

Report sponsor: Andy Smith, Strategic Director
for Peoples Services

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Children's Integrated Commissioning

Post 16-19 Home to School Travel Assistance Consultation

Purpose

- 1.1 To provide the Children and Young People (CYP) Scrutiny Review Board information regarding the Council's 11 week public consultation on a proposal which may change the way the Council currently provides discretionary travel assistance to eligible sixth form students, launched on Friday 30 September 2022.
- 1.2 To note that the proposal set out within the consultation document, and attached as Appendix 1 of this report is, instead of the Council arranging taxis and minibuses or paying fuel reimbursement, the Council proposes to replace them with Personal Travel Budget for all eligible sixth form learners.
- 1.3 The proposal will be supported by a new and enriched Independent Travel Training service to help and support more young people become independent travellers.
- 1.4 It is important to note that the proposal does not impact on, or change the eligibility criteria set out in section 5 of the Home to School Travel Assistance Policy 2022-23 [2022-2023 Policy](#).
- 1.5 To note that if the proposal is agreed, a new Post 16-19 Transport Policy Statement would be co-produced and be published by the Council by 31 March 2023, with possible changes taking effect from September 2023.

Recommendations

- 2.1 To note the proposed change to Post 16 – 16 discretionary home to school travel assistance public consultation launched on 30 September 2022 and will close on 12 December 2022.
- 2.2 To note, a communication bulletin was circulated to all stakeholders on 30 September 2022 as notice of the consultation on the proposed changes. See Appendix 2 of this report from complete circulation list.
- 2.3 To highlight current high-cost Post 16 – 19 Discretionary Home to School travel assistance against required Council budget savings.

Reasons

- 3.1 The Education Act 1996 sets out the local authorities' responsibilities with regard to transport for 16 – 19-year-olds, giving Council's discretion to determine what transport and financial support is necessary to facilitate attendance for all persons of sixth form

age receiving education or training. The sixth form duty also includes those under 25's with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) who started their course before their 19th birthday.

- 3.2 Legislation, therefore, gives local authorities discretion to determine what transport and financial assistance is necessary to facilitate young people's attendance at their education and/or training setting. Specifically, that local authorities must exercise their power to provide transport or financial support reasonably, considering all relevant matters.
- 3.3 The introduction of personal travel budgets is consistent with approaches taken by other Local Authorities.
- 3.4 Outcomes for young people from personal travel budgets and independent travel training reach far beyond the bus journey to and from school or college, into lifelong learning opportunities which include taking care of personal belongings, finances and, the ability and confidence to make informed choices.
- 3.5 The Council is currently experiencing significant financial challenges, the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) from 2022/23 to 2024/25 included £28.437m of new additional costs which means that the Council needs to make £16.767m of savings over the next three years. Unfortunately, this means making difficult decisions about services in all areas of the Council's work.
- 3.6 Over recent years there has been a 27% increase in the number of pupils eligible for travel assistance. The Council's overall home to school travel assistance expenditure for 2021-22 financial year was £5.5m and is forecast to increase by another £2.5m to £8.0m by the end of March 2023 because of rapidly rising demand in eligible travel assistance applications, together with increasing costs from transport operators.
- 3.7 The overall numbers of children and young people aged 0-25 eligible for home to school travel assistance is also forecast to increase by at least 16% over the next two years. This means that home to school travel assistance costs could also continue to increase by a further £1.0m by the end of March 2024.
- 3.8 The Council's overall Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) was approved at full Council on 28 February 2022. The budget setting process requires a reduction in demand and costs across a range of Council services, including the Home to School Travel Service.

Supporting information

- 4.1 The Council's current travel assistance offer for eligible sixth form learners, mainly consists of providing single occupancy, or shared taxis. It is believed that this could be a barrier for some young people who may otherwise be able to access a wide range of opportunities available to support them on their journey into adulthood, employment and beyond. The Council currently arranges taxis and minibuses for 181 eligible sixth form learners at a cost of £1.3m.
- 4.2 Transport provided by taxi or minibus would only be considered in exceptional circumstances. For example, young people who have significant medical needs where they must travel with specialist professional support and/or medical equipment.

