

Appendix 3

Home to School Transport Policy Review

Consultation responses, 7 February – 8 April 2011

Final Report

1.0 Purpose and Methodology of Consultation

- 1.1 On 7 February 2011, Hampshire County Council's Children's Services Department launched an 8 week consultation on proposals to revise its Home to School Transport (HTST) policy. It was aimed at parents, schools, colleges, Diocesan Boards of Education, neighbouring local authorities and anyone who had an interest in the services that is provided for many children and young people across Hampshire.
- 1.2 The consultation paper considered the effect of removal of the discretionary elements of the existing policy, and a further two changes to the existing policy. They are summarised below:-
- Delayed application of the increased statutory walking distance for 8 year olds.
 - Removing a HTST service for children attending a denominational school.
 - Providing assistance with transport for Year 10 and 11 (i.e. Key Stage 4) pupils who move schools.
 - Providing assistance for home to college transport costs for students from low income families.
 - In the case of there being more than one school treating an address as 'in-catchment' HTST would only be provided to the nearest qualifying school.
 - Introducing a charge for post-16 students with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities.
- 1.3 The consultation feedback is important in informing the decision to be taken by the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services regarding the content of future HTST policy in Hampshire.
- 1.4 The authority launched its consultation on 7 February with the following approaches being followed over the period of consultation.
- General Press Release
 - Schools Communication
 - Advice to all Hampshire Colleges
 - Advice and e-mails to Diocesan Boards of Education
 - E-mails to Neighbouring Authorities
 - Direct communication with Governing Bodies of Hampshire schools.
- The consultation was picked up by a number of publications including newspapers and newsletters (e.g. Parent Voice).

- 1.5 The consultation responses have been collated into a single dataset used to calculate the figures used in this report. All consultations submitted before the deadline of midnight on 8 April 2011 have been included. A copy of each of the responses is included in the Members' files. A further 30 letters about this consultation were received by the County Council, their contents summarised for this report and copies included in the members' files.

2.0 Levels of Engagement

- 2.1 239 online consultations were received. Respondents could answer any of the questions; not all questions have received 239 responses. The consultation was available on a dedicated Children's Services Department webpage, with links from other websites including the main Home to School Transport webpage.
- 2.2 In February 2011 there were approximately 15 000 pupils being provided with assistance for their journey to and from school by the HTST service.
- 2.3 Respondents were asked to categorise themselves as a parent, teacher, member of the public, organisation representative, student or Governor. A breakdown of the 239 respondents is as follows, this information will be provided for each question in the body of this report.

Parent	175
Teacher	14
Member of the public	20
Organisation representative	3
Student	7
Governor	16
Total	239

- 2.4 At the end of this document an appendix is provided showing a collation of the written comments that places parents comments into themes. This information is used in the response analysis provided below.

3.0 Key Findings

3.1 Responses

- 3.1.1 The first consultation question advised parents of the following discretionary element under consideration as follows:

"Delayed application of the increased statutory walking distance for 8 year olds

The current policy states: "A pupil will be eligible for assistance where the distance from home to school, measured by the nearest available walking route, is more than:

- **two miles: for pupils up to the end of the school year in which they have their eighth birthday, (ie end of Year 3)"**

HCC is consulting on the proposal to remove the discretionary element, i.e. apply the 3 mile distance on the child's 8th birthday rather than waiting for the beginning of the next school year.

This may result in savings of approximately £90, 000 calculated using the 2010/11 financial year expenditure on 53 children at an average cost of £1,680 equating to just under £90,000. These savings can all be realised within one year of introducing a revised policy.

3.1.2 There were 143 responses to this question., respondent types were made up as follows

Parent	100
Teacher	10
Member of the public	14
Organisation representative	1
Student	4
Governor	14
Total	143

3.1.3 Of the respondents 110 opposed the proposal to remove this discretionary provision , 33 supported the proposal. Therefore 77% of respondents do not support the removal of this discretionary provision.

