



Consultation

on proposed changes to home to school transport



- Home to school transport for students at faith and voluntary aided schools
- Transport for students aged 16+
- Home to school transport for students who change address during their final year(s) of study.

Have your say

We want your views on the proposed changes. We're asking you to read our summary below, and then complete a feedback form.

For more information, get in touch – our contact details are on the last page.

We're listening



Budget pressures



We hope to save around



£1m

through changes to school transport in the next four years.

About home to school transport

Leicestershire County Council has a duty to ensure that every child in the county has access to a school place.

Most parents send their children to the school in their catchment area, or to the nearest school. We normally provide free transport for Primary School children who live two miles or more from their school and for Secondary School children who live three miles away or more.

For children from families on low income, the distance is two miles or more, whether the children are of primary or secondary school age. Families on low income are those in receipt of their maximum level of Working Tax Credit or where the child is eligible for free school meals.

Leicestershire County Council is continuing to face 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 a large number of schools locally moving to academy status and coming out of council control. Because the Government has transferred funding from the council's budget to support the new academies, we have to deal with this additional implication of losing further significant funding. All of this means we have to save more.

The County Council faces cuts in income over the next three years and needs to make around £79 million savings over the next four years.

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. We will be undertaking an Equalities Impact Assessment on these proposals.

Your views

Last year we carried out a similar consultation on proposed changes to school transport but the policy was not changed.

We are now asking for your views again about the detail of the council's new proposals to make changes to the provision of transport. We hope to save around £1m through changes to school transport in the next four years.

16+ transport

The council is considering withdrawing the subsidy for students aged 16+ and no longer providing transport, or charging the full cost.

This change would not apply to students aged 16+ with special educational needs who will still be provided with subsidised transport.

Students who continue in full time education, which is more than about 16 hours per week, currently receive subsidised transport to their nearest or Transport Eligibility Area (TEA) school/college, if it is over three miles from their home.

Around 3,500 students currently contribute £240 per year towards their travel (this will rise to £252 for the 2013/14 academic year). The full cost of providing each seat is £425 per year. Leicestershire County Council currently pays a subsidy of £173 per student, per year. This costs us £605,000 per year.

Transport to faith and voluntary aided schools

The council is considering withdrawing the subsidy for transport to faith and voluntary aided schools and no longer providing transport, or charging the full cost.

For many years we have given help when children attend their nearest faith 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 (this will rise to £252 for the 2013/14 academic year). The full cost of providing transport for each student is £640 per year. Leicestershire County Council currently pays a subsidy of £388 per student, per year for around 900 students. This costs us £350,000 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 (except for children from qualifying low income families).

Students who change address during their final year(s) at school

The Council is considering withdrawing this facility. This would mean that, unless the move is beyond the parents' control, they would be responsible for travel arrangements from their new address.

Currently, if a pupil changes address Leicestershire County Council will continue to provide free transport from their new address to their existing school to minimise disruption for the pupil. The Council provides this for primary aged and high school aged children in their final year at school. For upper school and 16+ students who have moved after their first half-term we continue to provide transport assistance from their new address at any point during their final year(s).

Have your say

We would like to take into account the views of residents and partners in developing our final proposals.

Deadline for responses:
Sunday 30th June 2013.

To request a hard copy of the form:
Tel **0116 305 0002** or email
passengertransport@leics.gov.uk

What happens next?

Following the consultation period, responses to the survey will be considered by the Cabinet on 9th July 2013.

The outcomes of the consultation will be published on the website in July 2013.