



Coventry City Council

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## Briefing note

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**To**

Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee

9<sup>th</sup> August, 2011

Secondary School Transport Policy Consultation – Call-in

### **1 Purpose of the Note**

- 1.1 To inform the Committee of the call-in received on this issue and the reasons why the Chair of the Committee determined that it was inappropriate.

### **2 Recommendations**

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to note the information shown in section 3 below.

### **3 Information/Background**

- 3.1 The Cabinet considered the attached report at its meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> July 2011, when it decided to agree the following recommendation as set out in the report:-

to approve the removal of the discretionary sections of the secondary transport policy relating to the provision of transport for pupils attending faith and single sex schools with effect from September 2012 for new applicants only. Those who qualify under the current policy in July 2012 will continue to qualify on this basis unless circumstances change e.g. house move.

- 3.2 Subsequently, the following call-in relating to this decision was received from Councillors Blundell, Dixon and Johnson:-
- 1) To further examine the reasoning behind rejecting the result of the consultation in relation to the proposals to remove discretionary sections of the secondary transport policy relating to pupils attending faith and single sex schools with effect from September 2012 for new applicants.
  - 2) Also examine the basis of a suggestion made during Cabinet discussion of the report, that an agreement could be reached with schools affected for a whole or partial reimbursement of the cost for Bus Passes that would previously have been provided by the Local Authority.
- 3.3 In accordance with the Council's Constitution, the Committee Chair (Councillor Lucas) considered the call-in against the criteria decided by the Committee and, having received advice from the Council Solicitor, determined the call-in to be inappropriate. The reasons for her decision are shown in the following paragraph.

## **Call-in – Reasons for decision**

3.4.1 The reasons for the Call-in being deemed invalid are that:

- 1) in relation to the first part of the call-in the reasons for the decision, which are based essentially on financial and legal considerations, are clear in the report of the Director of Children, Learning and Young People. Therefore the first reason for the call-in is not valid.
- 2) the second point of the call-in refers to a suggestion made at Cabinet that an agreement could be reached with schools affected for a whole or partial reimbursement of the cost of bus passes. This did not form part of the Cabinet's decision and therefore is not valid.

3.5 The Members who submitted the call-in were informed of the Chair's decisions and the reasons for them.

Adrian West  
Scrutiny Team  
Chief Executive's Directorate  
Tel. 024 7683 2286

Cabinet

19<sup>th</sup> July 2011

**Name of Cabinet Member:**

Cabinet Member (Education) - Councillor Kelly

**Director Approving Submission of the report:**

Director of Children, Learning and Young People

**Ward(s) affected:**

All

**Title: Secondary school transport policy**

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**Is this a key decision?**

**Yes**

The proposals may have a significant impact on residents living in all electoral wards in the City.

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**Executive Summary:**

The current school transport policy for secondary school age pupils contains both statutory and discretionary provision. Statutory entitlement was increased for low-income families from 2008.

Statutory requirements are for the provision of transport where the local authority cannot provide a place at a school within 3 miles of the home for secondary school pupils, and there are provisions for families who are assessed as on low income if they live more than 2 miles away from one of their 3 nearest schools with places available. Also low income pupils aged 11-16 qualify for assistance to the nearest suitable school preferred on grounds of a parent's religion or belief, which is between 2 and 15 miles from their home. This includes faith schools and where a single sex school is chosen on grounds of a parent's religion or belief.

The Coventry City Council discretionary policy provides passes for all children attending faith schools and single sex schools where they live over 3 miles from the school and in the case of Catholic schools where they have attended the requisite feeder primary school.

In the current financial climate, where statutory expenditure is the priority, we need to reduce the level of discretionary expenditure. In addition, the current discretionary policy in its current form is not sustainable from a legal compliance point of view as the law requires the offer of transport support to be based on the religious adherence or philosophical belief of the parent, not simply to be given to any child who wishes to attend the school and travels over 3 miles. Following the agreement of Cabinet Member (Education) on 30 November 2010 and taking into account the views of Scrutiny Board 2, a consultation was held to withdraw the current discretionary policies for new applicants from 2012 but preserving entitlement for those pupils who already have bus passes.

The table below shows the costs in the current academic year for the schools where the discretionary policy applies.

