

## **School Transport**

### **SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report presents the results of the consultation exercise recently carried out regarding revised charges for home to school transport, to take effect from September 2008.
- 1.2 In order to meet a number of significant new budget pressures, proposals to change the charging policy for transport to faith schools and to increase all other home to school transport charges have been suggested. A full consultation process has been carried out, the results of which are contained in this report at Appendix 2.
- 1.3 Subject to any issues raised at the meeting, I support the following recommendations.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 To note the results of the latest school transport consultation exercise.
- 2.2 To approve the proposed charges as detailed in the report for implementation from September 2008.

### **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 The City Council has to make budget savings over the next three years to meet a number of significant new pressures. The proposals for home to school transport are designed to assist in that budget process. Not approving the revised proposals would not produce the budget savings planned for in the Council's budget strategy for 2008/09 and beyond, and would require alternative savings to be made from elsewhere.
- 3.2 The Council consulted on prior proposals in the spring of 2007. A number of concerns were raised in response to the previous consultation. The rerun of that consultation and these latest proposals attempt to address those concerns, wherever possible, against the difficult financial background outlined above. The majority of respondents have again confirmed that they do want the Council to continue to provide both discretionary and faith school transport.

## **School Transport**

### **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

1.1 The City Council has to make budget savings over the next three years to address a number of significant new pressures. As part of these savings, the Council consulted earlier in the year on proposals to change the charging policy for transport to faith schools and to increase all other home to school transport charges. The latter apply to subsidised transport, which tends to be provided in areas where pupils have difficulty getting a direct commercial bus service to take them to school.

1.2 A number of general concerns emerged from respondents to the previous consultation:

- the cost for each pupil was considered too high, ranging from £350 to £500 for faith pupils and £320 for other discretionary non-faith pupils
- the maximum charge for each household was considered to be set at too high a level (capped at £1000) and unaffordable for larger households
- there were not enough opportunities to pay the advance charges (a maximum of two payments a year was previously proposed)
- the timescale for the consultation was thought to be insufficient.

Details of the responses received to the previous consultation are attached at Appendix 2.

1.3 In response to these concerns, set against the continued need to make savings in light of the financial situation facing the Council, a revised consultation process has been carried out on amended proposals, which are outlined below.

- To introduce standard fares of £290 each year for primary age pupils and £350 each year for secondary age pupils who either:
  - live within walking distance of their nearest suitable school, or
  - who attend a faith school which is not their nearest suitable school.
- To introduce larger discounts for households with more than one child up to age 16 travelling to school. Discounts to be 10% of the full charge for

the second child, 20% for the third child and any additional children, within a maximum charge for each household of £850 each year.

- To increase the number of payments options as follows:
  - a) one payment, by cash, cheque or postal order in July
  - b) two payments, one in July and one in February, by cash, cheque or postal order, if possible direct to Roman House Local Housing Office
  - c) one payment by cheque in July, followed by seven monthly direct debit payments between September and March.
- For faith pupils, to apply charges only for those starting at a faith school from September 2008. Other discretionary charges will apply to all pupils from that date.

1.4 Although the proposed new advance charges for discretionary home to school transport will not cover the full cost of providing the transport, they still offer a number of advantages, including:

- the bus network will be maintained and pupils will still be able to travel safely and directly to school
- the introduction of a 'fare for all' will avoid the complexity of calculating different fares on different routes
- advance charging will provide more certainty of obtaining fares for travel
- some limited financial savings will be achieved, which will help to protect other council services.

1.5 There are also disadvantages applying to both discretionary and faith school transport:

- parents may choose to take their children to school by car, rather than paying, thereby having a negative impact upon congestion
- the financial impact for families who will have to pay (more) for their child's transport from September 2008.

#### 1.6 **Consultation**

The council has consulted with the following:

- parents of all pupils attending schools in Derby
- parents of children who live in Derby but who attend faith schools outside the city
- governors and headteachers of all Derby schools and neighbouring faith schools
- the Catholic diocesan education authority for Derby
- neighbouring local authorities

- the Confederation of Passenger Transport.

1.7 The closing date for responses was 3 December 2007 and an analysis has been carried out, alongside responses received from the initial consultation exercise in March/April.

