

**Proposed Modification of Discretionary Home to School
Transport Services****SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The Council's budget approved on 2 March 2009, included the proposal to withdraw the Council's discretionary transport provision that is provided predominantly for children that live less than 2 or 3 miles from school. The estimated financial saving included in the budget proposals was £280,000 to be made over 2 years.
- 1.2 In order to deliver the £280,000 savings, Cabinet need to be advised of the detailed implications of the proposals and approve any recommendations in the light of this information.
- 1.3 This report sets out the implications of these proposals and considers the results and analysis of a public consultation exercise, a scheme impact assessment and a financial assessment of the situation with various options and mitigating measures that could be considered by Members.
- 1.4 There has also been a significant change in the situation since this proposal was first considered, as reported to Cabinet on 2 June 2009. This relates to a local commercial bus operator, Notts and Derby, that has now registered to run commercial services to Saint Benedict and Derby Moor from September 2009, along very similar routes to the current Council routes. This means that these commercial services will, in any event, replace the Council services, and children will be able to pay a daily fare to use these buses. The Council will purchase from the operator season tickets for those children that are eligible for school transport. In the current academic year, only 64 pupils would not be accommodated on these new services.

There are a number of positive points arising from this development:

- There will be minimal disruption for these schools: a seamless transfer is expected from provision by the Council in the current academic year to Notts & Derby in the new academic year commencing in September 2009.
- A facility to pay in advance will still be offered; but, as pupils will be able to pay on the day, patronage on the buses is expected to increase.
- Increased numbers of secondary pupils travelling by bus are likely to result in a decrease in the number of home to school car journeys across the City.
- Any increase in bus travel will tend to offset the negative environmental and congestion-related effects of any extra car journeys resulting from the remaining measures proposed.

The registration of these services means it would seem impractical to return to the former situation where the Council procured buses for the services to St Benedict and Derby Moor schools.

- 1.5 Having assessed all of the information available, it is recommended to Cabinet that they approve the withdrawal of the Council's commitment and direct financial contribution to the provision of these discretionary school transport services, that is those predominantly for children travelling less than 2 or 3 miles to school.,
- 1.6 It is acknowledged that these service withdrawals will require parents/ carers to make other travel arrangements for their children, which may be challenging for some, particularly in the short term.
- 1.7 One of the main reasons for this recommendation is to provide an equitable approach to transport provision to all schools in the city, and to focus continuing support on providing transport to those children that live beyond the statutory minimum walking distance from their nearest appropriate school.
- 1.8 The key mitigation measure is for the Council to continue to develop the Sustainable School Travel Strategy and work with these affected schools more closely over the coming year to develop and support their School Travel Plans and seek to support parents/ carers in planning their travel arrangements. A very positive outcome from this change is that it should increase the numbers of children walking and cycling to school and thereby support both the Government and Council's health agenda to increase children's physical activity.
- 1.9 The approval of this proposal would meet the savings target included in the Council's budget strategy by 2010/11.
- 1.10 Any changes to this discretionary transport provision would not take place until September 2010.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 To approve the withdrawal of the Council's commitment and any direct financial support from September 2010, for the provision of category c) discretionary home to school transport, as described in paragraphs in Appendix 2 of the report.
- 2.2 To approve the ongoing development and enhancement of the Council's Sustainable School Travel Strategy to provide information to parents on access to all schools and to continue to support School Travel Plans and help to prioritise the safer routes to school infrastructure programme as part of the Local Transport Plan capital programme. Over the next year this support should be prioritised to those parents/ carers and schools that are directly affected by the modification of the bus services.
- 2.3 To note the continued statutory transport provision for all mainstream schools including to faith schools, and the Council's continued commitment to non-statutory transport provision to faith schools, as defined in Appendix 2 under Categories a) and b) respectively.
- 2.4 To note the Council's commitment to b-line, the young person's concessionary travel scheme, which in partnership with the commercial bus operators, supports half fare travel for children up to the age of 18.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To provide an equitable approach to transport provision to all schools in the city, and to focus continuing support on providing transport to those children that live beyond the statutory minimum walking distance from their nearest appropriate school.
- 3.2 Implementing this recommendation will enable the savings proposals included in the Council budget to be met by 2010/11.
- 3.3 If we can increase the numbers of children walking and cycling to school then this will support both the Government's and the Council's health agenda's to increase children's physical activity and improve their health.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Introduction

- 4.1 The Council's budget approved on 2 March 2009 included the proposal to withdraw the Council's discretionary transport provision that is currently provided predominantly to children that live less than 2 or 3 miles from school.
- 4.2 In order to deliver the £280,000 savings, Cabinet need to be advised of the detailed implications of the proposals and approve any recommendations in the knowledge of this information.
- 4.3 At the 2 June Cabinet meeting, Members approved delaying the decision on implementing the budget changes until the 7 July Cabinet, due to a significant change in the situation. This change related to the registering of commercial bus services which would provide bus travel to St Benedict and Derby Moor secondary schools.
- 4.4 The 2 June decision means that there will be no changes to the level of discretionary transport provision to school children until September 2010, though the specific type of transport may be different to ensure that the most cost effective transport is provided.
- 4.5 This report sets out the background information around the proposal including the current transport provision, the detailed proposal that is included in the budget and the numbers of children affected.
- 4.6 The report sets out the likely impacts of the scheme with detailed information and appendices that set out the results of a wide ranging public consultation exercise and a scheme impact and financial assessment, including the consideration of different options and mitigation measures.

Current home to school transport provision to mainstream schools

- 4.7 The Council currently provides transport to school, under a number of different categories of provision, for children living in the city. The provision is split between transport to mainstream schools and transport provided for children with special needs attending various schools. This report is focused on the transport provision to mainstream schools and the categories below are related to this mainstream provision.
- 4.8 The categories of transport provided by the Council are set out in detail in Appendix 2. In summary they are:
- Category a) Statutory provision to mainstream schools, including faith schools
 - Category b) Non-statutory provision to faith schools
 - Category c) Discretionary provision to a range of mainstream schools
- 4.9 In the current 2008/09 academic year, under statutory provision we are providing transport for around 126 children; under non-statutory provision to faith schools we are providing transport for around 467 children; under discretionary transport we are providing transport for around 321 children. Appendix 4, table 2.1, sets out the numbers of children travelling to each of the schools, by category of transport provision.
- 4.10 Parents whose children receive category (c) discretionary provision have been reminded by letter when applying that this is not a statutory entitlement and may be withdrawn. Similarly, The Admissions Handbooks for Primary and Secondary schools note that, in such cases the Council will not normally provide help with transport.

Proposals for modification of Home to School bus services

- 4.11 The proposal is to withdraw the Council's commitment and any direct financial support from September 2010 to discretionary transport provision to a range of mainstream schools; category c). The provision is focused predominantly on children who live less than 2 or 3 miles, depending on their age, from their nearest suitable school including attending a faith school on faith grounds and live within the statutory minimum walking distance. Any spare seats are currently offered to other children attending those schools through parental choice, but this is based on whether there are seats available. This includes children attending faith schools on non faith grounds, i.e. parental choice.
- 4.12 This provision consists of subsidised transport, with the parents/ carers paying an advance charge for use of the bus if they wish to take advantage of the transport for their children.
- 4.13 The schools where this category of transport is currently provided are St George's, St John Fisher, St Joseph's and St Mary's primary schools and Saint Benedict, Derby Moor and Bemrose secondary schools.

- 4.14 At the time of the budget setting process in March 2009, the estimated net annual cost to the Council of providing this discretionary transport was around £360,000. The proposed budget saving to be achieved by 2010/11 is £280,000; £165,000 in 2009/10 and a further £115,000 in 2010/11. The remaining funding of £80,000 was planned to be retained to allow for any consequential cost increases around the continued provision of the statutory and non-statutory transport and any potential increase in b-line subsidy costs if children then chose to use commercial bus services.
- 4.15 There are a number of justifiable reasons for proposing this course of action:
- when looked at in the round, the current system of subsidised transport provision to only a handful of schools across the city is considered inequitable
 - this element of school transport has not been reviewed since the Council took over the responsibility for this provision from the County Council in 1997
 - the Council's budget situation means that we must critically review all discretionary services and consider the case for continued support
 - the promotion and support for the children's health agenda and the use of sustainable travel modes of walking and cycling; the provision of bus services for travel below the statutory minimum walking distance potentially works against these priorities
- 4.16 The key concerns that have been raised about the proposals are:
- the services provided should be considered as a crucial part of a child's overall education provision and should not be removed
 - if the Council does decide to make changes these should be phased, so that children that began their education with the services in place should be able to carry on receiving the service until they leave their primary school or secondary school
 - there will be increased road accidents if more children walk and cycle to school
 - the proposals go against the council's environmental policies as they will increase car usage
 - some parents may not be able to readily afford the alternative provision they need to put in place to arrange their child's travel to school
 - it may affect some parents' abilities to work and will certainly affect parents' well planned daily routines for arranging their children's travel to school

- 4.17 A concern that was raised early in the discussions by the Planning and Transportation Commission has now been addressed. This related to the fact that some parents may have selected a new school from September 2009 on the basis of the transport that they believed would be available at the time of completing their application forms. If they had known that transport was not going to be available then they may have made a different choice. The delay of any changes until September 2010 means that parents selecting schools this year for their child to start in September 2010 will be able to take on board the actual transport situation, following Cabinet's decision at this meeting on the future of these services.
- 4.18 There has also been a significant change in the situation since this proposal was considered, which was reported to Cabinet on 2 June 2009. This relates to a local commercial bus operator, Notts and Derby, that has now registered to run commercial services to Saint Benedict and Derby Moor from September 2009, along very similar routes to the current Council routes. This means that these commercial services will, in any event, replace the Council services, and children will be able to pay a daily fare to use these buses. The Council will purchase from the operator season tickets for those children that are eligible for school transport. For this reason, it would now be impractical to return to the former situation where the Council procured buses for the services to St Benedict and Derby Moor schools.

Implications of the proposals

- 4.19 The implications of the proposals have been informed by a number of pieces of work that have been carried out over the last few months. This detailed work is contained in the two main appendices to this report:
- Appendix 3: Results and consideration of a Public Consultation Exercise
 - Appendix 4: Scheme impact and financial assessments
- 4.20 Set out below are the key findings from these documents that have led officers to make a series of recommendations to Members on this proposal.

Overall summary of the public consultation results

- 4.21 A public consultation on the proposed changes was carried out from 17 March 2009 to 11 May 2009.
- 4.22 Over 1600 questionnaires were completed and returned and a number of individual letters were also submitted to the Council.
- 4.23 The key findings from the consultation were:
- Significant support for maintaining the discretionary transport services, particularly amongst those with children attending faith schools
 - The one group who were less supportive of maintaining the service were those parents whose children attended their nearest school
 - There was a mixed opinion on whether Council tax payers should subsidise these discretionary services

- A high level of support for the view that it is wrong to treat some families more favourably than others
- Few respondents actively disagreed that the Council should be encouraging healthy ways to travel to school, such as walking or cycling
- In the additional comments made by respondents several concerns were raised about the impact of the changes, including increased levels of traffic in the city, child safety if they had to walk and concern that parents may find the cost implications of paying for alternative transport difficult to manage financially
- Travelling to school by car was identified as being the most likely alternative travel method if the services are withdrawn

Direct impacts on children and parents/ carers

4.24 The direct impacts on children and parents/ carers would be:

- There are currently 55 children attending four primary schools that would no longer be offered subsidised transport directly from the Council; parents/ carers will have to make their own travel arrangements for children going to and from school
- There are currently 9 children attending Bemrose secondary school that would no longer be offered subsidised transport directly from the Council; parents/ carers will have to make their own travel arrangements for children going to and from school
- There are currently 220 children attending Saint Benedict and 37 attending Derby Moor that would no longer be offered subsidised transport directly from the Council; parents/ carers will have to make their own travel arrangements for children going to and from school. However 'Notts and Derby', a local commercial bus operator, has registered commercial bus services, largely covering the previous 'Council' routes and therefore these children will be able to access these services to attend school.

