

Improving Places Select Commission, 1st November 2018

Home to School Transport Policy Implementation Update.

Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?

No

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

Strategic Director, Regeneration and Environment

Report Author(s)

Tom Smith, Assistant Director, Community Safety and Street Scene

Ward(s) Affected

All Wards

Summary

This report updates Improving Places Select Commission on the implementation of the new Home to School Transport Policy

Recommendations

That Improving Places Select Commission note the report and comment on progress with the implementation of the New Home to School Transport Policy.

List of Appendices Included

Appendix A. Home to School Transport Policy (2018 – 2019)

Appendix B. Parent & Carers Brochure

Appendix C. Assessment Matrix: Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
(Home to School Transport)

Background Papers

None

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

No

Council Approval Required

No

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

Home to School Policy Implementation Update

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 That Improving Places Select Commission note the report and comment on progress with the implementation of the New Home to School Transport Policy.

2. Background

- 2.1 Changes to the Home to School Transport Policy in Rotherham were approved by the Cabinet and Commissioners' Decision Making Meeting on the 16th April 2018. The changes include:
 - Publication of the Home to School Transport Policy 2018-19;
 - Introduction of the Home to School Transport Assessment Matrix;
 - The introduction of a formal annual review of transport provision which includes engagement with families;
 - That an assessment of existing service users is conducted to review their circumstances to enable participation on a voluntary basis ahead of the introduction of the formal annual review;
 - The introduction of a personal travel budget scheme to provide transport support to families of children with special educational needs and disabilities;
 - That post 16 transport travel arrangements are revised to replace direct transport as a first option with personal travel budgets for those students with special educational needs and disabilities;
 - The consideration of alternative methods of support for particular groups or individuals such as walking bus, cycle or moped schemes when appropriate;
 - The introduction of independent travel training as a central resource in Rotherham to support arrangements currently delivered by Special Schools for children from the age of 14+ to enable independence. That travel training is commenced from June 2018 for appropriate young people;
 - The personal travel budgets for all students making new applications for post 16 travel is instigated from 1st July 2018, and existing users of the post 16 service are permitted to apply on a voluntary basis from 1st May;

- That a transition period to validate the Transport Assessment Matrix will begin from 1st May 2018, with the full implementation of the policy for all new applicants with effect from 1st July 2018;
- That children and young people in need of home to school transport, and including transport operators, are engaged as part of the transition and implementation process;
- Any decisions to amend the Transport Assessment Matrix, resulting from the transition period, to be delegated to the Assistant Director, Community Safety and Street Scene.

3. Key Issues

Policy Change Implementation

- 3.1 The service implementation is being managed by the Transport Project Group. Updates about each recommendation are as follows:

Publication of the Home to School Transport Policy 2018-19 (Appendix A)

- 3.2 The approved new Home to School Transport Policy has been published on the Council's web site, on the education and local offer pages. Families already receiving transport have received a brochure explaining the new elements of the policy and the choices that are now available relating to home to school transport. **Appendix B**

Introduction of the Home to School Transport Assessment Matrix (Appendix C)

- 3.3 Following approval of the new Home to School Transport policy, the transport team has commenced completing the transport matrix for each new transport applicant. This has been further developed following work with Children and Young Peoples Service's (CYPS) Education Health Care Team. Following approval of an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) the team provides a completed Matrix to support the initial transport request. Further work is programmed with special schools to enable completion in future for those who are already being provided with transport.

The introduction of a formal annual review of transport provision which includes engagement with families;

- 3.4 The annual transport review process is to be undertaken at the same time as EHCP reviews and will assess the suitability of existing transport, and the ability to partake in Independent Travel Training. It is not normal practice for a CYPS or Transport Service representative to attend these reviews, as these are undertaken at schools. This therefore requires the support of individual schools and engagement has commenced. This is ongoing, with attendance at the special schools heads meeting 17th October 2018. Representatives of the transport team will attend to discuss

the annual review process. The service aims to have a robust process for reviews in place in early 2019.

That an assessment of existing service users is conducted to review their circumstances to enable participation on a voluntary basis ahead of the introduction of the formal annual review;

- 3.5 Assessment is being undertaken in two ways: Firstly, all parent/carers of existing transport users have received a brochure detailing the choice available to the family, and asking for expressions of interest in an early assessment. All expressions of interest will then be assessed for Personal Travel Budgets and Independent Travel Training.
- 3.6 Secondly, discussions will continue with individual schools about the delivery of Independent Travel Training. This engagement has commenced with positive discussions at Newman School and Willows, and will be broadened out following engagement with Special School Heads, as above, during October.