1.8 The results of the latest consultation are attached as Appendix 2.

## **OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 2 A further reduced charge for both discretionary and faith transport would not produce any savings in view of the additional administrative costs incurred, particularly in relation to multiple payments.

|                                      |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|
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| <b>Background papers:</b>            | School Transport – Your Views Questionnaire                           |
| <b>List of appendices:</b>           | 1. Implications<br>2. Summary of Consultation Responses – Spring 2007 |

|                     |
|---------------------|
| <b>IMPLICATIONS</b> |
|---------------------|

**Financial**

- 1.1 The Council currently spends around £378,000, or £645 per child, every year to transport pupils free of charge to faith schools on supported school bus services.
- 1.2 In addition, around £450,000, or £475 per child, is spent every year providing subsidised school transport for pupils up to age 16 who attend their nearest suitable or faith school, but who live within walking distance of that school.
- 1.3 Set against these costs, the proposals are estimated to generate income of approximately £20,000 in the 2008/9 financial year, £35,000 in 2009/10 and approximately £180k a year once the faith charges apply to all year groups. It should be noted that the revised proposals will not generate the level of savings anticipated in the Council's three-year indicative budget. These amounted to £120,000 in 2008/09, leaving a shortfall of £100,000.

**Legal**

- 2 There are no direct legal implications for these proposals as they relate to discretionary transport.

**Personnel**

- 3 An additional staffing resource will be needed to implement these proposals, which may impact upon the projected savings. However, this may be linked to grant funding received for the additional responsibilities relating to transport in the Education and Inspections Act.

**Equalities Impact**

- 4.1 The current policy benefits pupils attending faith schools as free transport is not available to those who wish to attend schools for other reasons, such as their specialism.
- 4.2 The Education and Inspections Act 2006 increases entitlement to free transport for pupils whose families are entitled to free school meals or the maximum level of working tax credit. However, those on low incomes just above the threshold may find difficulty in affording increased or new charges.

**Corporate Objectives and Priorities for Change**

- 5 One of the Council's priorities for 2007-10 is "to give you excellent service and value for money". The income generated by this proposal enables other services to children, young people and the public to be maintained and developed.

## Summary of latest consultation responses

In total there were 824 responses to this survey compared to 721 in the spring consultation. Of these 428 (52%) had also responded to the spring 2007 consultation.

Out of the 811 respondents who indicated where they live, 767 live in Derby City and 44 live outside Derby City. As with the previous consultation, all respondent's views are presented in the results.

**Table 1 Respondent Type** Responses were received from...

|  | n   | %    |
|--|-----|------|
| Teacher / Head teacher   | 20  | 2.4  |
| School Governor  | 40  | 4.9  |
| Parent / Carer of a pupil that attends a faith school on faith grounds | 222 | 27.2 |
| Parent / Carer of pupil that attends their nearest suitable school     | 376 | 46.0 |
| Parent / Carer of a pupil that attends a preferred school              | 212 | 25.9 |
| Other  | 25  | 3.1  |

Some respondents selected more than one response to this question. In total 817 respondents completed this question, 7 did not give a response.

Where respondents selected 'other', further details given included; taxi driver, student, bursar, babysitter, parent / carer of a child attending the most appropriate special needs school, parent with one child still at primary school, nearest suitable nursery, parent of pupils attending their nearest available school, parent of a pupil attending a faith school not on faith grounds, parent who's child attends their second choice school, a parent of a pupil who attends their catchment area school and not their nearest suitable school, a parent who's children attend a school but not the nearest.

Of the 40 School Governors responding to the survey 3 were responding on behalf of their school's governing body.

**Table 2 Travel Assistance Currently Received**

|  | n   | %    |
|--|-----|------|
| Free transport to a faith school                     | 89  | 11.0 |
| Free transport to a non-faith school                 | 25  | 3.1  |
| Transport to a faith school on payment of a fare     | 90  | 11.1 |
| Transport to a non-faith school on payment of a fare | 27  | 3.3  |
| No travel assistance received                        | 365 | 45.0 |
| Not applicable                                       | 199 | 24.5 |
| Other  | 53  | 6.5  |

Some respondents selected more than one response to this question. In total 811 respondents completed this question, 13 did not give a response.