4.25 Although the impact of withdrawing the bus services to the primary schools and Bemrose would be inconvenient for these children and parents/ carers, this needs to be set in the context that there are essentially 5 schools and 64 children that will be affected, in comparison to the 103 schools and 37,000 mainstream children in school across Derby who all have to make their own arrangements to travel, unless they live beyond the maximum statutory walking distance. This includes those who receive statutory help for travel over 2 miles on low income grounds.

4.26 It is acknowledged that whilst there will be commercial services running to Saint Benedict and Derby Moor, these could be changed or withdrawn by the commercial operator if they no longer wanted to run them. The withdrawal of the Council's commitment to these discretionary transport services means that if no other operators come forward, then these 257 children would also have to find alternative means to travel to school. Notts & Derby and the Council do not anticipate this as a future situation, as we believe that there is likely to be an increase in patronage with the re-introduction of daily fares.

Other impacts on children and parents/ carers

- 4.27 From the information gathered during the consultation processes, the other impacts on parents/ carers who may have to find alternative means of transport for their children are:
- It would have a detrimental effect on children's safety as they walk/ cycle to school
 - The cost implications of paying for alternative transport arrangements would be difficult for some parents to afford
 - It may mean that parents cannot afford to keep sending their children to their preferred school, whether it be a faith or non-faith school
 - It would be difficult for parents to make alternative arrangements for travel, particularly for working parents
 - It was acknowledged that walking or cycling would have a positive effect on children's health
 - Children may be late to class or less prepared to learn when they arrive as a consequence of a long, tiring journey
- 4.28 Whilst we acknowledge that there is a perception that there are increased safety concerns over children walking and cycling to school, the analysis that we have completed on accident statistics shows only a small number of accidents in which children are involved, despite significant numbers of children walking or cycling daily to schools across Derby. Due to the very low numbers of children involved, we would not expect the level of accidents to change with a relatively small increase in those walking or cycling directly due to the proposed decrease in bus provision. We will continue to work very hard on a range of school safety initiatives to keep these numbers as low as possible.
- 4.29 We do acknowledge that for a comparatively small number of parents/carers that have been used to having this service available it could be difficult for them to plan and adopt new travel arrangements.
- 4.30 Officers have recommended to Members that we continue to develop the Sustainable School Travel Strategy that looks to promote alternative travel modes and that over the coming year, our resources are focussed on helping those parents/ carers who are affected by the changes and need help to plan their alternative arrangements. The changes are looking predominantly to support walking, cycling or car sharing to school.

Scheme impacts and Mitigation Measures

4.31 Appendix 4 includes details of the other likely impacts of the proposed scheme, covering the areas of:

- Level of bus usage
- Modal shift
- Accident Statistics
- Parking and congestion
- Health and Social aspects

4.32 Set out below are the key points and conclusions from this assessment.

In relation to levels of bus usage, Appendix 4 includes:-

- an estimate in bus usage from before the introduction of the advance charge; around 1500 children
- the advance charge changes; around 900 children
- the predicted changes from these proposals to modify discretionary transport; around 850 children: this includes those children that will be able to use commercial services to Saint Benedict and Derby Moor schools

The assessment shows that the numbers of children that will be affected by these proposals are significantly less than the numbers affected when the advance charge was introduced.

4.33 In relation to modal shift, we have reviewed the Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) school survey data which gives an indication of the modes of travel that children use to go to and from school, and therefore allows us to look at modal shift from year to year. The results, which are shown in detail in Appendix 4, do show that since the introduction of the advance charge the proportions of children travelling by bus have reduced and the numbers travelling by car have increased. Also the modal shift analysis does not show that there has been an increase in walking and cycling to any of the schools that were affected by the advance charge scheme. However we have not done any concentrated work with these particular schools to support their School Travel Plans, and it is recommended to Members that we should do this.

4.34 As has been mentioned earlier, the accident statistics that have been analysed show very low levels of accidents involving children. There has not been an increase with the introduction of the advance charge scheme which saw higher levels of children choosing an alternative mode of transport to the bus than will be affected by these proposed service modifications. Based on these findings, we do not consider that there is a significant increased risk of children being involved in road accidents due to these proposed changes.

4.35 Appendix 4 reports the results of some traffic surveys that have been carried out near to the secondary schools, and also comments that primary schools generally have a bigger problem related to car drop off. This is due to children being too young to travel to school unaccompanied and, because of family circumstances, travel by car may be the most appropriate mode of transport. However the levels of congestion and parking outside of these schools is not considered significantly better or worse than at other schools across the city.

- 4.36 A significant number of responses to the consultation cited one of the main impacts of the proposal might be an increase in congestion and traffic, due to the fact that the majority of the affected children would be taken to school by car. Whilst we acknowledge that for the majority of these displaced journeys this is likely to be the case, especially in the short term whilst other arrangements can be made, the impact on existing parking and congestion levels at these schools will be minimal as the bus service withdrawals affect such relatively small numbers of children at each school.
- 4.37 We believe that through the further development of School Travel Plans and working more specifically with the primary schools over the coming year that we can aim to alleviate potential inconvenience problems and do more to encourage walking and cycling to school.
- 4.38 We are aware that Saint Benedict school has had to put in place arrangements to allow cars onto their school site to accommodate the effects of the advance charge scheme. The registration of the commercial bus services should help to alleviate this problem as children who were previously dissuaded from using the advance charge scheme will now be able to pay a daily fare, and may now revert to bus travel as their main mode of transport to school.
- 4.39 There is no doubt that increasing the numbers of children walking and cycling to school is good for children's health. We have opportunities to work with children through our School Travel Plan advisors and the Cycle Derby training team to try to support and encourage more sustainable travel.
- 4.40 The key social aspects around the scheme impact are the difficulties that some parents/ carers will have in changing their travel arrangements, particularly for working people. There may be increased costs associated with new arrangements. However other parents in schools that have not had access to these services have always had to factor in these issues when making their arrangements, again raising the issue of equity of provision. It would be also be equitable if we could provide transport to all schools, but this is simply not affordable.
- 4.41 In relation to Saint Benedict and Derby Moor, the registration of the commercial services does re-introduce the ability to pay a daily fare for bus travel, rather than the advance charge system. Some parents have reported that they have been unable to use the advance charge system as they cannot find the required amounts of 'up front' payment, despite the direct debit facility.

Financial impacts

- 4.42 The budget proposals estimated savings of £165,000 in 2009/10 and £115,000 in 2010/11 financial years from the proposed changes to home to school transport. In 2010/11, this saving was made up of £85,000 in operational transport costs and £30,000 in staff saving through not having to arrange this transport.
- 4.43 The approval by Cabinet on 2 June 2009 to delay the decision on these proposals means that the savings in 2009/10 are estimated to be £95,000, as it is estimated that the net cost of providing transport to the primary schools and Bemrose secondary school for the next academic year will be in the order of £70,000. It is anticipated that the full saving will be made by 2010/11.

- 4.44 Appendix 4 sets out the detail of the financial situation, including the overall levels of subsidy that the Council makes towards school transport, and the cost of transport to these particular schools. At the time of the budget setting process in March 2009, the net annual estimated cost of transport provision towards the operational service costs of these buses, between Children and Young People - CYP and Regeneration and Community - R&C, was around £700,000 - £370,000 from CYP and £330,000 from R&C.
- 4.45 The latest estimated net annual cost, by academic year, for the services going to these schools is £558,000. This is a reduction on the budget figures due to a reduction in the number of contracts to match usage and general re-tendering of contracts. This works out to be an average subsidy per child of around £610 per year, ranging from £520 to £1,600. This covers all categories of transport provision. Table 6.1 in Appendix 4 shows these figures in detail.
- 4.46 Table 1 below, which is also Table 6.2 in Appendix 4, shows these costs broken down between the different categories of provision. It can be seen that the average cost per child is significantly higher for discretionary provision, than the other categories. This is largely as a result of the advance charge scheme, as buses were carrying significantly more children prior to the introduction of this charge. The lack of take up of the advance charge scheme has increased the subsidy per child for those remaining children who are paying.

Table 1 Estimated net costs by different category of transport provision

School	Estimated net annual cost			Estimated net annual cost per child		
	Statutory	Non-statutory	Discretionary	Statutory	Non-statutory	Discretionary
Bemrose	£3,510	0	£18,780	£350	0	£2,350
Derby Moor	£9,610	0	£25,500	£320	0	£690
St George	£6,510	£6,950	£48,470	£650	£500	£1,390
St John Fisher	£1,620	£540	£21,670	£540	£540	£1,970
St Joseph	£1,200	£8,390	£17,130	£600	£490	£2,140
St Benedict/ St Mary	£48,710	£244,850	£97,670	£690	£560	£440
Total	£71,160	£260,730	£229,220	£570	£560	£710

- 4.47 Appendix 4 also includes the estimated costs of three options;
- to continue with the existing provision to the primary schools and Bemrose secondary school; estimated additional ongoing annual cost of £100,000
 - to phase out the support to discretionary transport, which would mean that children that had already started school would still be offered transport by the Council until they left school, which could be up to 7 years; cost over 7 years estimated at £450,000, from £100,000 in 2009/10 to £25,000 in 2015/16
 - to look at providing transport to the other schools in the city, around 100 schools; would require a net annual budget of around £1.5m

- 4.48 Officers do not consider that the cost of these alternatives is sustainable in the current economic climate. Also the option of continuing with the current provision does not address the equity issue of provision to all schools.

Conclusion

- 4.49 Having given due consideration to all of the information that has been gathered and analysed, the conclusion is a recommendation to Cabinet that it should withdraw the council's commitment to discretionary home to school transport and any direct financial support to these category c) discretionary transport services.
- 4.50 It is acknowledged that these service modifications will create difficulties for some children and parents/ carers in making other travel arrangements to travel, particularly in the short term.
- 4.51 The key reasons for this recommendation are;
- to ensure that the Council provides an equitable approach to transport provision to all schools in the city, focused on providing transport to those children that live beyond the statutory maximum walking distance from their nearest appropriate school
 - it provides a financially sustainable approach for the Council towards the overall transport provision in the city
 - it will help to promote walking and cycling to school
- 4.52 The key mitigation measure is for the Council to continue to develop the Sustainable School Travel Strategy and work with these affected schools more closely over the coming year to develop and support their School Travel Plans and seek to support parents/ carers in planning their travel arrangements. This should help to increase the number of children walking and cycling to school and support both the Government's and the Council's health agendas to increase children's physical activity.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 To carry on with the existing provision; however this would mean carrying on with the inequitable system of school transport provision across the city and additional funding of £100,000 a year would need to be identified.
- 5.2 To phase out the provision over a number of years; this would support those children who had already started school. The cost of this would be around £450,000 over 7 years.
- 5.3 To provide a bus service to all schools across the city, around 100 schools, to provide full equity of access to schools. This is estimated at a net annual cost of £1.5m.

