

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

Decision Maker:	Executive Member for Economy, Transport and Environment
Date:	19 January 2016
Title:	Review of Home to School Transport Contracts
Reference:	7230
Report From:	Director of Economy, Transport and Environment

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1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. The purpose of this paper is to seek approval to enter into a consultation exercise for the review of 'school special' bus services that convey non-entitled pupils to schools.

2. Contextual information

- 2.1. The Transport Act 1985 requires the County Council to identify socially necessary bus services which are not provided by the commercial bus operators. The Act does not set out the level of support required.
- 2.2. The public bus services being considered in this report, often known as 'school specials', are funded from the County Council's Local Bus Budget. These services have historically been provided at the discretion of the County Council for pupils not entitled to statutory Home to School Transport. A list of the routes and schools served can be found in Appendix 1.
- 2.3. The Passenger Transport Review Report of 27 October 2014 proposed that 'school special' services that conveyed non-entitled students be surveyed to confirm current use and cost per passenger journey, and that schools and parents then be consulted on opportunities for continuing operation of the services on a different funding basis.
- 2.4. The County Council meeting of 22 October 2015 gave authority to "review the current non-statutory Home to School Transport provision funded from the bus subsidy budget with a view to reducing it solely to those who are entitled to the service in order to generate savings".
- 2.5. Following this decision, the 'school special' services have been surveyed to determine current passenger usage.

- 2.6. The 'school special' services primarily convey students from bus stops near their homes to local schools. The vast majority of students using these services are not entitled to assistance with Home to School Transport as set out in the County Council's Home to School Transport Policy 2014, as they are either not attending a school which is the designated catchment area school (or to a nearer school to the home address – if different), or live within the 2 and 3 mile criteria published in the policy
- 2.7. There are 94 students who currently use 'school specials' who are entitled to school transport under the County Council's Home to School Transport Policy. This entitlement will continue, and appropriate transport will be provided.
- 2.8. Those students who are receiving entitlement on denominational grounds will cease to have this entitlement from September 2016. This follows the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services decision of 6 June 2011.
- 2.9. Where there is an interest in continuing a level of service by other funding means, County Council officers could offer technical advice in procuring and contracting transport to schools or parents' groups.
- 2.10. Work will also be carried out to identify any commercial bus services which provide opportunities for students to travel from home to school.

3. Finance

- 3.1. The current total cost of all the contracts is £629,298 per annum.
- 3.2. The level of savings expected to be achieved from this exercise is around £450,000, once any adjustments for additional transport for entitled students are taken into account.
- 3.3. Although fares are charged on 'school specials' these do not cover the cost of the services which results in an annual subsidy cost of £629,298.
- 3.4. Where entitled students are currently travelling on affected 'school specials', there will be a requirement for a new form of transport provision. The cost of this transport will be covered by budget transfer to Children's Services.

4. Consultation

- 4.1. As the non-entitled students who use these 'school specials' are fare payers, the County Council does not have contact details for them. Therefore, the consultation exercise will be carried out by firstly writing to the schools served by the 'school specials' to explain the County Council's proposal and then to ask them to promote the consultation to the parents/guardians of the students who use the services.

- 4.2. The consultation will invite schools and parents/guardians of students to express a preference as to how the 'school specials' could continue to operate without County Council subsidy.
- 4.3. The consultation will be open from Friday 22 January 2016 to Friday 19th February 2016. This will enable a decision to be made in March 2016 and implemented in September 2016 to ensure that affected parents and schools have adequate time to plan alternative funding or transport if required. Advance notice has been given to the schools affected.
- 4.4. To ensure that the consultation reaches as many parents/guardians as possible the following measures will be put in place:
 - The consultation will be promoted on the County Council's website, the Children's Services Home to School Transport web page and on the Passenger Transport Group web page.
 - Passenger Transport Group staff will distribute paper copies of the consultation to students travelling on both inward and homeward affected buses.
 - Schools will be asked to promote the consultation via their website and any other media that may be available such as newsletters to parents.

5. Future direction

- 5.1. The results of the consultation, and subsequent recommendations, will be reported back to the Executive Member for Economy, Transport and Environment at his March Decision Day.

