

**SCRUTINY COMMISSION – 2 MAY 2012**

**CONSULTATION INTO THE HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT POLICY  
AND DISCRETIONARY ELEMENTS OF THE CONCESSIONARY TRAVEL  
SCHEME**

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT**

**Purpose of Report**

1. The purpose is to report the results of the public consultation into proposals for the Mainstream Home to School Transport Policy as well as the discretionary elements of the English National Concessionary Travel Scheme (ENCTS). The results of this consultation and an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) will be reported to Cabinet on 8<sup>th</sup> May to consider the outcome of the consultation and the impact of the changes in the light of savings agreed in the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) which were approved by the County Council on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2012.
2. The report to be submitted to the Cabinet is still in the preparation stage and will be circulated to members of the Commission as soon as it is available. Members of the Commission will be invited to comment on the proposals prior to their consideration by the Cabinet.

**Background**

**Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)**

3. Members will recall that the Cabinet considered the provisional MTFS at its meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> January 2012 and resolved that the Director of Environment and Transport be authorised to undertake consultation on proposals for changes to the discretionary elements of home to school transport and discretionary elements of concessionary travel.
4. The requirement of the MTFS was to seek to identify savings of £1,100,000 in home to school transport and savings in the order of £270,000 through the possible removal of the discretionary elements of the concessionary travel scheme.

**Mainstream Home to School Transport Policy**

5. In the current academic year, 2011/12, it is estimated the subsidy for the 16+ transport scheme is £850,000 and £250,000 for the provision of denominational school transport. Both of these discretionary schemes

presently require a contribution of £240 towards the cost of provision.

6. There are reductions for low income families at denominational schools (but not at 16+) and the costs of transport to denominational schools are capped at £480 for any family with more than 2 children of statutory school age. The County Council provides a grant of £20,000 for the administration of a hardship fund by the diocesan authority for all denominational schools.
7. The consultation proposals on the Mainstream Home to School Transport Policy covered the following:-
  - (a) Eligibility to statutory free home to school transport and the conversion of community schools to academy schools.
  - (b) Either the continued provision of discretionary transport to denominational schools at an increased fare from the present £240 currently to an average full cost recovery estimated at £490 per academic year or the withdrawal of this discretionary provision.
  - (c) Either the continued provision of discretionary transport for 16+ students to 6<sup>th</sup> forms and Further Education Colleges at an increased fare from the present £240 currently to average full cost recovery estimated at £430 per academic year or the withdrawal of this discretionary provision.
  - (d) The measurement of statutory travel distances.
  - (e) Transport eligibility around moving home address during final GCSE year.

### **Concessionary Travel Scheme**

8. The final cost to the County Council of providing the ENCTS in 2011/12 is expected to be £5.4m. A budget of £6.0m for Concessionary Travel was made available in 2011/12, in part to deal with uncertainties around new Department for Transport toolkits for reimbursement to operators. The funding transferred into the formula grant for the County Council to provide the ENCTS in 2011/12 was £4.7m and this is reduced to £4.3m in 2012/13. The cost of the discretionary elements in the concessionary travel scheme is estimated at £270,000 in 2011/12.
9. There are 4 discretionary elements provided in addition to the statutory English National Concessionary Travel Scheme (ENCTS):
  - Free travel for disabled concessionary pass holders before 9.30am Monday to Friday.
  - Free travel after 11.00pm Monday to Friday for disabled and older concessionary pass holders.

- £33 of vouchers for use on local taxi and bus services as an alternative to the statutory concession scheme if the applicant is disabled or lives over 800 metres from a frequent bus service.
- Half fare on community transport services.

10. Members will recall that the Scrutiny Review on Concessionary Travel undertaken in the first half of 2010 supported the retention of all discretionary elements from April 2011, and the introduction of pre 9.30 am half fare travel for older people in North West Leicestershire, to give consistent discretionary elements across Leicestershire. However, the Panel subsequently recognised and acknowledged the concerns about costs and Government funding from April and the consequent difficulties in implementing the Panel's recommendations.

### **Consultation**

11. The consultation on both proposals commenced on 25<sup>th</sup> January and closed on 2<sup>nd</sup> April. A summary of the consultation responses is appended to this report.

### **Recommendations**

12. The Scrutiny Commission is invited to consider the report to be submitted to the Cabinet setting out the outcome of the consultation and revised proposals on Home to School transport and the discretionary elements of the concessionary travel scheme and submit comments to the Cabinet.

### **Background Papers**

Report to the Cabinet on 17<sup>th</sup> January and 10<sup>th</sup> February – MTFS proposals

### **Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure**

13. As the report proposals will impact on all electoral divisions the Cabinet report will be circulated via the Members' Information Service to all members.

### **Officers to contact**

Ian Drummond, Ass't Director - Transport

☎ 0116 305 5990

✉ [ian.drummond@leics.gov.uk](mailto:ian.drummond@leics.gov.uk)

Tony Kirk - Sustainable Travel Manager

☎ 0116 305 6270

✉ [tony.kirk@leics.gov.uk](mailto:tony.kirk@leics.gov.uk)

### **List of Appendices**

Appendix A – Consultation on proposed Changes to Transport

Appendix B – Questionnaire