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Background papers:	Appendix 1 – Implications
List of appendices:	Appendix 2 – Mainstream Home to School Transport Provision
	Appendix 3 – The Future Provision of Discretionary Home to School Travel in Derby
	Appendix 4 – Proposed Changes to Home to School Provision Scheme Impact and Financial Assessment

IMPLICATIONS

Financial

- 1.1 The estimated net cost, in an academic year, to the Council of providing this discretionary transport is around £360,000. The proposed budget saving to be achieved by 2010/11 is £280,000; £165,000 in 2009/10 and a further £115,000 in 2010/11. The £80,000 difference between the net cost and the saving was planned to be retained to allow for any consequential cost increases around the continued provision of the statutory and non-statutory transport and any potential increase in b-line subsidy costs if children then chose to use commercial bus services.
- 1.2 The financial implications are summarised in paragraphs 4.41 to 4.47, with a detailed analysis included in Appendix 4.

Legal

- 2.1 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
 - 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
 - The outcome of the consultation must be conscientiously taken into account when the ultimate decision is taken.
- 2.2 In this instance the time given to consultees is in accordance with the DfES guidance on Home to School Travel and Transport referred to below.
- 2.3 There is a general duty on local education authorities like the Council 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.
- 2.4 As paragraph 4.10 states, it is only discretionary transport that is being considered in this report. Under section 508C Education Act 1996 local education authorities have a discretion to pay the whole or any part of the reasonable travelling expenses of any person receiving education at a school, further education institution or any other institution where the Learning and Skills Council have secured provision. Section 46(1) Public Passengers Vehicles Act 1981 allows pupils not eligible for free transport to pay for seats on school buses used to provide free transport to other pupils.

2.5 The Council must have regard to DfES guidance 373/2007 on Home to School Travel and Transport in considering this matter. It 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.” (Except in exceptional circumstances)

2.6 It is proposed that these changes take effect in September 2010.

Personnel

- 3.1 The modification of these discretionary transport services will reduce the staff resource requirements within the Integrated Passenger Transport Group. Consideration will be given to the exact nature of the changes required following more detailed assessment and consultation with staff.
- 3.2 Concern has been expressed about the possible impact upon pupil numbers at schools affected by the proposal and any subsequent reduction in school budgets, leading to potential staff redundancies. The number of pupils affected is, however, relatively small and unlikely to affect schools in this way. The only exception to this is St Benedict’s School. However, similar concerns were raised when the advanced charging system was introduced and any impact at St Benedict’s was monitored. The number of applications for admission to St Benedict’s has not declined since the charging scheme was introduced.

Equalities Impact

- 4.1 The rationale for the proposals is based on both equity and budgetary grounds; the current pattern of provision to a limited number of schools could be perceived as inequitable. The proposed removal of services would address this issue.

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

- 5.1 This proposal contributes towards the Council’s Corporate Priorities of providing excellent services and value for money and helping us all to be healthy, active and independent.

Categories of transport provision

The Council currently provides transport to school, under a number of different categories of provision, for children living in the city. The provision is split between transport to mainstream schools and transport provided for children with special needs attending various schools. This report is focussed on the transport provision to mainstream schools and the categories below are related to this mainstream provision.

a) Statutory provision to mainstream schools

This provision is focused over two sub-categories:

- those parents/ carers on low income who live between 2 and 6 miles to one of their 3 nearest secondary schools or between 2 and 15 miles from a suitable faith school they are attending on faith grounds, specifically where:
 - the family receives the maximum level of Working Tax Credit, or
 - the children are entitled to free school meals
- those children that live more than the statutory minimum walking distance from their nearest suitable school, specifically where:
 - they are aged 4 to 7 and live 2 miles or more from their nearest suitable school
 - they are aged 8 to 16 and live 3 miles or more from their nearest suitable school

In the current 2008/09 academic year, under this statutory provision we are providing transport for around 125 children.

b) Non-Statutory provision to faith schools

This provision is focused around those children that are aged between 4 – 7 years old and live 2 miles or more from school or for children between 8 and 16 who live 3 miles or more from school and are attending a faith school on faith grounds.

In these circumstances the Council provides either:

- free transport, if they were making this specific home to school journey before September 2008 or
- subsidised transport with the family paying an advance charge for use of the bus, if they started school in or after September 2008

The introduction of an advance charge payment was approved by Cabinet on 15 January 2008.

In the current 2008/09 academic year, under this non-statutory provision to faith schools we are providing transport for around 470 children.

c) Discretionary provision to a range of mainstream schools

This provision is focused predominantly on children who live less than 2 or 3 miles, depending on their age, from their nearest suitable school or are attending a faith school on faith grounds and live within the statutory minimum walking distance. Any spare seats are offered to other children attending those schools through parental choice, but this is based on whether there are seats available. This includes children attending faith schools on non faith grounds, i.e. parental choice.

This provision is subsidised transport with the family paying an advance charge for use of the bus if they wish to take advantage of the transport for their children.

The schools where this category of transport is currently provided are St George's, St John Fisher, St Joseph's and St Mary's primary schools and Saint Benedict, Derby Moor and Bemrose secondary schools.

In the current academic year, 2008/09, under this discretionary transport we are providing transport for around 320 children.

No specific 16+ transport is provided directly by the Council, although b-line cards used on commercial services allow half fare travel which is subsidised by the Council. The recent curriculum changes across the 14-19 age-groups may require us to review our transport provision, but this is uncertain at the present time.

The future provision of discretionary home to school
travel in Derby

Results and consideration of a public consultation
exercise

June 2009

Contents

Introduction

Consultation Methodology

Consultation Process

Consulting with Overview and Scrutiny Commissions

Timetable for consultation

Comments on some of the issues raised in the consultation

Annex A: Findings from the Consultative Survey

Introduction

- 1.1 A public consultation exercise was undertaken to gauge the response of residents of Derby to the withdrawal of specific discretionary home to school transport provided by the City Council, and in particular the views of parents/ carers of the 350 children that would be directly affected.
- 1.2 Following the consultation period the situation did change as a commercial operator Notts and Derby took the decision to register a range of bus services, following similar routes to the 'Council' routes to Saint Benedict and Derby Moor Secondary Schools. This means that the number of children that would be directly affected by the changes reduced to 64.
- 1.3 The Executive Summary of Annex A sets out the key findings from the consultation.

Consultation Methodology

- 2.1 The survey was drafted initially by independent specialist transport consultants who had previously worked with the City Council on a previous consultation on school transport which was undertaken late in 2007.
- 2.2 In order to measure the strength of opinions a series of statements were drawn up about school transport provision to which the respondents were asked how strongly they agreed or disagreed.
- 2.3 Those who had children at school who used the service were also asked how they thought their child would travel to school should the service be withdrawn and if they would like advice / or assistance if the discretionary transport service did not continue.
- 2.4 This survey also provided opportunity for respondents to add further comments for consideration.
- 2.5 Completed surveys and all related correspondence outside of the surveys were sent to an independent research company for data input and analysis of the verbatim 'free text' questions to ensure that the findings of the consultation are independently verified.
- 2.6 Fifteen surveys were completed in Polish and were translated for analysis and the questionnaire did provide information on where to seek further help on interpreting the form if required for any reason.
- 2.7 Annex A provides an analysis of the findings from the survey including the findings from where respondents were asked to make further comments.

Consultation Process

- 3.1 The consultation proposals were approved by the Planning and Transportation Cabinet Member on 16 March at an individual cabinet member meeting. The consultation started on 17 March 2009 and closed on 11 May 2009.
- 3.2 The consultation process was designed to be as wide as possible.
- 3.3 We prepared a questionnaire for people to complete, either returning it by free post to the Council or by completing it online from our website.
- 3.4 Consultees included:
 - 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 head teachers of all Derby schools and neighbouring faith schools
 - the Catholic diocesan education authority for Derby
 - neighbouring local authorities
 - the Confederation of Passenger Transport
 - any interested members of the general public, who became aware of the consultation process and wished to provide their views

Consulting with Overview and Scrutiny Commissions

- 4.1 Throughout the process, both the Children and Young People and Planning and Transportation Commissions have been kept informed of the situation and have provided constructive comments.
- 4.2 We have arranged separate consultation meetings with the Commissions to ensure that their views have been formally captured within the consultation process.

Timetable for Consultation

- 5.1 We followed consultation guidelines for consulting with schools to ensure that we consulted for at least 28 working days, in term time. This equated to around 6 weeks of term time; formally starting on Tuesday 17 March 2009 and technically finishing on Monday 11 May 2009. If one day is allowed for postal delivery purposes and one for the May Day bank holiday on 4 May, this results in a period of 28 days in term time.
- 5.2 In reality, the consultation ran for 40 days; this included two weeks over the Easter Holidays.

- 5.3 Following formal approval of the consultation process by the Cabinet Member for Planning and Transportation on Monday 16 March, copies of the consultation were immediately sent to heads and chairs of governors by first class post, with the expectation that they would arrive on Tuesday 17 March 2009.
- 5.4 Following the above, copies of the consultation were sent to parents of all the children using the affected bus services by first class post on Tuesday 17 March 2009. In addition, copies of the consultation were made available at Council receptions at the Council House, Roman House and Middleton House and on the Council's website on this date.
- 5.5 All schools were then distributed with the questionnaires. Some 38,000 in total were distributed to schools by courier runs on Friday 20 March 2009 for them to be distributed to pupils and parents.

Comments on some of the issues raised in the consultation

- 6.1 There have been issues raised about the clarity and fairness of the consultation questionnaire, but essentially the form was put together with significant input from the corporate consultation team and follows other consultations that have been completed by the council and the previous consultation that was done around the introduction of advance charges for home to school transport. We believe that however we had phrased the questions, there would have been adverse comments.
- 6.2 Other concerns have been expressed about the consultation and proposals allegedly being anti-Catholic; it just so happens that the majority of these discretionary services that we support are to Catholic schools, but Bemrose and Derby Moor will also be affected, to greater or lesser degrees, now that commercial services have been registered to Derby Moor. This consultation would have affected pupils at Littleover School too, but their service is now also provided by a commercial operator. The Council will continue to fully support Catholic schools, by providing both statutory and non-statutory transport, as defined in Appendix 2.
- 6.3 We are aware that a number of people raised an issue related to the amalgamation and closure of St Ralph Sherwin and St Thomas More Catholic Schools, which we believe happened in 1986. At this time, it has been reported that the County Council made an agreement that transport would be provided across the city to St Benedict's so that children could readily access the new school. It has proved difficult to confirm the wording of this agreement but we believe that, the majority of children would have been affected by the school changes are likely to fall into the category b) provision of non-statutory transport to faith schools, living 2 or 3 miles from their faith school, which is not affected by this consultation exercise and that with the forthcoming provision of alternative bus services to Saint Benedict School by Notts & Derby that the issue has now been largely resolved.

