



Derby City Council

**COUNCIL CABINET**  
**21 January 2015**

Report of the Cabinet Member for Children and  
Young People

# ITEM 12

## Home to School/College Transport Consultation

### SUMMARY

- 1.1 Whilst undertaking a review of home to school/college transport services, the City Council identified a number of ways students could be better supported whilst transitioning to adulthood.
- 1.2 One area identified was the promotion of independence skills for students with Special Educational Needs (SEN), who often require additional support to develop the independence skills needed to enable access to employment and leisure.
- 1.3 In support of this and in line with best practise, Derby has recently begun an independent travel training programme. However, the current Transport policy acts as a disincentive to this, as when students are able to travel independently they are not always provided with assistance.
- 1.4 A second area identified was to align travel assistance for students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) with more sustainable travel options used in adulthood, by including personal travel budget options in the transport assistance offer.
- 1.5 In addition to the above:
  - The recent introduction of specialist post 19 education in the city has reduced the need for extensive travel for older students, and
- 1.6
  - Benchmarking against other Local Authorities (LAs) has found Derby has a generous post 16 SEN transport offer, where support is provided for longer and is fully subsidised. Both Leicester City Council and Derbyshire County Council have recently reduced support to post 16 students.
- 1.7 This report provides an overview of the Transport proposals to be consulted upon, which focus on supporting students to develop the independence skills needed whilst retaining specialist transport support for students in most need.

### RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 To approve the consultation as noted.

<b>REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION</b>
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3.1 The proposals will:

- Better support students transitioning to adulthood by providing support in a more sustainable way.

3.2

- Enable increased demand for transport services to be managed within a balanced budget position.



Derby City Council

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### Report of the Strategic Director of Children and Young People

#### SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 4.1 The City council currently spends a total of circa £3.5 million per year on home to school/college transport. The majority of spend is for students with statements of Special Educational Need (SEN) who are placed at schools across the city.
- 4.2 Whilst extensive work has been undertaken within the council to reduce this cost over recent years, financial pressures continue as the demand for transport increases.
- 4.3 A large proportion of the home to school transport budget funds pupils who are eligible in law for free transport assistance to school. In addition, the council also provides transport to other pupils and students at its own discretion. The law gives discretion over which types of transport the council can provide.
- 4.4 In order to manage increased demand whilst balancing the budget the proposals are to reduce **discretionary** home to school/college travel provision and move to lower cost modes of travel.
- 4.5 The following key areas have been identified for consultation:

#### **Proposal 1: Reduction in discretionary Post 16 special educational needs transport arrangements.**

- It is proposed in future to provide transport assistance only to those students with special educational needs who have severely restricted mobility\* up to the end of the term in which they reach the age of 19. Where transport assistance is provided, it may be in the form of a personal travel budget.

\*as defined by being eligible for the Disability Living Allowance mobility component at the higher rate.

- 4.6 Derby City's current policy is considered a disincentive to promoting independence, as travel by public transport is not fully subsidised by the Council yet taxi travel is.
- 4.7 Benchmarking against other Local Authorities (LAs) has found Derby has a generous post 16 SEN transport offer - transport for students with SEN continues for longer (until the pupil turns 25 years), with the default method of transport provided being a taxi.

