

Executive

28 April 2016

Report of the Director of Children's Services, Education & Skills

(Portfolio of the Executive Member for Children's Services, Education & Skills)

Review of the Provision of Home to School Transport

Summary

1. This report presents proposals to review provision of home to school transport.

Recommendations

2. Executive are asked:
 - i. To approve the option as set out in paragraph 11(a) – To withdraw the dedicated home to school bus services to and from Manor CE Academy from September 2016, and provide assistance with transport for eligible pupils only.

Reason: To ensure that adequate transport arrangements are available for those pupils who are still eligible for assistance with home to school transport, whilst making a saving of £45,000 in the 2016/17 financial year.
 - ii. To approve the option as set out in paragraph 18(a) - to continue to provide a dedicated home to school bus service to St Wilfrid's RC Primary School for both eligible and non eligible pupils (who will pay a concessionary fare) for 2016/17 but withdraw the dedicated home to school bus service from July 2017, replacing it with the offer of a mileage allowance to parent/carers of eligible pupils.

Reason: This will ensure provision of transport for eligible pupils but will achieve a saving of £5,220 for the 2016/17 financial year and £16,000 for the 2017/18 financial year.
 - iii. To approve the option as set out in paragraph 24 (b) - To begin consultation on implementing Personalised Transport Budgets (PTB's) at an enhanced rate for all SEN Post-16 and 19-25

young people who are eligible for assistance with transport, on a rolling programme from September 2016 onwards. This would achieve savings of £32,812 for the 2016/17 financial year, based on 50% of eligible young people being transferred to PTB's from September 2016.

Reason: To maintain support for transport for these students but enable a reduction in expenditure.

Background

3. There is a requirement to reduce the home to school transport budget as follows:
 - 2016/17 £100,000
 - 2017/18 £200,000
4. The purpose of this paper is to put forward a number of options to continue to support those eligible pupils/students but reduce expenditure.

Options and Analysis

Manor CE Academy

5. A decision was taken in September 2012, following a recommendation of the Learning and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee, that from September 2013, transport for pupils attending denominational schools would be withdrawn. At this time, Members agreed that transport would continue to be provided for those pupils already eligible for assistance. For secondary aged pupils, this would be until July 2017.
6. In addition, the low income transport policy (for pupils in receipt of free school meals or whose parent/carers are in receipt of maximum level of working tax credit) remains in place, for pupils who attend the nearest school preferred on grounds of "religion or belief", where that school is between 2 and 15 miles from their home address.
7. There are currently three dedicated home to school bus services to and from Manor CE Academy. The cost of these services in the 2015/16 financial year is £78,000. These services have continued to be provided since the policy change in September 2013.

8. Those pupils who are not eligible for assistance have been able to purchase concessionary seats on the services at a current cost of £380 per seat. As the average cost of a seat on these vehicles is approximately £700, this means that the full costs have not been passed on to parent/carers.
9. There are currently 83 pupils who purchase concessionary seats on the dedicated home to school bus services to Manor CE Academy.
10. From September 2016, there will be 30 pupils eligible for assistance with home to school transport to Manor CE Academy. This includes a small number who are eligible for assistance under our low income policy, and this figure assumes that they will continue to be eligible.

11. Saving Options - Manor CE Academy:

- (a) To withdraw the dedicated home to school bus services to and from Manor CE Academy from September 2016, and provide assistance with transport for eligible pupils only. This assistance would be in the form of bus passes for those served by public bus services, and a dedicated service for those not served by public transport. This would provide savings of £45,000 for the 2016/17 financial year.

The 30 eligible pupils who would be provided with assistance are as follows:

- Rawcliffe/Skelton - 13 pupils
First York bus pass –average journey time of 45 minutes, current average journey time of 20 minutes
- Hessay/Rufforth/Askham Richard– 6 pupils
Dedicated service – journey time as it is currently
- Copmanthorpe/Acomb/Foxwood – 11 pupils
Connexions/First York bus pass – average journey time of 55 minutes, current average journey time of 30 minutes

Of the 83 non-eligible pupils, there would be approximately only 30 pupils who are not living on the route of public service bus route in September 2016 (Rufforth/Hessay/Askham Bryan/Askham Richard). There may be the option for parent/carers to enter into a private arrangement with a transport provider to procure a service.

- (b) To continue to provide a dedicated home to school transport service for eligible pupils until July 2017, with non-eligible pupils having the option to purchase a concessionary seat at the current cost of £380. This option would provide savings of only £11,066 for the 2016/17 financial year but would provide the current dedicated home to school bus service for both eligible and non-eligible pupils.

St Wilfrid's RC Primary School

12. A decision was taken in September 2012, following a recommendation of the Learning and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee, that from September 2013, transport for pupils attending denominational schools would be withdrawn. At this time, Members agreed that transport would continue to be provided for those pupils already eligible for assistance. For primary aged pupils, this would mean that there would still be eligible pupils until July 2019.
13. In addition, the low income transport policy (for pupils in receipt of free school meals or whose parent/carers are in receipt of maximum level of working tax credit) remains in place, for pupils who attend the nearest school preferred on grounds of "religion or belief", where that school is between 2 and 15 miles from their home address.
14. A dedicated home to school bus service is provided to and from St Wilfrid's RC Primary School from the Strensall/Haxby/Clifton Moor/Rawcliffe areas of the city. The cost of this service in the 2015/16 financial year is £40,000. This service has continued to be provided since the policy change in September 2013.
15. Those pupils who are not eligible for assistance have been able to purchase concessionary seats on the services at a current cost of £380 per seat. As the average cost of a seat on these vehicles is approximately £1120, this means that the full costs have not been passed on to parent/carers.
16. There are currently 14 pupils who purchase concessionary seats on the dedicated home to school bus services to St Wilfrid's RC Primary.
17. From September 2016, there will be 14 eligible pupils eligible for assistance with home to school transport to St Wilfrid's RC Primary School.