Annex A

Findings from the Consultative Survey June 2009

Executive Summary / Key Findings

- Over 1600 surveys were completed and returned in time for the end of the consultation.
- An independent research company data inputted all of the surveys and provided an analysis of any supporting information provided by respondents.
- Over half of the completed surveys were from parents with children at school and a third were from pupils.
- The consultation highlighted significant support for maintaining the discretionary transport service, particularly amongst those with children attending faith schools.
- The one group who were less supportive of maintaining the service were those parents whose children attended their nearest school.
- There was a mixed opinion on whether Council Tax payers should subsidise these discretionary services.
- There was significant support for the view that it is wrong to treat some families more favourably than others.
- Few respondents actively disagreed that the Council should be encouraging healthy ways to travel to school such as cycling or walking but some concern was noted about the potential safety issues of these options.
- The additional comments made by the survey respondents raised several concerns about the impact of the withdrawal of the discretionary service such as increased levels of traffic in the city, child safety if they had to walk and concern that parents may find the cost implications of paying for alternative transport difficult to manage financially.
- Travelling to school by car was identified as being the most likely alternative travel method if the discretionary service was withdrawn.
- A number of other letters were received in addition to completed questionnaires and these have been reviewed to ensure that all of the specific issues were captured in the overall survey results and comments that came through the questionnaires.

Responses to the survey

- A1.1 The survey was completed by over 1,630 respondents with 1432 (87%) completed on paper and 207 (13%) completed online, Table A1.1, this is a high level of response and roughly double the number of responses to similar school transport surveys undertaken in the last two years.

Table A1.1: Respondents to the survey

	Number	Percent
Paper	1432	87%
Web	207	13%
TOTAL	1639	100%

Profile of respondents

- A1.2 Just over half, 56%, (880 respondents) of those who responded to the survey were parents of children who were currently in school. A third (546 respondents) of those who responded were pupils currently at school and a minority (14%, 230 respondents) stated that they were an interested member of the public, Table A1.2.

Table A1.2: Profile of respondents

	Number	Percent
A Parent / Carer of a pupil that attends a faith school on faith grounds	362	22%
A Parent / Carer of a pupil that attends their nearest suitable school	384	23%
A Parent / Carer of a pupil who does not attend their nearest suitable school	134	8%
A Teacher / Head Teacher	45	3%
A School Governor	61	4%
A member of the Catholic Diocesan Education Authority	12	1%
A pupil at a Derby School	546	33%
A Derby City Council Elected Member	66	4%
An interested Member of the Public	230	14%
Representative of a neighbouring Local Authority	12	1%
Other	57	3%
None/no response	54	3%
TOTAL	1639	100%

Question 2 (i)

A2.1 In light of its current budgetary position, Derby City Council should stop providing these buses, but should work with parents and schools to reduce the impact on families

A2.2 Only a minority of respondents 20% (320 respondents) either agreed or strongly agreed that in light of its current budgetary position, Derby City Council should stop providing these buses, but should work with parents and schools to overcome any potential difficulties. As can be seen from Table A2.1, the majority of respondents, over two thirds (65%, 1060 respondents) either disagreed or strongly disagreed. Relatively few respondents (only 11%) were neutral.

Table A2.1: In light of its current budgetary position, Derby City Council should stop providing these buses, but should work with parents and schools to reduce the impact on families

	Number	Percent
Strongly Agree	179	11%
Agree	141	9%
Neither agree nor disagree	183	11%
Disagree	294	18%
Strongly disagree	766	47%
No Response	76	5%
TOTAL	1639	100%

A2.3 As can be seen from Table A2.2 below when we examine the replies by type of respondent, there is some variation in how much agreement / disagreement with the statement there is. Parent / Carers of a pupil that attends a faith school on faith grounds are the most likely to disagree with the statement that 'In light of its current budgetary position, Derby City Council should stop providing these buses, but should work with parents and schools to reduce the impact on families' and Parent / Carers of a pupil that attends their nearest suitable school were the most likely to agree (in fact this group is significantly more likely to agree than any other respondent type)

Table A2.2: In light of its current budgetary position, Derby City Council should stop providing these buses, but should work with parents and schools to reduce the impact on families by respondent type

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
A Parent / Carer of a pupil that attends a faith school on faith grounds	4.70%	1.80%	4.70%	15.20%	73.60%
A Parent / Carer of a pupil that attends their nearest suitable school	30.30%	21.40%	11.00%	13.40%	23.90%
A Parent / Carer of a pupil who does not attend their nearest suitable school	16.20%	14.60%	7.70%	20.00%	41.50%
A Teacher / Head Teacher	11.60%	4.70%	9.30%	16.30%	58.10%
A School Governor	23.70%	11.90%	6.80%	16.90%	40.70%
A member of the Catholic Diocesan Education Authority	9.10%	0.00%	27.30%	9.10%	54.50%
A pupil at a Derby School	5.00%	4.70%	19.20%	23.80%	47.30%
A Derby City Council Elected Member	4.80%	7.90%	28.60%	17.50%	41.30%
An interested Member of the Public	7.90%	4.20%	2.30%	13.90%	71.80%
Representative of a neighbouring Local Authority	10.00%	0.00%	20.00%	20.00%	50.00%
Other	7.30%	12.70%	9.10%	18.20%	52.70%

Question 2(ii)

A2.4 Derby City Council should continue to provide its current discretionary transport service, for certain pupils at certain schools and make savings in other council services

A2.5 Two thirds of respondents agreed that the council should continue to provide the discretionary service (63%, 1028 Respondents) Once again a small but significant minority held a differing opinion with a fifth (20%) disagreeing/strongly disagreeing that the council should maintain the service.

Table A2.3: Derby City Council should continue to provide its current discretionary transport service, for certain pupils at certain schools and make savings in other council services

	Number	Percent
Strongly Agree	641	39%
Agree	387	24%
Neither agree nor disagree	195	12%
Disagree	177	11%
Strongly disagree	154	9%
No Response	85	5%
TOTAL	1639	100%

- A2.6 Table A2.4, shows the strength of feeling amongst Parent / Carers of a pupil that attends a faith school on faith grounds that the discretionary service should continue, with once again Parent / Carers of a pupil that attends their nearest suitable school contrasting with this and being the least likely to agree. Interested members of the public also felt strongly that the discretionary service should continue.
- A2.7 With the exception of Parent / Carers of a pupil that attends their nearest suitable school at least 50% of respondents agreed that the City Council should continue to provide its current discretionary transport service.

Table A2.4: Derby City Council should continue to provide its current discretionary transport service, for certain pupils at certain schools and make savings in other council services by respondent type

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
A Parent / Carer of a pupil that attends a faith school on faith grounds	61.70%	19.20%	8.10%	4.20%	6.90%
A Parent / Carer of a pupil that attends their nearest suitable school	26.40%	19.00%	11.10%	21.20%	22.30%
A Parent / Carer of a pupil who does not attend their nearest suitable school	31.50%	26.20%	10.80%	15.40%	16.20%
A Teacher / Head Teacher	53.30%	11.10%	11.10%	15.60%	8.90%
A School Governor	35.60%	16.90%	11.90%	23.70%	11.90%
A member of the Catholic Diocesan Education Authority	58.30%	16.70%	8.30%	16.70%	0.00%
A pupil at a Derby School	34.60%	30.70%	17.80%	11.40%	5.40%
A Derby City Council Elected Member	36.10%	29.50%	21.30%	8.20%	4.90%
An interested Member of the Public	65.60%	15.80%	4.10%	6.80%	7.70%
Representative of a neighbouring Local Authority	50.00%	10.00%	20.00%	10.00%	10.00%
Other	42.90%	30.40%	19.60%	5.40%	1.80%

Question 2 (iii)

A2.8 Council tax payers should not subsidise discretionary school transport for certain pupils at certain schools

- A2.9 Interestingly when asked if the agreed or disagreed with the statement that 'Council tax payers should not subsidise discretionary school transport for certain pupils at certain schools', opinion is more mixed. Just under a third of respondents at least agreed with the statement (30%, 494 respondents) a fifth were neutral (22% 356 respondents) and 40% (661 respondents) at least disagreed – see Table A2.5.

Table A2.5: Council tax payers should not subsidise discretionary school transport for certain pupils at certain schools

	Number	Percent
Strongly Agree	262	16%
Agree	232	14%
Neither agree nor disagree	356	22%
Disagree	232	14%
Strongly disagree	429	26%
No Response	128	8%
TOTAL	1639	100%

A2.10 Once gain the split between the two sets of parents (see Table A2.6) is strong and the opinions of Parent / Carers of a pupil that attends their nearest suitable school contrasting with the other types of respondent (with the possible exception of School Governors)

Table A2.6: Council tax payers should not subsidise discretionary school transport for certain pupils at certain schools by respondent type

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
A Parent / Carer of a pupil that attends a faith school on faith grounds	10.10%	10.40%	19.30%	15.90%	44.30%
A Parent / Carer of a pupil that attends their nearest suitable school	39.50%	20.70%	15.00%	10.60%	14.20%
A Parent / Carer of a pupil who does not attend their nearest suitable school	18.50%	19.20%	20.80%	18.50%	23.10%
A Teacher / Head Teacher	8.90%	11.10%	8.90%	31.10%	40.00%
A School Governor	27.10%	16.90%	6.80%	15.30%	33.90%
A member of the Catholic Diocesan Education Authority	9.10%	9.10%	54.50%	0.00%	27.30%
A pupil at a Derby School	10.70%	14.30%	36.80%	16.10%	22.10%
A Derby City Council Elected Member	10.70%	16.10%	32.10%	16.10%	25.00%
An interested Member of the Public	11.60%	7.40%	11.20%	14.40%	55.30%
Representative of a neighbouring Local Authority	20.00%	0.00%	40.00%	40.00%	0.00%
Other	12.00%	20.00%	20.00%	18.00%	30.00%

Question 2 (iv)

A2.11 It is wrong to treat some families more favourably by the City Council only providing discretionary transport in certain circumstances.

A2.12 More respondents (50%, 807 respondents) agreed/strongly agreed that it is wrong to treat more favourably by only offering discretionary transport in certain circumstances with just over a quarter (28%, 456 respondents) at least disagreeing. This does not mean that this indicates any less support for maintaining discretionary transport, but rather it could indicate a level of support for increased provision.

Table A2.7: It is wrong to treat some families more favourably by the City Council only providing discretionary transport in certain circumstances.

	Number	Percent
Strongly Agree	438	27%
Agree	369	23%
Neither agree nor disagree	264	16%
Disagree	179	11%
Strongly disagree	277	17%
No Response	112	7%
TOTAL	1639	100%

A2.13 Parent / Carers of a pupil that attends a faith school on faith grounds are the least likely to agree that 'It is wrong to treat some families more favourably by the City Council only providing discretionary transport in certain circumstances', with interested members of the public the most likely to actively disagree (see Table A2.8) Representatives from neighbouring authorities, member of the Catholic Diocesan Education Authority and Parent / Carers of a pupil that attends their nearest suitable school the most likely to agree.

