

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

**CHILDREN'S SERVICES
CABINET MEMBER**

**REVIEW OF SCHOOL TRANSPORT FOR PUPILS LIVING WITHIN THE
STATUTORY WALKING DISTANCE**

1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

- 1.1 To review the decision to implement the Home to School Transport Policy for pupils living within the statutory walking distance where historically free transport has been provided following petition hearings.
- 1.2 To present the outcomes of consultation on the decision.
- 1.3 An urgent decision is required in order to ensure that the families affected are aware of transport arrangements prior to the end of the summer term.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 On 20 March 2008 the Cabinet Member for Children's Services agreed to give pupils from the communities listed below the opportunity to purchase a spare seat on the school bus, with effect from September 2008 (minute 39 refers).

- Normanby to Burton on Stather
- Melton Ross to Barnetby
- Ulceby to St Nicholas Primary School
- Roxby to Winterton
- Barrow to Baysgarth Schools, Barton
- Part of Messingham to Frederick Gough School
- Part of Scawby to Brigg secondary schools

These routes are within the statutory walking distance and historically free transport has been provided. It was also agreed that consultation with schools would take place and that the families affected would be notified.

- 2.2 The Home to School Transport Policy provides free transport for those living within the statutory walking distance, where the route has been assessed as hazardous using national guidelines from the Local Authority Road Safety Association (LARSOA).

- 2.3 An objective assessment of walking routes to the schools affected had been completed in accordance with the Local Authority Road Safety Officer Association Guidelines. In applying this guidance no hazards had been identified on these routes that would mean that a child could not reasonably be expected to walk (accompanied by an adult as necessary).
- 2.4 Consultation took place with schools and interested parties and families affected were notified. The Cabinet Member walked the routes that were to see this change.
- 2.5 Following consultation four petitions were received from the communities of Messingham, Barrow, Scawby and Roxby. The petitioners were objecting to the decision to remove free school transport on the basis the routes were hazardous. Petition panels chaired by the Children's Services Cabinet Member were heard in June 2008.

3. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- 3.1 Implement the Home to School Transport Policy for pupils living within statutory walking distance where historically they have received free transport.
- 3.2 Continue to offer free transport for pupils on the routes as specified in paragraph 2.1.

4. ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS

- 4.1 To implement the policy would mean the council does not take into account the concerns raised by parents, schools and other interested parties.
- 4.2 Continuation of free transport would acknowledge the concerns raised.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, STAFFING, PROPERTY, IT)

5.1 Financial

The estimated income from charging those affected a concessionary fare was £15,000.

5.2 Staffing

There are no staffing implications.

6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS (STATUTORY, ENVIRONMENTAL, DIVERSITY, SECTION 17 - CRIME AND DISORDER, RISK AND OTHER)

6.1 None

7. OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION

- 7.1 Letters were sent to the schools and families affected by the policy.
- 7.2 The council received numerous responses from parents, other family members, ward members and Members of Parliament.
- 7.3 The presentations made by the petitioners expressed concerns that the guidelines used in making the assessments of the routes were not rigorous enough.

8. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 8.1 That the Cabinet Member for Children's Services, having considered the representations from affected communities, revokes the decision (20 March 2008) set out in Minute 39, thereby continuing to offer pupils from the communities listed at paragraph 2.1 free home to school transport.
- 8.2 That the Cabinet Member makes appropriate representations for a national review of the Local Authority Road Safety Officer Association (LARSOA) guidelines on the identification of hazards and the assessment of risk of walked routes to school.

SERVICE DIRECTOR CHILDREN, STRATEGY AND PARTNERSHIPS

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Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

None.