
Report To:	Education and Communities Committee	Date:	10 March 2015
Report By:	Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development	Report No:	EDUCOM/28/15/PC
Contact Officer:	Angela Edwards Head of Inclusive Education Culture and Corporate Policy	Contact No:	01475 712828
Subject:	School Transport Review		

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Committee on the remit to report back to this committee with a revised school transport policy and to seek approval to continue the interim arrangements for St Columba's High School during session 2015 / 2016 until revised guidance on school consultation is issued by the Scottish Government.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 At the meeting of this Committee on 11 March 2014 officers were instructed to review the transport policy and report back to Committee. Since that time, officers have been reviewing the existing schools transport arrangements and exploring options for revisions to current policy.
- 2.2 In the interim, The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 amended in part 15 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 was introduced in August 2014 and relates to a statutory process for consultation on changes to transport for pupils at any denominational school.
- 2.3 The Scottish Government is due to issue guidance on the implementation of this new legislation during March and it would not be appropriate to conclude the review until the revised guidance is received to ensure any revised proposals are future proof.
- 2.4 It is therefore proposed that the interim transport arrangement for pupils at St Columba's High School is continued for a further school year and that the cost of £151,000 be contained within the Committee's overall 2015/16 revenue budget.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Members of the Committee are requested to:

- 3.1 Note that it is not appropriate for the Council to conclude the review on school transport until the revised guidance is issued by the Scottish Government.
- 3.2 Approve the continuation of the interim transport arrangement for pupils at St Columba's High School until the implementation of the revised policy in August 2016 and agree that the cost of £151,000 be contained within the Committee's overall 2015/16 revenue budget.
- 3.3 Note that a report on the schools transport review will be issued after the summer recess.

Patricia Cassidy
Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 At the meeting on 11 March 2014 members of this Committee instructed that the interim arrangement for free transport for pupils of St Columba's High School continue and that officers report back to Committee with a revised school transport policy by February 2015. Since March last year, officers have been reviewing the existing schools transport arrangements with a view to developing options for a revised schools transport policy for Members consideration. Discussions on these arrangements were started at school level, with a wider consultation planned.
- 4.2 However the new statutory requirements came into force in August 2014. The new requirement had not featured in previous consultation drafts of the Children and Young People Act. This amendment to the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 requires councils *"to formally consult with all stakeholders on any proposal to discontinue the arrangements for the provision of transport by the Council for pupils attending a denominational school."* All authorities are now expected to be fully compliant with this Act.
- 4.3 Officers understand that the Government will now issue new guidance before the end of March 2015 to clarify the requirements for alterations to school transport policy out with school closures.
- 4.4 Officers will not be in a position to report back more fully until the guidance on the implementation of The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 amended in part 15 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 is issued.
- 4.5 Therefore, it is proposed that the interim arrangement for school transport for pupils at St Columba's High School is continued for the next academic year 2015/16 to enable the review and associated consultation based on the new guidance to be completed in the context of the revised legislation.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

Finance

- 5.1 Current costs related to the interim arrangements at St Columba's High School are stated below. One off Costs:

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report £000	Virement From	Other Comments
Education	Transport various	To: August 2016	151		£151,000 to be met from one off virements within the Education Budget 2015/16

Legal

- 5.2 The current policy is well within legislative requirements for free transport to school.

Human Resources

- 5.3 There are no Human Resources Implications arising from this report.

Equalities

- 5.4 Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out?

Yes See attached appendix (To be completed during consultation)

No This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a change to an existing policy, function or strategy. Therefore, no Equality Impact Assessment is required.

Repopulation

5.5 There are no repopulation implications arising from this report.

6.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

6.1 Transport Policy Review Education and Communities Committee 11 March 2014.