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<b>Report To:</b>	<b>Education and Communities Committee</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>12 March 2019</b>
<b>Report By:</b>	<b>Grant McGovern Head of Inclusive Education, Culture &amp; Communities</b>	<b>Report No:</b>	<b>EDUCOM/11/19/GM</b>
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<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Additional School Transport – Increase in SEMP Funding</b>		

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## 1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Committee of additional costs incurred in the provision of additional school transport for specified Inverclyde schools currently funded through the School Estates Management Programme (SEMP).

## 2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 During the period of decant of St Columba's High School to the former site of Gourock High School pending the school's relocation to its current location on Fletcher Avenue, Gourock, it was necessary to provide all pupils with transport to the campus on Inverkip Road. Given the decant situation the transport provision was funded through the School Estates Management Programme (SEMP).
- 2.2 On completion of the new St Columba's High School campus on Fletcher Avenue, concerns were raised by parents on the designation of some identified safe walking routes and the lack of public transport provision. Subsequently, the decision to continue free school transport for pupils in specified areas was agreed by the Policy & Resources Committee with the resulting shortfall to be funded from the SEMP budget.

Over the subsequent two years, the Education and Communities Committee agreed that the transport costs incurred by the additional transport arrangements should be met from the Education Revenue Budget pending a review of the Council's school transport policy.

- 2.3 Following the statutory consultation in January 2017 on the proposal to increase school transport eligibility to 2.5 miles in secondary schools and 1.5 miles in primary schools, the Committee decided that there should be no change to the transport policy at that time and that the SEMP should continue to fund the resultant shortfall until June 2020.

There are similar additional transport arrangements in place for pupils at Clydeview Academy and Inverkip Primary School. These arrangements are also to continue to be funded by the SEMP through to June 2020.

- 2.4 The allocation of school transport contracts is managed by SPT on behalf of Inverclyde Council using a process of competitive tendering. On completion of the tendering process, SPT provide Education Services with a comparison of bids and a recommended tender based on best value.
- 2.5 The total cost of additional transport contracts for the three specified schools over session 2018/19 will be £342K.

### **3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

3.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

- a) Notes the circumstances resulting in the increase in school transport costs; and
- b) Notes the allocation of an £342K from the School Estates Management Programme (SEMP) to fund the additional transport requirements for session 2018/19.

**Grant McGovern**  
**Head of Inclusive Education, Culture and Communities**

## **4.0 BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 The background to this issue centres on St Columba's High School and the relocation of the school to the former site of Gourock High School. Prior to completion of the rebuild project, St Columba's High School had been decanted to the former site of Greenock High School on Inverkip Road. During any decant situation, all pupils receive free transport. St Columba's High School had been decanted for 4 years, with all pupils receiving transport during this time. Given the decant situation the transport provision was funded through the School Estates Management Programme (SEMP).
- 4.2 On completion of the new St Columba's High School campus on Fletcher Avenue, concerns were raised by parents on the designation of some identified safe walking routes and, significantly, the lack of public transport provision from the Burnside areas of the school catchment area. Subsequently, the decision to continue free school transport for the routes causing concern was agreed by the Policy & Resources Executive Sub Committee on 12 June 2013 (see PR/093/13/AH). It was agreed that the overall estimated £120K shortfall for the education transport budget at that time would continue to be funded from the SEMP.

In subsequent years the Education and Communities Committee agreed that the additional transport costs incurred by the additional transport arrangements should be met from the Education revenue budget (see EDUCOM/24/14/AE, 11 March 2014 and EDUCOM/28/15/PC, 10 March 2015). These arrangements were recommended pending a proposed review of the school transport policy.

- 4.3 In January 2017, a report was submitted to the Education and Communities Committee on the outcome of the statutory consultation on the proposal to increase school transport eligibility for pupils to 2.5 miles in secondary schools and 1.5 miles in primary schools. The Committee at that time decided that there should be no change to the transport policy at that time and, further, decided to maintain existing interim travel arrangements and use the SEMP to fund the resultant overspend until June 2020.
- 4.4 It should be noted that in addition to the interim provision for St. Columba's High School described above, there are currently similar arrangements in place for pupils at Clydeview Academy and Inverkip Primary School. These arrangements have resulted in an overall overspend each year in the Education Transport budget, requiring additional funding to be allocated from the SEMP fund.

The school transport shortfall for 2017/18 totalled £244K.

## **5.0 TRANSPORT COSTS**

- 5.1 The allocation of school transport contracts is managed by SPT on behalf of Inverclyde Council following a process of competitive tendering. On completion of the tendering process, SPT provide Education Services with a comparison of tender bids and recommended tender based on best value.
- 5.2 In respect of the additional transport required for St Columba's High School, as outlined in Section 4 above, on 10 October 2017 a best value tender was recommended by SPT based on a package bid for the three required contracts (St Columba's HS to Larkfield; Bow Road and Braeside respectively). Further, on 18 October 2017, SPT contacted Education Services to inform the School Transport Team that the operator who had submitted the above tender had now withdrawn their tender resulting in the contracts being awarded to another company. The recommendations were accepted and the contracts operated through to June 2018. The total cost of the contracts, £110.5K, was funded through the SEMP.

The total SEMP funded additional transport for St Columba's High School, Clydeview Academy and Inverkip Primary for session 2017/18 was £244K.

- 5.3 On renewal of the contracts in June 2018, an initial tender for the three required contracts totalling £142.5K was rejected by SPT. SPT subsequently advised that the next best value tender should be accepted. The total value of that tender for the three contracts was £239.6K – an increase of £97.1K on the original contract tender.

The total SEMP funded additional transport for St Columba's High School, Clydeview Academy and Inverkip Primary for session 2018/19 is £343K.

## 6.0 IMPLICATIONS

### 6.1 Finance

#### 6.2 Financial Implications:

The costs below were approved as part of the Council's 2018-19 budget and are included for the benefit of members.

One off Costs:

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact £000	Virement From (If Applicable)	Other Comments
SEMP	School Transport	2018/19	£343	EMR	Funding from SEMP to cover shortfall in school transport budget.
SEMP	School Transport	2019/20	£374	EMR	Anticipated that 2019/20 contract cost are likely to increase.
SEMP	School Transport	2020/21	£125	EMR	Funding allocation to cover contract costs April to July 2020.

Annually Recurring Costs/(Savings):

Public Engagement Events, communications and administration costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report £000	Virement From	Other Comments

### 6.3 Legal

N/A.

### 6.4 Equalities

Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out?

YES (see attached appendix)

NO - No change to current policy

### 6.5 Repopulation

N/A.

## **7.0 CONSULTATION**

7.1 N/A.

## **8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

8.1 N/A.