

## DRAFT - Supporting Information and Impact Assessment

Service / Policy:	Home to School Transport
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### Section 1: Background Information

1.

#### What is the proposal / issue?

The proposal is to reduce the home to school transport budget by £80,000 through a range of measures:

- Offering current service users a personal allowance and supporting willing service users to move to this option on routes that can be achieved at a reduced cost
- Professionals supporting the development of transport / Education, Health and Care Plans for new service users to use the option of a personal allowance as the first recommendation. This will enable a change in culture regarding the expectation of on-going transport support.
- Continue to provide bespoke travel arrangements to pupils with medical needs that would not enable full day attendance.
- Implement clear guidance to schools/providers regarding an expectation that transport will be provided at the start and end of the school day only for all pupils.
- Professionals creating part time/ bespoke packages to plan for transport to only be provided at the start and end of the school day.
- Ensure a regular risk assessment process is completed with all pupils in receipt of individual transport (where an alternative option is available). Schools, parents and pupils to be consulted in decision making and where appropriate pupils to be returned to the original transport plan.

<p>2.</p>	<p><b>What is the current situation?</b></p> <p>In 2014-15 (school year) transport assistance was given to approximately 900 children and young people. This included bus passes, taxi and minibus transport and fuel allowances to parents to drive their children to school. Approximately 400 of these students travelled on taxis and minibuses.</p> <p>The transport assistance now provided is that to which students have a legal entitlement. All discretionary transport has been removed. In addition, a charge has been introduced for post-16 transport for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities. All transport entitlement is reassessed at least annually.</p> <p>The contracts on which escorts are employed have been changed to enable greater flexibility. Children are placed on shared taxis/minibuses wherever possible to minimise the cost per student and routes are regularly reviewed to ensure best value for money.</p> <p>Due to the changes to concessionary transport agreed in July 2013, the number of children and young people provided with transport assistance is expected to reduce to approximately 700 from September 2015. This reduction will be in bus passes rather than in taxi or minibus transport.</p> <p>The number of students within Torbay being given Education, Health and Care Plans is increasing. In 2013-14, 111 new Plans were requested and in 2014-15 there have been 163 requests. A significant proportion of these students require transport assistance, usually by taxi or minibus.</p>
<p>3.</p>	<p><b>What options have been considered?</b></p> <p>In order to reduce the budget for home to school transport, a number of options have been considered.</p> <p>Legal advice is that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• arrangements for any eligible child have to be free of charge</li> <li>• each parent would have to consent to using their own transport while being paid an allowance</li> <li>• the payment of an allowance to parents to use their own transport would include their return journey if they could show that this was an additional cost to them</li> </ul> <p><b>Option A - Paying a personal budget to parents to provide transport</b></p> <p>Some children need an escort as well as a driver to enable them to travel in a vehicle. Some children need special equipment to enable them to travel safely in a vehicle. Where parents cannot drive or do not want to drive, an option is to give them a budget that would cover the cost of a taxi (plus escort and equipment as appropriate).</p>

	<p>There is the potential that the cost of this option would be higher than the cost the council pays for taxi transport, because wherever possible the council transports more than one child in a vehicle with a shared escort.</p> <p><b>Option B – Reviewing the bespoke transport arrangements for part time packages and attendees outside of normal start and end of days.</b></p> <p>To support the effective transition of pupils, professionals create bespoke packages of attendance. This can include phased start dates, early or late finishing hours and, most frequently, part time packages. Where these packages finish outside of the start and end of the school day additional transport is provided increasing costs.</p> <p>There is the potential to review the current arrangements to see if more a more cost effective option can be put into place.</p> <p><b>Option C –Review current arrangements where pupils are receiving individual transportation.</b></p> <p>A small number of pupils are currently receiving transport in a taxi with an escort. This has been provided where there have been identified behavioural concerns.</p> <p>There is the potential to review the current arrangement to see if alternative arrangements can be put in place.</p> <p><i>The proposal will see the introduction of all three options aimed at promoting cultural change for professionals in ensuring that the most cost effective means of home to school transport is provided whilst meeting the Council’s statutory requirements.</i></p>
4.	<p><b>How does this proposal support the ambitions and principles of the Corporate Plan 2015-19?</b></p> <p>Ambition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protecting all children and giving them the best start in life</li> </ul> <p>Principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using reducing resources to best effect</li> <li>• Reducing demand through prevention and innovation</li> <li>• Integrated and joined up approach</li> </ul>
5.	<p><b>Who will be affected by this proposal and who do you need to consult with?</b></p> <p>The proposal may potentially have an impact on the children and young people both currently receiving a transport service and future service users.</p>

**6.**

**How will you propose to consult?**

Each child or young person receiving home to school transport will be reviewed as part of an individual assessment and so consultation and feedback will be completed during the process and acted upon where required. Due to the nature of this proposal it would not be appropriate to undertake a blanket consultation process as each individual's circumstances and the potential outcome will be different.