Where respondents selected 'other', further details given included; none (5), transport to a special school (3). From the majority of respondents selecting 'other' a description of how they travel to school was given – which included walking (25), by car including taxi (5), bus (3).

**Table 3 Do you think we should continue to provide school buses to...**

|                           | Yes |      | No  |      | Don't know |      | Total |       |
|---------------------------|-----|------|-----|------|------------|------|-------|-------|
|                           | n   | %    | n   | %    | n          | %    | n     | %     |
| faith schools?            | 479 | 59.5 | 206 | 25.6 | 120        | 14.9 | 805   | 100.0 |
| nearest suitable schools? | 563 | 72.0 | 126 | 16.1 | 93         | 11.9 | 782   | 100.0 |

**Table 4 Taking into account the Council's need to secure budgetary savings, please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements**

|   | Agree |      | Neither agree nor disagree |      | Disagree |      | Total |       |
|---|-------|------|----------------------------|------|----------|------|-------|-------|
|   | n     | %    | n                          | %    | n        | %    | n     | %     |
| The proposed changes for each child are reasonable  | 232   | 29.0 | 238                        | 29.8 | 329      | 41.2 | 799   | 100.0 |
| The maximum charge for each household is reasonable | 205   | 25.8 | 237                        | 29.8 | 353      | 44.4 | 795   | 100.0 |
| The range of payment options is reasonable          | 310   | 38.9 | 239                        | 30.0 | 248      | 31.1 | 797   | 100.0 |

**Table 5 Which of the available payment options are you most likely to choose?**

|  | n          | %           |
|--|------------|-------------|
| One payment by cash, cheque or postal order in July  | 58         | 11.0        |
| Two payments, one in July and one in February, by cash, cheque or postal order                             | 111        | 21.1        |
| One payment by cheque in July, followed by seven monthly direct debit payments between September and March | 356        | 67.8        |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>525</b> | <b>99.9</b> |

**Table 6 If your child/ren use the school bus and pay a fare, do you think they will continue to use the bus from September 2008 when you will have to pay in advance and the charges increase?**

|                | n          | %           |
|----------------|------------|-------------|
| Yes            | 77         | 24.4        |
| No             | 151        | 47.9        |
| Don't know     | 87         | 27.6        |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>315</b> | <b>99.9</b> |
| Not applicable | 445        | -           |

**Table 7 If your children will stop using the school bus service, how will they travel to school?**

|                | n   | %    |
|----------------|-----|------|
| Walk           | 31  | 20.5 |
| Bicycle        | 8   | 5.3  |
| Car            | 112 | 74.2 |
| Other          | 20  | 13.2 |
| Not applicable | 4   | 2.6  |

This table shows the responses given by the 151 respondents who said 'no' when asked if their child/ren would continue to use the bus from September 2008. Some respondents selected more than one response to this question.

Where respondents selected 'other', further details given included; by using public transport buses (11), keeping children at home (4), may need to move school (4), walk (2), car or car pool / sharing (2), don't know (3).

**Table 8 Whether or not respondents agree that we should continue to provide school buses to faith schools by respondent type.**

|  | Yes |      | No  |      | Don't know |      | Total |       |
|--|-----|------|-----|------|------------|------|-------|-------|
|  | n   | %    | n   | %    | n          | %    | n     | %     |
| Teacher / Head teacher   | 16  | 80.0 | 4   | 20.0 | 0          | 0.0  | 20    | 100.0 |
| School Governor  | 21  | 52.5 | 15  | 37.5 | 4          | 10.0 | 40    | 100.0 |
| Parent / Carer of a pupil that attends a faith school on faith grounds | 212 | 95.9 | 4   | 1.8  | 5          | 2.3  | 221   | 100.0 |
| Parent / Carer of pupil that attends their nearest suitable school     | 142 | 39.1 | 150 | 41.3 | 71         | 19.6 | 363   | 100.0 |
| Parent / Carer of a pupil that attends a preferred school              | 109 | 53.2 | 53  | 25.9 | 43         | 21.0 | 205   | 100.0 |
| Other  | 13  | 52.0 | 7   | 28.0 | 5          | 20.0 | 25    | 100.0 |