	Statutory passes		Discretionary passes		Total costs	Total pupils
	£	pupils	£	pupils		
Blue Coat	9,453	43	61,021	275	70,474	318
Bishop Ullathorne	15,613	70	57,407	257	73,020	327
Cardinal Newman	12,668	57	11,707	54	24,375	111
Cardinal Wiseman	17,756	80	32,814	151	50,570	231
	<b>55,490</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>162,949</b>	<b>737</b>	<b>218,439</b>	<b>987</b>
Tile Hill Wood	20,385	92	49,590	218	69,975	310
Woodlands	11,223	57	26,990	120	38,213	177
	<b>31,608</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>76,580</b>	<b>338</b>	<b>108,188</b>	<b>487</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>87,098</b>	<b>399</b>	<b>239,529</b>	<b>1075</b>	<b>326,627</b>	<b>1474</b>

Please note children included in the discretionary column may qualify for statutory passes where parents are working and receive maximum working tax credit. However the only data we have to identify low income statutory entitlement is based on free school meals information.

The proposal to withdraw the discretionary policy from 2012 on a phased basis would mean an estimated reduction of 20% in the numbers of passes issued on a discretionary basis increasing year on year to 100% in 2016. The budget for bus passes was overspent for the 2010 financial year by £32,501, and is not set to increase. However, the cost of bus passes from transport providers will increase. Also looking further ahead, pupil numbers will begin to increase significantly from 2016 and we would expect that the level of pupils entitled under the statutory regulations to a pass will increase as more schools become full and pupils may have to travel further to schools.

Given the level of interest in this issue and the impact across all wards it was felt appropriate that the final decision following the consultation should be made by Cabinet

**Recommendations:**

Cabinet is to approve the removal of the discretionary sections of the secondary transport policy relating to the provision of transport for pupils attending faith and single sex schools with effect from September 2012 for new applicants only. Those who qualify under the current policy in July 2012 will continue to qualify on this basis unless circumstances change e.g. house move

**List of Appendices included:**

- Appendix 1 : Consultation on secondary home to school transport policy
- Appendix 2: Secondary School Transport Consultation Analysis Appendix

**Other useful background papers:**

Home to school travel and transport guidance – DCSF. This is available from the Department of Education website at [www.education.gov.uk/publications](http://www.education.gov.uk/publications)

**Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?**

No

**Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?**

No

**Will this report go to Council?**

No

**Report title:**

## Secondary School Transport Policy

**1. Context (or background)**

- 1.1 New statutory provision for low income pupils in 2008 led to an increase in entitlement to free home to school transport. From this point local authorities have reviewed the discretionary elements of their policies. Increasing financial pressures require all departments to examine areas of discretionary expenditure.

**2. Options considered and recommended proposal**

- 2.1 The statutory requirements for assistance with transport to secondary schools are set out below. They apply to all schools including Academies.
- 2.1.1. The law says children who have to travel more than **3 miles** to get to their **nearest** secondary schools with available places will qualify for a bus pass. The reality in Coventry is that when pupils make choices about schools for Year 7 they will be able to get places in a school under 3 miles from their home address in the vast majority of cases. For pupils moving into the city at another point in time there can be difficulties if they move into an area with oversubscribed schools and therefore there are children who receive passes on this basis.
- 2.1.2. The law says children who come from low-income families should have greater support and choice around getting to secondary school. Therefore they will qualify if they live more than 2 miles away (but less than 6 miles) from their school and it is not just the nearest school, but one of the 3 nearest schools. For example a pupil living in Foleshill may be over 2 miles away from their 3 nearest schools: Foxford, Grace Academy and Lyng Hall. They would qualify for a pass to any of these schools, rather than only the nearest one.
- 2.1.3. The law also recognises that for low-income families it may be more difficult to get their child to a school which they prefer on the grounds of religion or philosophical belief. It is also recognised that such schools may often be further away. Therefore children will qualify for a pass to the nearest school over 2 miles (and less than 15 miles) away. In Coventry this means that children from low-income families living over 2 miles from their nearest Catholic school, or over 2 miles from Blue Coat Church of England School will qualify for bus passes. They would also receive a pass if they wished to attend a single sex school on the basis of their religious belief and live over 2 miles away.
- 2.1.4 We also operate an appeals process where applications which fall outside the remit of the current policy can still be considered on the grounds of exceptional circumstances.
- 2.2 **Coventry's discretionary policy:** Maintaining the current discretionary provision is not an option as the current policy for the provision of passes to children in faith schools has been identified by the Local Government Ombudsman as discriminatory and unlawful. Therefore a consultation has taken place on the removal of the discretionary policy for transport for single sex and faith schools on a phased basis from 2012. Low-income families could still qualify to attend faith and single sex schools through the provisions in points 2.1.2 and 2.1.3 above. By adopting this position and implementing change from 2012 for new pupils only, no current pass holders would have their passes withdrawn.