Table A2.8: It is wrong to treat some families more favourably by the City Council only providing discretionary transport in certain circumstances. , by respondent type

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
A Parent / Carer of a pupil that attends a faith school on faith grounds	22.80%	13.40%	22.20%	12.50%	29.20%
A Parent / Carer of a pupil that attends their nearest suitable school	40.10%	29.00%	13.80%	9.80%	7.30%
A Parent / Carer of a pupil who does not attend their nearest suitable school	26.20%	29.20%	15.40%	13.80%	15.40%
A Teacher / Head Teacher	20.90%	34.90%	2.30%	18.60%	23.30%
A School Governor	29.30%	22.40%	10.30%	15.50%	22.40%
A member of the Catholic Diocesan Education Authority	45.50%	27.30%	0.00%	9.10%	18.20%
A pupil at a Derby School	27.50%	30.30%	18.00%	9.10%	15.20%
A Derby City Council Elected Member	28.30%	21.70%	26.70%	13.30%	10.00%
An interested Member of the Public	23.60%	12.30%	12.70%	12.30%	39.20%
Representative of a neighbouring Local Authority	40.00%	50.00%	0.00%	10.00%	0.00%
Other	35.30%	13.70%	21.60%	19.60%	9.80%

Question 2(v)

A2.14 Derby City Council should encourage healthy ways to travel to school such as cycling or walking.

A2.15 Table A2.9 shows the level of agreement for the council to encourage healthy ways to travel to school such as cycling or walking. Just under half agreed (46%, 747 respondents) whilst relatively few disagreed (12%, 202 respondents). However, this question had a high level of non committal responses with 23% (380) neutral and 19% (310 respondents) not answering this question

Table A2.9: Derby City Council should encourage healthy ways to travel to school such as cycling or walking

	Number	Percent
Strongly Agree	325	20%
Agree	422	26%
Neither agree nor disagree	380	23%
Disagree	86	5%
Strongly disagree	116	7%
No Response	310	19%
TOTAL	1639	100%

- A2.16 At least 40% of all groups agreed that Derby City Council should encourage healthy ways to travel to school such as cycling or walking rising to over 75% of those whose children attended the nearest suitable school (see Table A2.10)

Table A2.10: Derby City Council should encourage healthy ways to travel to school such as cycling or walking by respondent type

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
A Parent / Carer of a pupil that attends a faith school on faith grounds	19.20%	28.60%	30.20%	10.10%	11.90%
A Parent / Carer of a pupil that attends their nearest suitable school	45.10%	32.00%	17.50%	1.40%	4.10%
A Parent / Carer of a pupil who does not attend their nearest suitable school	21.60%	33.60%	32.00%	7.20%	5.60%
A Teacher / Head Teacher	27.50%	40.00%	15.00%	5.00%	12.50%
A School Governor	37.50%	37.50%	14.30%	5.40%	5.40%
A member of the Catholic Diocesan Education Authority	33.30%	22.20%	22.20%	11.10%	11.10%
A pupil at a Derby School	16.80%	31.60%	33.40%	6.10%	12.00%
A Derby City Council Elected Member	25.00%	17.50%	40.00%	7.50%	10.00%
An interested Member of the Public	16.90%	34.80%	29.50%	7.70%	11.10%
Representative of a neighbouring Local Authority	0.00%	50.00%	25.00%	25.00%	0.00%
Other	20.80%	39.60%	22.90%	4.20%	12.50%

Question 3

A3.1 What are your views on the potential impacts of withdrawing these buses on schools, parents and pupils?

A3.2 Respondents were asked to give their views on the potential impacts of withdrawing these buses on schools, parents and pupils, 1229 verbatim (free text) comments were received (see Table A3.1). The largest proportion of comments, 237 were concerned about increased levels of traffic in the city, with the second largest number, 201, concerned about child safety if they had to walk / cycle to school. 145 respondents raised concern that parents may find the cost implications of paying for alternative transport difficult to manage. The verbatim comments on the whole raised significant concerns about what they felt the impact of withdrawing the service would be.

A3.3 The verbatim responses are available to be reviewed on request.

Table A3.1: Analysis of the verbatim comments to the question 'What are your views on the potential impacts of withdrawing these buses on schools', parents and pupils

Comments	Number	Percent
It would result in an increase in congestion / traffic	237	19%
It would result in an increase in pollution	102	8%
It would have a detrimental effect on children's safety as they walk / cycle to school	201	16%
The cost implications of paying for alternative transport arrangements will be difficult for some parents to bear	145	12%
It would mean that parents may not be able to keep sending their children to their preferred school	44	4%
It would mean that parents may not be able to keep sending children to a faith school	43	3%
Children may experience distress if they have to change schools as a consequence of withdrawing the service	17	1%
Schools will experience a loss of attendance as children cannot travel to their site	54	4%
It will be difficult for parents to arrange alternative transport for their children	33	3%
It will be particularly difficult for working parents to arrange alternative transport for their children	55	4%
It will be particularly difficult for parents of disabled / SEN children to arrange alternative / specialised transport	3	0%
Special consideration needs to be made for families who live particularly far away from their child's school	28	2%
Walking or cycling will have a positive effect on the children's health	48	4%
It would be sensible to look at withdrawing or re-organising some under-used bus services rather than simply withdrawing them all.	4	0%
This proposal discriminates against specific faith groups	45	4%
Parents who wish to send their child to a faith school should pay for / organise their own transport services	15	1%
Children would be late to class or less prepared to learn when they arrive as a consequence of long, tiring journey	53	4%
Derby City Council have reneged on the promise that free school transport would be provided for children attending faith schools	26	2%
The correct infrastructure / arrangements must be in place to cope with consequences of the proposal - cycles lanes, 'walking buses', greater number of regular service buses etc	23	2%
Provision of free school transport should be considered an essential part of the council's budget, and cuts / savings must be made elsewhere	26	2%
Paying school bus fares on day to day basis - as with regular public transport - would be acceptable	12	1%
Whatever is decided, the same approach must be applied to all school bus services	29	2%
Parents should be prepared to contribute something towards / pay for cost of / arrange their own transport if they send their child to a school outside of their immediate catchment area	42	3%
General request that service is not withdrawn	76	6%
General support for the proposal	12	1%
Concern that these decisions have already been taken / this is not adequate consultation	8	1%
Other	5	0%
Not relevant answer to consultation subject	33	3%
Total comments	1229	100%

Question 4

A4.1 Do you have any further comments that will help us to reach a decision about the future provision of these school buses

- A4.2 All respondents to the survey were invited to make any further comments that they felt would help the council reach a decision about the future provision of the discretionary school buses. Just over half of the respondents (946) made a comment. Table A4.1 shows an analysis of the comments that were made, many of which reiterated the types of comments made earlier in the survey, shown in Table A3.1.
- A4.3 Within Table A4.1 the majority, (114 comments) expressed concern about the safety of other ways to reach school such as cycling or walking.
- A4.4 The analysis also shows that 108 comments received made the request to maintain the discretionary bus services, whilst in contrast 71 felt that parents should be prepared to contribute something towards / pay for cost of / arrange their own transport if they send their child to a school outside of their immediate catchments area.
- A4.5 A significant number (69) felt that this proposal discriminates against specific faith groups and in total just over 100 responses raised concerns about traffic / environmental issues.
- A4.6 61 respondents felt that the provision of free school transport should be considered an essential part of the council's budget, and cuts / savings must be made elsewhere.
- A4.7 The verbatim responses are available to be reviewed on request.

Table A4.1: Analysis of the verbatim comments to the question ‘Do you have any further comments that will help us to reach a decision about the future provision of these school buses’

Comment	Number	Percent
It would be difficult / impossible for our child to travel to our preferred faith school without current service	18	2%
If parents have chosen to send their children to a faith school, they should pay for the service	13	1%
No council tax should be spent on providing these services	1	0%
Provision of free school transport should be considered an essential part of the council's budget, and cuts / savings must be made elsewhere	61	6%
Parents should be prepared to contribute something towards / pay for cost of / arrange their own transport if they send their child to a school outside of their immediate catchments area	71	8%
Paying school bus fares on day to day basis - as with regular public transport - would be acceptable	16	2%
It is unfair to provide this service to some schools and not to others	31	3%
It will result in reduction in attendance / an increase in lateness	27	3%
It is unfair for the council to withdraw these services after we have already chosen to send our child to a school based on the promise / expectation that a free bus service would be available	23	2%
Children may experience distress if they have to change schools as a consequence of withdrawing the service	8	1%
The cost implications of paying for alternative transport arrangements will be difficult for some parents to bear	37	4%
The proposal would result in an increase in congestion / traffic	58	6%
The proposal would result in an increase in pollution	43	5%
Special consideration needs to be made for families who live particularly far away from their child's school	12	1%
The correct infrastructure / arrangements must be in place to cope with consequences of the proposal - cycles lanes, 'walking buses', greater number of regular service buses etc	37	4%
The proposal would have a detrimental effect on children's safety as they walk / cycle to school	114	12%
Walking or cycling will have a positive effect on the children's health	19	2%
Concern that these decisions have already been taken / this is not adequate consultation	33	3%
This proposal discriminates against specific faith groups	69	7%
Many parents - especially those working full time or with no access to a car at these times - will find arranging transport for their children very difficult.	21	2%
It would be sensible to look at withdrawing or re-organising some under-used bus services rather than simply withdrawing them all.	43	5%
This proposal would cause particular problems for disabled children	9	1%
The school itself should pay for school bus service	2	0%
Introduce a bus pass system for children to use on the regular bus service	5	1%
General request that service is not withdrawn	108	11%
General support for the proposal	1	0%
Other	16	2%
Not relevant answer to consultation subject	96	10%
TOTAL	946	100%

Questions 5 to 10

A5.1 The following questions were asked only to those respondents who currently had children at school, 792 respondents responded to this section.

Question 5 (i)

A5.2 Do you live in Derby City (do you pay your council tax to Derby City Council)?

A5.3 The majority of respondents live in the City (89%, 708 respondents) as shown in Table A5.1 below

Table A5.1: Whether respondents live in Derby City or not

	Number	Percent
Yes	708	89%
No	59	7%
No Response	25	3%
TOTAL	792	100%

Question 5 (ii)

A5.4 Do you have a child / children who attend school(s) within Derby City?

A5.5 The majority of respondents, have children who are at school in the City (89%, 705 respondents) Only 17 respondents (2%) have children who are not educated in Derby.

Table A5.2: Whether respondents children attended school/s in Derby City or not

	Number	Percent
Yes	705	89%
No	17	2%
No Response	70	9%
TOTAL	792	100%

Question 6

A6.1 Type of school children attend

A6.2 70% of those who responded (555) have children at primary school. 54% (428) have children who are at secondary school.

Table A6.1: Type of children school attend

	Number	Percent
Primary School*	555	70%
Secondary School*	428	54%
Other*	40	5%
No Response	24	3%
TOTAL	792	100%

* Could respond to more than one option

Question 7

A7.1 Does your child currently use one of the discretionary buses?

A7.2 37% of those who responded (293 replies) use one of the discretionary bus services (see Table A7.1)

Table A7.1: Use of one of the discretionary buses

	Number	Percent
Yes	293	37%
No	471	59%
NR	28	4%
TOTAL	792	100%

Question 8

A8.1 If yes, does your child travel...?

A8.2 Table A8.1 shows of the 293 respondents who said that their child/children used one of the discretionary bus services 110 have free travel (38%) and 167 (57%) pay for a pass

Table A8.1: Whether respondent's children currently pay for, or receive free, their travel pass

	Number	Percent
Free	110	38%
Pay for a pass	167	57%
No Response	16	5%
TOTAL	293	100%

Question 9

A9.1 If we withdraw the discretionary transport services, how would your child / children travel to school?