The introduction of a personal travel budget scheme to provide transport support to families of children with special educational needs and disabilities, that post 16 transport travel arrangements are revised to replace direct transport as a first option with personal travel budgets for those students with special educational needs and disabilities, that personal travel budgets for all students making new applications for post 16 travel is instigated from 1st July 2018, and existing users of the post 16 service are permitted to apply on a voluntary basis from 1st May;

- 3.7 Further to approval of this addition to the Home to School Transport Policy, all transport applications are now being assessed in line with the matrix. Families are being made aware of the options for transport including Personal Travel Budgets. Following the provision of a brochure in September 2018, detailing the choices for families, a number of families have now expressed an interest in alternative transport options. The Personal Travel Budget is now a key part of options for families; in particularly for post 16 young people, where it forms part of the initial application discussion.
- 3.8 To date the service has received 30 expressions of interest with the following outcomes:
- **17 who already have existing transport:**
 - 2 - have signed up to personal travel budgets
 - 15 - currently under review
 - **13 new post-16 starters:**
 - 8 - have signed up to personal travel budgets
 - 3 - currently under review
 - 2 - not suitable

The consideration of alternative methods of support for particular groups or individuals such as walking bus, cycle or moped schemes when appropriate;

- 3.9 The service has plans in place to discuss this with the parents' forum and special schools, as the policy is implemented further, and will consider opportunities as they arise in particular circumstances.

The introduction of independent travel training as a central resource in Rotherham to support arrangements currently delivered by Special Schools for children from the age of 14+ to enable independence. That travel training is commenced from June 2018 for appropriate young people;

- 3.10 The service has considered a number of approaches, such as contracted delivery, use of the in-house unit, and collaborative working with schools, to deliver training. The approach which is now being adopted is a collaborative approach with special schools, where the Council will deliver training for trainers, and training for young people will then be delivered through school staff.
- 3.11 Delivery of the initial 'train the trainer' training will be with the support of Leeds City Council's Independent Travel Training Team providing refresher training. The initial training is programmed for November and December 2018.

That a transition period to validate the Transport Assessment Matrix will begin from 1st May 2018, with the full implementation of the policy for all new applicants with effect from 1st July 2018;

- 3.12 The new matrix was initially used for assessments within the Transport Team for post-16 applicants, and following that, for all new transport applicants. CYPs colleagues also completed the matrix in tandem with the process, and the matrix was then validated by both services.
- 3.13 A number of recommendations to change the matrix were made and were incorporated into the matrix. For example 'absconding and unpredictability' were added into the behaviour section and 'anxiety' was added into the vulnerability section.

That children and young people in need of home to school transport, and including transport operators, are engaged as part of the transition and implementation process;

- 3.14 A brochure has been circulated to families, support groups, and positive engagement with the parents' forum continues.
- 3.15 Further work is required to engage with transport operators outside of the Council, and this will take place over the months ahead, and in particular when a young person makes the transition into public transport.

Any decisions to amend the Transport Assessment Matrix, resulting from the transition period, to be delegated to the Assistant Director, Community Safety and Street Scene;

3.16 The matrix has been reviewed by both colleagues in Transport and CYPS. This identified some clarifications in terms of the interpretation of the document and minor reference changes to descriptions. The matrix has now been approved by the Assistant Director of Community Safety and Street Scene, and circulated to CYPS colleagues to provide the basis of the assessment following confirmation of an EHCP.

4. Risks Associated with Project

4.1 The delivery of budget savings associated with the project are predicated on families voluntarily taking up the option for Personal Travel Budgets.

4.2 The transport is provided by Regeneration and Environment Directorate. However demand for the service is generated through demographic growth. The current assessment is that demand for the service will increase by around 40% by 2020.

5. Options considered and recommended proposal

5.1 The approach outlined has been considered and agreed by Cabinet, and implementation decisions have been made by the Council's Transport Board.

6. Consultation

6.1 There is no proposed consultation associated with this report.

7. Financial and Procurement Implications

7.1 As part of setting the 2016/17, 2017/18 and 2018/19 revenue budgets the Council agreed budget savings of £793k to be delivered from transport by the end of 2019/20, with a particular emphasis on Home to School transport. £163k of savings were delivered against this requirement in 2017/18 and further savings have been identified in 2018/19. It has been estimated that savings of £162k per annum will be achieved from the changes to the Home to School Transport policy, when they have been fully implemented.

7.2 As stated in 4.2 above, in addition to the agreed budget savings, the Service is under pressure from increased demand for the service. It is estimated that the impact of this increased demand is an increase in costs of £356k per annum from the baseline position as at 1st April 2017. This pressure is being managed within the overall budget monitoring position being reported by the Directorate.

8. Legal Implications

8.1 There are no legal implications of this report.

9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

9.1 There are no implications for Children, Young People or Vulnerable adults from this report.

10. Implications for Partners and Other Directorates

10.1 There are no implications for partners or other Directorates from this report.

11. Risks and Mitigation

11.1 Any risks of this approach are routinely monitored through the Project Team.

12. Accountable Officer(s)

Tom Smith, Assistant Director, Community Safety and Street Scene

Approvals Obtained from:

| | Named Officer | Date |
|---|----------------------|-------------|
| Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services | N/A | |
| Assistant Director of Legal Services | N/A | |
| Head of Procurement (if appropriate) | N/A | |
| Head of Human Resources (if appropriate) | N/A | |

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