**Table 9 Whether or not respondents agree that we should continue to provide school buses to nearest suitable schools by respondent type.**

|  | Yes |      | No |      | Don't know |      | Total |       |
|--|-----|------|----|------|------------|------|-------|-------|
|  | n   | %    | n  | %    | n          | %    | n     | %     |
| Teacher / Head teacher   | 17  | 89.5 | 2  | 10.5 | 0          | 0.0  | 19    | 100.0 |
| School Governor  | 25  | 67.6 | 7  | 18.9 | 5          | 13.5 | 37    | 100.0 |
| Parent / Carer of a pupil that attends a faith school on faith grounds | 157 | 79.7 | 18 | 9.1  | 22         | 11.2 | 197   | 100.0 |
| Parent / Carer of pupil that attends their nearest suitable school     | 258 | 70.1 | 74 | 20.1 | 36         | 9.8  | 368   | 100.0 |
| Parent / Carer of a pupil that attends a preferred school              | 139 | 67.8 | 31 | 15.1 | 35         | 17.1 | 205   | 100.0 |
| Other  | 15  | 65.2 | 5  | 21.7 | 3          | 13.0 | 23    | 100.0 |



**Table 10 Whether or not respondents agree that we should continue to provide school buses to faith schools by current travel assistance.**

|  | Yes |      | No  |      | Don't know |      | Total |       |
|--|-----|------|-----|------|------------|------|-------|-------|
|  | n   | %    | n   | %    | n          | %    | n     | %     |
| Free transport to a faith school                     | 87  | 97.8 | 1   | 1.1  | 1          | 1.1  | 89    | 100.0 |
| Free transport to a non-faith school                 | 8   | 33.3 | 7   | 29.2 | 9          | 37.5 | 24    | 100.0 |
| Transport to a faith school on payment of a fare     | 85  | 95.5 | 1   | 1.1  | 3          | 3.4  | 89    | 100.0 |
| Transport to a non-faith school on payment of a fare | 12  | 44.4 | 6   | 22.2 | 9          | 33.3 | 27    | 100.0 |
| No travel assistance received                        | 173 | 48.5 | 129 | 36.1 | 55         | 15.4 | 357   | 100.0 |
| Not applicable                                       | 104 | 54.2 | 53  | 27.6 | 35         | 18.2 | 192   | 100.0 |
| Other  | 27  | 51.9 | 14  | 26.9 | 11         | 21.2 | 52    | 100.0 |

**Table 11 Whether or not respondents agree that we should continue to provide school buses to nearest suitable school by current travel assistance.**

|  | Yes |      | No |      | Don't know |      | Total |       |
|--|-----|------|----|------|------------|------|-------|-------|
|  | n   | %    | n  | %    | n          | %    | n     | %     |
| Free transport to a faith school                     | 59  | 76.6 | 9  | 11.7 | 9          | 11.7 | 77    | 100.0 |
| Free transport to a non-faith school                 | 23  | 92.0 | 0  | 0.0  | 2          | 8.0  | 25    | 100.0 |
| Transport to a faith school on payment of a fare     | 60  | 75.0 | 5  | 6.3  | 15         | 18.8 | 80    | 100.0 |
| Transport to a non-faith school on payment of a fare | 21  | 77.8 | 1  | 3.7  | 5          | 18.5 | 27    | 100.0 |
| No travel assistance received                        | 239 | 68.1 | 75 | 21.4 | 37         | 10.5 | 351   | 100.0 |
| Not applicable                                       | 137 | 72.5 | 33 | 17.5 | 19         | 10.1 | 189   | 100.0 |
| Other  | 41  | 77.4 | 7  | 13.2 | 5          | 9.4  | 53    | 100.0 |