- 3.1.4 There were 18 written comments from the online consultation. A number of respondents referred to the maturity of the children and the need for them to be accompanied by a parent, the increased car usage and the disruption during the academic year.
- 3.1.5 The second consultation question advised parents of the following discretionary element under consideration as follows:

“Providing a HTST service for children attending a denominational school.

The current policy states: “The County Council will assist with travelling expenses to the nearest denominational school with a place if all the following criteria are met:

- **The child has been baptised or otherwise received into the faith of the foundation of the school;**
- **For primary pupils, the distance between home and school is more than two miles (Year R to Year 3) or three miles (Year 4 to Year 6) and less than six miles; or**
- **For secondary pupils, the distance between home and school is more than three miles and less than 10 miles.”**

It goes on to say

“The County Council will assist parents who meet the above criteria with travelling expenses. Parents will normally be expected to contribute £1 per day to their child’s travel costs.”

HCC is consulting on the proposal to remove this discretionary element. This service might be discontinued by a phased approach in which there are no changes for children already receiving transport whilst they remain in their current school. Alternatively the authority might choose a timescale, for instance one academic year might be considered reasonable, for a notice period. At the end of the notice period all the service provided within this discretionary element would cease.

This may result in savings of approximately £325k calculated using the 2010/11 expenditure on 808 pupils receive HTST service under the denominational entitlement with an average cost of £406 per year. If ending the entitlement at the end of a notice period then that would be the annual saving once the service is terminated.

Alternatively ending the service using a phased approach the savings are realised in a different way. In the longer term savings would arise by ceasing to provide subsidised transport. At the moment the typical uptake per year for secondary age children joining Year 7 is 150 children (including those exempt from the charge because of low income) transported at a cost of £360 per year, with a total spend of £50,000.

Therefore the potential savings, if the phasing begins for admission in 2012, would be

Financial Year	2012/2013	2013/2014	2014/2015	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018
Savings	30,000*	80,000	130,000	180,000	230,000	280,000

***7/12ths of 50 000**

There are further children being transported, e.g. primary age children. Their entitlement would mostly end over the same period and so the savings would be slightly higher than the final figure in the table.

Also as the authority currently provides a subsidised service raising the cost to parents can be considered . The charge to parents has stayed the same since its introduction in 2007. If a subsidised service does continue then HCC proposes that the charge be increased from £1 to £2 per day.

This increased charge may result in savings of approximately £100k, presuming similar levels of take up of the service."

3.1.6 There were 199 online respondents to this question., respondent types were made up as follows

Parent	149
Teacher	10
Member of the public	21
Organisation representative	1
Student	7
Governor	11
Total	199

3.1.7 Of the respondents 157 opposed the proposal to remove this discretionary provision , 41 supported the proposal. Therefore 79% of respondents do not support the removal of this discretionary provision.

3.1.8 There were 222 comments from the online consultation (as respondents can make more than one comment). A number of comments referred to the extra traffic around school gates. Also whilst 40 comments referred to removal of the entitlement being discriminatory against catholic families there were 21 comments stating that having this entitlement discriminates against all other families. 13 comments referred to entitlement being phased out rather than following a period of notice.

3.1.9 The third consultation question advised parents of the following discretionary element under consideration as follows:

"Waiving the charge for the HTST service for children attending a denominational school for a family of three or more children.

The current policy states: "If a family has three or more children travelling to their nearest denominational school and are otherwise subject to charges, a charge will be made for two children with the remaining children exempt from charges during the years where there are more than two children travelling to school"

HCC is consulting on the proposal to remove this discretionary element as well as removing the wider entitlement. This is a separate discretionary element that might be discontinued even if the wider entitlement is continued.

This may result in savings of approximately £2k calculated using the 2010/11 financial year expenditure on 4 children at an average cost of £500 each."

