

ITEM 5

MINUTE EXTRACT

Time began 6.30pm

Time ended 7.37pm

COUNCIL CABINET 31 JULY 2007

Present: Councillor Williamson (Chair)
Councillors Banwait, Bolton, Graves, Hickson,
Nath, Roberts, Smalley and Williams

In attendance Councillor Jones

This record of decisions was published on 2 August 2007. The key decisions set out in this record will come into force and may be implemented on the expiry of five clear days unless a key decision is called in.

Key Decisions

38/07 Home to School Transport

The Council Cabinet considered a report on Home to School Transport and a report from the Children and Young People Commission. As part of the Council's budget strategy for 2007-10, each department made proposals to save 10% of its budget. In the budget agreed by Council on 1 March 2007, the savings included income from introducing charges for transport to faith schools, and increasing the fares charged on other discretionary school transport. A formal consultation took place between 22 March and 20 April 2007. Copies of the consultation document were distributed to all pupils in city schools as well as other interested bodies. In the light of the comments of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Commission it was proposed to undertake a further period of consultation in the autumn term.

Options Considered

1. It would be possible to make no changes to the policy. This would, however, require equivalent savings to be made elsewhere in the Council's budget, and would impact on other services to children, young people and the public.
2. It would be possible to extend the free transport entitlement to pupils attending schools for other reasons than faith. However, the Council did not have the financial resources to do this and the Education and Inspections Act 2006 was already extending the entitlement for low income families.
3. It would be possible to withdraw the transport provision completely. However, this was not supported in the consultation, as it would create difficulties for many families and may have further environmental impact as more pupils were transported by car.

4. It would be possible to introduce and increase charges for faith and other discretionary transport from September 2008 without further consultation. As concerns had been raised about the length of the initial consultation within term time it was considered appropriate to carry out a further period of consultation when the schools returned in the autumn term.

Decision

1. To note the comments of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Commission.
2. To increase fares for existing charged for services by 15% from September 2007.
3. To confirm that those pupils currently receiving free transport to faith schools will continue to do so until they leave statutory education or change school.
4. To carry out a further period of consultation when the schools return for the autumn term.

Reasons

1. There was a continuing need for the Council to identify and implement budget savings.
2. Concerns had been raised about the length of consultation within term time.

(Councillor Smalley requested that his vote against the decision be recorded.)

EXTRACT ENDS