



4. Petitions and Public Address

The Leader of the Council has agreed the following requests to address the meeting:-

| Name | Organisation |
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| Councillor George Reynolds | Local Member (5 minutes) |
| Mrs K. Haig | Headteacher – Burford School (3 minutes) |
| Richard Martin | Governor and Chairman of Finance Committee – Burford School (3 minutes) |
| Andrew Pitman | Chair of Governors – Burford School (3 minutes) |
| Councillor John White | Mayor of Burford (3 minutes) |
| Councillor Lynda Atkins | Local Member (5 Minutes) |
| Helen Forey | Parent Governor – St. Swithun’s Primary School (3 minutes) |
| Niall McWilliams | Headteacher – Carterton Community College (3 minutes) |
| Graham Speke | Community Director for Carterton Community College (3 minutes) |
| Sue Moon | Oxfordshire School Bus Action Group (OSBAG) (3 minutes) |
| Councillor Neil Owen | Local Member (5 minutes) |

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| Dr. Annabel Kay | Headteacher – The Warriner School (3 minutes) |
| John Cochrane | A member of the public (3 minutes) |
| Chris Fyfe | Parent and financial adviser to Oxfordshire School Bus Action Group (OSBAG) (3 minutes) |
| Angus Wilkinson | Oxfordshire School Bus Action Group (OSBAG) (3 minutes) |
| Louise Sumner | A member of the public (3 minutes) |
| Councillor Anne Purse | Local Member (5 minutes) |

Councillor Mark Gray will attend to present the comments of the Education Scrutiny Committee held on 4 February 2014.

5. The Proposed Home to School Transport Policy (Pages 1 - 4)

Comments of the Education Scrutiny Committee attached.

**Education Scrutiny Committee
4 February 2014**

**The Proposed Home to School Transport Policy
Summary of Comments to Cabinet**

Report by Chairman – Cllr Mark Gray

Introduction

At its meetings on 04 July 2013, 14 November 2013 and 4 February 2014 the Education Scrutiny Committee considered the Proposed Home to School Transport Policy.

Following the original proposal a revised proposal was issued for consideration at the 14 November committee. The committee considered in turn each of the proposals and the likely impact on families, villages and the proposed savings.

The comments below are presented to Cabinet in order that they can take these into consideration when making their decisions.

Proposal a: To provide free transport to the nearest available school only

1. Concern was raised over the potential of a blank cheque being made available to academies in terms of transport and view was expressed that Option A1 removes this risk, although it was unclear whether Option A2 does the same.
2. Important to go to nearest school and would like to extend this to nearest school in Oxfordshire
3. Concerned about the split villages, as the percentages in future years might change and this would make it complicated.

Proposal a (i): Nearest available school in Oxfordshire

Recommendation: Clear majority in favour of nearest in county.

Proposal a(ii): A 'split village' entitlement where at least 25% of addresses but not all are nearest to the catchment school and the rest are nearest to the other school in such cases free transport to be provided to the catchment school for all addresses.

1. Would enable children from the same village to attend the same school, but may make the issue unnecessarily complex.
2. The case for Option A2 was emotional, and the issue was not one of splitting villages, but of providing free transport.

3. The statutory walking distance of 2 miles did not appear to be “rural-proof” and there may be difficulties in walking an 8-year-old 2 miles in winter across fields and bridle-ways.
4. It was emphasised that Option A2 may prove cheaper, as there was no need to transport in 2 directions
5. Split villages only spoke about the rural aspects and this has not been explored for the towns.
6. Seems to be complicated, use nearest school

General Comments

1. Would it be worthwhile to hold off until the new DfE guidance comes out.
2. Concerned about the links to the policy and the admissions team given the budgets will be in E&E
3. Schools have a wide discretion for spending on improving education outcomes and transport would be no different.
4. Concerns about the amount parents have to pay and would not want this up front. This is currently payable in three instalments, but officers are considering 12 monthly instalments.
5. Concerns about the consultation not including extended transport options
6. Concerns about the unknown risks, free schools, housing but cannot be hostage to these.
7. Changes are fair logical and reasonable to put forward
8. Protections in place to support the split villages
9. No change to children currently receiving transport to school
10. Whatever the final figure is we will be making savings
11. Concerned that nothing has changed since the last consultation and the new guidance is not available to guide us.
12. Most savings could be made by looking at the taxi budget
13. Safe travel routes have not been explored
14. Consider a more proactive role in the Big Society approach to school transport including alternative arrangements.

Recommendation to Cabinet

The meeting was in favour of the split village with a mixed view as to whether split should be 20%. There was no appetite for 25% split.

Proposal b: To introduce the new policy from September 2015 for all children starting primary school or transferring to secondary school and to phase the policy change in year by year as children start school or transfer between places of education. Those in receipt of free travel under the current policy in September 2014 will continue to receive it on the same terms until they leave that phase of education or move to an alternative school.

Recommendation to Cabinet:

The clear majority was in favour of this phased introduction.

Proposal c: To increase the charges for concessionary travel and post-16 travel by 10% in September 2014. This would involve increasing concessionary fares 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 six term year) for those who live over 3 miles from the school attended.

1. The costs for educational rather than vocational may affect the choice of children staying on in education
2. Arbitrary figure, children choosing to use these seats should be charged what they cost
3. Disagree with any increase in Post 16 since the educational age has been increased
4. We should be lobbying the government to fund this since they changed the rules

Recommendation to Cabinet:

There was strong support for this option.

Proposal d: from September 2015, to increase concessionary and post-16 fares by either:

- (i) By 8% per year for the following three years (proposal C2) or
- (ii) By 5% per year for the following five years (proposal C3)

Recommendation to Cabinet:

The clear majority were in favour of d(ii)

Proposal e: To remove references to collaborative learning transport from the Home to School Travel Policy.

1. All in favour

Proposal f: in order to administer the changes, particularly the determination of the nearest available school and the need to process an anticipated increase in the number of Home to School Transport appeals, the admissions Team to be increased, for two years, by an additional 1 Full Time Equivalent (at a cost of £34,923 per annum)

Recommendation:

The team is given the appropriate resources to deliver this option.

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| Overall Statement |
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The committee supported further work to be undertaken in respect of this area, including safe routes, admissions policies, and the taxi budget. The study of alternative transport arrangements and the dissemination of best practice could be included in this work. There is an SEN pilot in place at the moment which should be incorporated.

The committee would also like to press the government to overhaul the principles of home to school transport in the light of the new Post 16 regulations.

Cllr Mark Gray

Education Scrutiny Committee Chairman

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