

Supporting Information and Impact Assessment

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| Service / Policy: | Home to School Transport |
| Executive Lead: | Julien Parrott |
| Director / Assistant Director: | Richard Williams |

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| Version: | 2 | Date: | January 2016 | Author: | Rachael Williams |
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| Section 1: Background Information | |
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| 1. | <p>What is the proposal / issue?</p> <p>The proposal is to reduce the home to school transport budget by £80,000 through a range of measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 include discussions about transport when identifying suitable schools and exploring cost-effective solutions/managing expectations. 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 and other providers regarding an expectation that transport will be provided at the start and end of the school day only for all pupils including those on part-time/bespoke packages. • Where pupils are travelling individually in vehicles due to behaviour issues, ensure a regular risk assessment process is completed including discussion with escort, setting and parent, with the aim of returning the pupil to shared transport wherever possible. |
| 2. | <p>What is the current situation?</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> |

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| | <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>What options have been considered?</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"> • arrangements for any eligible child have to be free of charge • each parent would have to consent to using their own transport while being paid an allowance • 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 <p>Option A - Paying a personal budget to parents to provide transport</p> <p>Paying a fuel allowance for a parent to drive their child to school is often more cost effective than paying for a taxi to transport them. Where this is the case, and where the parent is willing and able to drive, this should be the preferred option. However 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 and some need special equipment. Where parents cannot drive or do not want to drive the personal budget would need to cover the cost of a taxi, plus escort and equipment as appropriate. 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. Therefore relative cost would need to be taken into account when considering this option.</p> <p>Option B – Reviewing the bespoke transport arrangements for part time packages and attendees outside of normal start and end of days.</p> |

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| | <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>Option C –Review current arrangements where pupils are receiving individual transportation.</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>How does this proposal support the ambitions and principles of the Corporate Plan 2015-19?</p> <p>Ambition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protecting all children and giving them the best start in life <p>Principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using reducing resources to best effect • Reducing demand through prevention and innovation • Integrated and joined up approach |
| 5. | <p>Who will be affected by this proposal and who do you need to consult with?</p> <p>The proposal is ensuring current policy is used to maximum effect. Option A will only be used when families are in agreement. Options B & C are to ensure maximum efficiency in delivering the service. Whilst this may have some impact upon families, as this will only be done within existing policy, and in the case of option A, only with families agreement, there is no need to consult.</p> |
| 6. | <p>How will you propose to consult?</p> <p>Each child or young person receiving home to school taxi or minibus transport will be reviewed as part of an individual assessment and so will be undertaken where appropriate during the process and acted upon where required. As per 5 above formal consultation is not required.</p> |

Section 2: Implications and Impact Assessment

7. What are the financial and legal implications?

The proposals are in line with legal advice and will be given to parents as an option only when cost effective. The proposal meets the legal advice that:

- Arrangements for any eligible child have to be free of charge
- Each parent would have to consent to using their own transport while being paid an allowance.
- 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.

8. What are the risks?

The transport budget was underspent by £111,000 last year. There are likely to be some increased costs this year, including transport for post-16 students to the new Mayfield site at Preston (an additional 8-seater taxi plus escort) and the likelihood of having to transport some mainstream pupils as there is a shortage of reception places in Torquay; the agreed strategy is to transport pupils rather than adding a bulge class to one school. In addition, the operator costs are likely to increase as transport is re-tendered (some tenders are several years old). There are also more early years pupils attending Mayfield than in the past who require specialist transport. The increase in the number of requests for statutory assessment is likely to result in an increased demand for transport assistance. Finally, the IT system used by the transport team is due to be upgraded and there may be a considerable charge for this, but costs are not yet known.

An important factor to take into consideration is the increase in the minimum wage to a compulsory living wage for staff over the age of 25, rising to £7.20 in April 2016 and then to £9 by 2020. Escorts are currently paid at an hourly rate of £7.10 - £7.30 per hour, depending on length of service. Therefore any increases brought in after April 2016 will have a direct impact on the escort budget.