18. Savings Options – St Wilfrid’s RC Primary School:

- (a) The LA continues to provide a dedicated home to school transport bus service to St Wilfrid’s RC Primary school for the 2016/17 school year. A reduction in pupil numbers will allow for a smaller vehicle representing a saving of £5,220 for the 2016/17 financial year. The dedicated home to school transport would be then withdrawn from September 2017. For those pupils who are still eligible from that date a mileage allowance would be available to their parents. This would achieve a further saving of £16,000 in the financial year 2017/18.
- (b) To continue to provide a dedicated home to school transport service for eligible pupils beyond July 2017, with non-eligible pupils having the option to purchase a concessionary seat at the current cost of £380. This option would provide savings of only £5,000 for the 2017/18 financial year but would provide the current dedicated home to school bus service for both eligible and non-eligible pupils.

Withdrawal of Post-16 & 19-25 SEN transport

- 19. Provision of Post-16 transport is non-statutory, and is currently provided on a discretionary basis. The cost to the LA for Post-16 and 19-25 SEN transport is approximately £450,000 per annum. The majority of this transport is taxi or minibus transport, to educational provision both within and outside of the City of York.
- 20. All parent/carers of pupils with Special Educational Needs in receipt of assistance with transport were given the opportunity to take up a Personalised Transport Budget (PTB) from September 2015. The current PTB provision is a payment of 60p per mile, for 2 return journeys per day, with payment in advance at the beginning of each term. To date, only 8 parent/carers have taken up a PTB.
- 21. It is estimated that expenditure on home to school/college transport could be significantly reduced if Personal Transport Budgets could be implemented for all post 16 SEN students.
- 22. A PTB replaces dedicated home to college transport being provided by allowing for a contribution being made towards transport costs rather than meeting the full costs. It also provides some flexibility and choice to the individual student and their families.

23. In order for Personal Transport Budgets to be successful, there needs to be viable options available for parent/carers so that they have available options to get their child to and from their appropriate provision, at a reasonable cost. To support parent/carers in the transition, the LA will be actively seeking alternative transport providers who may be able to support this move. These options will include details of voluntary organisations/social enterprises who may be able offer transport provision, support in Independent Travel, and other options they may wish to consider.
24. Savings Option: Withdrawal of SEN Post-16 and 19-25 transport:
 - (a) To implement Personalised Transport Budgets for all SEN Post-16 and 19-25 young people who are eligible for assistance with transport, from September 2016, based on the current Personalised Transport Budget payment system. This would achieve savings of £131,250 for the 2016/17 financial year.
 - (b) To begin consultation on implementing Personalised Transport Budgets at an enhanced rate for all SEN Post-16 and 19-25 young people who are eligible for assistance with transport, on a rolling programme from September 2016 onwards. This would achieve initial savings of £32,812 for the 2016/17 financial year, based on 50% of eligible young people being transferred to PTB's.
25. This option would mean that the LA would no longer have any dedicated home to college transport for this group of young people. However it would mean that support could be provided in terms of options available for alternative transport.
26. The PTB would be calculated by taking into account the young person's level of need eg if they need a Passenger Transport Assistant, or a wheelchair vehicle. It also considers what would be an appropriate form of assistance, the distance from home to educational provision, and transport options available.

Consultation

27. Denominational transport - Informal consultation has taken place with both Manor CE Academy and St Wilfrid's RC Primary School over the proposals.
28. SEN Post-16 and 19-25 transport – Consultation will take place with the relevant stakeholders and parental groups to seek their involvement and input into the development of Personalised Transport Budgets.

Council Plan

29. **Prosperous City for all** – use of local transport providers, including the voluntary sector. Helping grow businesses and providing employment within the city.
30. **A council that listens to residents** – responding to the needs of the client group who are eligible for assistance with transport and seeking their input in implementation of new ways of delivering services.
31. **A focus on frontline services** – ensuring that quality services are delivered to residents within the constraints of reduced resources.

Implications

Financial

32. Savings targets have been set for the home to school transport budget for the next two financial years. The recommendations in the report demonstrate options for how these savings can be made.

Legal

33. The recommendations in the report relate to non-statutory functions which are currently provided by the LA under their discretionary powers.

Equalities

34. See Legal implications.

Other Implications

35. There are no specific Human Resources, Crime and Disorder, Information Technology or Property implications arising from this report.

Risk Management

36. Savings are required to be made against the Home to School Transport budget. The areas identified are non statutory functions. If savings are not made in the areas identified then there will be the requirements to look to other areas, which could lead to a reduction in service provision and quality of service provision.

Contact Details

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Report
Approved



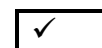
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Wards Affected: List wards or tick box to indicate all

All



For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers

None

Annexes

Annex 1 – Community Impact Assessment