**Table 12 Agreement or disagreement that the proposed charges for each child are reasonable by respondent type.**

|  | Agree |      | Neither agree nor disagree |      | Disagree |      | Total |       |
|--|-------|------|----------------------------|------|----------|------|-------|-------|
|  | n     | %    | n                          | %    | n        | %    | n     | %     |
| Teacher / Head teacher   | 5     | 25.0 | 3                          | 15.0 | 12       | 60.0 | 20    | 100.0 |
| School Governor  | 16    | 41.0 | 6                          | 15.4 | 17       | 43.6 | 39    | 100.0 |
| Parent / Carer of a pupil that attends a faith school on faith grounds | 31    | 14.2 | 24                         | 11.0 | 163      | 74.8 | 218   | 100.0 |
| Parent / Carer of pupil that attends their nearest suitable school     | 141   | 39.0 | 132                        | 36.5 | 89       | 24.6 | 362   | 100.0 |
| Parent / Carer of a pupil that attends a preferred school              | 60    | 29.3 | 81                         | 39.5 | 64       | 31.2 | 205   | 100.0 |
| Other  | 10    | 41.7 | 5                          | 20.8 | 9        | 37.5 | 24    | 100.0 |

**Table 13 Agreement or disagreement that the maximum charge for each household is reasonable by respondent type.**

|  | Agree |      | Neither agree nor disagree |      | Disagree |      | Total |       |
|--|-------|------|----------------------------|------|----------|------|-------|-------|
|  | n     | %    | n                          | %    | n        | %    | n     | %     |
| Teacher / Head teacher   | 5     | 25.0 | 2                          | 10.0 | 13       | 65.0 | 20    | 100.0 |
| School Governor  | 13    | 34.2 | 5                          | 13.2 | 20       | 52.6 | 38    | 100.0 |
| Parent / Carer of a pupil that attends a faith school on faith grounds | 23    | 10.6 | 27                         | 12.4 | 167      | 77.0 | 217   | 100.0 |
| Parent / Carer of pupil that attends their nearest suitable school     | 132   | 36.6 | 122                        | 33.8 | 107      | 29.6 | 361   | 100.0 |
| Parent / Care of a pupil that attends a preferred school               | 52    | 25.5 | 85                         | 41.7 | 67       | 32.8 | 204   | 100.0 |
| Other  | 6     | 25.0 | 8                          | 33.3 | 10       | 41.7 | 24    | 100.0 |
| <b>Total</b>   |       |      |                            |      |          |      |       |       |

**Table 14 Agreement or disagreement that the range of payment options is reasonable by respondent type.**

|  | Agree |      | Neither agree nor disagree |      | Disagree |      | Total |       |
|--|-------|------|----------------------------|------|----------|------|-------|-------|
|  | n     | %    | n                          | %    | n        | %    | n     | %     |
| Teacher / Head teacher   | 5     | 25.0 | 5                          | 25.0 | 10       | 50.0 | 20    | 100.0 |
| School Governor  | 16    | 42.1 | 8                          | 21.1 | 14       | 36.8 | 38    | 100.0 |
| Parent / Carer of a pupil that attends a faith school on faith grounds | 60    | 27.5 | 28                         | 12.8 | 130      | 59.6 | 218   | 100.0 |
| Parent / Carer of pupil that attends their nearest suitable school     | 176   | 48.8 | 123                        | 34.1 | 62       | 17.2 | 361   | 100.0 |
| Parent / Care of a pupil that attends a preferred school               | 78    | 38.0 | 85                         | 41.5 | 42       | 20.5 | 205   | 100.0 |
| Other  | 7     | 29.2 | 8                          | 33.3 | 9        | 37.5 | 24    | 100.0 |

**Table 15 Agreement or disagreement that the proposed charges for each child are reasonable by current travel assistance.**

|  | Agree |      | Neither agree nor disagree |      | Disagree |      | Total |       |
|--|-------|------|----------------------------|------|----------|------|-------|-------|
|  | n     | %    | n                          | %    | n        | %    | n     | %     |
| Free transport to a faith school                     | 10    | 11.5 | 6                          | 6.9  | 71       | 81.6 | 87    | 100.0 |
| Free transport to a non-faith school                 | 6     | 25.0 | 6                          | 25.0 | 12       | 50.0 | 24    | 100.0 |
| Transport to a faith school on payment of a fare     | 15    | 16.9 | 14                         | 15.7 | 60       | 67.4 | 89    | 100.0 |
| Transport to a non-faith school on payment of a fare | 5     | 20.0 | 5                          | 20.0 | 15       | 60.0 | 25    | 100.0 |
| No travel assistance received                        | 118   | 33.1 | 129                        | 36.2 | 109      | 30.6 | 356   | 100.0 |
| Not applicable                                       | 73    | 37.6 | 65                         | 33.5 | 56       | 28.9 | 194   | 100.0 |
| Other  | 12    | 23.5 | 23                         | 45.1 | 16       | 31.4 | 51    | 100.0 |

