

Time commenced - 6.00pm
Time finished - 7.00pm

SPECIAL JOINT MEETING OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSIONS

1 JUNE 2009

Present: Councillor Poutler (in the Chair)
Planning and Transportation Commission – Councillors
Harwood, Ingall

Children and Young People Commission – Councillors
Bolton, Higginbottom, F Khan Latham, Williams
John Honey – Catholic Church Diocese
Maurice Lawrence – Parent Governor Representative

In attendance: Councillor Allen – Cabinet Member for Children and
Young People

01/09 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Alison Brown, Nasreen Iqbal and
Councillor Rawson.

02/09 Late Items

There were no late items.

03/09 Declarations of Interest

David Wilkinson declared a prejudicial interest in minute 04/09 as he is
employed by St Benedict's School.

Councillor Ginns declared a personal interest in minute 04/09 as she is a
governor at St Martin's School.

Councillor Allen declared a personal interest in minute 04/09 as he is the
Cabinet Member for Children and Young People.

Items for Discussion

04/09 Proposed Withdrawal of Home to School Transport Services

The Children and Young People's Commission and the Planning and
Transportation Commission considered a report from the Corporate Director

of Regeneration and Community detailing current proposals relating to discretionary transport to mainstream schools. The Assistant Director for Highways and Transport informed the Commission that the Council's budget approved on 2 March 2009 included the proposal to withdraw the Council's discretionary transport provision that is predominantly for children that live less than two or three miles from school. Officers estimate that the Council will make a saving of £280,000 in the next two years.

Officers consulted with service users between 17 March and 11 May 2009 to seek people's views on the proposals. However, the situation has now changed as Notts:Derby, a local bus company, had registered a number of commercial services covering similar routes to the existing Council contracted services to Saint Benedict and Derby Moor secondary school. These services will provide access to transport for the majority of secondary school children that would have been affected by the service withdrawal proposals.

The Assistant Director for Highways and Transport stated that this change in circumstances meant that officers were now suggesting that the decision on this report be deferred until the Cabinet meeting on 7 July. This would in turn impact on the time frame for withdrawing the service which would now be scheduled for September 2010.

The Chair stated that the Commissions' main concerns were that the consultation process was being rushed. He expressed concern that the results of the consultation were not ready for the Commissions' to consider. The Assistant Director of Highways and Transport said that had the Notts:Derby bus company not intervened then officers would have made sure that the consultation results were ready for the Commissions to view.

Councillor Higginbottom asked if the unions had been consulted on this issue. The Assistant Director for Highways and Transport said that there was no duty to consult with the unions but she said that there was no reason that their views should not be taken into account.

Maurice Lawrence expressed concern that if the Notts:Derby bus company found that the routes were financially unviable then parents would once again find themselves without transport for their children. The Assistant Director for Highways and Transport stated that they would be commercial services and until Council underwrites these services then there is a chance that in future they could be cancelled. Councillor Harwood expressed concern that the Council was not making a commitment to underwriting the commercial services. He said that the Council should be providing parents with some stability during this transition.

Councillor Ginns asked for clarification on why the payment for the service needed to be taken up front for the service. The Assistant Director for Highways and Transport said that this had been agreed in January 2008. She added that it would be difficult to run a day to day payment system for the service as this would not provide a guaranteed income and could render the service commercially unviable.

John Honey expressed concerns about the timescale of the consultation and said that some parents had not received the consultation letter by the correct deadline which may have impacted on their ability to respond in time. The Assistant Director of Highways and Transport stated that those parents who were directly affected had received their consultation letters by the 18 March 2009 which was in accordance with the statutory timeframe. The Chair asked officers to provide evidence of the dates the letters were posted to parents.

Resolved:

- 1. To recommend that Cabinet defer the report on X June 2009 until more details are known about the Notts:Derby bus company offer;**
- 2. To recommend that Cabinet underwrites the bus company's service; and**
- 3. That officers provide the Commissions with details of the consultation deadlines and the dates of postings to parents.**

Minutes End