable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No disruption to users. • Supports upward trend in bus use. • Supports against cost of living pressures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unaffordable without significant additional investment. • Existing budget exhausted. • Concern over rising scheme costs.
B: Fare increase (in isolation)	Not recommended or viable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eases budget pressure and curbs the rising costs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in uptake and potential to reduce bus use. • Increased travel costs to users. • Will not prevent budget being exceeded this year, even if price rise significant. • Significant reputational risk to the Council.
C: Redirect existing funds and maintain current pricing	Not recommended	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No disruption to users. • Supports upward trend in bus use. • Supports against cost of living pressures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient to cover indicated funding shortfall. • Concern over rising scheme costs.
D: Hybrid approach (options B and C)	Recommended	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balanced approach which spreads the impact of the changes. • Limits the impact on users. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some reduction in uptake. • Increased travel costs to users in some cases. • Some reputational risk to the Council.

E: Temporary Scheme suspension (for the remainder of the financial year)	Not recommended	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enables financial stability in the short term. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Temporary loss of cost of living support to users. Does not support increase in bus use. Does not meet BSIP or LTCP aims. Significant reputational risk to the Council. Confusing for passengers
F: Scheme termination or commercial transition	Not recommended	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financially sustainable. Releases funds for other fares schemes or service improvement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loss of cost of living support to users. Does not support increase in bus use. Reduction in uptake if continued. Does not meet BSIP or LTCP aims. Significant reputational risk to the Council.