

ITEM 2



COUNCIL CABINET
17 March 2009

Report of the Chair of the Children and Young People Commission

Proposed Withdrawal of Discretionary Transport to Mainstream Schools

SUMMARY

- 1.1 At its meeting on 10 March 2009 the Children and Young People (CYP) Commission considered a report by the Corporate Director Regeneration and Community on the proposal to withdraw discretionary transport to mainstream schools.
- 1.2 Commission members had concerns about the impacts of this suggestion. After lengthy discussion of the issues the Commission voted to recommend to Cabinet that it did not proceed with the proposal to withdraw discretionary transport.

RECOMMENDATIONS

2. That Council Cabinet does not proceed with the proposal to withdraw discretionary transport to mainstream schools.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Commission members were concerned about the impacts that the proposed withdrawal of discretionary transport would have on pupils who attend the schools and on their families.
- 3.2 Members also considered that the withdrawal of discretionary transport would increase private car use. They felt that this in turn would result in increased congestion, higher carbon emissions and reduced road safety.
- 3.3 Some members expressed concern about the apparent lack of consultation that has taken place on the proposals.
- 3.4 At a previous meeting of the Commission, members were told by young people's representatives of their concerns about safety whilst travelling to school. Members considered that the withdrawal of discretionary transport could have an adverse impact on the safety of pupils on their

journeys to and from school and on their attendance.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 4.1 Members were concerned that the withdrawal of discretionary school transport would have a significant financial impact on the families of children who currently used the service. It was pointed out that in some cases children who had previously used the discretionary service would have to pay for two bus journeys to get to school and two more to get home again. It was felt that this could involve their families in significant additional financial outlay and that this might prove particularly onerous in the present economic climate. The view was expressed that the projected annual savings did not justify the financial impact on families.
- 4.2 It was suggested by members that the withdrawal of discretionary transport would result in increased car use because the parents of children who had previously used the buses would instead take them to school by car. Members considered that this would result in increased congestion and in increased carbon emissions that would come at a time when the Council was committed to reducing the overall level of carbon emissions from the City. It was also felt that increased car use would have road safety implications, particularly in the vicinity of the schools.
- 4.3 A statutory co-opted member of the CYP Commission was concerned about the lack of previous consultation and felt that the Catholic Church had been excluded from the formative stages of the discussions of the proposal.
- 4.4 The CYP Commission meeting on 20 January 2009 was attended by young people's representatives. They participated in the discussion of the proposal to withdraw discretionary transport that took place at that meeting and told the Commission of their worries about the withdrawal of the discretionary services. It is of note that those worries included the safety of children travelling to school on normal commercial service buses. Some of the young people also mentioned the problems caused by commercial service buses being late, or in some cases not arriving at all, and said that this could result in them being marked as not attending school.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5. None

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Background papers: Background Papers - None
List of appendices: Appendix 1 – Implications

Appendix 1

IMPLICATIONS

Financial

1. None arising from this report. The projected cost savings would not be realised if the discretionary services were not withdrawn.

Legal

2. None arising from this report.

Personnel

3. None arising from this report.

Equalities impact

4. Although it can be argued that the current arrangements do not offer equality of provision, it could also be argued that the withdrawal of the discretionary service would have an unequal impact on the pupils and the families of those pupils who currently use the service.

Corporate Priorities

5. This report has the potential to link with the following Corporate priorities
 - Leading Derby towards a better environment
 - Supporting everyone in learning and achieving
 - Giving you excellent services and value for money