

Budget Proposals 2013/14: Major Decision: Business Unit: Children's Services: School Commissioning – Home to School Transport

Combined Impact Assessment: Full assessment (Part 2)

The council and its partners are facing a significant challenge in the savings it needs to make over the next couple of years. This Full Impact Assessment has been developed as a tool to enable business units to fully consider the impact of proposed major decisions on the community. As a council we need to ensure that we are able to deliver the savings that we need to make from the 1st April and be able to justify our decisions through any legal challenge.

This full assessment, combined with the initial review, will evidence that you have fully considered the impact of your proposed changes and carried out appropriate consultation on those changes with the key stakeholders. The Combined Impact Assessment will allow Councillors to make informed decisions as part of the decision-making process regarding the council's budget.

Name: Tricia Harwood

Position: Admissions, Transport and Development Officer

Business Unit: School Commissioning

Department: Admissions

Date Commenced: 23.11.12

Date: January 2013

Summary from Overall Proposal

Proposals – Outline	Savings 2013/14		Implementation Cost Include brief outline + year incurred	Delivery In place 01/04/13 If earlier or later state date	Risks / impact of proposals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential risks Impact on community Knock on impact to other agencies 	Type of decision*		
	Income £ 000's	Budget reduction £ 000's				Internal	Minor	Major
Home to School Transport – change of policy to entitlement to free/subsidised transport		23	None	Phased from 1/9/13 and then over 3 financial years / 2 academic years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cost of transporting children to chosen schools passed to parents in some circumstances. This decision may cause some financial hardship and/or limit the choice of schools available for some families to choose from. 			X

Section 1: Purpose of the proposal/strategy/decision

No	Question	Details
1.	Clearly set out the purpose of the proposal	<p>Please note that the consultation on this proposal will include phasing changes over a period to enable parents and pupils to plan for any proposed changes. See section 7 for more details</p> <p>To remove discretionary transport assistance for home to school / college transport . Children’s Services will continue to provide the statutory services in relation to home to school / college transport.</p> <p>All local authorities have a statutory duty to make arrangements for the provision of transport as they consider necessary to facilitate school attendance. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing transport assistance to pupils of statutory school age travelling to and from school if they live further than the statutory walking distance from their nearest school (this is two miles for pupils aged 7 and under and three miles for pupils aged 8 and over). Secondary pupils from low income families are entitled to free transport to any of the three nearest suitable schools that are more than two and less than six miles away, and to a denominational school up to 15 miles away. Normally assistance is in the form of a free bus pass.

No	Question	Details
		<p>Local Authorities have a duty to have regard to parental wishes for a faith/denominational school. They also have a duty to raise the participation in Post 16 education and training.</p> <p>Currently Torbay Council provides additional non-statutory (discretionary) assistance in a range of circumstances, as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. A financial contribution to the cost of a bus pass for pupils attending St Cuthbert Mayne on grounds of faith, where they live further than 3 miles away and do not qualify for statutory assistance. In 2012-13 the cost of a bus pass to the council is £515 and we charge parental contributions at £490 so the net cost to the council per paying pupil is £25. There is an additional subsidy of £245 per second child and £490 per third and subsequent child in a single family. The total annual cost to the council of this support to 62 pupils is approximately £4,000. The cost of purchasing an annual bus pass from Stagecoach by a parent is £575. ii. A financial contribution to the cost of a bus pass for pupils attending a selective school who live more than three miles away, are not entitled to statutory transport assistance and live within the designated transport area for the school. The net cost and subsidy are as in (i) above. The total annual cost of this support to 42 pupils is approximately £2,520. iii. The provision of a free bus pass to pupils from low income families to any secondary school between 2 and 6 miles away, even if it is not one of the three nearest suitable schools. This costs the council around £15,000 a year. iv. A financial contribution to the cost of a bus pass for 144 post-16 students studying in school sixth forms, where they live further than three miles away. The council makes a net contribution of £25 per student, or £415 per student for low income families. The annual cost to the council is approximately £22,320. v. A block contribution to South Devon College for assistance with transport of £70,000 per year.
2.	Who is intended to benefit / who will be affected?	<p>Families who currently have access to free or subsidised transport on a statutory basis will continue to receive the appropriate assistance.</p> <p>Families who currently have access to free or subsidised transport on a discretionary basis will be impacted by this decision.</p> <p>There may also be an adverse impact on denominational (i.e. Church of England / Roman Catholic) schools and selective schools (i.e. Grammar schools) in Torbay and on South Devon College.</p> <p>The key stakeholders in relation to this proposal are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools • South Devon College • Families

No	Question	Details
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children / parents / carers
3.	What is the intended outcome?	To review the policy and criteria in relation to discretionary transport assistance for home to school transport.

Section 2: Equalities, Consultation and Engagement

Torbay Council has a moral obligation as well as a duty under the Equality Act 2010 to eliminate discrimination, promote good relations and advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not.

The **Equalities, Consultation and Engagement** section ensures that, as a council, we take into account the Public Sector Equality Duty at an early stage and provide evidence to ensure that we fully consider the impact of our decisions/proposals on the Torbay community.

