Consultation on Proposed Changes to Transport

Budget pressures

Leicestershire County Council is facing a number of challenges. The funding we receive from national Government is reducing. At the same time demand for services, such as care for older people and waste disposal, is expected to go up.

We also have to deal with the impact of schools locally moving to academy status and coming out of council control. Because the Government will transfer funding from the council's budget to support the new academies, we have to deal with the implications of losing significant funding.

All of this means we have to save more. Our financial plan has been rolled forward a year and now includes a total of \pounds 74 million in savings for the next four years. This is on top of the \pounds 24 million that we already achieved during 2011/12.

We are now looking at how we can achieve additional savings. In making decisions, we must target our resources at those with the greatest need.

Your views

Last year we carried out extensive consultation on our four year financial plan. Our budget plans for this year reflect what residents told us, and have been amended to take into account extra budget pressures that have arisen over the last 12 months.

We are now asking for your views about the detail of the council's proposals to make changes to the provision of transport.

If you have any questions about this consultation or if you require the information contained in this questionnaire in an alternative version such as large print, Braille or help in understanding it in your language please contact: 0116 305 0001 or email: stg@leics.gov.uk

Home to School Transport Policy and the Impact of Academies

Once a school gains academy status, the current rules about providing transport to catchment schools no longer apply, because the academies will decide their own admissions policy. The council therefore has to make some decisions about which students will be offered free or subsidised transport.

We are proposing that once a school converts to an academy then the policy is to provide free transport to the nearest Academy or Community School if this is over two miles for children in primary education and over three miles for children in secondary education, measured by the shortest available route by road. Where an available walking route below two miles (for children in primary education) or three miles (for children in secondary education) exists, transport will not be provided.

Q1 Do you agree or disagree with the Council's proposed policy for the provision of transport to academies? Please tick one box only



We could choose only to apply the new policy to students starting primary or secondary academies, so that students already in primary or secondary education retain their current entitlement to transport until age 11, 14 or 16 respectively. In some cases, students will continue to travel to their current school, but because of the change in catchment rules, they would not be entitled to free travel under our new policy. We are considering allowing students to retain their existing travel arrangements until they next change school.

Q2 Do you agree or disagree that when a school converts to an academy, we should allow students to retain their existing travel arrangements until they next change school? Please tick one box only

		Neither Agree		Strongly	
Strongly Agree	Agree	nor Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Don't Know

Allowing students to retain their existing travel arrangements until they change school would have a cost implication for the council. We are considering whether to make a charge for this concession, currently £300 per student per school year for primary age students and £400 for secondary age students.

Q3 Do you agree or disagree that we should make a charge, currently £300 for primary school and £400 for secondary school students, to retain their existing travel arrangements until they next change school? Please tick one box only

		Neither Agree		Strongly	
Strongly Agree	Agree	nor Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Don't Know

Currently, if a student changes address during the period when they are studying for GCSEs, the County Council will continue to provide free travel to their existing school, even if this is some distance from the new address, to minimise disruption for the student. The Council is considering withdrawing this facility, meaning that in these circumstances parents would be responsible for travel arrangements.

Q4 Do you agree or disagree that we should continue to provide free transport from the new address if a student changes address during GCSE studies? Please tick one box only

	A	Neither Agree	D	Strongly	Darkk
Strongly Agree	Agree	nor Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Don't Know

Q5 Please use the space below to let us know any other comments on our proposed policy for the provision of transport to academies

Age 16+ transport to colleges and sixth forms

Around 4,500 students currently contribute £240 per year towards their travel. The full cost of providing each seat is £429 per year. Leicestershire County Council currently pays a subsidy of £189 per seat, per year. This cost us £850,000 per year.

The council is considering withdrawing the subsidy for students aged 16+ and no longer providing transport. This change would not apply to students aged 16 or over with special educational needs who attend a college or other further education establishment for 16 hours a week or more. Such students would continue to be entitled to free travel.

Q6 Do you agree or disagree with the Council's proposal to remove the subsidy from post 16 transport to colleges and sixth forms? Please tick one box only



Q7 Do you agree or disagree that if the subsidy is removed the transport service should remain available for those who wish to cover the full cost of the transport (approximately £429)? Please tick one box only



The County Council could continue to provide transport to those who are currently in the first year of post 16 education, to enable them to continue to receive subsidised transport in the 2012/13 academic year.

Q8 Do you agree or disagree that, if the subsidy is withdrawn, we should continue to provide transport to those in the second year of 16 plus in the 2012/13 academic year? Please tick one box only

	_	Neither Agree		Strongly	
Strongly Agree	Agree	nor Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Don't Know

Q9 Please use the space below to let us know any other comments on our proposals for 16+ transport to colleges and sixth forms



Transport to voluntary aided (denominational) schools

For many years we have given help when children attend their nearest church school on denominational grounds. Currently, transport for some pupils is subsidised and for others it is free.

Students currently contribute £240 per year towards their travel. The full cost of providing each seat is £490 per year. Leicestershire County Council currently pays a subsidy of £250 per seat, per year for around 1,000 pupils. This costs us £250,000 per year.