- 2.3 Options for maintaining a discretionary policy which would be in line with legal requirements were also considered. The council could offer bus passes to the nearest faith school preferred on the grounds of religion or belief of the parent. This would apply for those not on low-income when a pupil lives 3 miles from the school. Transport support would only be provided where the religion or denomination of the parent is the same as the school. This would therefore require a system to verify the parent's religion, and also would be a change from the current position where all pupils, no matter what their or their parental religion is, are provided with passes if they meet the distance criteria. We do not hold data at the moment on parental religious adherence so would not be able to identify the numbers of pupils who may fall into this category.
- 2.4 The council could also choose to offer bus passes to the single sex schools if preferred on the grounds of religion or belief of the parent. This would apply for those not on low-income when a pupil lives either 2 or 3 miles from the school. This would therefore require a system to verify the parent's religion or belief in relation to single sex education, and also would be a change from the current position where all pupils, no matter what their or their parental religion or belief is, are provided with passes if they meet the distance criteria. Simply saying that you prefer an all girls/boys environment would not be sufficient grounds for transport support.
- 2.5 There have been strong representations from the Catholic diocese against removing the discretionary transport assistance. The position of other Local Authorities within the diocese is as follows:-
- 9 authorities – Warwickshire, Solihull, Staffordshire, Stoke on Trent, Wolverhampton, Walsall, Herefordshire, Oxfordshire - have removed or are planning to remove discretionary policies since the government introduced the extra assistance for low-income families in 2008.
  - 2 authorities - Birmingham and Worcestershire - are consulting on the removal of policies as we have been.
  - 2 authorities -Sandwell and Shropshire- currently maintain discretionary policies.
- 2.6 The proposal to Cabinet is to approve the removal of the discretionary sections of the secondary transport policy relating to the provision of transport for pupils attending faith and single sex schools with effect from September 2012 for new applicants only. Those who qualify under the current policy in July 2012 will continue to qualify on this basis unless circumstances change eg house move. This proposal will ensure that financial expenditure is targeted towards low-income families in line with other expenditure decisions for the authority, whilst in the long term reducing rather than adding to the level of complexity in the systems for administering the transport policy and ensuring that we operate within legal requirements.

### **3. Results of consultation undertaken**

- 3.1 A consultation was held on the secondary home to school transport policy from 8 December 2010 until 13 February 2011. The consultation was reopened from 17 March until 8 April 2011 in response to concerns about problems for some people in accessing the consultation documents online during the upgrading of the city council website. This was made available to parents, head teachers, school governing bodies, diocesan authorities, local councillors and the School Admissions Forum. Copies of the consultation document are attached at appendix 1 along with a collated analysis of responses at appendix 2. In addition Cllr A Khan received a petition from parents requesting that the council continues to provide a subsidised bus service to pupils attending Tile Hill Wood. The petition had 45 signatures.
- 3.2 Issues raised in the consultation responses from those who disagreed with the proposal are grouped together into general themes below with responses to the issues raised.

### 3.2.1 Legal issues

20% of respondents felt the proposal would create discrimination on the grounds of religion, or could be viewed as illegal under equality or human rights legislation.

Response: Human rights legislation gives parents the right to make sure that their religious beliefs are considered in the provision of education, but it does not guarantee a parent a place at a denominational school for their child or entitle them to free transport to that school.

Parents have a right under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 to express a preference for a place at a particular school, and whilst the Council must have regard to that preference, the allocation of a school place does not carry with it an automatic right to the parents choice of school or to transport assistance. Advice from Legal Services is that the proposal does not breach legislation.

### 3.1.2 Financial issues

27% of respondents expressed concerns about the potential costs for families and the impact on low income families. There were also concerns raised from 23% of respondents that this would therefore restrict the choice for parents who could not afford transport and may create a rich/poor divide

Response: All families who are on a low income (and meet the established test to determine low income; receipt of maximum level working tax credit or free school meals) will continue to be covered by the statutory policy which provides assistance for pupils living over 2 miles from the chosen school, or assistance to the nearest school chosen on grounds of religion or belief (between 2 and 15 miles from the home address)

### 3.1.3 Environmental issues

2% of respondents suggested that the proposal would increase traffic levels leading to an increase in pollution. A smaller number felt there would be more children walking and they had concerns about safeguarding children when walking.