3.1.10 There were 165 responses to this question., respondent types were made up as follows:

Parent	118
--------	-----

Teacher	10
Member of the public	18
Organisation representative	0
Student	7
Governor	12
Total	165

- 3.1.11 Of the respondents 119 opposed the proposal to remove this discretionary provision , 46 supported the proposal. Therefore 72% of respondents do not support the removal of this discretionary provision.
- 3.1.12 There were 7 comments from the online consultation. As the question is similar to question 2 and about transport to denominational schools it may be that respondents did not repeat previous comments. Within the 7 comments 5 referred to the impact on hard up families.
- 3.1.13 The fourth consultation question advised parents of the following discretionary element under consideration as follows:
“Providing assistance with transport for Year 10 and 11 (i.e. Key Stage 4) pupils who move schools.

The current policy states: “Assistance may be offered to pupils in Years 10 and 11 where:

- The change of address takes place after the start of the first term of Year 10 and**
- The distance criteria are met in respect of the new home and**
- The pupil continues to attend the designated catchment area (or nearest) school for the previous home address.**

HCC is consulting on the proposal to remove the discretionary element. This may result in savings of approximately £55k calculated using the 2010/11 financial year expenditure on 58 children at an average cost of £955 equating to just over £55k. The vast majority of pupils using the service are of year 11 age, more year 10 and 11 pupils who move home during the academic year and are entitled will come forward as the year progresses. These savings could be achieved as soon as they are included in the policy.

- 3.1.14 There were 134 responses to this question., respondent types were made up as follows:

Parent	97
Teacher	9
Member of the public	13
Organisation representative	0
Student	3
Governor	12
Total	134

- 3.1.15 Of the respondents 97 opposed the proposal to remove this discretionary provision, 37 supported the proposal. Therefore 72% of respondents do not support the removal of this discretionary provision.
- 3.1.16 There were 11 comments from the online consultation. 9 of these comments referred to the idea that the authority must look at the circumstances of the house move.

- 3.1.17** The fifth consultation question advised parents of the following discretionary element under consideration as follows:
“Providing assistance for home to college transport costs for students from low income families.

The current policy states: The following section details only the support with home to school transport available from the County Council.

Age The student must be under 19 years of age on 1 September prior to the start of a course.

Income The student’s parents must be in receipt of Income Support or income based job seekers allowance.

Distance The journey from home to school/college must be more than four miles, measured by the most direct practicable route.

Home The student must normally live in the home of his/her parents/legal guardians. In the event of a student living alone assistance will be given where the student is in receipt of income support in their own right.

Which college or school?

The student must attend the nearest school with a sixth form or college offering an appropriate full-time, non advanced course, or to the nearest school with a sixth form.

Which course? A full-time course or programme of study is deemed to be appropriate where it enables the student to meet his or her employment objectives.

Maximum distance

The nearest school with a sixth form must be within a maximum distance of ten miles.

Transport to church schools with sixth forms

Where a student attends a church school with a sixth form transport assistance will only be available where:

- The student attended that school on denominational grounds prior to transferring to its sixth form
- The minimum distance (4 miles) applies
- The student has been baptised or otherwise received into the faith of the foundation of the school
- The school is within the maximum distance (10 miles) of the home address
- The school is the nearest church school of the appropriate denomination with a place

Pick-up and drop off points

Where the distance between a pick-up or drop off point and home or school/college is less than 1.5 miles the County Council will not normally provide transport for that part of the journey.

Journeys to and from other destinations

Transport is not offered to or from points other than the school/college and home.

HCC is consulting on the proposal to remove the discretionary element.

This may result in savings of approximately £247k calculated using the 2010/11 financial year expenditure on 368 students at an average cost of £671 equating to just over £247k. There is a great range in cost for each student, the bottom quartile cost is £546, the median is £650 and the upper quartile is £755. The savings can be realised at the end of a suitable notice period providing the new policy is published with adequate notice for students due to start in the FE sector.

Alternatively to retain some support with travelling costs for students from families on a low income the authority could introduce a fixed percentage contribution for students meeting the criteria in the existing policy (stated above) of 40% of the actual costs. This would lead to savings of £148k."

3.1.18 There were 153 responses to this question., respondent types were made up as follows:

Parent	109
Teacher	11
Member of the public	15
Organisation representative	2
Student	4
Governor	12
Total	153

3.1.19 Of the respondents 136 opposed the proposal to remove this discretionary provision, 17 supported the proposal. Therefore 89% of respondents do not support the removal of this discretionary provision.

