

Report for Education Scrutiny Committee - 4 July 2013

Home to School Transport Consultation

This report covers

1. A summary of the proposed changes to the Home to School Transport Policy
2. Annex A the full public consultation document
3. Annex B a summary of the responses to the public consultation (to follow)

Background

The Local Authority has consulted with the public, head teachers and other interested parties upon a number changes to the Home to School Transport Policy. The Cabinet is due to consider the proposals on 16th July.

The proposed changes have been made in the light of the current difficult financial situation in the UK, the continuing impact this will have on local government finances, and the need to ensure that the Home to School Transport Policy is equitable. If the Cabinet decides to accept the proposals regarding the two tier appeals process and the use of the Road Safety GB guidance in making decisions regarding route safety, they will be implemented from September 2013. However, if the proposals regarding concessionary fares and the ending of free travel to the designated (catchment) school are agreed they would not take effect until September 2014.

1. To increase the charges for concessionary travel and post 16 travel in 2014/15 to £290.40 (£96.80 per two terms of the 6 term year) for those who live under 3 miles from the school attended and £541.20 per annum (£180.40 per two terms of the 6 term year) for those who live over 3 miles from the school attended .
2. From September 2015 onwards, to increase the concessionary fare by 2% per annum.
3. From September 2014 to end the waiving of the concessionary charge for the third and subsequent children of families where they have more than two children using the same home to school transport service
4. To only use the guidance issued by Road Safety GB when making risk assessments of walked routes to school.
5. To end free travel to the designated (catchment) school if the distance from home to school is over 3 miles if aged 8 or over, or 2 miles if less than aged 8 and of school age, unless this is the nearest school to a child's home address. This would take effect from September 2014 and those children for whom free transport has been agreed before that date would not be affected by this proposed change of policy. This protection would last up until the end of Year 6 for those in primary school and Year 11 for those in secondary school. (NB At present the Council provides free transport to *either* the designated (catchment) school or the nearest school if the distance is over 3 miles if aged 8 or over, or 2 miles if less than aged 8 and of school age. For most

addresses the designated school and the nearest school are the same but there are a limited number of examples where the designated school is considerably more distant.)

6. To reassess routes designated as “unsafe walking routes” against the guidance issued by Road Safety GB during 2013/14 and 2014/15. This part of the policy would come into force in September 2013 and would ensure that all routes are reviewed by the end of the 2014/15 academic year. Those receiving free transport on the grounds that there is no safe walking route would, as now, have this financial assistance withdrawn if the route were re-assessed as safe to walk.
7. To remove references to collaborative learning transport from the Home to School Transport Policy. Collaborative Learning Partnerships are no longer operating in Oxfordshire.
8. To adopt a two stage review/appeal process from September 2013 in accordance with the Department for Education Transport and Travel Guidance of March 2013.

Contact officers:

Neil Darlington, Admissions & Transport Service Manager
01865 - 815844
Neil.darlington@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Roy Leach
School Organisation & Planning Manager
01865 - 816458
Roy.leach@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Annex A: The full public consultation document

Annex B: A summary of the responses to the public consultation (to follow)