Response: Whilst an increase in car journeys is a possibility, we believe that the school bus passes on offer from transport providers will still offer value for money and in most cases would be more cost effective for families than increasing their own fuel costs. There are also health benefits from encouraging activity/walking where childhood obesity is a growing health concern.

### 3.1.4 Wider schools based issues

0.5% of respondents felt the proposal would lead to changes in pupil numbers at the affected schools which had large or whole city catchment areas and this could in turn lead to a lack of places in other schools, or the closure of some of the faith and single sex schools, and thus a significant reduction in school choices for parents.

Response: Parental choices of school occur for a variety of reasons and transport provision is only one part of the picture. According to information provided through contact with the Admissions Team, the Choice Adviser and through the school appeals process, parents choose a school for many of the following reasons : locality; ofsted reports ; exam results; reputation; faith or non-faith based education; single sex or co-educational; school specialism; school size; family links; maintaining friendship groups; sibling links and many other personal preferences and combinations of factors. The local authority has an important strategic role to play in planning for the provision of school places and ensuring that Coventry parents have a range of positive choices within the city which means that such issues would be kept under review.



#### 4. Timetable for implementing this decision

- 4.1 The implementation of the recommended changes to the secondary school transport policy will be carried out from September 2012. This requires details of the amended policy to be published by the end of August 2011.

#### 5. Comments from Director of Finance and Legal Services

##### 5.1 Financial implications

Academic Year	Potential Saving (20% PA)
2012/13	£50k
2013/14	£95k
2014/15	£145k
2015/16	£190k
2016/17	£240k

The savings detailed above are based on current levels of spend on discretionary bus passes. The figures shown do not take account of future increases in charges from providers.

Expected future increases in pupil numbers will result in more schools becoming full and pupils having to travel further. This will increase the demand on statutory bus passes and impact on any savings achieved.

As yet, it is not possible to calculate the likely impact on expenditure due to an increase in pupil numbers. Work will be done when information becomes available.

##### 5.2 Legal implications

The local authority has a duty under section 508B of the Education Act 1996 in the case of an eligible child to make such travel arrangements as they consider necessary in order to secure that suitable home to school travel arrangements are in place for the purpose of facilitating the child's attendance at school free of charge. Eligible children include pupils from low-income families (where the parents are eligible for free school meals or maximum working tax credit). Additionally under section 509AD of the Education Act 1996 the local authority has a duty to have regard in exercising any of their travel functions in relation to travel to or from school, to any wish of a parent for the child to be educated in a school, institution or other place based on the parents religion or belief. Where changes are proposed to local policies on school travel arrangements the Home to School Travel and Transport Guidance states that local authorities should consult widely with all interested parties.

#### 6. Other implications

##### 6.1 How will this contribute to achievement of the Council's key objectives / corporate priorities (corporate plan/scorecard) / organisational blueprint / Local Area Agreement (or Coventry Sustainable Community Strategy)?

School transport provision contributes to the objectives of ensuring that children and young people are safe, achieve and make a positive contribution, and developing a more equal city.

## **6.2 How is risk being managed?**

Adoption of the proposal will eliminate the current key risk of legal challenge to the discretionary policy with its related significant financial implications.

There is risk to the reputation of the local authority as the proposal may receive negative publicity, especially in the light of the consultation results which show the majority of respondents are against the proposal. Clear information on the decision including the continuation of the provision of passes for those who currently have them, the opportunity to apply via the statutory route for assistance (particularly for those on low income), the opportunity to use the appeals procedure which looks at exceptional individual circumstances, and the fact that we are following a path taken by large numbers of other local authorities should be communicated to all stakeholders. Also affected schools can be approached to discuss alternative funding of transport support to pupils which they may wish to provide.

Concerns have been raised about potential safeguarding risks for pupils who walk to school instead of using the bus when passes are not available. By providing information at the time of choosing a school on a new transport policy parents will be able to make a choice of school which takes into account available travel mechanisms. Parents retain the responsibility for ensuring the safety of their children travelling to and from school.

The corporate risk management framework has been considered when identifying and assessing these risks.

## **6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?**

Phased implementation of the policy changes will require the administration of both old and new policies from 2012 until 2016. From 2017 only one policy will be in place.

