

CHILDREN AND LEARNING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Subject Heading:	SEND Transport Update
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Policy context:	The Education Act 1996 and LB Havering SEND Transport Policy.

SUMMARY

This report summarises the key issues regarding journey times for the provision of transport for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. The report addresses issues raised with the time young people are spending on board transport and provide detail on the current levels of spend, increasing pressures and actions that are underway to vary the offer and meet demand.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the progress to date in addressing issues in the Havering SEND Transport Offer and future intended actions. Members are asked to note the content of the report.

REPORT DETAIL

1 Background and Demand

Currently in 2016/17 389 young people are provided travel assistance, of which 319 are on buses and 70 are in taxis. The Passenger Travel Service operates 34 buses on a daily basis which is the same number as last year. In 2015/16 402 young people were provided travel assistance in the form of a bus. Whilst there

has been a slight reduction in the numbers travelling by bus the budget remains under considerable pressure.

The total budget for 2016/17 is £2,248,610 for Home to School Transport, this includes Post 16. At this stage we are forecasting that there will be an overspend against allocated budgets of £264,995, which equates to 11.8% over budget. The overspend is in post 16 transport. Despite the budget being increased each financial year the demand for travel assistance continues to increase, in particular the request for specialist bespoke transport has also seen an increase. In addition to the impact on the budget, the demand for transport support is also affecting the time young people are spending on board transport.

It is envisaged that the continued implementation of the revised policy, which includes the reintroduction of travel training and pick up points will help to reduce time on board as well as the pressures on the budget. We are continuing to transport approximately the same number of young people, and the focus on local provision and the introduction on pick up points has helped in managing the demand within budget. We have successfully introduced 58 pick-up points for young people aged below 16.

The Council's School and Post 16 Travel Assistance Policy was refreshed in line with Statutory Guidance. There has been no significant change in policy; however we are now adhering to the policy more robustly. A Equalities Impact Assessment was undertaken in March 2016 and is available below at Annex 3.

One of the key changes which was implemented in 2016/17 is the re-introduction of pick up points. Previously only 12 young people were being collected from a pick up point, this year we have increased this to 79 pickup points. The re-introduction of pick up points has impacted on journey times, and on some routes has brought these closer to the max recommended time of 75 minutes. An example of the impact of introducing pick up is detailed below (example 1), the overall journey time has been reduced by 15 minutes,

We are currently undertaking further analysis of the impact with PTS and will be in a position to provide further information by Easter. By continuing to introduce further pick up points where appropriate it is hoped that both journey times and costs will be reduced.

Example 1 - CORBETS TEY CONTRACT 1 - BUS 4 – 2 YEAR COMPARISON

	Pickup area	Earliest Pickup Time	Last Pick-up Time	School Open Time	Time on Bus	How Many pick-up Points
2015-16	Gidea Park	07:15	08:40	08:45	01:30	3
2016-17	Gidea Park	07:30	08:35	08:45	01:15	5

The key drivers in managing demand are the rising costs and increased journey times on some routes. In 2015/16 it was highlighted that journey times on routes to Dycorts School were exceeding the recommended 75 minute journey time. An additional bus and an additional taxi was added to the Dycorts School route in order to alleviate some of the pressures on the routes which were impacting on journey times. The budget constraints do not permit us to add additional buses across routes where journey are significantly over the guidelines of 75 minutes, our intention is to continue to work with all parents in order to develop transport options that will help to mitigate current issues.

The commissioning team are continuing to work with our Passenger Transport Services (PTS) to review routes in order to reduce journey times, however appropriate solutions must be achieved with consideration given to the already overspending transport budget. Teams are working to develop a range of options to support families with transport – such options include mileage allowance, oyster cards and travel training. We are continuing to carry out further analysis of routes in order to better understand the underlying issues; however it should be noted however that there are occasions when circumstances i.e. traffic, roadworks are out of our control and impact on the journey time. The teams are in the process of implementing the changes previously mentioned, thorough the refreshed transport policy and it is envisaged over time this will have a greater impact on average journey times.

2 Current pressures

On occasion the board times for some young people on routes to Corbets Tey School exceed the Department for Education guidelines of 75 minutes. In addition to the time spent on board, there have been occasions when young people have arrived at the school late meaning that they miss part of their school day. (Annex 1 – Corbets Tey – arrival times).

Annex 2 outlines current pick up times and the longest time spent on board. It is acknowledged that some routes exceed the recommended travel time.

As outlined previously, further analysis of routes is required to fully understand the issues impacting on journey times in order to determine an appropriate solution. PTS do not hold data in the format needed for the analysis, interrogation of vehicle trackers for each route to show actual journey times would be required and this would take a considerable amount of time.

3 Comparator information

We continue to consult with neighbouring boroughs to discuss the demand, costs and sharing of transport. In the main, most boroughs are facing the same issues and are keen to share routes in order to achieve value for money and to manage journey times. We are sharing information on the options that are being

implemented and will continue to work as a cluster in order to share best practise and to learn from each other's initiatives.

4 Further actions

We acknowledge that there are issues with journey times for some routes and will continue to work with PTS to understand the issues and to take appropriate action. We are also working with families to develop the range of options for transport support and where appropriate offer mileage allowance to families who are able to provide their own transport.

We will also explore options of changing current school start and finish times in order to balance the need to get to school on time as well as the time that young people are spending traveling to school.

We will continue to work with key partners and will be in a position to provide a further update by Easter.

IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

Financial implications and risks:

None- 03/01/17 - Falil Onikoy

Legal implications and risks:

None - 30/12/16 - Stephen Doye

Human Resources implications and risks:

None- 3/1/17 - Geraldine Minchin

Equalities implications and risks:

The report highlights progress on the current SEND transport update. The provision of transport where required, helps to remove potential barriers enabling pupils to attend school on a regular basis. As such it is helping the Council to meet the three aims of the Public Sector Equality duty as set out in the Equality Act which state that those subject to the general equality duty must have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity between different groups
- Foster good relations between different groups

The Act explains that having due regard for advancing equality involves:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people.

Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low

30/12/16 – Savi Bhamra

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None