



Derby City Council

Council Cabinet
9 November 2016

Report of the Cabinet Member for Cohesion
and Integration

ITEM 10

Review of School Crossing Patrol Budget Savings

SUMMARY

- 1.1 As a result of the Government continuing to cut local government funding the Council has to make substantial changes to its budget and consider where services are statutory and therefore must be provided by law or where there is local discretion. Current budget proposals include for the removal of funding used to support the School Crossing Patrol (SCP) service by the end of this financial year reflecting the fact that this service is discretionary. The original intention behind the removal of the budget was to seek alternative funding sources rather than end this valuable service.
- 1.2 Initial engagement with directly interested parties including schools has shown that there is little opportunity for these sources to secure alternative long term funding of the SCP service. The savings planned for this financial year will not be achieved. It is therefore necessary to look for other funding opportunities.
- 1.3 This report sets out a proposal that seeks to achieve savings by making changes to the Concessionary Fares scheme. If achieved these savings would replace those previously identified as arising from the SCP service and the service would be retained.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 To authorise officers to undertake consultation with the public about potential changes to the concessionary fares scheme. The consultation will make it clear that it is the intention that any savings agreed will be used to support the retention of the SCP service.
- 2.2 To note that, following the completion of the consultation set out above, a further report be presented to Council Cabinet, setting out the implications of changes to the concessionary fares scheme and seeking a decision on any budget savings that are likely to arise.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The Council had resolved to withdraw £47,000 from the School Crossing Patrol service budget in 2016/17 and the remaining £100,000 in 2017/18. However, the Council Administration have recently indicated their wish to retain the School Crossing

Patrol service.

- 3.2 Following consultation regarding the proposed changes to concessionary fares, it will be possible for Cabinet to consider the savings that may be achieved and the implications of this proposed reduction in service. This will inform the Cabinet's decisions on budget savings, including the future of school crossing patrols. A Cabinet decision will also need to confirm changes to the concessionary fares scheme.



SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 4.1 Included in the Councils MTFP for 2016/17 and 2017/18 are savings related to the SCP service. The savings were included on the basis that while the service is considered important it is not a statutory service. The savings target for 2016/17 was indicated at £47k; with a further £100k targeted for 2017/18. The Council has engaged with schools to seek potential alternative funding for the service but this has failed to identify a long term solution. A possible alternative saving option has now been identified and is set out in the following paragraphs.
- 4.2 Earlier this year, Nottingham City Council announced that it would withdraw concessionary travel on the Trentbarton Red Arrow bus service. This service, which Nottingham City Council argued does not constitute a local bus service and is therefore outside the scope of the English National Concessionary Travel scheme, provides direct non-stop travel between Derby and Nottingham. In 2015/16, it is estimated that the cost to Derby City Council of subsidised travel on the Red Arrow was almost £300k.
- 4.3 The bus service was reconfigured in October 2015, so whole year-on-year cost comparisons are difficult. However, it is clear that the current concessionary fares budget for 2016/17 includes a provisional allowance for reimbursements associated with travel on the Red Arrow and that even allowing for passengers to transfer to other local bus services there is a potential £150k saving available should concessions be withdrawn and our arrangements brought in line with Nottingham's.
- 4.4 In considering removal of concessionary travel on the Red Arrow, which has already been introduced by Nottingham, we should also examine all other similar type bus services. The argument for treating the Red Arrow differently from local bus services is that it operates effectively as a direct link between two destinations and has no stops on route. It is also provided to a high standard, marketed as a bespoke service and is similar to intercity style coach services. The X38 bus service, operated jointly by Trentbarton and Arriva is another potentially similar style service; again providing a direct service between two locations.