**Table 16 Agreement or disagreement that the maximum charge for each household is reasonable by current travel assistance.**

|  | Agree |      | Neither agree nor disagree |      | Disagree |      | Total |       |
|--|-------|------|----------------------------|------|----------|------|-------|-------|
|  | n     | %    | n                          | %    | n        | %    | n     | %     |
| Free transport to a faith school                     | 8     | 9.2  | 7                          | 8.0  | 72       | 82.8 | 87    | 100.0 |
| Free transport to a non-faith school                 | 5     | 20.8 | 6                          | 25.0 | 13       | 54.2 | 24    | 100.0 |
| Transport to a faith school on payment of a fare     | 9     | 10.3 | 18                         | 20.7 | 60       | 69.0 | 87    | 100.0 |
| Transport to a non-faith school on payment of a fare | 4     | 16.0 | 7                          | 28.0 | 14       | 56.0 | 25    | 100.0 |
| No travel assistance received                        | 107   | 30.0 | 121                        | 33.9 | 129      | 36.1 | 357   | 100.0 |
| Not applicable                                       | 65    | 33.7 | 62                         | 32.1 | 66       | 34.2 | 193   | 100.0 |
| Other  | 14    | 28.0 | 20                         | 40.0 | 16       | 32.0 | 50    | 100.0 |

**Table 17 Agreement or disagreement that the range of payment options is reasonable by current travel assistance.**

|  | Agree |      | Neither agree nor disagree |      | Disagree |      | Total |       |
|--|-------|------|----------------------------|------|----------|------|-------|-------|
|  | n     | %    | n                          | %    | n        | %    | n     | %     |
| Free transport to a faith school                     | 21    | 24.1 | 10                         | 11.5 | 56       | 64.4 | 87    | 100.0 |
| Free transport to a non-faith school                 | 8     | 33.3 | 7                          | 29.2 | 9        | 37.5 | 24    | 100.0 |
| Transport to a faith school on payment of a fare     | 22    | 25.0 | 17                         | 19.3 | 49       | 55.7 | 88    | 100.0 |
| Transport to a non-faith school on payment of a fare | 6     | 24.0 | 6                          | 24.0 | 13       | 52.0 | 25    | 100.0 |
| No travel assistance received                        | 156   | 43.6 | 120                        | 33.5 | 82       | 22.9 | 358   | 100.0 |
| Not applicable                                       | 95    | 48.7 | 61                         | 31.3 | 39       | 20.0 | 195   | 100.0 |
| Other  | 17    | 34.7 | 25                         | 51.0 | 7        | 14.3 | 49    | 100.0 |

Respondents were asked if they would like to add any other comments. In total 412 comments were received, many were quite detailed and covered more than one issue.