Therefore it would be realistic to expect a maximum saving of £80,000 from the 2016-17 transport budget if the budget allocated for 2016-17 is the same as for 2015-16. It is important to bear in mind that the transport budget is demand led and volatile, and also that decisions taken elsewhere in Children's Services, for example to keep more children with complex needs in Torbay rather than placing them in out of county provision, may have an adverse impact on the transport budget e.g. transporting a child to and from school in Torbay every day rather than once every half term to a more distant residential school.

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| 9. | <p>Public Services Value (Social Value) Act 2012</p> <p>The transport service currently tenders regular contracts.</p> |
| 10. | <p>What evidence / data / research have you gathered in relation to this proposal?</p> <p>A range of routes have been selected to model what would happen if all parents were given personal budgets instead of the council providing transport. Full calculations are shown in the appendix to this report. Example 1 shows an existing route to Chestnut Centre in Brixham. The total cost for taxi plus escort is £17,742.20 . There are currently 4 students using this taxi but there is space for 6 at minimal additional cost. If the parents of these students all agreed to a personal fuel allowance to take their own child to school, the cost would be reduced to £10,670.40 – an apparent significant saving of approximately £7,000. However, if one of the parents decided that they would not or could not use their car to take their child, the cost of a taxi would be a minimum of £7,600 (assuming no escort were needed). This would reduce the saving to approximately £2,000. If a second parent decided the same, then the overall cost would be increased to £20,535.20 i.e. an increase of nearly £3,000 compared with the current cost.</p> <p>Example 2 shows an existing route to Mayfield. This route uses a minibus to transport 9 students. The overall cost for the minibus and escort is £29,450.00 . If all parents agreed to a fuel allowance at 40p per mile, the cost could be reduced to £25,292.80 – although some of these children may still need an escort if their parent were to transport them, which could reduce any savings. If one parent could not or did not wish to drive their child to school and needed a taxi (using average costs to model) the overall cost to the council would increase to £34,482.49 i.e. an increase of £5000 compared with the current cost.</p> <p>Example 3, an existing route to Combe Pafford School, shows that even if all parents agreed to drive their own child to school the cost would be increased from the current cost by approximately £1500. Example 4 shows a route to the Royal School for the Deaf in Exeter. Currently it would be much more cost effective for the parent to be given a fuel allowance (and this will have been discussed as an option) but from September another child is joining the route and it will be more cost effective to transport the two of them together than it would be to pay individual fuel allowances. Example 5 shows a taxi route to the autistic unit at Brixham College. There would be an increased cost of £4500 to the council if fuel allowances were given to parents. Example 6, another Combe Pafford route, shows how any saving would be lost if a single student needed taxi transport.</p> |
| 11. | <p>What are key findings from the consultation you have carried out?</p> <p><u>As per 5 above, formal consultation is not required. There has however been some testing of thinking, as set out below.</u></p> <p><u>Option A</u> Consultation has been undertaken using a random sampling of existing service users.</p> |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of a random sample of 20 applicants indicated that 75% of parents would not be able to drive their child to school and would require a taxi. This was for a range of reasons: <i>many parents are unable to drive or do not have a car; a number of parents have other children at different schools and have to take these other children to school; and some parents would not be able to fit this in with their work commitment.</i> • A further analysis of an additional sample of 30 applicants was also conducted prior to the policy development group meeting. This sample indicated that 80% of parents would not be able to use personal a budget to provide transport. <p>Key findings:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The personal allowance would not be possible for all parents • The personal allowance needs to be given as an option <p><u>Option B</u> Existing users have not been consulted as no change is proposed to their arrangements. Professionals are being made aware for future planning and barriers to individual cases will be worked through as they arise. There have been no new cases to test this on at present.</p> <p><u>Option C</u> The Headteacher of Chestnut School has been made aware. Regular information sharing has been established with Chestnut staff to ensure all information is known when making transport decisions. Additional information is being collected from existing settings to make an informed judgement regarding individual vehicles.</p> <p>Key findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is possible to implement this option based on case by case decision making. |
| 12. | <p>Amendments to Proposal / Mitigating Actions</p> <p>The proposal outlines a number of options that staff can use when planning transport arrangements. Due to all options continuing and the need for parents to agree to receiving a personal allowance there is no change to the arrangements unless agreed.</p> <p>To overcome the negative impact of implementing Option B to a small number of pupils a mitigating factor will be implemented.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The provider of the service operating outside of the agreed hours will pay the additional costs of this service. <p>The recommendation is to implement all three options as part of a culture of change for existing and future service users.</p> |