## **6.4 Equalities / EIA**

An EIA was completed in November 2010. Data analysis shows that the current policy does not have a significant differentiated impact across the city in terms of gender or ethnicity. The ethnic breakdown of pupils across the schools follows a similar pattern to those obtaining a bus pass within the schools. However in Tile Hill Wood and Woodlands Schools a greater proportion of pupils from minority ethnic communities currently qualify for bus passes than would be proportionately expected. This is due to the fact that many of the pupils from these communities attending the schools will not live locally and therefore are more likely to meet the distance qualification for free passes.

The introduction of new statutory rights in 2008 for low-income families has increased the number of pupils qualifying for transport provision and this will continue.

## **6.5 Implications for (or impact on) the environment**

It has been suggested that the proposal would increase traffic levels leading to an increase in pollution. There is no data available to identify whether changes in bus pass allocation will lead to changing choices of school, or of pupils continuing to choose more distant schools whilst not qualifying for transport assistance. Whilst an increase in car journeys is a possibility if pupils continue to choose more distant schools, we believe that the school bus passes on offer from transport providers will still offer value for money and in most cases would be more cost effective for families than increasing their own fuel costs.

## 6.6 Implications for partner organisations?

Fewer pupils attending faith and single sex secondary schools will qualify for transport support once the policy change is fully implemented. These schools are concerned that pupils who are not from low-income families may choose alternative schools and that their pupil numbers may decrease as a result. Whilst this is a possibility, item 3.1.4 gives details of the range and complexity of the decision making process for parents. In addition it is worth noting that current population trends within the city identify an increasing pupil population for secondary schools from 2016 placing a greater demand on all schools for places.

### Report author(s):

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<b>Names of approvers for submission: (officers and members)</b>				
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Director: Colin Green	Director	CLYP	21/6/11	22/06/11
Members: Cllr Kelly	Cabinet Member (Education)		21/6/11	21/06/11

This report is published on the council's website:

[www.coventry.gov.uk/meetings](http://www.coventry.gov.uk/meetings)

## **Appendix 1 : CONSULTATION ON SECONDARY SCHOOL HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT POLICY**

**Launch date: 13 December 2010**

**Closing date: 13 February 2011**

**Announcement : April 2011**

1.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Coventry City Council has a policy on home to school transport which sets out the circumstances in which it will provide free transport to assist pupils to get to secondary school. The Council reviews that policy each year and decides whether or not it needs to make changes. As part of the drive to ensure the most efficient use of resources, the Council has decided to consider making changes to the policy to be brought in from September 2012. This consultation document sets out the proposed changes and seeks your views on the changes. Please note that these changes do not relate to pupils who have special educational needs and have transport provided as a result of their needs. Further information on entitlement to transport for these pupils can be gained by contacting a member of the Special Educational Needs Team, on 024 7683 1574 who will be pleased to offer help and advice.

This consultation document sets out:

- What free transport does Coventry city council have to provide?
- What extra help does the council provide now?
- What is the council planning to change?
- If these changes happen how will children at faith and single sex schools get help with transport costs?
- Who will make the decision about any changes?
- How to make your views known

The proposed changes to the Council's home to school transport policy only relate to pupils attending secondary school aged 11 to 16.

2.

### **WHAT FREE TRANSPORT DOES COVENTRY CITY COUNCIL HAVE TO PROVIDE?**

Every Local Authority (LA) is required by the Education Act 1996 as amended by the Education Inspections Act 2006 to ensure that every child in their area can get to a school. For those children who live some distance from a school, LAs are required to take action to help them get to school, normally by providing free transport.

The legislation states that the LA has to provide help if the distance to the nearest available school is more than three miles for a child aged 11 to 16.

LAs are not required to provide transport if the child is attending a distant school and a place is available at a school nearer the child's home. Therefore, if a child's parents choose not to send their child to their nearest available school but send their child to a school some distance away, the LA will not necessarily have to provide transport.

Children from low income families (that is children entitled to free school meals, or whose parents/carers are in receipt of their maximum level of working tax credit) must receive free transport to:

- any of their 3 nearest qualifying schools that are more than 2 miles but less than 6 miles from the child's home and;
- the nearest school preferred by reason of the parent's/carer's religion or belief which is more than 2 miles, but not more than 15 miles from the child's home.

The LA must also make arrangements for consideration of individual cases where the applicant claims there are special circumstances, to determine whether the exceptional circumstances justify a more favourable decision being made in favour of the applicant than the normal policy would allow. We have an appeals process which enables this to happen.