Evidence, Consultation and Engagement

No	Question	Details
4.	Have you considered the available evidence?	<p>Pupils living more than 2 miles from school (aged 7 and under) or 3 miles (aged 8 and over) are legally entitled to free transport and are provided with a bus pass.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The number of pupils currently eligible for discretionary transport on religion / faith grounds and paying a contribution towards the cost of transport is 62. The number of pupils currently eligible for discretionary transport to a selective school and paying a contribution towards the cost of transport is 42. Parents currently pay £490; the full cost of an annual Stagecoach bus pass is currently £575. At the moment, parents with a second child receiving this discretionary transport get a 50% discount in their contribution and third children within a family travel free. This discounted travel affects very few pupils. <p>The greatest impact will be on post-16 students, some of whom will need to finance their own travel pass at a higher cost than they are currently paying.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 48 students attending school sixth forms from low income families currently receive a substantial transport subsidy, paying £100 towards the cost of an annual bus pass. Approximately 90 students purchase discretionary passes at a cost of £490 per year. 1026 students on low income attending South Devon College receive free passes funded entirely by the College

No	Question	Details
		<p>so these students will not be affected by this proposal.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A further 356 students attending South Devon College receive a discretionary transport subsidy provided in part by Torbay Council and partly by the College. They pay an annual contribution that varies according to the number of days they attend. <p>Bursaries are now available for post-16 students in care, leaving care or in receipt of some income support. Discretionary bursaries are available for other students to help with costs such as transport. These are distributed directly by post-16 institutions.</p> <p>From September 2013, it is likely that all secondary schools across Torbay will offer post-16 provision. Students will therefore have the option of studying locally.</p> <p>A number of other Local Authorities across the country are removing discretionary transport subsidies.</p>
5.	How have you consulted on the proposal?	<p>This proposal is being considered the Overview and Scrutiny Priorities and Resources Panel on the 15th January 2013. The panel have invited members of the public and stakeholder organisations to attend and make representations if they wish to do so.</p> <p>Council at this stage in the budget process is being asked to approve this policy in ‘principle,’ as no consultation has as yet taken place. This consultation will take place over the next few months and the decision will be placed before Council for a final decision.</p>
6.	Outline the key findings	<p>This section will be updated as to the outcome of the consultation once this has taken place and before the Council makes a final decision on this proposal.</p> <p><u>Priorities and Resources:</u></p> <p>Representations made at the Priorities & Resources (Overview & Scrutiny) Panel:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Transport is a key barrier to participation”</i> • <i>“...the reduction in funds is inevitably going to lead to some loss of patronage on bus services as parents and students decide to either relocate or find alternative means of transport such as the car”</i> • <i>“...Several of the routes, particularly for South Devon College, only run at the start and end of the day there is no scope for minor reductions. Withdrawing a route would of course disadvantage all students, not just those who are receiving the support”</i>

No	Question	Details
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Short-sighted decision that may increase the use of cars, or remove children from school”</i> <p>Please Note: The comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Board are set out in paragraphs 4.21-4.24 of its report “Review of Priorities and Resources 2013/2014”</p>
7.	What amendments may be required as a result of the consultation?	<p>Further to representations made regarding this proposal it has been agreed that there will be a consultation in February/March on phasing these proposals over 3 financial years (two academic years) to enable parents and students to plan for changes phased over a longer period. This will mean some pupils/students will have completed their courses and others will have longer to plan for the necessary financial arrangements for travel to school/college to finish their courses if concessionary travel is removed. Parents of children moving school will be able to choose school places in the knowledge of the new policy.</p> <p>Bursaries are available for post-16 low income students who meet qualifying criteria. These are administered directly by schools / colleges.</p>

Positive and Negative Equality Impacts

No	Question	Details		
8.	Identify the potential positive and negative impacts on specific groups			
		Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Neutral Impact
	All groups in society generally		Policy only applies to children / young people attending school or further education. This decision may cause some financial hardship and/or limit the choice of schools available for some families to choose from.	To mitigate against the negative impacts on families of increased costs, there will be an appeals process where parents will be able to request discretionary support in exceptional circumstances and cases of genuine hardship. This process is open to all families.
	Older or younger people	1026 students on low income attending South Devon College receive free passes funded entirely by the College so these students will not be affected by this proposal.	Children / young people are the ones who travel from home to school and will therefore be affected by cuts in discretionary funding. This proposal will affect approximately 1000 children / young people. This decision may cause some financial hardship and/or limit the choice of schools available for some families to choose from.	To mitigate against the negative impacts on families of increased costs, there will be an appeals process where parents will be able to request discretionary support in exceptional circumstances and cases of genuine hardship. This process is open to all families.
	People with caring responsibilities	To mitigate against the negative impacts on families of increased costs, there will be an appeals process where parents will be able to request discretionary support in exceptional circumstances and cases of genuine hardship. This process is open to all families.	This decision does not differentially impact upon those with caring responsibilities over and above that detailed above in respect of all groups generally.	Young people who are post-16 carers are eligible for bursaries. Those children / young people who are carers and under the age of 16 are entitled to the same transport provision as all other young people.