- 4.3 A wide-ranging Equalities Impact Assessment will also be carried out with young people and their families, partner organisations and stakeholders throughout the consultation so that we can understand how our proposals may affect them.
- 4.4 It is considered that providing personal travel budgets for eligible sixth formers could also help to shape and reposition expectations for when young people reach 19 – 25 years of age, thereby improving independence and reducing budget pressures in the 19 – 25 age group.
- 4.5 It is proposed that the Council's enriched independent travel training service will be led by Transition 2, the Council's 18-25 learning facility for young with disabilities who provide bespoke transition programmes.
- 4.6 The proposed change to Post 16 – 16 discretionary home to school travel assistance public consultation launched on 30 September 2022 and will close on 12 December 2022. The outcome of this extensive consultation will be presented to Council Cabinet for consideration in February 2023.

Public/stakeholder engagement

- 5.1 The Council is absolutely committed to listening and hearing from parents, carers, and young people about their experiences of travel to school and college, their aspirations for independence and integration and what they think will help support them.
- 5.3 Participation and engagement meetings have been scheduled at 13 with schools, colleges, and the voluntary sector, specifically designed for and targeted to reach young people who may be directly affected by the proposal.
- 5.4 In addition to the participation and engagement meetings detailed in paragraph 5.3 of this report, three public consultation events to discuss the proposals have also been scheduled. The dates and venues for the public consultation events are:
- Wednesday 19 October 2022 from 10am – 11:30am – The Council House
 - Wednesday 19 October 2022 from 12:30pm – 2pm – The Council House (BSL supported meeting)
 - Thursday 20 October 6:30pm – 8pm – The Council House
- 5.5 A wide-ranging Equalities Impact Assessment will also be carried out with young people and their families, partner organisations and stakeholders throughout the consultation so that we can understand how our proposals may affect them.

Other options

- 6.1 No other options have been considered.

Financial and value for money issues

- 7.1 Derby City Council is currently experiencing significant financial challenges, the Medium Term Financial Plan from 2022/23 to 2024/25 included £28.437m of new additional costs which means that the Council needs to make £16.767m of savings over the next three years. Unfortunately, this means making difficult decisions about services in all areas of the Council's work.

- 7.2 It is considered that providing personal travel budgets for eligible sixth formers could also help to shape and reposition expectations for when young people reach 19 – 25 years of age, thereby improving independence and reducing budget pressures in the 19 – 25 age group.

Legal implications

- 8.1 It is important to note that the proposal does not impact on, or change the eligibility criteria set out in section 5 of the Home to School Travel Assistance Policy 2022-23 [2022-2023 Policy](#).
- 8.2 The Education Act 1996 places duties on local authorities regarding travel arrangements for children of compulsory school age (5-16 years). The Act also sets out local authorities' responsibilities with regard to transport for 16-19 year olds, giving Councils discretion to determine what transport and financial support is necessary to facilitate attendance for all persons of sixth form age receiving education or training. The sixth form duty also includes those under 25's with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) who started their course before their 19th birthday.
- 8.3 Legislation recognises that a local response to transport arrangements is important to enable young people's participation in education and training and, as such, the flexibility of the extent of an individual policy lies with individual local authorities.
- 8.4 Legislation, therefore, gives local authorities discretion to determine what transport and financial assistance is necessary to facilitate young people's attendance at their education and/or training setting. Specifically, that local authorities must exercise their power to provide transport or financial support reasonably, considering all relevant matters.

Climate implications

- 9.1 Post-16-19 learners are encouraged to use sustainable travel, such as walking and cycling, to travel to and from education providers in and around the city. Where this is not a practical option, learners are advised to use public transport services.

Other significant implications

- 10.1 Should the Council agree the introduction of a Personal Travel Budget there is a very real risk of legal challenge at Judicial Review. Legal advice has been sought prior to the launch of the consultation and will continue throughout the project.
- 10.2 With such a stepped change in travel assistance for Post 16-19 learners, there is no capacity in the Home to School Travel Team to deal with the expected high level increase in appeals.

This report has been approved by the following people:

Role	Name	Date of sign-off
Legal	N/A	
Finance	N/A	
Service Director(s)	Gurmail Nizzer, Director for Children's Integrated Commissioning	03/10/2022
Report sponsor	Andy Smith, Strategic Director for People Services	03/10/2022
Other(s)		

Background papers:	None
List of appendices:	Appendix 1 – Post 16-19 Home to School Travel Consultation document Appendix 2 – Consultation circulation list

Appendix 1



Home to School
Transport.pdf



Home to School
Transport Easy Read.ç

Appendix 2



Circulation list
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