### 3.

## WHAT EXTRA HELP DOES THE COUNCIL PROVIDE NOW?

### The Council Policy

As well as providing free transport as required by the law on the basis described in section 2, the Council is providing transport in the following **discretionary** areas:

#### Transport to Faith Schools

Where a child has requested a place at Blue Coat Church of England School and they live over 3 miles from the school they will be provided with a free travel pass.

Where a child has requested a place at Bishop Ullathorne, Cardinal Newman or Cardinal Wiseman Catholic Schools and they have attended the relevant catholic feeder primary and they live over 3 miles from the school they will be provided with a free travel pass.

Where a child has been unable to gain a place at their associated Catholic secondary school and has been unable to gain a place at an alternative Catholic school in Coventry or an alternative community school within 3 miles of their home.

#### Transport for single sex and co-educational schools

Where a child has requested a place at The Woodlands School (Boys) or Tile Hill Wood School (Girls) and they live over 3 miles from the school they will be provided with a free travel pass

Where a child lives in the catchment area of the single sex schools and wishes to attend a co-educational school, and they live over 3 miles from the nearest school with places available they will also be provided with a free travel pass.

#### Expenditure on Discretionary Transport in 2009/10

The provision of all these types of discretionary transport has been made at a considerable cost to the Local Authority on top of services that it must provide on a statutory basis. Approximate total costs are detailed below:

Transport to faith schools : £183,787 (895 pupils)  
 Transport to single sex schools:£95,111 (458 pupils)

Whilst all pupils qualified under the discretionary policy, we estimate that 354 pupils were from low income families who may also have been entitled to assistance on a statutory basis. Therefore the estimated total cost of discretionary policy is as follows.

Estimated total cost for faith schools : £136,648  
 Estimated total cost for single sex schools:£71,149  
 Note the total overall cost of free bus passes for mainstream secondary schools was £322,830

4.

#### WHAT IS THE COUNCIL PLANNING TO CHANGE?

The Council is considering the removal of the following discretionary policies:

- free transport to faith schools from September 2012 for children living more than three miles from their school who are new pupils at the school
- free transport to single sex secondary schools from September 2012 for children living more than three miles from their school who are new pupils at the school
- free transport to co-educational schools for those who live in a single sex school catchment area and who are new pupils from September 2012

The Council has a duty to ensure that spending is focused on its priorities. As such it has been agreed that there should be a review of discretionary school transport.

5.

#### IF THESE CHANGES HAPPEN, HOW WILL CHILDREN AT FAITH AND SINGLE SEX SCHOOLS GET HELP WITH TRANSPORT COSTS?

If a child is receiving free transport on the basis of the discretionary policy in July 2012 this will continue until they leave their current school or transfer into the sixth form (subject to their being no change of circumstances such as a house move)

From September 2012 new applicants would only receive free transport if they fit into the following categories:

- If a faith or single sex school is the nearest school to your home with available spaces but is over 3 miles away you will still be entitled to a free bus pass. **This is a legal requirement and there will be no change to this aspect of the policy**
- Pupils from low income families will be entitled to help if they fit into the categories described in section 2. **This is a legal requirement and there will be no change to this aspect of the policy.**

For those new pupils who will not qualify for help we can advise that the current cost of an annual pass for parents is £220.50 or £225 per year depending on which transport provider you use.

**Please note that the governors of some of these schools are considering proposals to continue to provide free bus passes for children living over 3 miles from their schools if the Council does withdraw the current discretionary passes**

6.

#### WHO WILL MAKE THE DECISION ABOUT ANY CHANGES?

This consultation period will end on 13 February 2011. After that date the Cabinet and full Council will consider the comments received and will then decide if changes are to be made to the home to school transport policy for the 2012-13 school year and subsequent years.

The decision will be published on the Council Website and in the Home to School Transport Policy.

7.

