

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	Cabinet Member for Town Centres, Economic Growth and Prosperity
2.	Date:	7 March 2012
3.	Title:	E Petition Ward: Rotherham West
4.	Directorate:	Environment and Development Services

5. Summary

An e-Petition containing 44 signatures has been received from parents of children attending Blackburn Primary School. The e-Petition relates to the parents' objection to the withdrawal of free school bus passes.

The e-Petition was available from 7th October to 18th November, 2011 inclusive.

6. Recommendations

1. That Members note the receipt of the e-Petition and,
2. That the decision taken by Cabinet member for Town Centres, Economic Growth and Prosperity is reaffirmed.

7. Proposals and Details

At the meeting of 19th September 2011 The Cabinet Member Town Centres, Economic Growth and Prosperity took the decision to withdraw zero fare bus passes for a proportion of children attending Blackburn School with effect from July 2012.

The meeting resolved:

- 1) That advance notification commences in September 2011 with the school and affected parents/carers with a view to classifying the route as "safe to walk" and removing all free transport assistance by September 2012.
- 2) That all other statutory obligations for transport assistance for eligible primary aged pupils are met.
- 3) That the Ward No 8 (Keppel) Councillors be provided with detailed information.

The report confirmed that there is a safe walking route to Blackburn School which was less than the statutory distance limit of more than 2 miles (further details in Cabinet Report), and highlighted that the withdrawal of such passes would affect 14% of pupils attending Blackburn School with the other 86% receiving no transport assistance.

The e-Petition expresses parents dissatisfaction with the Cabinet Members decision to remove zero fare bus passes after July 2012; the school has 320 pupils and the petition attracted 44 signatures.

8. Finance

Based upon the withdrawal of all zero fare bus passes by September 2012, and the current eligible pupil numbers, there was a projected saving of £8,471. Each zero fare bus pass costs £197 per annum, as of September 2011. There is a projected increase of 20% in April 2012 and the cost will be £233 in September 2012.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

Existing families in receipt of free school meals and/or living more than 2 miles from their catchment primary school would continue to qualify (in specific circumstances eg if below 8 years of age). This is the same statutory entitlement criteria used to assess and review all other Rotherham pupils.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

Failure to act on information regarding the availability of a safe **walking** route would lead to inconsistent application of eligibility criteria. This would lead to inequity amongst pupils attending Rotherham Schools.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

Report considered by Cabinet Member for Town Centres, Economic Growth and Prosperity on 19 September 2011 (Minute G37).

Letters to affected parents (See Appendices 1 and 2)



Blackburn
Letters1.doc



Blackburn school
letter2.doc

Contact Name:

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