
Report To:	Policy & Resources Executive Sub-Committee	Date:	12 June 2013
Report By:	Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development	Report No:	PR/093/13/AH
Contact Officer:	Albert Henderson	Contact No:	01475 712043
Subject:	School Transport Policy Review		

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to outline transport issues relating to St Columba's High School moving to its permanent site on Fletcher Avenue in August 2013 and to seek authority to make transport arrangements outlined in section 2 until a review of the policy has taken place.
- 1.2 In addition, to seek permission to present a revised School Transport Policy to relevant Committee in the new cycle.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 St Columba's High School was decanted from its old site on Bayhill to the Greenock High School site in 2009. The reason for the decant was to allow the new Clydeview to be built on the Bayhill site.
- 2.2 St Columba's High School will move to a £15m refurbished school on Fletcher Avenue (the old Gourock High School site) in August 2013.
- 2.3 As St Columba's High School is in a decant situation, all pupils who qualify for free transport receive it at present as provided within current policy. When the school moves to its permanent location, the School Transport Policy applies which sets a limit of 2 miles for secondary pupils, ie any secondary pupil who lives more than 2 miles (safe walking distance) from the school is entitled to free transport.
- 2.4 The St Columba's transport situation is further complicated by the fact that free transport was available, before the school moved, to a large number of pupils within the 2 mile limit. This was because certain routes were deemed unsuitable for safe walking at that time. Both parents and elected members have expressed concerns that this previously agreed transport arrangement is being withdrawn.
- 2.5 The parents and elected members have also expressed a number of concerns regarding safe walking routes to school. As outlined in section 3 of this report, the areas giving the greatest cause for concern are Branchton, Braeside, Grieve Road, Bow Road and Larkfield.
- 2.6 It is proposed therefore to maintain transport for these areas for the academic year 2013/14 until these issues can be looked at and any policy review resulting from that being brought back to the relevant Committees.

2.7 In the wider context, this year sees the completion of the School Estate Management Plan for secondary schools. As the School Estate Management Plan has resulted in some schools now being relocated to a different permanent site, it is deemed appropriate to review the current School Transport Policy to see if it is still fit for purpose.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 The transport arrangements outlined in 2.5 and 2.6 above be maintained for the academic year 2013/14 when St Columba's moves to its new permanent home in Fletcher Avenue in August 2013.

3.2 As the Secondary School Management Plan is now nearing completion, officers review the current School Transport Policy and bring back a paper to the relevant Committee in the new cycle.

Albert Henderson
Corporate Directorate Education, Communities
and Organisational Development

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 St Columba's High School was decanted from its old site on Bayhill to the Greenock High School site in 2009. The reason for the decant was to allow the new Clydeview to be built on the Bayhill site.
- 4.2 St Columba's High School will move to a £15m refurbished school on Fletcher Avenue (the old Gourrock High School site) in August 2013.
- 4.3 As St Columba's High School is in a decant situation, all pupils who require free transport receive it at present as provided within current policy. When the school moves to its permanent location, the School Transport Policy applies which sets a limit of 2 miles for secondary pupils, ie any secondary pupil who lives more than 2 miles (safe walking distance) from the school is entitled to free transport.
- 4.4 The St Columba's transport situation is further complicated by the fact that free transport was available, before the school moved, to a large number of pupils within the 2 mile limit. This was because certain routes were deemed unsuitable for safe walking at that time. Both parents and elected members have expressed concerns that this previously agreed transport arrangement is being withdrawn.
- 4.5 The parents and elected members have also expressed a number of concerns regarding safe walking routes to school. As outlined in section 5 of this report, the areas giving the greatest cause for concern are Branchton, Braeside, Grieve Road, Bow Road and Larkfield.
- 4.6 It is proposed therefore to maintain transport for these areas for the 2013/14 academic year until these issues can be looked at and any policy review resulting from that being brought back to the relevant Committees.
- 4.7 In the wider context, this year sees the completion of the School Estate Management Plan for secondary schools. As the School Estate Management Plan has resulted in some schools now being relocated to a different permanent site, it is deemed appropriate to review the current School Transport Policy to see if it is still fit for purpose

5.0 ISSUES OF CONCERN

- 5.1 In terms of safe walking routes to school and other health and safety issues, areas causing the most concern are Branchton, Braeside, Grieve Road, Bow Road and Larkfield.
- 5.2 The concerns can be summarised as follows:
 1. Historically pupils were transported by bus from a number of these areas inside the 2 mile limit because the route was not deemed suitable.
 2. Flooding issues on part of the proposed route that make the pavement unsafe and unpassable at times.
 3. Road junctions extremely busy at peak times.
 4. A lack of any direct bus route to new school for many pupils.
 5. Other health and safety considerations such as woods and reservoirs alongside walking routes.
 6. Number of shortcuts essentially taken by pupils walking to school.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Financial Implications

The financial implications outlined below apply only to transport for St Columba's on a

time limited basis. If there are any policy changes following the review then these are likely to result in additional costs as they would be applied Council wide.

- 6.2 The correct transport budget for St Columba's High School were the 2 mile limit to be applied is £103,000. Estimated cost for current proposals for one year (still to be confirmed by SPT) £223,000. The overall estimated shortfall therefore is £120,000 and it is proposed that this could be funded from the money being used from the one off costs in the SEMP Model.

Financial Implications - One of Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Year	Proposed Spend this Report	Virement From	Other Comments
SEMP	Decant Costs	2013/14	£120,000	N/A	Costs incurred to end of 2013/14 academic year.

- 6.3 Human Resources: N/A

- 6.4 Legal: N/A

- 6.5 Equalities: N/A

- 6.6 Repopulation: N/A