Equality Impacts

| 13 | Identify the potential positive and negative impacts on specific groups | | | |
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| | | Positive Impact | Negative Impact & Mitigating Actions | Neutral Impact |
| | Older or younger people | | Whilst there may be some change in provision, there is no change to existing policy. Mitigating action implemented for Option B (stated in section 12) | There is no differential impact for option A and C |
| | People with caring Responsibilities | | | There is no differential impact |
| | People with a disability | | Whilst there may be some change in provision, there is no change to existing policy. Mitigating action implemented for Option B (stated in section 12) | There is no differential impact for option A and C |
| | Women or men | | | There is no differential impact |
| | People who are black or from a minority ethnic background (BME) <i>(Please note Gypsies / Roma are within this community)</i> | | | There is no differential impact |
| | Religion or belief (including lack of belief) | | | There is no differential impact |
| | People who are lesbian, gay or bisexual | | | There is no differential impact |
| | People who are transgendered | | | There is no differential impact |

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| | People who are in a marriage or civil partnership | | | There is no differential impact |
| | Women who are pregnant / on maternity leave | | | There is no differential impact |
| | Socio-economic impacts (Including impact on child poverty issues and deprivation) | | | There is no differential impact |
| | Public Health impacts (How will your proposal impact on the general health of the population of Torbay) | | | There is no differential impact |
| 14 | Cumulative Impacts – Council wide (proposed changes elsewhere which might worsen the impacts identified above) | <i>None identified</i> | | |
| 15 | Cumulative Impacts – Other public services (proposed changes elsewhere which might worsen the impacts identified above) | <i>None identified</i> | | |

Appendix:

| Example 1 - | | Route CHES08 to Chestnut Centre | | | | |
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| Current cost to Council: | | | | | | |
| Vehicle per day | | | 67.38 | | | |
| Escort per day | | | 26.00 | | | |
| Currently 4 students, could take 6 | | | | | | |
| Total cost per day | Days per week | Weeks per year | Current annual cost | Annual cost per student (current) | Annual cost per student (potential) | |
| 93.38 | 5 | 38 | 17742.20 | 4435.55 | 2957.03 | |
| If parents were paid mileage at 40p per mile: | | | | | | |
| | Home to school miles | Miles per day | days per week | weeks per year | payment per mile £ | annual cost £ |
| Student A | 10.1 | 40.4 | 5 | 38 | 0.40 | 3070.40 |
| Student B | 6.3 | 25.2 | 5 | 38 | 0.40 | 1915.20 |
| Student C | 9.0 | 36 | 5 | 38 | 0.40 | 2736.00 |
| Student D | 9.7 | 38.8 | 5 | 38 | 0.40 | 2948.80 |
| TOTAL | | | | | | 10670.40 |
| AVERAGE COST | | | | | | 2667.60 |
| HOWEVER, if one parent refused or was unable to drive their child and required taxi transport instead then the cost for that one child would be a minimum of £7,600 assuming the child does not need an escort | | | | | | |
| Using average costs: | | | | | | |
| Fuel allowance for 3 children at 40p per mile | | | | | 8002.80 | |
| Taxi for one child | | | | | 7,600.00 | |
| TOTAL | | | | | 15602.80 | |
| Fuel allowance for 2 children at 40p per mile | | | | | 5335.20 | |
| Individual taxis for 2 children | | | | | 15200.00 | |
| TOTAL | | | | | 20535.20 | |