3.1.20 There were 18 comments from the online consultation. These include comments that refer to not penalising students from low income backgrounds and making them less likely to attend college, the double effect of removal of the Education Maintenance Allowance and that this measure makes some students less likely to continue in Further Education and so reduces their job opportunities.

3.1.21 The sixth consultation question asked for views on possible changes to the following change to policy:

"Revising entitlement when children live in an area designated as catchment by more than one school.

In 2.4.3.the current policy states: "Which school?

'Free transport will be provided to a school which is the designated catchment area school or to the nearest school to the home address where a school is nearer to the home address than the designated catchment area school, providing the distance criteria are met..'

It is proposed that the following phrase is added: "Please note: where more than one school treats the home address as falling within its catchment area transport will only be provided to the nearest catchment school or the nearest school to the home address if different, providing the distance criteria are met."

The implications of the proposed change are for children living in a so called "shared catchment area". Children living in certain addresses are in

treated as 'in catchment' by two schools and, under the current policy, they may receive free transport to either school. Under the revised policy they would not receive free transport to the school that is furthest from the home address, in some cases this may mean that in future there is no entitlement to transport.

Savings will arise as some entitlement ends and fewer services are supplied."

3.1.22 There were 133 responses to this question., respondent types were made up as follows:

Parent	101
Teacher	8
Member of the public	12
Organisation representative	1
Student	0
Governor	11
Total	133

3.1.23 Of the 133 respondents 91 opposed the amendment to the policy detailed above. 42 do support the change. Therefore 68% of respondents do not support the proposed change to policy.

3.1.24 There were 3 comments on this question from the online responses. Also there was a longer direct correspondence with a parent who was able to identify that if the change is introduced then her elder child would be entitled but the younger sibling would then not be able to access a free transport service.

3.1.25 The seventh consultation question asked for views on possible changes to the following change to policy:
"Revising entitlement for Year 10 and 11 pupils so that the policy reflects practice.

In 2.4.8 the current policy states:

2.4.8 Change of address

2.4.8.1 Assistance will normally be offered to pupils in Years 10 and 11 where:

- **The change of address takes place after the start of the first term of Year 10 and**
- **The distance criteria are met in respect of the new home and**
- **The pupil continues to attend the designated catchment area (or nearest) school for the previous home address.**

2.4.8.2 Assistance will not normally be offered for pupils up to and including Year 9

It is proposed that the following phrase is added: unless the pupil has already commenced a KS4 programme of study which will be determined by the County Council.

2.4.8 is a discretionary feature of the policy and its inclusion in future policies is part of this consultation. (see Appendix A)

The implication of the proposed change is that it will regularise the current practice as all pupils that have not yet started in Year 10 but have begun the Key Stage 4 phase in secondary education are considered for entitlement as exceptions to policy.

If the discretionary entitlement is retained and the extra clause added there is no change in cost to the authority."

3.1.26 There were 133 responses to this question., respondent types were made up as follows:

Parent	79
Teacher	8
Member of the public	14
Organisation representative	0
Student	1
Governor	8
Total	110

3.1.26 Of the 110 respondents 57 opposed the amendment to the policy detailed above. 53 do support the change. Therefore 52% of respondents do not support the change to policy.

3.1.27 There were no comments on this question from the online responses.

3.1.28 The eighth and last consultation question asked for views on possible changes to the following change to policy:

"Introduce a charge for Post-16 students with learning difficulties or a disability.

The current policy allows for transport to be provided to post-16 students with learning difficulties or a disability without charge.

It is proposed that the authority introduces a charge of £500 per annum to be paid by parents of a student. If the student is entitled to free school meals or if their parents are in receipt of the maximum level of Working Tax Credit, the County Council will not enforce the payment.

The implications of the change are that the authority may save up to approximately £300k calculated using expenditure in 2010/11 where 468 students receiving free transport to an FE setting and a further 135 receiving transport to a school sixth form for whom a charge would become payable. It is not possible to gauge how many would be exempt from the charge."