No	Question	Details	
	People with a disability		The proposed changes to discretionary transport will not affect entitlement to transport on the basis of inability to walk to school/use public transport to travel to school.
	Women or men		This decision does not differentially impact upon those of different gender over and above that detailed above in respect of all groups generally.
	People who are black or from a minority ethnic background (BME)		This decision does not differentially impact upon those of different ethnicity over and above that detailed above in respect of all groups generally.
	Religion or belief (including lack of belief)		There will be a negative impact on the families of approximately 60 pupils who attend a faith school and who do not qualify for low income support. These families may be expected to pay the full cost of the bus pass which is £575. They currently make a contribution of £490. To mitigate against the negative impacts on families of increased costs, there will be an appeals process where parents will be able to request discretionary support in exceptional circumstances and cases of genuine hardship. This process is open to all families.
	People who are lesbian, gay or bisexual		This decision does not differentially impact upon a persons sexuality over and above that detailed above in respect of all groups generally.
	People who are transgendered		This decision does not differentially impact upon those who are transgendered over and above that detailed above in respect of all groups generally.
	People who are in a		Policy only applies to children / young

No	Question	Details	
	marriage or civil partnership		people attending school or further education.
	Women who are pregnant / on maternity leave		Policy only applies to children / young people attending school or further education.
	Socio-economic (including child poverty)		<p>This decision may impact upon the disposable income of some families, impacting upon impact upon families will not be able to send their children to the school of their choice.</p> <p>To mitigate against the negative impacts on families of increased costs, there will be an appeals process where parents will be able to request discretionary support in exceptional circumstances and cases of genuine hardship. This process is open to all families.</p>
9.	Is there scope for your proposal to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and/or foster good relations?	<p>Assistance with transport to and from school is provided for anyone living more than the statutory distance from their nearest school. There is an additional legal entitlement to support for pupils of statutory school age from low-income families to give them access to a wider choice of learning institutions. Transport is also provided for young people with disabilities who are unable to walk to school or use public transport on medical grounds.</p> <p>To mitigate against the negative impacts on families of increased costs, there will be an appeals process where parents will be able to request discretionary support in exceptional circumstances and cases of genuine hardship. This process is open to all families.</p>	

Section 3: Steps required to manage the potential impacts identified

No	Action	Details
10.	Summarise any positive impacts and how they will be realised most effectively?	<p>Children's Services will continue to provide the statutory services in relation to home to school / college transport.</p> <p>Children / young people on low incomes attending South Devon College will continue to receive free passes.</p> <p>Young people who are post-16 carers are eligible for bursaries – bursaries are administered directly by post-16 institutions and young people are advised to talk to their school / college for assistance. Those children / young people who are carers and under the age of 16 are entitled to the same transport provision as all other young people.</p>
11.	Summarise any negative impacts and how these will be managed?	<p>The negative impact will be an additional cost for transport to school or college for a range of pupils and students and their parents. Statutory assistance will continue to be given to those who are entitled to it. The council will work with post-16 institutions where possible to encourage and support access to education and training for all young people up to the age of 18.</p> <p>To mitigate against the negative impacts on families of increased costs, there will be an appeals process where parents will be able to request discretionary support in exceptional circumstances and cases of genuine hardship. This process is open to all families.</p>

Section 4: Recommended Course of action

No	Action	Details
12.	<p>State a recommended course of action</p> <p>[please refer to action plan]</p>	<p>Outcome 2: Adjustments to remove barriers – Action to remove the barriers identified in relation to equalities have been taken or actions identified to better promote equality.</p> <p>There will be a consultation in February/March on phasing proposals over 3 financial years (two academic years) to enable parents and students to plan for changes phased over a longer period. This will mean some pupils/students will have completed their courses and others will have longer to plan for the necessary financial arrangements for travel to school/college to finish their courses if concessionary travel is removed.</p>

Section 5: Monitoring and Action Plan

No	Action	Details
13.	Outline plans to monitor the actual impact of your proposals	The number of appeals for discretionary assistance will be monitored.

Action plan

No.	Action	Reason for action / contingency	Resources	Responsibility	Deadline date
1	Consult schools / colleges and parents on proposed changes to the policy.	To ensure key stakeholders are consulted and notified of the proposal.		Tony Hele/Tricia Harwood	Feb/March 2013
2	Present a report to Council in May	To report on consultation and any propose changes to Home to School/College transport		Matthew Redwood	May 2012
2	Revise appeals paperwork reflect any agreed changes and to enable parents to request discretionary transport assistance in exceptional circumstances;	To ensure that the council is fulfilling its duty to have regard to parental preference for faith schools and to raise the participation age in education and training		Tony Hele/ Tricia Harwood	July 2013
3	Monitor the number of appeals made and allowed for discretionary transport assistance	To assess the impact of the change in policy		Tony Hele/ Tricia Harwood	Ongoing, termly