**The most frequent issues raised were:**

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Expensive charges causing financial issues for families  | 95 |
| Would encourage parents to transport their children to school by car   | 58 |
| If parents decide to send their child/ren to a faith or preferred school, not in walking distance of home, they should pay travel costs. Many added that travel to special schools should be subsidised  | 52 |
| Congestion issues  | 42 |
| Freedom of choice – limited by these proposals   | 42 |
| Unable to or disagree with payment in advance  | 41 |
| Child safety issues  | 41 |
| Environmental issues   | 40 |
| Provide free / subsidised or means tested bus service. In addition, 6 respondents stated generally that school buses should be provided  | 32 |
| Discrimination / being penalised for faith   | 29 |
| Payment options / paying in advance does not take into account trips not taken due to after school activities, varying travel arrangements and time spent off sick   | 28 |
| Would prefer to pay more frequently  | 24 |
| Council should look for savings in other areas   | 24 |
| Financial impact on families with more than one child  | 21 |
| Proposed costs higher than other Local Authorities and / or service bus providers  | 20 |
| Policy for all schools / pupils whether faith or non faith should be same  | 19 |
| Current bus service poor / unsafe / unreliable – improvements would be expected with increased fares   | 17 |
| Perceive that Council Tax payments should be sufficient to cover costs   | 13 |
| Parents of non-faith pupils felt subsidies for faith pupils unfair   | 8  |
| Parents at faith schools already contribute 10% of capital costs   | 7  |
| Suggestions and miscellaneous comments – including encouraging other sustainable methods of travel to school, encourage the use of local schools, proposals will penalise hard working families with incomes just above benefit thresholds, a lack of clarity as to what families in receipt of benefits will be charged and an issue of there being only one Roman Catholic secondary school in Derby. One comment questioned whether a contract exists for free bus travel to St Benedict's from when it became the only Roman Catholic school for the area. One respondent felt that the proposals were contrary to the 1944 Education Act, Children's Act and the Education Act 2005 and one respondent questioned whether legally a change of this sort can only be brought in if a city wide travel plan is consulted on and put in place. |    |

## Summary of spring term consultation responses

721 people responded to this questionnaire. Of these:

|   | Number of responses | % of total |
|---|---------------------|------------|
| Teacher/ Head teacher   | 14                  | 2.0        |
| Governor  | 21                  | 3.0        |
| Parent /Carer of a pupil that attends a faith school on faith grounds | 211                 | 30.3       |
| Parent/Carer of pupil that attends their nearest suitable school      | 315                 | 45.3       |
| Parent/Care of a pupil that attends a preferred school                | 114                 | 16.4       |
| Other   | 21                  | 3.0        |
| Total   | 696                 | 100.0      |
| Did not complete this question  | 25                  |            |

Only 21 people lived outside Derby and of these 14 were parents of children at their nearest suitable school and 3 were parents of children at a faith school. Although these few responses came from people who do not pay Derby Council Tax they are clearly users of Derby schools and/or school bus. For the purpose of this research they have not been treated separately.

There was a mixed response to the proposed changes. The answer to the question **‘Do you agree with the proposed changes bearing in mind the need for the Council to find a saving in its budget?’** was:

|            |           |
|------------|-----------|
| Agree      | 264 (38%) |
| Disagree   | 339 (49%) |
| Don't know | 87 (13%)  |

|                         | Agree  |     | Disagree |     | Don't know |     |
|-------------------------|--------|-----|----------|-----|------------|-----|
|                         | Number | %   | Number   | %   | Number     | %   |
| Headteachers            | 8      | 57% | 3        | 21% | 3          | 21% |
| Governors               | 8      | 38% | 11       | 52% | 2          | 10% |
| Parents /faith schools  | 30     | 15% | 171      | 83% | 5          | 2%  |
| Parents /nearest school | 158    | 53% | 92       | 31% | 47         | 16% |
| Parent /pref school     | 46     | 41% | 40       | 36% | 25         | 23% |

In the main headteachers agreed to the proposal and school governors were against it. However only small numbers responded and only indicate possible trends. Amongst parents and carers there are clear trends. Parents from faith schools where the proposed changes are greatest were mainly against the proposal and parents of pupils from ‘nearest suitable schools’ were mainly in agreement. The opinions of parents of pupils at ‘preferred schools’ were more evenly distributed.

Regardless of their agreement with the proposal, people were asked if they thought the service should continue with increased charges.

The response to **‘Do you think we should continue provide school buses to faith schools?’** was:

|            |     |
|------------|-----|
| Yes        | 63% |
| No         | 24% |
| No opinion | 13% |

The vast majority of ‘faith school parents’ wanted buses to continue (95%), as did parents of nearest suitable schools (43%) and parents of preferred schools (64%)

There was stronger agreement for the **continuation of school buses to ‘nearest suitable schools’**, with 74% of parents from faith schools, 82% of parents from nearest suitable schools and 80% of parents from preferred schools indicating they wanted the buses to continue.