3.1.29 There were 147 responses to this question., respondent types were made up as follows:

Parent	107
Teacher	10
Member of the public	16
Organisation representative	1
Student	1
Governor	12
Total	147

3.1.30 Of the 147 respondents 126 opposed the amendment to the policy detailed above. 21 do support the change. Therefore 86% of respondents do not support the change to policy.

3.1.31 There were 45 comments regarding this proposal. Most were single comments but there were multiple responses with the following themes; the most vulnerable have little choice over where they will go, transport means the difference between staying at home and going to college, families already have high costs due to child's disability and there can be financial hardship despite working.

CONSULTATIONS ON PROPOSED CHANGES TO HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT

Consultation Proposal ID

- C1** Transport for eight year olds until the end of the school year in which they have their eighth birthday
- C2** Home to school transport for children attending a denominational school
- C3** Home to school transport for children attending a denominational school for a family of three or more children
- C4** Assistance with transport for Year 10 and 11 (ie Key Stage 4) pupils who move schools
- C5** Assistance for home to college transport costs for students from low income families
- D1** Revising entitlement when children live in an area designated as catchment by more than one school
- D2** Revising entitlement for Year 10 and 11 pupils so that the policy reflects practice
- D3** Introducing a charge for post-16 students with learning disabilities or a disability

**Number of
times
comment
raised**

Typical comments

C1	Maturity of children - safety of routes. Parents cannot accompany	4
	Road crossing patrols	1
	Increased car usage around school	3
	Administration of scheme?	1
	ASA transport not paid for - would rather pay for that than HTST (Hounslow)	1

Disruption during an academic year / not consistent, penalising child for its birth date	3
Freedom of choice - penalising hard up families	1
The school takes Wiltshire pupils - Wiltshire has different criteria and will keep transport	1
Unrealistic, children too tired to work	1
SEN pupils' needs greater as they get older	1
Transport cheaper than building schools nearer to home	1
	18

C2 Could pupils find place at local school?	1
Could free up spaces in denominational schools then other pupils go in - imbalance of school places?	2
Rural issues/safety	3
Question over baptism	1
Any of the proposals mean increased parental traffic/parking/environmental problems	16
Time it all stopped	2
Hayling/Oaklands - bus service invaluable	1
Do not remove from those already receiving financial assistance.	2
Made school choice easier	1
Children attend nearest RC school	3
Penalising and discriminating against personal choice / families' beliefs	21
Penalising a "minority" community	1
Against human rights	3
Why should they get assistance - discriminates against all other parents	21
Purchased home based on transport being available - cannot move again	4
Subsidised transport helps parents in choice, so removing that option	1
Will have to move schools	1
Unfair to denominational schools - they are needed in the community	3
Support for removing it altogether and keep pupils in catchment	1
Isn't education meant to be the core focus of the government?	1
Keep assistance for those already getting, then phase out	13
Catholic families have a right to educate their child at a faith school but could not afford to if free transport taken away	19
Freedom of choice - penalising hard up families	5
Less choice - government supports choice	1

Disruptive to many pupils	1
Education Act 1944 - no child shall be denied the right to education on religious or other grounds	8
Already changed 1944 Act by charging £1 per day	1
Original change to £1 charge perday was fine but to remove it altogether is discriminatory	1
Illegal - religious discrimination	8
Financial impact	19
Loss of pupils	1
School provides minibus as part of School Travel Plan (STP) - keeps 80 cars off the road	1
Agrees with proposal but suggests a phased approach to allow a change of schools	4
Against Mr David Cameron's "family orientated" policies	1
Parents choosing denominational education should pay for the transport - divisive and discriminatory to other parents	1
Effect on school through lack of pupils	1
Equality -	1
Denying children the right to attend an outstanding school / opportunity lost to parents to choose a good school	5
Needs a public meeting	1
Could put higher demand on local schools	2
Issue over school places in non-catholic schools in Fleet	1
Stress to the child over moving schools	1
Implications on job and timekeeping	2
Attending faith school important part of child's development/health & wellbeing	3
Cannot afford petrol to take by car	1
Reducing Christian morals in a country which is at an all time low already	1
Cannot use a car - no reliable public transport	1
Use Surrey's approach to honour those already getting transport	1
Increase charge to parents rather than take it away	1
Travelling by bus provides operator with huge profit	1
Could lead to closure of some schools / what happens to faith schools if the pupils move to a more local school?	2
Why pick on church schools, other local schools receive passes	2
Cannot discriminate against denominational schools, change must be made across the board	5
Ability to pay should not be a factor when choosing a school	4
Unreasonable	1