- 4.5 Initial consultation with bus operators on the proposed changes to concessionary fares has commenced but It is also proposed that public consultation be undertaken, prior to any formal decisions being taken. If subsequently, cabinet were to decide to proceed, the proposal would be to then use these savings to continue to fund school crossing patrols. The consultation will specifically highlight the intention to withdraw concessions from bus services including the Red Arrow. It will highlight that alternative bus services do exist that would continue to allow people to travel, albeit on lower quality services. The results of the consultation will then be presented to Council Cabinet and a decision taken both in respect of the concessionary travel scheme and also school crossing patrols.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 This report considers a range of options.

This report has been approved by the following officers:

Legal officer Financial officer Human Resources officer Estates/Property officer Service Director(s) Other(s)	Olu Idowu, Head of Legal Services Amanda Fletcher, Head of Finance, Organisation and Governance David Gartside, Director of Strategic Partnerships, Planning and Transportation
For more information contact: Background papers:	David Dowbenko, Group Manager, Traffic & Transportation 01332 641754 dave.dowbenko@derby.gov.uk None

List of appendices:	Appendix 1 - Implications
----------------------------	---------------------------

IMPLICATIONS

Financial and Value for Money

- 1.1 There are no financial implications associated with carrying out the consultation. However once the outcome is known they will be more accurately defined and included in a formal cabinet report. Currently it appears that should the Council decide to end concessionary travel on either or both of the Red Arrow and the X38 bus services, savings in excess of £150k per annum would be achievable from 2017/18 onwards.
- 1.2 The delay in a decision in relation to savings from School Crossing Patrols has left a budget pressure of £47k in 2016/17. This pressure could be met from within Streetpride budget in 2016/17 as a one-off.

Legal

- 2.1 Provision of the school crossing service is not a statutory requirement and the responsibility for ensuring the safety of children travelling to and from school is ultimately a parental one. The Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (amended by the Transport Act 2000) enables a local authority at its discretion to appoint persons to undertake the functions of school crossing patrol operatives. This authorises them to stop traffic at designated points. School crossing patrol officers can only be appointed by Derby City Council or persons acting with its authority. Any decision to remove or change the service can only be implemented following meaningful consultation.
- 2.2 A mandatory bus concession for older and disabled people has been in place since 2001. The scheme has gradually been extended since its introduction and since April 2008 has provided free off-peak local bus travel to eligible older and disabled people anywhere in England. The Derbyshire 'Gold Card' scheme forms part of the national scheme and is enshrined in primary legislation through the Transport Act 2000 (as modified by the Concessionary Bus Travel Act 2007). Both the Red Arrow and X38 bus services are currently treated as 'eligible services' in terms of reimbursement of Gold Card fares by the City Council. This report aims to achieve savings by contesting that they should be exempted from the concessionary fares regime.
- 2.3 As with the proposals in relation to school crossing patrols, changes to concessionary fares including the potential exclusion of some bus services must be subject to meaningful consultation prior to any decisions being reached. Both proposals also impact on statutorily defined equality groups, and therefore require equality impact assessments of the implications of the proposals on those groups to be carried out. An equality impact assessment will be included with the further report to Cabinet detailing the consultation findings.

- 2.4 Members will need to consider the possible implications of any post-consultation decision to withdraw the funding for reimbursement of Gold Card fares on the Red Arrow and X38 bus services. In the event that either (or both) of the services could be judged not to be exempted from the concessionary fares legislation, the City and/or Derbyshire County Council (in its role as lead authority) might be vulnerable to a legal challenge in the event of such a decision.
- 2.5 As the original decision to cut school crossing patrols was taken by Full Council, any decision to reverse this cut will need to be taken by Cabinet.

Personnel

- 3.1 None

IT

- 4.1 None

Equalities Impact

- 5.1 Making changes to the concessionary fares scheme will impact on the young, the elderly and disabled people. Equality Impact Assessments will be undertaken prior to any formal decisions being taken and will be used to help understand and manage any potentially negative impacts.

Health and Safety

- 6.1 None

Environmental Sustainability

- 7.1 None

Property and Asset Management

- 8.1 None

Risk Management and Safeguarding

- 9.1 None

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

- 10.1 This report contributes to the priority outcome of 'making the most of our assets.'