A9.2 When asked how their child would travel to school if the discretionary travel were withdrawn the 167 affected families answered as shown in Table A9.1. A significant proportion were unsure (31%, 52

respondents) with the majority (47%, 83 respondents) saying their child /children would travel by car.

Table A9.1: If we withdraw the discretionary transport services, how would your child / children travel to school?

	Number	Percent
Walk	12	7%
Cycle	4	2%
Scheduled bus service	40	24%
Family Car	75	45%
Friend's Car	8	5%
Don't Know	52	31%
Other	15	9%
No Response	4	2%
TOTAL	167	100%

A9.3 Under the answer of 'other', 9 parents said that their child would not attend school, 11 said their child would have to move school and eight said it would not be possible to get to school. Three respondents identified Taxis as an alternative way to go to school

Question 10

A10.1 If following the results of this consultation we were to stop providing discretionary transport, would you like us to provide you with further information which could assist you to plan your child's / children's school journey

A10.2 Just under half of the respondents (48%) would like the city council to provide further information which could assist them to plan their child's / children's school journey (see Table A10.1)

Table A10.1: If following the results of this consultation we were to stop providing discretionary transport, would you like us to provide you with further information which could assist you to plan your child's / children's school journey

	Number	Percent
Yes	80	48%
No	46	28%
Don't Know	22	13%
Not applicable	3	2%
No Response	16	10%
TOTAL	167	100%

Question 11

A11.1 Did you consider sending your child/children to a particular school because Derby City Council provides discretionary transport to that school?

A11.2 231 respondents (30% of those who replied) considered sending their child to a particular school on the strength of the provision of discretionary transport being provided.

Table A11.1: Did you consider sending your child/children to a particular School because Derby City Council provides discretionary transport to that school?

	Number	Percent
Yes	231	30%
No	464	59%
Don't Know	88	11%
TOTAL	783	100%

Other correspondence received during the consultation period

A12.1 During and slightly after the consultation period we received a number of letters, either directly through to officers or to Councillors and these have also been reviewed as part of the consultation process.

A12.2 The issues that were raised specifically with the withdrawal of the services are all issues that have been captured through the questionnaires and the 'free-text' areas within it.

A12.3 There were a number of other more strategic issues related to broader agendas, which have been or will be considered by the Council through other work areas. These include;

- Every child matters agenda
- Changes to the 14 to 19 curriculum and the links to transport provision

A12.4 All of these letters are available on request, together with all of the verbatim comments that were made through the questionnaires.

Proposed Changes to Home to School Transport Provision

Scheme Impact & Financial Assessment

June 2009

Contents

Introduction

Current provision

Proposals included in the consultation to modify discretionary transport

Impact of the Advanced Charging system at affected schools

Levels of Bus Usage

Modal shift

Accident Statistics during school start and pick-up times

Congestion outside schools during start/ pick-up times

Health and Social Aspects

Forecast impact of modification of discretionary transport & proposed mitigation measures

Modal shift

Accident Statistics during school start and pick-up times

Evidence of changes in bus usage

Congestion outside schools during start/ pick-up times

Health and Social Aspects

Mitigation Measures

Financial Assessment

Introduction

Overall Home to School Transport Funding

Cost Analysis of Services

Estimated Budget Savings for Discretionary Transport

Cost Estimates for Different Options of Transport Provision

Introduction

- 1.1 This report aims to set out the impact of the advanced charging scheme that started in September 2008 and to forecast the impact of the proposed modification of discretionary transport. It also suggests potential mitigation measures in the event of the modification.

Current Provision

- 2.1 The Council currently provides transport under the following scenarios to children attending school from 4 to 16 years old:

a) Statutory provision to all schools

This provision is focused over two categories:

- those families on low income who live between 2 and 6 miles to one of their 3 nearest secondary schools or between 2 and 15 miles from a suitable faith school they are attending on faith grounds, specifically where:
 - the family receives the maximum level of Working Tax Credit, or
 - the children are entitled to free school meals
- those children that live more than the statutory minimum walking distance from their nearest suitable school, specifically where:
 - they are aged 4 to 7 and live 2 miles or more from their nearest suitable school
 - they are aged 8 to 16 and live 3 miles or more from their nearest suitable school

b) Non-Statutory provision to faith schools

This provision is focused around those children that are aged between 4 – 7 years old and live more than 2 miles from school or for children between 8 and 16 who live more than 3 miles from school and are attending a faith school on faith grounds.

In these circumstances the Council provides either:

- free transport, if they began this specific home to school journey before September 2008 or
- subsidised transport with the family paying an advanced charge for use of the bus, if they started school in or after September 2008

The introduction of an advanced charge payment was approved by Cabinet on 15 January 2008.

c) Discretionary provision to a range of schools

This provision is focused predominantly on children that live less than 2 or 3 miles, depending on their age, from their nearest suitable school or are attending a faith school on faith grounds and live within the statutory distance. Any spare seats are offered to other children attending those schools on parental choice, but this is based on whether there are seats available. This includes children attending faith schools on non faith grounds, i.e. through parental choice.

This provision is:

- subsidised transport with the family paying an advanced charge for use of the bus if they wish to take advantage of the transport for their children

2.2 The schools where transport is currently provided are St George's; St John Fisher, St Joseph's, St Mary's primary schools and Saint Benedict, Derby Moor and Bemrose secondary schools.

2.3 No specific 16+ transport is provided directly by the Council, though B-line cards used on commercial services allow half fare travel, which is subsidised by the Council. The recent curriculum changes across the 14-19 curriculum may require us to review our transport provision, but this is uncertain at the present time.

Table 2.1 overleaf shows the numbers of children using the buses in the 08/09 academic year, broken down by category of provision.

Table 2.1 Mainstream Home to School Transport Provision - Details of services provided and usage statistics (May 2009)

Service	School	(a) Statutory Provision		(b) Non-statutory provision		(c) Discretionary provision		Total seats allocated	Total seats left vacant
		Free – Benefits	Free – Distance	Free – pre-Sept 08	Fare-paying from Sept 08	Fare-paying to nearest school	Fare-paying to choice school		
230	Bemrose	9	1	0	0	7	1	18	53
235	Derby Moor	7	0	0	0	21	2	30	41
236	Derby Moor	23	0	0	0	11	3	37	34
	Derby Moor sub-total	30	0	0	0	32	5	67	75
245	St George	10	0	12	1	10	18	51	20
246	St George	0	0	1	0	4	3	8	38
	St George sub-total	10	0	13	1	14	21	59	58
401	St John Fisher	3	0	1	0	9	2	15	31
212	St Joseph	2	0	16	1	7	1	27	43
90	St Benedict/St Marys	4	0	1	0	6	9	20	26
234	St Benedict	6	0	45	7	0	10	68	3
238	St Benedict	7	0	39	8	0	9	63	8
240	St Benedict	10	0	38	5	0	19	72	-1
244	St Benedict	9	0	23	1	2	22	57	14
251	St Benedict	0	0	29	4	0	1	34	12
253	St Benedict	5	0	37	3	8	16	69	1
255	St Benedict	2	0	38	7	1	2	50	0
257	St Benedict	3	0	8	1	1	14	27	43
258	St Benedict	1	0	37	6	7	7	58	13
260	St Benedict	0	0	14	0	0	2	16	5
261	St Benedict	12	0	21	7	2	28	70	1
403	St Benedict	0	0	24	2	0	4	30	2
433	St Benedict	10	0	19	0	6	27	62	8
434	St Benedict	2	0	10	1	7	12	32	22
	St Benedict sub-total	71	0	383	52	40	182	728	157
Overall Total		125	1	413	54	109	212	914	417
Percentage of total allocated seats		14%	0%	45%	6%	12%	23%		

Proposals Included in the Consultation to Modify Discretionary Transport

- 3.1 The current consultation is around the proposal to modify the discretionary provision that is provided to a range of schools which is predominantly made available to those children that live less than 2 or 3 miles from their school, depending on their age; category c) above.
- 3.2 In the current academic year, 2008/09, this would affect around 320 children attending four primary and three secondary schools.

Table 3.1: Numbers of Children Affected by the Proposals

Primary schools	St George's St John Fisher St Joseph's St Mary's around 55 children in total
Secondary schools	Saint Benedict; around 220 children Derby Moor Community; around 37 children Bemrose Community; around 8 children

- 3.3 The reduction in numbers equates to 35% of all children that the Council currently transports to mainstream schools.
- 3.4 The current net cost to the Council of providing this discretionary transport is around £360,000. The proposed budget saving is £280,000, with the difference being retained to allow for any consequential cost increases around the continued provision of the statutory and non-statutory transport and b_line.

Impact of the Advanced Charging System at Affected Schools

Usage of Council's Discretionary Bus Services Prior to the Introduction of Advanced Charging

- 4.1 Table 4.1 shows the estimated numbers of children using the services prior to the introduction of advanced charging, against a summary of the current usage.

Table 4.1: Numbers of Children Using Discretionary Transport Buses

School	Pre Sept 2008	Post Sept 2008
Bemrose	80	18
Derby Moor	400	67
St George's	85	59
St John Fisher	20	15
St Joseph's	60	27
Saint Benedict /St Mary's	837	728
Total	1487	914

- 4.2 This shows significant reductions in the numbers of pupils using the services; an overall percentage reduction of approximately 38.5%.

Evidence of Changes in Bus Usage Following the Introduction of Advanced Charging

Additional Bus Service

- 4.3 Although there have been no widespread reports of overloading on commercial services, following specific observations of regular overcrowding on the 0815am bus (Service 6.4) from Derby to Belper, an extra bus has been provided by Notts. & Derby from the city centre to St Benedict School, to add extra capacity to the current commercial service provided by their sister company (trent barton). This service was introduced with effect from the October 2008 half term holiday and is still running at the time of writing, indicating that significant numbers of pupils are travelling to St Benedict School on commercial services each morning. The bus operators have not identified a corresponding existing demand to run a similar extra service for pupils returning to the city centre or for journeys to/from the other schools served by the advance charging system.

b_line card usage:

- 4.4 Usage figures were obtained for comparable 5 month periods prior to (September 2007 to January 2008) and after (September 2008 to January 2009) the introduction of advance charging.

Table 4.2: 'b_line' Card Usage and the Introduction of Advance Charging

Period/Operator	Arriva	Trent Barton
Sept '07 to Jan '08	276,716	100,902
Sept '08 to Jan '09	274,651	99,708

- 4.5 The slight decrease in b_line usage figures for both of the major bus operators indicates that there has not been any significant shift of pupils to commercial services following the introduction of advance charging.

Modal Shift

- 4.6 Data has been collated from a mixture of City-wide surveys (prior to 2007) and Pupil Led Annual School Census figures between 2007 and 2009. The PLASC surveys are completed in January each year, so it would seem reasonable to assume that the 2009 data is a reflection of any modal shift since the current advance charging policy was introduced (in September 2008).

Modal Shift at Primary Schools

- 4.7 **Summary :** For primary schools (see Table 4.3 overleaf), the most significant effect of the introduction of advance charging would appear to have been to decrease bus usage in three of the four schools affected. The numbers of pupils walking & travelling by car have generally increased, apart from at St Mary's Catholic Primary where there is little shift in any mode since the introduction of the new system.