	Needs to keep the character of the denominational school	1
	Proposal only favours the rich	1
	Seriously affect denominational schools across Hampshire and they give the best results	1
	Would force parents to change schools	4
	Couple this proposal with the closure of Oak Farm	1
	Do not charge parents, but use the money to negotiate cheaper fares with operators	1
	Would agree to increase in daily charge / increase of 50p per day - HCC to subsidise balance?	2
	Were not informed subsidisation would stop	1
		222
C3	Would put more cars on the road, particularly those with more children	1
	Purchased home based on transport being available - cannot move again	1
	Freedom of choice - penalising hard up families	3
	Financially impossible for those with more than one child at school	2
		7
C4	Suggests end of Year 10/Year 11	
	Need to look at reasons/circumstances for move	9
	Discriminatory to parents who have no choice but to move	1
	Freedom of choice - penalising hard up families	1
C5	Students not likely to attend college	2
	Withdrawal of EMA makes this a double blow to poor families	3
	Comments not compatible with proposal?	1
	Parent taken school as "college"	1
	Should be encouraging students from these families	2
	Penalising those students from continuing into further education and getting jobs	2
	Freedom of choice - penalising hard up families	4
	Sparsholt only college in Hampshire for "green" skills	1
	Social mobility should be considered	1
	Choice of college limited to those with long term disability	1

D1	Give parents choice then penalise	1
	Could child lose entitlement in 2012 as they have chosen the dual catchment school further away?	1
	Freedom of choice - penalising hard up families	1
		3
D2		
D3	Causes parents to fall into poverty trap	1
	Necessity to travel further	1
	Son receives benefit in his own right - should this be where entitlement is assessed?	1
	Disability Discrimination Act - against the principles	1
	Safety issues for vulnerable adults trying to get to college	1
	Transport means the difference between staying at home or going to college	3
	Financial hardship despite working	3
	Cost of administering outweighs saving	1
	Unjustified and will have serious impact	1
	Exception route will put parents off	1
	Heartless - parents struggle enough with SEN structure	3
	Ensure low income <u>is</u> accounted for	1
	Cannot afford Post 16 SEN charge	1
	Championing parents of disabled students asking where HCC responsibility lies to parents already in financial crisis	2
	Denying disabled students opportunity to progress with their peer group and become more independent	2
	Long term cost to Adult Services	1
	Disgusted/appalled at charging Post 16 SEN	1
	Most vulnerable will have no choice over where they go - future needs?	6
	Parents and children need all the assistance they can get	2
	Freedom of choice - penalising hard up families	1
	Families already have high costs due to child's disability.	3
	Train for independence by transporting them to college	1

Lack of local special school provision/college facilities	1
No - be serious	1
Possible use of DLA for transport/means testing, but SEN students need more help	1
Fair to charge, but suggests £1 per day, not £500	1
Grandparents as guardians - finally would not afford £500	1
Should look at all needs, not just ability to walk	1
Statement goes up to age <u>19</u>	1
	45
General Increased traffic - climate change	1
Against Cllr Thornber's "plan " - increase incentives one way/withdraw from the other	1
General complaint about poor bus service and cost of buses	1
Agrees with proposal - Authority should not pay for transport to any school (denominational or otherwise) if not in catchment	1
Freedom of choice - penalising hard up families	1
Agrees with proposal to remove denominational assistance even though a practising Catholic - parents should pay for choice	2
Comments not relevant to proposal	5

Total	649
--------------	------------