- 4.8 Other Local Authorities have recently amended policies to significantly reduce transport provision in this area, with reductions in post 16 provision (Leicester City Council) and post 19 provision (Derbyshire County Council).
- 4.9 Additionally, there is a reduced need for extensive travel to education provision - specialist post 19 education provision has recently been made available in the city, and during 2013/14 two thirds of post 16 SEN pupils were travelling to a provision within the Derby City boundary on public transport routes.
- 4.10 **Proposal 2: Changes to types of transport assistance offered to eligible special educational needs pupils.**
- It is proposed transport assistance to eligible SEN pupils would include:
    - Travel pass or season ticket for a school bus service or local bus service,
    - Independent Travel Training to support students to become independent travellers,
    - Fuel allowance, or
    - Personal travel budget.
  - Where the parent/carer has a motability vehicle for the benefit of the child, there is a reasonable expectation that this will be used to transport the child to school and fuel will be reimbursed.
- 4.11 Independent travel training allows for better preparation for adulthood by aligning home to school travel support for older students with sustainable travel methods used in adulthood. It is now in place in most local authorities, and recognised as good practice.
- 4.12 Derby has recently begun a training programme across the city, meeting students' aspirations to become more independent, and enabling greater access to employment and leisure. There has been a significant amount of interest in this from parents, students and schools.
- 4.13 Personal travel budgets are promoted within the SEND reforms as a way of giving families greater flexibility in sourcing the transport best suited for their child's needs. They may also provide cost savings by efficiencies gained from parents sourcing their own methods of transport.
- 4.14 Many LAs have moved to personal travel budgets over the last two years. During 2014/15 Derby City begun to pilot personal travel budgets.
- 4.15 **Timescales for changes**  
Proposal 1 is proposed to be implemented from September 2015 for all students. Proposal 2 is proposed to be phased in from immediately following approval.

<b>OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED</b>
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- 5.1 Accept an on-going budget pressure for Home to School/College Transport.
- 5.2 Increasing the budget in line with forecasted costs.

**This report has been approved by the following officers:**

<b>Legal officer</b> <b>Financial officer</b> <b>Human Resources officer</b> <b>Estates/Property officer</b> <b>Service Director(s)</b>  <b>Other(s)</b>	Anita Barnett, Solicitor Janet Bowlzer, Group Accountant  Frank McGhee, Service Director, Commissioning, Children and Young People Paula Nightingale, Head of Inclusion and Intervention, Children & Young People Dave Dowbenko, Group Transport Manager, Neighbourhoods Ann Webster, Lead on Equality and Diversity, Resources
<b>For more information contact:</b> <b>Background papers:</b> <b>List of appendices:</b>	Lisa Melrose 01332 642569 lisa.melrose@derby.gov.uk None Appendix 1 – Implications Appendix 2 – Home to School/College Transport Consultation Appendix 3 – Proposed Home to School Transport Policy

<b>IMPLICATIONS</b>
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**Financial and Value for Money**

- 1.1 The City council currently spends a total of circa £3.5 million per year on home to school/college transport. Whilst extensive work has been undertaken within the council to reduce this cost over recent years, financial pressures continue as the demand for transport increases.
- 1.2 The council currently transports 139 post 16 students at a cost of £480,000 per annum. This cost is wholly met by the council. The average cost of providing this transport is £3,451 per student per annum.

Proposal 1 would seek to achieve savings of approximately £200,000.

- 1.3 During academic year 2013/14, 767 pupils (including post 16) were provided with transport assistance at a cost of £2.7 million per annum. The average cost of providing this transport was £3,520 per student per annum. This cost is wholly met by the council.

Proposal 2 would achieve savings by reducing the unit cost of travel per pupil, on a gradual basis.

**Legal**

- 2.1 There is a general duty on local education authorities to assess the school travel needs of their area and to promote the use of sustainable modes of transport under section 508 Education Act 1996.
- 2.2 The Council must have regard to DfE guidance 501-2014 'Home to School Travel and Transport guidance', and DfE guidance 025-2014 'Post 16 Transport to Education and Training', in considering the recommendations made in this report.
- 2.3 The former policy 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'.
- 2.4 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.

**Personnel**

- 3.1 There may be an impact on roles as different types of transport provision are sourced.

## **IT**

4.1 None noted.

## **Equalities Impact**

5.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) has been undertaken, and will be revisited during consultation, as students with special educational needs would be affected.

## **Health and Safety**

6.1 None noted.

## **Environmental Sustainability**

7.1 Any potential impact on carbon emissions would be noted in the EIA.

## **Property and Asset Management**

8.1 None noted.

## **Risk Management**

9.1 There is a risk that post 16 students do not attend, or drop out part way through their course if transport is no longer provided free of charge.

## **Corporate objectives and priorities for change**

- 10.1
- Achieving learning potential.
  - Good health and well-being.
  - Value for money strategy.
  - Being safe and feeling safe.