| Example 2 - | | Route MAYF18 to Mayfield School | | | | | |
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| Current cost to Council: | | | | | | | |
| Vehicle per day | | | 115.00 | | | | |
| Escort per day | | | 40.00 | | | | |
| Currently 9 students, no room for more | | | | | | | |
| | Days per week | Weeks per year | Annual cost | Annual cost per student (current) | Annual cost per student (potential) | | |
| Total cost per day | 155 | 5 | 38 | 29450.00 | 3272.22 | 3272.22 | |
| If parents were paid mileage at 40p per mile: | | | | | | | |
| | Home to school miles | Miles per day | days per week | weeks per year | payment per mile £ | annual cost £ | |
| Student A | 12.2 | 48.8 | 5 | 38 | 0.40 | 3708.80 | |
| Student B | 12.2 | 48.8 | 5 | 38 | 0.40 | 3708.80 | |
| Student C | 3.0 | 12 | 5 | 38 | 0.40 | 912.00 | |
| Student D | 8.9 | 35.6 | 5 | 38 | 0.40 | 2705.60 | |
| Student E | 7.5 | 30 | 5 | 38 | 0.40 | 2280.00 | |
| Student F | 7.7 | 30.8 | 5 | 38 | 0.40 | 2340.80 | |
| Student G | 7.8 | 31.2 | 5 | 38 | 0.40 | 2371.20 | |
| Student H | 11.7 | 46.8 | 5 | 38 | 0.40 | 3556.80 | |
| Student I | 12.2 | 48.8 | 5 | 38 | 0.40 | 3708.80 | |
| TOTAL | | | | | | 25292.80 | |
| AVERAGE COST | | | | | | 2810.31 | |
| HOWEVER, if one parent refused to drive or was unable to drive, the minimum cost of transport for this child would be approximately £10,000-£14,000 depending on distance. This includes the cost of an escort. | | | | | | | |
| Using average cost, fuel allowance for 8 students at 40p per mile | | | | 22482.49 | | | |
| Taxi for one child | | | | 12,000.00 | | | |
| TOTAL | | | | 34482.49 | | | |

| Example 4 - | | EVHD00 to Royal School for the Deaf, Exeter | | | | |
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| Current cost to Council: | | | | | | |
| Vehicle per day | | | 58.78 | | | |
| Escort per day | | | 0.00 | | | |
| Currently 1 student, could take 3 | | | | | | |
| Total cost per day | Days per week | Weeks per year | Annual cost | Annual cost per student (current) | Annual cost per student (potential) | |
| 58.78 | 5 | 38 | 11168.20 | 11168.20 | 3722.73 | |
| If parents were paid mileage at 40p per mile: | | | | | | |
| | Home to school mi | Miles per day | days per week | weeks per year | payment per mile £ | annual cost £ |
| Student A | 20.7 | 82.8 | 5 | 38 | 0.40 | 6292.80 |
| TOTAL | | | | | | 6292.80 |
| AVERAGE COST | | | | | | 6292.80 |
| NOTE: A second student will be joining this route in September at minimal extra cost | | | | | | |
| Fuel allowance for two students would be approx | | | 12585.60 | | | |

| Example 6 - | | Route CFPD29 to Combe Pafford | | | | |
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| Current cost to Council: | | | | | | |
| Vehicle per day | | | 50.00 | | | |
| Escort per day | | | 31.00 | | | |
| Currently 5 students, could take 6 | | | | | | |
| Total cost per day | Days per week | Weeks per year | Annual cost | Annual cost per student (current) | Annual cost per student (potential) | |
| 81.00 | 5 | 38 | 15390.00 | 3078.00 | 2565.00 | |
| If parents were paid mileage at 40p per mile: | | | | | | |
| | Home to school miles | Miles per day | days per week | weeks per year | payment per mile £ | annual cost £ |
| Student A | 9.1 | 36.4 | 5 | 38 | 0.40 | 2766.40 |
| Student B | 7.7 | 30.8 | 5 | 38 | 0.40 | 2340.80 |
| Student C | 6.2 | 24.8 | 5 | 38 | 0.40 | 1884.80 |
| Student D | 6.4 | 25.6 | 5 | 38 | 0.40 | 1945.60 |
| Student E | 9.9 | 39.6 | 5 | 38 | 0.40 | 3009.60 |
| TOTAL | | | | | | 11947.20 |
| AVERAGE COST | | | | | | 2389.44 |
| HOWEVER, if a single parent could not or did not wish to drive their child to school and required a taxi, the cost of this for a year would be approximately £6080 assuming no escort needed | | | | | | |
| Fuel allowance for 4 students at average cost | | | 9557.76 | | | |
| Taxi for one student | | | 6080.00 | | | |
| TOTAL | | | 15637.76 | | | |