Questions 9 and 10 asked people who already pay a fare if they would **continue to use the subsidised buses when the fare was increased in September 2007, and when the fare was increased again in 2008 with payment in advance.**

|                                     | 2007      | 2008     |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|----------|
| We will continue to use the bus     | 140 (58%) | 91 (36%) |
| We will NOT continue to use the bus | 38 (16%)  | 88 (34%) |
| We don't know                       | 64 (26%)  | 76 (30%) |
| Not Applicable                      | 415       | 398      |
| Total applicable                    | 242       | 255      |
| Did not complete this question      | 75        | 68       |

The table shows that many of the respondents indicated that the question was not applicable to them. The remaining figure would seem to indicate a fall in demand for school buses from people who currently pay.

Question 11 asked, **'If your children travel free of charge on the school bus, do you think they will continue to use the bus from September 2008 when they have to pay in advance?**

|                                     | 2008     |
|-------------------------------------|----------|
| We will continue to use the bus     | 70 (34%) |
| We will NOT continue to use the bus | 78 (37%) |
| We don't know                       | 60 (29%) |
| Total                               | 208      |

Question six asked if there should be a discount for second and subsequent siblings travelling on buses. 70% of all respondents said yes, 20% said no and 10% were undecided.

Of the 483 respondents who said there should be a subsidy, 284 suggested a rate, which ranged from 100% to 10% as shown below:

|                    |         |     |        |        |
|--------------------|---------|-----|--------|--------|
| Suggested discount | 51-100% | 50% | 49-25% | 24-10% |
| N =284             | 42      | 148 | 46     | 23     |

Question 7 asks how people would prefer to pay in advance and gives options for once or twice a year. 593 people responded to this question:

|                             | Number | %   |
|-----------------------------|--------|-----|
| Once, in July               | 35     | 6   |
| Twice, in July and November | 346    | 58  |
| No preference               | 212    | 36  |
| Total                       | 593    | 100 |

Question 8 gives three options for methods of paying in advance. Of the respondents who had a preference, cheque or cash outweighs both credit / debit card options.

|                              | Number | %   |
|------------------------------|--------|-----|
| By cheque or cash            | 283    | 39  |
| Online, debit or credit card | 119    | 17  |
| Phone debit or credit card   | 88     | 12  |
| No preference                | 232    | 32  |
| Total                        | 722    | 100 |

Finally, question 12 asks, '**If your Children stop using the school bus service, how will they travel to school?**' 440 people responded, showing a preference for using their cars.

|       | Number | %   |
|-------|--------|-----|
| Walk  | 104    | 24  |
| Bike  | 12     | 3   |
| Car   | 249    | 56  |
| Other | 75     | 17  |
| Total | 440    | 100 |

Respondents were also able to add comments on the form. A number of e-mails were also received, including 25 similarly worded comments from staff at St Benedict's. The most frequent issues raised were:

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Green/environmental issues   | 87  |
| Congestion issues  | 99  |
| General financial impact on families                                       | 100 |
| Impact on families with more than one child                                | 35  |
| Many unable to afford to pay in advance                                    | 47  |
| Would prefer to pay more frequently  | 27  |
| Child safety issues  | 37  |
| Discrimination against faith schools/ people with faiths                   | 46  |
| Freedom of choice  | 36  |
| If parents decide to send child to faith school, they should expect to pay | 44  |
| Policy for faith schools and others should be the same                     | 26  |
| Parents at faith schools already contribute 10% of capital                 | 31  |



|  |    |
|--|----|
| costs  |    |
| Penalised twice as Council Tax continues to rise     | 26 |
| Council should look for savings in other areas       | 25 |
| Effect on inclusive nature of St Benedict's          | 20 |
| Lower contribution would be acceptable               | 20 |
| Stop spending this subsidy                           | 13 |
| Adds to Duffield Rd bus lane problem                 | 12 |
| Council should promote bus use                       | 18 |
| Will/may/would have moved child to nearer school     | 13 |
| Encourage walking                                    | 14 |
| Encourage cycling                                    | 11 |
| Decision a foregone conclusion/already made          | 11 |
| Consider rebates for illness/days when not using bus | 10 |