



DERBY CITY COUNCIL

COUNCIL CABINET
11 January 2011

Report of the Strategic Director for Children and
Young People

ITEM 8

Review of Transport Policy in Children and Young People Directorate

SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Council provides transport to a range of children and young people. The total budget for 2010-11 is £3.07m (million), which is in line with previous years. The biggest proportion (89%) of the transport budget is used to transport children and young people to schools (£2.76m).
- 1.2 In the light of the current financial outlook, officers have reviewed expenditure on transport for children and young people. A number of policy changes are now being proposed to maximise the value of transport services to all those who receive them.
- 1.3 The proposed changes will not affect existing arrangements and will be subject to a consultation exercise and Equality Impact Assessment as set out in the report.

RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 To consult on the following proposed policy changes:
 1. to remove discretionary free transport for any **new** pupil below Foundation Stage 2 on and after 1 September 2011
 2. to remove discretionary free transport for all new instances of a child or young person attending a school less than the statutory walking distance (*this includes all young people attending a special school closer than two miles, aged seven years and under, or three miles for over eight-year-olds*).
- 2.2 On completion of the consultation period and the Equality Impact Assessment regarding the proposed changes in paragraphs 2.1.1 and 2.1.2, to bring a further report to Cabinet.

2.3 To agree to a review and a report of outcomes being brought to a future meeting on the following:

- post-16 students with special educational needs (SEN) contributing to their transport costs
- changing the transport escort policy and developing a new assessment criteria.
- whether it is more effective to require escorts to be provided by transport providers rather than employed by the Council
- special schools taking an active role in arranging transport for their own pupils through direct delegated funding
- a reduction in the number of taxis used for home to school transport and a review of routes followed.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 **Recommendation 2.1.1** - The local authority provides a small number of disabled young people with transport to schools with nurseries and nurseries that offer preschool education. The Council does not have a statutory duty to provide such transport. Potential savings from adopting this change are £87,000 a year. This change will not affect any existing pupil.
- 3.2 **Recommendation 2.1.2** – Removing discretionary free transport for all new instances of a child or young person attending a school less than the statutory walking distance will allow financial savings whilst maintaining a statutory service. Pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN), who have specific transport needs written into their statement, will still be provided with transport. Potential savings from this change are up to £100,000 a year.
- 3.3 **Recommendation 2.3** - Our aim is to continue work to identify further savings in order to meet budget requirements.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 4.1 The Council currently provides transport to a range of children and young people. This includes transporting children and young people with special educational needs (SEN) to schools and transport for contact visits for Children in Care (CiC). The total budget for 2010-11 is £3.07m (million). This is in line with budgets in previous years: £3.12m in 2009-10, £3.06m in 2008-09 and £3.00m in 2007-08.
- 4.2 The biggest proportion (89%) of the transport budget is used to transport children and young people to schools (£2.76m).

- 4.3 The Council has a duty to provide free transport to a number of pupils. These include:
- those aged under eight and living more than two miles from school
 - aged eight to 16 and living more than three miles from school
 - some children from low income families living more than a certain distance from their school
 - any pupil who is unable to walk to school
 - pupils with SEN who have specific transport needs written in their statement.
- 4.4 The Council also has a duty to promote contact between children in care and family members. This is facilitated through a contact plan, which includes appropriate transport arrangements. There is also a requirement to ensure attendance at school and at any medical appointments.
- 4.5 Having taken into account statutory requirements, this report explores those discretionary areas which are subject to this review to ensure that we are achieving best value from this budget.
- 4.6 Details are set out in Appendix 2 – Revised transport policy.
- 4.7 It is proposed to carry out a consultation with all necessary stakeholders on all proposed policy changes to run from 18 January 2011 until 11 March 2011. An equality impact assessment will also be undertaken during this timeframe.
- 4.8 Consultations on these policy changes are in line with other local authorities including Nottingham City and Leicester City.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5 All options to date are outlined in section 2 above.

This report has been approved by the following officers:

Legal officer	Stuart Leslie – Director of Legal and Democratic Services
Financial officer	
Human Resources officer	
Service Director(s)	Rita Silvester – Service Director Strategy and Commissioning CYPD
Other(s)	

For more information contact:	Name Liz Beswick 01332 716943 e-mail Liz.Beswick@derby.gov.uk
Background papers:	None
List of appendices:	Appendix 1 – Implications Appendix 2 – Revised Transport policy

IMPLICATIONS

Financial

- 1 Work to identify potential cost savings. Potential savings identified to date of up to £427,000.

Legal

- 2.1 There is a general duty on local education authorities to assess the school travel needs of their area and to promote the use of sustainable modes of transport under section 508A Education Act 1996
- 2.2 The Council must have regard to DfES guidance 373/2007 on Home to School Travel and Transport in considering the recommendations made in this report. This states that: "Local authorities should consult widely on any changes to their local policies on school travel arrangements, with all interested parties included in the consultations. Consultations should last for at least 28 working days during term time. This period should be extended to take account of any school holidays that may occur during the period of consultation. Good practice suggests that any such changes should be phased in and come into effect as pupils start school."
- 2.3 There are some basic principles that a consultation must satisfy to be procedurally fair...
 - All interested parties must be consulted while the proposals are still at a formative stage.
 - It is permissible to have a preferred option as long as other options are consulted upon.
 - There must be sufficient reasons for the proposals to allow an interested party to consider the proposals and formulate a response.
 - Interested parties must be given adequate time to be able to consider the proposals and formulate their response.

Personnel

- 3 Options explored to date have not highlighted any risk to local authority employment.

Equalities Impact

- 4 Need to ensure that equal access to education is maintained for all and vulnerable groups are not disadvantaged by any change. An Equality Impact Assessment will be conducted during the consultation process.

Health and Safety

- 5 Need to ensure that safeguarding is maintained through any proposed changes to service.

Carbon commitment

- 6 Work being undertaken should have a positive impact on CO₂ emissions through a potential reduction in number of individual journeys.

Value for money

- 7 Efficiency savings should help to deliver greater value for money.

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

- 8
 - Need to maintain support to parents (CYP1).
 - Helping to reduce CO₂ emissions (CG5).