Table 4.3: Modal Shift at Primary Schools

a) St George's Catholic Primary School											
Year	No Surveyed	Walk No	Walk %	Cycle No	Cycle %	Car No	Car %	Car Share No	Car share %	Bus No	Bus %
2005	324	91	28	1	-	131	40	21	7	94	29
2006	311	104	33	0	-	90	29	18	6	99	32
2007	335	87	26	3	-	134	40	0	-	111	33
2008	255	63	25	3	1	102	40	0	-	87	34
2009	320	94	29	7	2	145	45	16	5	58	18

Significant Observations: Large decrease in bus usage (by 16%) since the introduction of advance charging. In absolute number terms, both walking and car use have increased markedly, when compared to 2008. However, the 2008 survey seems to have had a much lower return rate, so these figures are not reflected as a significant percentage change.

b) St John Fisher Catholic Primary School											
Year	No Surveyed	Walk No	Walk %	Cycle No	Cycle %	Car No	Car %	Car Share No	Car share %	Bus No	Bus %
2007	196	35	18	1	-	111	57	0	-	49	25
2009	205	43	21	9	4	122	60	2	-	28	14

Significant Observations: No data for 2008, but bus usage has decreased dramatically (by 11%) since 2007. Corresponding increases in walking (3%) and car usage (5%).

c) St Joseph's Catholic Primary School											
Year	No Surveyed	Walk No	Walk %	Cycle No	Cycle %	Car No	Car %	Car Share No	Car share %	Bus No	Bus %
2006	197	48	24	0	-	113	57	5	3	31	16
2007	360	131	36	0	-	156	43	0	-	73	21
2009	352	121	34	0	-	174	49	4	1	52	15

Significant Observations: No data for 2008, but 2009 figures indicate a 6% decrease in bus usage since 2007 and corresponding 6% increase in pupils travelling by car. Walking figures are static.

d) St Mary's Catholic Primary School											
Year	No Surveyed	Walk No	Walk %	Cycle No	Cycle %	Car No	Car %	Car Share No	Car share %	Bus No	Bus %
2006	242	42	17	1	-	141	58	30	13	28	12
2007	314	56	18	0	-	218	69	18	6	14	7
2008	358	81	23	2	-	249	69	6	2	18	5
2009	364	88	24	2	-	236	65	9	2	19	5

Significant Observations: Bus usage has remained fairly similar in both 2008 and 2009, as have walking & cycling.

Modal Shift at Secondary Schools

- 4.8 Summary:** For secondary schools, the trend since the introduction of advance charging seems to be that bus usage has decreased at each of the schools in question. This decrease has generally been mirrored by a similar percentage rise in pupils using cars to travel to/from school. For walking and cycling, the overall conclusion is that travel by these modes does not appear to have been changed significantly since the advance charging was implemented.

Table 4.4: Modal Shift at Secondary Schools

a) St Benedict Catholic School											
Year	No surveyed	Walk no	Walk %	Cycle No	Cycle %	Car No	Car %	Car Share no	Car Share %	Bus No	Bus %
2005	600	45	8	1	-	51	9	14	2	469	78
2006	671	40	6	3	-	68	10	13	2	543	81
2007	1489	126	8	3	-	49	3	0	-	1063	71
2008	1444	131	9	3	-	78	5	0	-	1192	83
2009	1492	178	12	16	1	191	13	2	-	1071	72

Significant Observations: Bus usage reduced by 11%; significant increase in car usage (by 8%, or 113 pupils). Walking increased by 3%; slight increase in cycling.

b) Derby Moor Community Sports College											
Year	No surveyed	Walk no	Walk %	Cycle No	Cycle %	Car No	Car %	Car Share no	Car Share %	Bus No	Bus %
2005	521	187	36	17	3	104	20	45	8	143	27
2006	109	16	15	11	10	32	29	8	7	35	33
2007	1316	462	35	66	5	304	23	5	-	427	32
2008	1045	374	36	58	6	266	25	6	-	333	32
2009	1314	466	35	78	6	368	28	26	2	372	28

Significant Observations: Bus usage decreased slightly (by 4%), with comparable percentage increase in car usage (3%). Walking & cycling static.

c) Bemrose Community School											
Year	No surveyed	Walk no	Walk %	Cycle No	Cycle %	Car No	Car %	Car Share no	Car Share %	Bus No	Bus %
2005	479	196	41	5	1	127	26	34	7	99	21
2006	369	156	42	5	1	121	33	20	5	56	15
2008	114	52	46	2	2	43	38	0	-	12	11
2009	818	394	48	4	-	282	34	50	6	54	7

Significant Observations: Indicated decrease (of 4%) in past year for bus usage. Car usage also decreased by 4%. Walking & cycling no significant change. 2007 PLASC data had a low rate of return, which may explain these results.

Note: Before 2007, citywide surveys were completed, but with varying degrees of success. PLASC figures are shown from 2007-2009; the travel return on PLASC is only compulsory for those schools that have completed a travel plan.

Accident Data during School Access Times

- 4.9 In order to quantify whether the expected shift for some pupils to other modes of travel to school following the implementation of the advance charging system in September 2008 may have resulted in more accidents involving pupils, the Council's accident database has been interrogated for the first quarter following the introduction of the scheme and the corresponding quarter in the previous year. The parameters were: city-wide, between 8am to 9am and 3pm to 4pm, between September and December 07 and September and December 08, up to age 15.

Table 4.5: Summary of Accidents between 1st September and 31st December in 2007 and 2008, between 0800-0859 and 1500-1559 hours.

Time & Year	Fatal	Serious	Slight	Total Accidents
0800-0859 2007	0	1	5	6
1500-1559 2007	0	1	2	3
0800-0859 2008	0	0	1	1
1500-1559 2008	0	0	5	5

- 4.10 The overall conclusion is that the introduction of advance charging has not resulted in a significant increase in the number of accidents reported – the figures available indicate an overall decreased level of accidents, but the sample size is too small to be statistically significant.

Morning period

- 4.11 During the period examined, for 2007, there were a total of 6 accidents, of which two involved child pedestrians – in the other 4 accidents, the children involved were car passengers. Similarly, for the 2008 period, the sole accident involved children who were passengers in a car.

Afternoon Period

- 4.12 The 2007 data reveals a citywide total of 3 pedestrian accidents involving children aged between 4 and 15. In 2008, there were 5 accidents in the comparable time period, of which two involved cyclists and three pedestrians. None of the accidents were within the immediate vicinity of any of the relevant schools; the closest to any of the schools in question was one approximately 0.5km from St Joseph's Primary

Congestion Outside Schools during 'Drop-Off' & 'Pick-Up' Times

- 4.13 There is a general public perception that there is a widespread congestion issue across the city, namely of large numbers of vehicle movements and parking problems in the vicinity of schools, usually associated with the start and end of the school day.

- 4.14 In relation to the introduction of advance charging, the congestion issues have been reported to be particularly bad at two of the secondary schools, namely Derby Moor and St Benedict; presumably due to large numbers of pupils travelling to/from a single destination over short periods of time. In terms of primary schools, the levels of parking issues and congestion for schools covered by the advance charging scheme have not been considered to be significantly worse than at other schools, with the exception of St Mary's Catholic Primary School, where it is accepted that parking problems and congestion has occurred in the vicinity of Broadway.
- 4.15 To address the other reported concerns, during one week in April 2009, officers monitored the current levels of parked vehicles and vehicle movements around the three secondary schools currently served by buses contracted by the Council.

Traffic Surveys – Potential Vehicle Parking Issues at Secondary Schools

- 4.16 The surveys follow the initial limited observations made shortly after the introduction of advance charging and are intended to act as a more detailed baseline snapshot of typical school 'drop-off' and 'pick up' traffic movements on residential roads near the schools in question.

Table 4.6: Traffic Surveys - Synopsis of results:

School	Morning Peak	Afternoon Peak
St Benedict	No significant parking issues noted on roads adjacent to the school where surveys were conducted.	No significant parking issues noted on roads adjacent to the school where surveys were conducted.
Derby Moor	Approximately 20 'drop-off' related movements on Bannels Avenue between 0815 and 0845hrs.	Approximately 20 'pick up' related movements on Bannels Avenue between 1500 and 1545hrs. Similar number of movements in two locations on Moorway Lane between 1445 and 1545hrs.
Bemrose	Approximately 17 'drop-off' related movements noted between 0815 and 0845hrs on roads adjacent to the school where surveys were conducted..	Relatively high number (27) of vehicle movements noted in Rowditch Avenue between 1445 and 1500hrs

- 4.17 The overall results indicate that there are localised 'hotspots' which can occur during a relatively short period of time near two of the schools.
- 4.18 Whilst accepting that there is some evidence of heightened vehicle activity associated with two schools, considering the size of the secondary schools concerned, the number of vehicle movements related to school 'drop-off' and 'pick up' traffic movements is relatively

low at present. In general terms, the surveys tend to suggest that the introduction of the advance charging system has not resulted in prolonged periods of excessive parking problems in the residential streets nearest to the schools surveyed.

- 4.19 It should be noted that the surveys performed amount to a 'snapshot' and that very extensive surveys performed over a long duration might result in different findings. However, such surveys would be costly and difficult to justify in the light of these findings and anecdotal evidence from the enumerators that levels of congestion are not significantly different from those that can occur at other schools not served by buses under the advance charging system.
- 4.20 With the exception of St Mary's Catholic Primary, officers are not aware of any complaints of excessive parking problems/congestion at the primary schools served by the advance charging system.

Health and Social Aspects

- 4.21 The withdrawal of Council support from discretionary mainstream school bus services might be viewed as being likely to cause inconvenience to those pupils involved. However, should services be reduced or withdrawn, it is likely that increased numbers of pupils will walk or cycle to school
- 4.22 It may be feasible to implement a number of low-cost potential mitigation measures such as targeted cycle training. In addition, there are likely to be health and social benefits which may be linked to the Government's 'Change4Life' agenda.

Forecast Impact of Modification of Discretionary Transport & Proposed Mitigation Measures

Modal shift

- 5.1 In relation to modal shift, we have reviewed the Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) school survey data which gives an indication of the modes of travel that children use to go to and from school, and therefore allows us to look at modal shift from year to year. The results show that since the introduction of the advance charge the numbers of children travelling by bus have reduced and the numbers travelling by car have increased. Also the modal shift analysis does not show that there has been an increase in walking and cycling to any of the schools that were affected by the advance charge scheme. However we have not done any concentrated work with these particular schools to support their School Travel Plans, and it is recommended to Members that we should do this.

Accident Statistics during school start and pick-up times

- 5.2 As mentioned earlier, the accident statistics that have been analysed show very low levels of accidents involving children. There has not been an increase with the introduction of the advance charge scheme, which has seen higher levels of children choosing an alternative mode of transport to the bus than will be affected by these proposed service modifications. Based on these findings, we do not consider that there is a significant increased risk of children being involved in road accidents due to these proposed changes.

Evidence of changes in bus usage

- 5.3 The data examined does not indicate that there will be significant additional adverse impacts in terms of overcrowding on commercial bus services if the Council's commitment to discretionary home to school transport is reduced from its current level or withdrawn completely.