## HOW TO MAKE YOUR VIEWS KNOWN

If you wish to comment on this change you must do so by completing the pro forma attached or by completing the consultation form on the council website at [www.coventry.gov.uk/SchoolTransportPolicy](http://www.coventry.gov.uk/SchoolTransportPolicy)

## OTHER LANGUAGE VERSIONS

- English** If you find this document difficult to understand, and would like help in reading it or translating it, please contact Minority Group Support Services on 07738 993 771.
- Arabic** إذا ما وجدت أن هذه الوثيقة صعبة الفهم، ورغبت في الحصول على معونة في قراءتها أو ترجمتها، فقم فضلاً بالاتصال بخدمات إسناد مجموعة الأقلية على الهاتف رقم 07738 993 771
- Bengali** যদি এই দলিল বুঝতে আপনাকে অসুবিধা হয়, এবং এটা পড়তে অথবা অনুবাদের সাহায্যের প্রয়োজন হয় তাহলে অনুগ্রহ করে মাইনরিটি গ্রুপ সাপোর্ট সার্ভিস (Minority Group Support Services)-এ 07738 993 771 নম্বরে যোগাযোগ করুন।
- French** Si vous avez du mal à comprendre ce document et souhaitez obtenir de l'aide pour le lire ou le traduire, veuillez contacter le service de soutien aux minorités au 07738 993 771.
- Gujarati** જે તમને આ દસ્તાવેજ સમજવવામાં મુશ્કેલી લગે અને તેને વાંચવામાં મદદ જોઈએ અથવા તેનું ભાષાંતર જોઈએ, તો કૃપા કરી માઈનોરિટી ગ્રુપ સપોર્ટ સર્વિસ (Minority Group Support Services) નો 07738 993 771 પર સંપર્ક કરીએ.
- Hindi** अगर आपको यह दस्तावेज़ समझने में दिक्कत आती हो और यदि आप इसे पढ़ने में मदद चाहते हैं, या इसका अनुवाद चाहते हैं तो कृपया माइनॉरिटी ग्रुप सपोर्ट सर्विसेस (Minority Group Support Services) से 07738 993 771 पर सम्पर्क करें।
- Polish** Jeśli masz trudności ze zrozumieniem tego dokumentu i potrzebujesz tłumaczenia lub pomocy w jego przeczytaniu, zwróć się do Serwisu Pomocy dla Grup Mniejszościowych (Minority Group Support Services) pod nr 07738 993 771.
- Panjabi** ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਸਮਝਣ ਵਿਚ ਪਰੇਸ਼ਾਨੀ ਹੋ ਰਹੀ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਸਨੂੰ ਪੜ੍ਹਨ ਲਈ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ, ਜਾਂ ਇਸਦਾ ਅਨੁਵਾਦ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਮਾਇਨਾਰਿਟੀ ਗਰੁੱਪ ਸਪੋਰਟ ਸਰਵਿਸੇਸ (Minority Group Support Services) ਨਾਲ 07738 993 771 'ਤੇ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ।
- Slovak** Ak mate tazkosti s porozumenim tohto dokumentu a potrebovali by ste pomoc s prekladom, prosim zavolajte Minority Group Support Services na telefonne cislo 07738993771
- Somali** Haddii ay kugu adag tahay in aad dukumentigaan fahamto, aadna jeclaan lahayd in lagaa caawiyo akhrintiisa ama turjumiddiisa, fadlan Adeegyada Taageerada Kooxda Tirada yar kala xiriir 07738 993 771.
- Romanian** Daca aveti dificultate in a intelege ce scrie in acest document si doriti ajutor sa va fie citit sau sa va fie tradus, va rugam contactati Minority Group Support Services (MGSS) la 07738993771.
- Russian** Если у вас есть какие-нибудь проблемы чтобы перевести или прочитать этот документ, позвоните, пожалуйста, Minority Group Support Services (MGSS) на номер 07738 993 771.
- Urdu** اگر آپ کو یہ دستاویز سمجھنے میں دشواری پیش آتی ہے، اور اگر آپ اسے پڑھنے میں مدد چاہتے ہیں، یا اس کا ترجمہ چاہتے ہیں تو براہ کرم 07738 993 771 پر مائنارٹی گروپ سپورٹ سروسز (Minority Group Support Services) سے رابطہ کریں۔



**Response to the Consultation on the withdrawal of  
Discretionary Transport**

Please tick the chosen box on the question below and complete the monitoring information on this form or go to the website to complete the questionnaire online.