Leicestershire County Council has a duty to take into account the wishes of parents on the grounds of religion or belief, but there is no duty to provide free or subsidised transport. The council is considering withdrawing the subsidy for transport to faith and voluntary aided schools and no longer providing transport (except for children from qualifying low income families).

Q10 Do you agree or disagree with the Council's proposal to remove the subsidy from denominational transport? Please tick one box only



Q11	Do you agree or disagree that if the subsidy is removed the transport service should					
	remain available for those who wish to cover the	full cost of the transport (
	approximately £490)? Please tick one box only					
	Neither Agree	Strongly				

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know	

Q12 Please use the space below to let us know any other comments on our proposals for transport to voluntary aided schools

Discretionary concessionary travel provision

The national concessionary travel scheme entitles both older residents and disabled residents to free travel on local bus services between 9.30am and 11.00pm Monday to Friday and at any time at weekends and bank holidays.

The council in addition to this scheme in England provide a number of additional concessions. The council is considering the withdrawal of these extra elements of the Leicestershire concessionary travel scheme, which cost us £270,000 per year.

Around 120,000 residents hold an older person's bus pass, and a further 8,500 hold a disabled person's bus pass.

Q13	Do you currently have a concessionary travel pass or use concessionary travel
	vouchers? Please tick one box only

No	
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If yes, which type of concession do you have? Please tick one box only

Concessionary travel pass for older people	
Concessionary travel pass for disabled people	
Concessionary travel vouchers	

Q14 To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following extra elements of the Leicestershire concessionary travel scheme should be <u>withdrawn</u>? (The amount currently being spent is shown in brackets against each service listed). Please tick one box per row only

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know	
a.	Withdrawal of half fare on community transport (£155,000)							_
b.	Withdrawal of vouchers for disabled people who cannot use conventional bus services and for older people who live over 800 metres from an hourly bus (£85,000)							
C.	Withdrawal of free travel for disabled people before 9.30 am Mondays to Fridays (£20,000)							
d.	Withdrawal of free travel for older people and for disabled people after 11 pm Mondays to Fridays (£10,000)							

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Q15 Please use the space below to let us know any other comments about our proposals for discretionary concessionary travel provision

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About You

Leicestershire County Council is committed to ensuring that its services, policies and practices are free from discrimination and prejudice and that they meet the needs of all sections of the community.

We would be grateful if you would answer the questions below. You are under no obligation to provide the information requested, but it would help us greatly if you did. Information will be used to inform service development to ensure that what we are providing is fair and effective.

Q16	Are you male or female? Please tic	Are you male or female? Please tick one box only		
	Male	Female		
Q17	What was your age on your last bi	r thday? Please write in box below		
Q18	Are you a parent/carer of a child or Yes	r young person? Please tick one box only No		
		Idren in your care? Please tick all applicable		
Q19	Are you employed by a school in L Yes	eicestershire? Please tick one box only		
Q20	Are you a school governor? Pleas	e tick one box only		
	Yes	No		
Q21	Do you or your child(ren) make use Leicestershire County Council? P Yes	e of the home to school transport provided by lease tick one box only No		
Q22	education? Please tick one box only			
	Yes	No		
Q23	Are there any children in your hour aided (denominational) schools?	sehold who currently use our transport to voluntary Please tick one box only		
	Yes	No		
Q24	Do you have any long-standing illr	ness, disability or infirmity? Please tick one box only		
	Yes	No		

Q25 What is your ethnic group? Please tick one box only

White	
Mixed	
Asian or Asian British	

Black or Black British	
Other ethnic group	

Q26 What is your religion or belief? Please tick one box only

No religion	Hindu
Christian (no denomination)	Jewish
Roman Catholic	Muslim
Church of England/Anglican	Sikh
Christian (other denomination)	Any other religion or belief
Buddhist	

Q27 Sexual Orientation. Many people face discrimination because of their sexual orientation and for this reason we have decided to ask this monitoring question. You do not have to answer it but we would be grateful if you could tick the box next to the category which describes your sexual orientation: Please tick one box only

Bisexual	
Gay	
Heterosexual / Straight	

Lesbian	
Other	

Q28 In total, how many cars or vans are owned or available for use by members of your household? Please tick one box only

None	
One	
Two	

Three	
Four or more	
Don't know	

Q29 What is your postcode? Please write in the box below

Q30 Are you an employee of Leicestershire County Council? Please tick one box only

Yes

No.....

Thank you for your time.

Please return your completed questionnaire in an envelope by 2nd April 2012 to: Transport Consultation, Leicestershire County Council, Have Your Say, FREEPOST NAT18685, Leicester, LE3 8XT.

Please note that you do not need to add a stamp

Data Protection: Personal data supplied on this form will be held on computer and will be used in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. The information you provide will be used for statistical analysis, management, planning and the provision of services by the County Council and its partners, Leicestershire County Council will not share any personal information collected as part of this survey with its partners. The information will be held in accordance with the Council's records management and retention policy.