Congestion outside schools during start/ pick-up times

- 5.4 This Appendix notes the results of some traffic surveys that have been carried out near to the secondary schools, and also comments that primary schools generally have a bigger problem related to car drop off. This is due to children being too young to travel to school unaccompanied and, because of family circumstances; travel by car may be the most appropriate mode of transport. However the levels of congestion and parking outside of these schools are not considered significantly better or worse than at other schools across the city.
- 5.5 A significant number of responses to the consultation cited one of the main impacts of the proposal would be an increase in congestion and traffic, due to the fact that the majority of the affected children would be taken to school by car. Whilst we acknowledge that for the majority of these displaced journeys this is likely to be the case, especially in the

short term whilst other arrangements can be made, the impact on existing parking and congestion levels at these schools will be minimal as the bus service withdrawals affect such relatively small numbers of children at each school.

- 5.6 We are aware that Saint Benedict School has had to put in place arrangements to allow cars onto their school site to accommodate the effects of the advance charge scheme. The registration of the commercial bus services should help to alleviate this problem as children who were previously dissuaded from using the advance charge scheme will now be able to pay a daily fare, and may now revert to bus travel as their main mode of transport to school.

Health and Social Aspects

- 5.7 We do acknowledge that for a small, but significant, number of parents/ carers that have been used to having this service available it could be difficult for them to plan and adopt new travel arrangements
- 5.8 The key social aspects around the scheme impact are the difficulties that some parents/ carers will have in changing their travel arrangements, particularly for working people. There may be increased costs associated with new arrangements. However other parents in schools that have not had access to these services have always had to factor in these issues when making their arrangements, again raising the issue of equity of provision. It would be also be equitable if we could provide transport to all schools, but this is simply not affordable.
- 5.9 In relation to Saint Benedict and Derby Moor, the registration of the commercial services does re-introduce the ability to pay a daily fare for bus travel, rather than the advance charge system. Some parents have reported that they have been unable to use the advance charge system as they cannot find the required amounts of 'up front' payment, despite the direct debit facility.
- 5.10 There is no doubt that increasing the numbers of children walking and cycling to school is good for children's health. We have opportunities to work with children through our School Travel Plan advisors and the Cycle Derby training team to try to support and encourage more sustainable travel.

Mitigation Measures

- 5.11 Officers have recommended to Members that we continue to develop the Sustainable School Travel Strategy that looks to promote alternative travel modes and that over the coming year, our resources are focussed on helping those parents/ carers who are affected by the changes and need help to plan their alternative arrangements. The changes are looking predominantly to support walking, cycling or car sharing to school.

- 5.12 We do believe that through the further development of School Travel Plans and working more specifically with the primary schools over the coming year we can try to alleviate potential inconvenience problems and do more to encourage walking and cycling to school.

Financial Assessment

Introduction

- 6.1 This financial assessment aims to set out an overall guide to the support that the Council provides to home to school transport and support to children through the b-line scheme, as well as a detailed analysis of the costs of the home to school transport to the schools.

Overall Home to School Transport Funding

- 6.2 The key areas of funding are split between transporting children with special educational needs, SEN, and providing transport, largely through contracted bus services to mainstream schools.
- 6.3 The annual funding for transport contracts and other provision provided by the Council is estimated at £3.2m. This is prior to any decision on modifying discretionary transport provision. They are split by:
- | | | |
|-----|---|--------------|
| 6.4 | SEN, Children and Young People's budget: | £2.4m |
| | Mainstream, Children and Young People's budget: | £450,000 |
| | Mainstream, Regeneration and Community budget: | £330,000 |
| | Total | £3.2m |
- 6.5 The funding linked to the services that would be affected by the modification of discretionary services is estimated at **£700,000**; £370,000 from CYP and £330,000 from R&C. On top of this for R&C £30,000 is spent on staff costs in arranging and managing the transport, which if the service is withdrawn would also be part of the total savings figures.
- 6.6 The total savings figure over 2 years is £280,000; £165,000 in 2009/10 and £115,000 in 2010/11. The £30,000 staff saving is proposed for 2010/11.
- 6.7 Although the delay of any decision by the Council has reduced the potential savings in 2009/10, it is still anticipated that the overall £280,000 saving could be achieved in 2010/11, subject to approval of the proposed modifications' by Members.
- 6.8 The other contribution that the Council makes towards supporting childrens' use of public transport is the b-line scheme. For children aged 14 to 19 who are still in full time education they are able to pay half fare on commercial services. The operators claim a proportion of the other half of the fare from the Council. The budget for spend on b-line within the city is £275,000. Obviously this entire budget is not all focussed on supporting home to school travel.

Cost Analysis of Services

- 6.9 In assessing the costs of the services we need to understand the estimated costs of the advanced charging scheme, which was introduced in September 2008.
- 6.10 Table 6.1 sets out the estimated costs of overall transport provision for the 2008/09 academic year, the full year of the advance charging scheme. The table sets out the numbers of children using the bus services, the estimated annual costs, per academic year, of the transport to each school, together with and an estimate of the income that is being received against that travel. It sets out the contract costs as they were in October 2008 and also as of May 2009, where it can be seen that costs have been negotiated down, or contracts have been retendered. The difference between these figures is significant and shows how variable the spend in this area can be.
- 6.11 These costs assume an average of 193 days of travel per school year, but this varies year to year; also the income may vary as some children will receive discounts if they are part of a larger family. The figures are calculated on the basis that the annual advance charge to travel to a primary school is £290 and to a secondary school is £350.

Table 6.1: Estimated costs of overall transport provision in 2008/09 academic year

School	Total seats allocated	Estimated annual income	Figures based on costs October 2008		Figures based on costs May 2009	
			Net cost	Net cost per child	Net cost	Net cost per child
Bemrose	18	£2,800	£28,000	£1,560	£22,000	£1,220
Derby Moor	67	£12,950	£142,000	£2,120	£35,000	£520
St George	59	£10,440	£71,000	£1,203	£60,000	£1,020
St John Fisher	15	£3,190	£25,000	£1,670	£24,000	£1,600
St Joseph	27	£2,610	£27,000	£1,000	£27,000	£1,000
St Benedict/ St Mary	728	£95,900	£450,000	£620	£390,000	£540
Total	914	£127,890	£743,000	£810	£558,000	£610

- 6.12 The estimated annual costs based on the May 2009 figures have been broken down further by the category of transport provision provided by the Council, shown in Table 6.2 overleaf. This is relevant to investigate the estimated cost of the discretionary element, which is the subject of the proposed modification of services.
- 6.13 Table 2.1 earlier in this report sets out the numbers of children being transport by different category of provision in the 2008/09 academic

year. In total for statutory this is 126, for non-statutory this is 467 and for discretionary this is 321.

Table 6.2: Estimated net costs by different category of transport provision

School	Estimated net annual cost			Estimated net annual cost per child		
	Statutory	Non-statutory	Discretionary	Statutory	Non-statutory	Discretionary
Bemrose	£3,510	0	£18,780	£350	0	£2,350
Derby Moor	£9,610	0	£25,500	£320	0	£690
St George	£6,510	£6,950	£48,470	£650	£500	£1,390
St John Fisher	£1,620	£540	£21,670	£540	£540	£1,970
St Joseph	£1,200	£8,390	£17,130	£600	£490	£2,140
St Benedict/ St Mary	£48,710	£244,850	£97,670	£690	£560	£440
Total	£71,160	£260,730	£229,220	£570	£560	£710

6.14 Table 6.2 shows the costs for each category of provision and the range of subsidy per child. For discretionary provision the net subsidy per child ranges from £440 to £2,350 per child; this does not include the cost of the staff resource required to arrange and manage this transport provision. Each child has already made a contribution of £290 for primary and £350 for secondary school provision.

6.15 This level of subsidy seems very difficult to justify in the current economic climate and also that it is provided to a relatively small number of children in the school system. Even within the schools themselves the numbers of pupils essentially receiving this subsidy are low. These proposals currently directly affect 64 children in 5 schools compared to the total of 103 schools and 37,000 children. There may be a minor variation to these numbers, due to 'starters' and 'leavers', but the overall level is not expected to change significantly.

6.16 With the registration of commercial services to Saint Benedict and Derby Moor, the level of subsidy per child reduces significantly as the only contribution from the Council for discretionary travel will be the b-line half fare subsidy for children aged between 14 and 18. This is estimated to be in the region of £40,000 to 50,000, depending on take up. For these children it would be a subsidy of around £300 per child depending on the level of bus usage.

Estimated Budget Savings for Discretionary Transport

6.17 In March 2009 the estimated net cost of discretionary transport for 2009/10 was £330,000, presuming that the service was to be continued; however as can be seen from the figures in Table 6.2, on the basis of the savings that have been made in changing some of the bus services to reflect existing demand the estimated net cost is £230,000; a saving of £100,000.

- 6.18 The total budget savings over 2 years however were £280,000; £250,000 on service costs and £30,000 on staff resources. Therefore in order to realise this estimated saving a further reduction of £150,000 is required in operational costs. The remaining £80,000 was retained in order to manage the reduction in service provision around any consequential increases in the continued provision of statutory and non-statutory provision and any potential increase in b-line subsidy costs if children then chose to use commercial services. The estimated costs for future years do use up this allocation, largely in b-line costs related to support for St Benedict and Derby Moor.

Cost Estimates for Different Options of Transport Provision

- 6.19 A range of other options have been costed for Member consideration and these are:
- a) To continue to provide the existing levels of discretionary transport to primary schools and Bemrose secondary school
 - b) To phase out the discretionary transport provision, which could take up to 7 years
 - c) To provide transport provision at 100 schools across the city

a) To continue to provide existing levels of discretionary transport to primary schools and Bemrose secondary school

- 6.20 The estimated net operational cost for carrying on with provision to 64 children across the 4 primary schools and Bemrose is £70,000; this is a net subsidy of £1100, excluding the staff costs. With the requirement to reinstatement staff resources, the total additional cost would be £100,000.

b) To phase out the discretionary transport provision, which could take up to 7 years

- 6.21 If we make some simple assumptions in terms of a reducing number of children per year, and a reducing cost of provision to ensure that the provision is as cost effective as possible then the following would seem a reasonable estimate. This is likely to be an underestimate of costs as depending on where children live, determining the most cost effective type of transport would require detailed work. However even with this best case assumption, Table 6.3 overleaf shows that subsidy per child is around £1,100, excluding staff costs. The situation is obviously worse if the cost of staff is included.
- 6.22 With the requirement to reinstate the staff resources, the total additional cost in 2009/10 would be £100,000, reducing to £25,000 over 7 years.

Table 6.3: Estimated costs to phase out the discretionary transport provision to primary schools

	Annual net cost	Estimated numbers of children	Annual net cost per child
2009/10	£70,000	64	1,100
2010/11	£60,000	55	1,100
2011/12	£50,000	46	1,100
2012/13	£40,000	37	1,100
2013/14	£30,000	28	1,100
2014/15	£20,000	19	1,100
2015/16	£10,000	9	1,100
Staffing cost – full time 4 years, then part time	£165,000		
Total over 7 years	£445,000		
Range	£25,000 to £100,000	9 to 64	£1,500 to £2,800

c) To provide Council transport provision at 100 schools across the city

- 6.23 If we were to assume that a bus costs around £140 per day, carries around 30 children paying £2 per day to travel, then the net transport cost of a bus would be around £15,000 per year. For 100 schools this would be a net cost of £1.5m per year. This is over 4 times more than the current budget and is likely to be considered unaffordable in the current financial climate.