

## Service and Community Impact Assessment (SCIA)

### Front Sheet:

**Directorate and Service Area:**

Children, Education & Families

**What is being assessed (eg name of policy, procedure, project, service or proposed service change):**

Home to School Transport for RAF Benson

**Responsible owner / senior officer:**

Admissions & Transport Services Manager – Education and Early Intervention

**Date of assessment:**

This was initiated as a working document in January 2015 and is kept under review.

**Summary of judgement:**

There are judged to be no major impacts on the groups with protected characteristics in this proposed policy change.

As the proposal relates very specifically to children aged 11-16 years old who are based at RAF Benson, many of whom already receive free school transport, there will be limited impact overall.

In reviewing the policy it has been acknowledged that the council is committed to the Military Covenant and its aim to ensure that the military community is treated equitably.

**Detail of Assessment:****Purpose of assessment:**

To assess the impact of the proposed amendment to the Home to School Transport Policy in relation to children based at RAF Benson for 2016 onwards.

Section 149 of the Equalities Act 2010 (“the 2010 Act”) imposes a duty on the Council to give due regard to three needs in exercising its functions:

- o Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act.
- o Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- o Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic, and those who do not.

Complying with section 149 may involve treating some people more favourably than others, but only to the extent that that does not amount to conduct which is otherwise unlawful under the new Act.

The need to advance equality of opportunity involves having due regard to the need to:

- remove or minimise disadvantages which are connected to a relevant protected characteristic and which are suffered by persons who share that characteristic,
- take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and which are different from the needs other people, and
- encourage those who share a relevant characteristic to take part in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such people is disproportionately low,
- take steps to meet the needs of disabled people which are different from the needs of people who are not disabled and include steps to take account of a person’s disabilities.

The need to foster good relations between different groups involves having due regard to the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding.

These protected characteristics are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- pregnancy and maternity
- race – this includes ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality
- religion or belief – this includes lack of belief
- sex
- sexual orientation
- marriage and civil partnership

## **Context / Background:**

The impact of the current home to school transport policy on families living at RAF Benson needs to be reviewed in the light of concerns raised by RAF Benson, RAF Benson School and Icknield Community College.

Essentially the nearest school to RAF Benson is Wallingford School. However, RAF Benson is outside Wallingford School's catchment/designated area and this school does not have the capacity to meet any increase in the demand for school places from families who live on the base, particularly since there is likely to be an increase in the demand for secondary school places from within the Wallingford School catchment/designated area. However, Icknield Community College does have the capacity to provide places for all likely demand from RAF Benson for the foreseeable future. Neither of these secondary schools is within a safe walking distance of RAF Benson and there are no suitable public bus service connections to Icknield Community College. However, the Council does already provide a free bus service to Icknield Community College.

The Council is committed to the Military Covenant and is also keen to ensure that that the Home to School Transport Policy is equitable.

A proposed amendment to the Home to School Transport Policy would provide free travel from RAF Benson to Icknield Community College. This would address the capacity issue in the Wallingford area and the concerns expressed by RAF Benson about the uncertainty around receiving free travel to Icknied Community College.

There is a need for an annual review because Wallingford School is an academy and is therefore responsible for setting its own admission arrangements. It may decide to give a higher priority for admission to children living at RAF Benson or increase its capacity and in either case it would then be inequitable to continue to provide free travel to new entrants to Icknield Community College since they could have places at Wallingford School, the nearest school to their address.

This proposal is being consulted upon until 27th February and is then to be considered by the Cabinet Member in March 2015. The responses to the consultation will be reported at that time. If the proposal is agreed there would be no likely increase in expenditure for Oxfordshire County Council but parents living at RAF Benson would have the security of knowing that their children will be able to access the secondary school which is most likely to be able to offer places, Icknield Community College.

There would still be a statutory entitlement to provide any child living at RAF Benson who is offered a place at Wallingford School free transport to that school since it is the nearest school to RAF Benson. The numbers involved are likely to be low given the capacity of Wallingford School and the likely future demand for places.

### **Proposals:**

On 9 March 2015 the Cabinet Member for Education will consider whether to agree the following proposal in whole or in part:

1. To provide guaranteed free travel for children of statutory school age from RAF Benson to Icknield Community College.
2. To review the need for this provision on an annual basis since it will be affected by changes in local schools' capacity and changing demand for free travel.

### **Evidence / Intelligence:**

A consultation exercise has been undertaken to ascertain the views of 'stakeholders' including the identification of potential impacts. This closes on 27th February 2015 and this assessment will be updated to reflect the findings, any changes to the proposals and any additional impacts identified.

The following steps were taken to ensure that the consultation reached those most likely to be affected:

the parents of children at RAF Benson School were all contacted by letter;  
Icknield Community College, Wallingford School and RAF Benson School were contacted by letter;  
the Admissions & Transport Services Manager met with Governors of RAF Benson School;  
the proposal was advertised through the consultation tracker used by the Council.

The proposal is not expected to either increase or decrease the number of children in receipt of free travel.

### **Alternatives considered / rejected:**

The alternative approach would have been to simply rely upon the Home to School Transport policy to provide free travel as necessary for children for whom Icknield Community College is the nearest available school. The number likely to receive free travel could be expected to be the same but as it is not guaranteed this could also be expected to lead to anxiety for Service families.

### **Impact Assessment:**

#### **Impact on Individuals and Communities:**

<b>Risks</b>	<b>Mitigations</b>
Age The policy specifically applies to all children aged 11 to 16 years old based at RAF Benson who attend Icknield Community College.	None. The specific age range is appropriate in light of the policy being discussed.
Disability n/a	None
Gender reassignment n/a	None
<b>Race</b> Ethnic minority groups make up a lower percentage of the pupil population in the Armed Services. Therefore a lower proportion of these groups will be entitled to free home to school transport.	No specific mitigation is required as there is no inherent discrimination in the policy.
Religion or belief n/a	<b>None</b>
Sex n/a	<b>None</b>
Sexual Orientation n/a	<b>None</b>
Marriage and civil partnership n/a	<b>None</b>
Rural communities n/a	The policy will be assisting access to a school which is based in a rural ward of the county.
Areas of deprivation n/a	<b>None</b>

**Impact on Staff: n/a**


**Impact on other Council services: n/a**  
The council already provides a free bus service to Icknield Community College.


**Impact on providers: n/a**


**Action plan: n/a**


**Monitoring and review:**

**Person responsible for assessment: Neil Darlington, Admissions & Transport Services Manager – Education and Early Intervention**

Version	Date	Notes
v.1	January 2015	Initial document to support consultation
v.2	February 2015	Update to reflect consultation process
v.3	September 2015	Review if the policy is agreed by Cabinet
v.4	September 2016	Review of the capacity issue and the proposed admissions arrangements for Wallingford school