6. Recommendations

- 6.1. That the Executive Member for Economy, Transport and Environment confirms the approach to consult with schools and parents currently benefiting from non-statutory Home to School Transport provision as agreed by the County Council on 22 October 2015.
- 6.2. That a report will be presented to the Executive Member in March 2016 with recommendations based on the outcome of the review and consultation.

CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:**Links to the Corporate Strategy**

Hampshire safer and more secure for all:	no
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
Maximising well-being:	yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
Enhancing our quality of place:	no
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

DocumentLocation

None

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

1. Equality Duty

1.1. The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

- a) The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant characteristic connected to that characteristic;
- b) Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- c) Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

1.2. Equalities Impact Assessment:

The consultation has been designed to ensure that as many affected people as possible can participate, which includes all those with protected characteristics. Measures to enable as many people as possible to submit their views include:

- The consultation will be promoted on the County Council's website, the Children's Services Home to School Transport web page and on the Passenger Transport Group web page.
- County Council staff will distribute paper copies of the consultation to students travelling on both inward and homeward affected buses.
- Schools will be asked to promote the consultation via their website and any other media that may be available such as newsletters to parents.

To ensure maximum opportunity for those affected to take part in the consultation, the County Council has written to Head teachers of all the schools and colleges affected in advance to make them aware of the consultation with the request that they draw it to the attention of the parents/students concerned. The County Council will write again to the

Head teachers when the formal consultation is due to start if that proposal is approved by the Executive member.

On this basis, the decision to consult is not thought to have a significant impact on any group with protected characteristics.

2. Impact on Crime and Disorder:

2.1. Not Applicable.

3. Climate Change:

3.1. How does what is being proposed impact on our carbon footprint / energy consumption? Not Applicable.

3.2. How does what is being proposed consider the need to adapt to climate change, and be resilient to its longer term impacts? Not Applicable.

List of 'School Special' Services in Review

Service number	Route	School/College
3	Liss Forest - Liss schools	Liss Forest schools
602	King Arthurs Way - Harrow Way	Harrow Way
607	Leigh Road - Anton school	Anton Infant/Junior
609	Enham - Winton school	Winton school
656	Chineham - Costello School	Costello school
505	Stoke Common & Bishopstoke - Stoke Park Infant & Junior schools	Stoke Park Infant & Junior schools
505	Bishopstoke - Wyvern College	Wyvern College
542	Park Gate - Hamble Sports College	Hamble Sports College
543	Hamble Lane - Netley Schools	Netley Infant & Junior Schools
600	Burrige - Sarisbury Infant & Junior Schools	Sarisbury Infant & Junior Schools
656	Lowford - Henry Cort College	Henry Cort College
646 Group contract	641/605: Emsworth - St Thomas More School	St Thomas More School
	627: Rowlands Castle - Oaklands	Oaklands Catholic School
	641: Emsworth/Southbourne - Oaklands	Oaklands Catholic School
637	Purbrook - Horndean Technology College	Horndean Technology College
645	South Hayling - Mengham Infant School (former 638)	Mengham Infant & Junior schools
	South Hayling - Mill Rythe Infant & Junior Schools (former 629)	Mill Rythe Infant & Jun Schools
635 PM only	Clanfield - Horndean Technology College	Horndean Technology College
636	Denmead - Horndean Technology College	Horndean Technology College
145	Cowplain, Oaklands, Havant College	South Downs College
	Hambledon - Cowplain School	Cowplain School
	Havant - Crookhorn School	Crookhorn School
	Emsworth - Oaklands School Hambledon - Oaklands School	Oaklands School
	Hambledon - Havant College	Havant College
	Havant - South Downs College Purbrook - South Downs College Hambledon - South Downs College	South Downs College
H5	Totton - Hounslow School	Hounslow School
F1	Totton - Foxhills Infant & Junior Schools	Foxhills Infant & Junior Schools
A1	Netley View - Applemore College	Applemore College
A1/W1	Netley View - Wildground Infant & Junior Schools	Wildground Infant & Junior Schools
N1	Hythe - Noadswood School	Noadswood School
X5	Fareham - Warsash - St Anne's RC Secondary	St Anne's RC Secondary