**Please note the closing date for receipt of responses is 13 February 2011**

The Council is proposing to withdraw discretionary free transport to new applicants from 2012. This includes discretionary free transport to:-

- Faith schools
- Single sex schools
- Co educational schools for children who live in the catchment area for a single sex school where the nearest co educational school is over 3 miles away

Do you

- Agree
- Disagree
- Don't know

**Please add reasons for your answer if you wish**

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**Personal Details**

First name

Last name

Address    
Number

Post Code

Email

**Your status**

- A school representative
- A school governor
- A parent of a pupil who would be affected by the withdrawal of one of these services
- A pupil who would be affected by the withdrawal of one of these services
- A parent of a pupil who would not be affected by the withdrawal of one of these services
- Other – please specify

**Equalities Data**

1. Please specify your gender:

- Male
- Female

2. How would you describe your ethnic background:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> White British             | <input type="checkbox"/> Asian Bangladeshi |
| <input type="checkbox"/> White Irish               | <input type="checkbox"/> Asian Other       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> White Other               | <input type="checkbox"/> Black Caribbean   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed and Black Caribbean | <input type="checkbox"/> Black African     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed White Asian         | <input type="checkbox"/> Black Other       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed White and Black     | <input type="checkbox"/> Chinese           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed Other               | <input type="checkbox"/> Other             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asian Indian              |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asian Pakistani           |  |

If other, please state:

3. How old are you?

- |                                  |                                  |                                  |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 16 – 24 | <input type="checkbox"/> 45 - 54 | <input type="checkbox"/> 65 – 79 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 25 – 34 | <input type="checkbox"/> 55 – 64 | <input type="checkbox"/> 80+     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 35 – 44 |                                  |                                  |

4. Do you consider yourself to be a disabled person?

- Yes
- No

The information we collect will only be used to inform the analysis of responses to be included in the final report. By providing your personal details we will be able to assess the responses from various groups. We will not pass your personal details/information to any other agency and your personal details will not be used in the final report. This information will be used for statistical purposes only.

Thank you for taking the time to respond to this consultation exercise.

## **Appendix 2: Secondary Home to School Transport Consultation Analysis**

A consultation was held on the secondary home to school transport policy from 8 December 2010 until 13 February 2011. The consultation was reopened from 17 March until 8 April 2011. The consultation proposal was as follows:-

The Council is proposing to withdraw discretionary free transport to new applicants from 2012. This includes discretionary free transport to

- faith schools
- single sex schools
- co-educational schools for children who live in the catchment area for a single sex schools where the nearest co-educational school is over 3 miles away.

We received responses as detailed below

Agree	25
Don't know	15
Disagree	1092
Total	1132

Types of respondents	
School representatives	24
School governors	40
Parents affected by the withdrawal of passes	266
Pupils affected by the withdrawal of passes	5
Parents not affected by the withdrawal of passes	249
Other relatives	170
Members of faith communities	66
Members of the public	52
Those connected to education	45
MP	1
Previous pupils or parents	73
No status recorded	141

**Issues raised in the consultation responses from those who disagreed with the proposal are grouped together into general themes below**

### **Legal issues**

20% of respondents felt the proposal would create discrimination on the grounds of religion, or could be viewed as illegal under equality or human rights legislation.

### **Financial issues**

27% of respondents expressed concerns about the potential costs for families and the impact on low income families.

There were also concerns raised from 23% of respondents that this would therefore restrict the choice for parents who could not afford transport and may create a rich/poor divide.

**Environmental issues**

2% of respondents suggested that the proposal would increase traffic levels leading to an increase in pollution. A smaller number felt there would be more children walking and they had concerns about safeguarding children when walking.

**Wider schools based issues**

0.5% of respondents felt the proposal would lead to changes in pupil numbers which could in turn lead to a lack of places in other schools, or the closure of some of the faith and single sex schools, and thus a significant reduction in school choices for parents.

A smaller number also pointed out that the effected schools had large catchment areas in the case of the Catholic schools or in the case of the single sex and Church of England schools were effectively taking from across the whole city and therefore had a greater likelihood that children wanting places would live over 3 miles away.

**Alternative suggestions**

We had a variety of suggestions from respondents on alternatives to the proposal.

- Introduce some form of means testing which would ensure that all those who could afford to pay for passes did so, whilst those on lower incomes could qualify for help on a sliding scale.
- Introduce a small charge for all pupils so that the costs of the passes to the council were reduced
- Ask affected schools to make a contribution towards bus pass costs for their pupils.
- Reduction of other council expenditure so that bus pass provision could be maintained
- Increase the numbers of faith schools so that they are more locally available

**Petition**

In addition a petition was received from Councillor A Khan signed by 45 members of the public. It requested that the city council "continued to provide a subsidised bus service to pupils attending Tile Hill Wood School since we feel it is unfair to stop this service due to the fact that the schools are a distance from our homes and we cannot move into the catchment area of the school to attend."