

EDUCATION & YOUTH OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Thursday 28 th April, 2016
Report Subject	Recommendations from the School Transport Task & Finish Group
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Education
Report Author	Education & Youth Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A decision was made by the Education & Youth Overview & Scrutiny Committee on the 17th September, 2015 to establish a School Transport Task & Finish Group.

The Group has met on three separate occasions to consider the outcome of the diagnostic work carried out to identify savings within the Integrated Transport Unit (ITU).

This report sets out the recommendations of the Group, for consideration by the Education & Youth Overview & Scrutiny Committee with a view to making recommendations to Cabinet.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That the Committee endorse the recommendations of the Task & Finish Group and submit them to Cabinet for its consideration.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE WORK OF THE TASK & FINISH GROUP
1.01	<p>The School Transport Task & Finish Group was established in September 2015. The Membership of the group is as follows:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cllr Paul Cunningham• Cllr Peter Curtis• Cllr Andy Dunbobbin• Cllr Nancy Matthews• Cllr Carolyn Thomas• Mr David Hytch• Mrs Rebecca Stark• Mr Bernard Stuart
1.02	<p>Meetings of the Task & Finish Group were also attended by Ian Budd, Chief Officer (Education & Youth), Katie Wilby, Transportation & Logistics Manager and Gill Yates, Pupil Support Service Manager who provided specialist advice.</p>
1.03	<p>Following Cabinet approval in May 2015, it was agreed that an ITU should be established for the Authority to ensure an integrated approach to service delivery and operational management. Budget management and eligibility assessment for mainstream home to school transport has also transferred to the ITU within the Streetscene and Transportation portfolio. Policy setting for school transport has remained within the Education & Youth portfolio.</p>
1.04	<p>In May, 2015, Cabinet also approved the engagement of a suitably qualified business partner (JMP Consultants) to assist with the assessment and delivery of the financial benefit that will be derived from the ITU. This has resulted in a diagnostic review of all transport operations across the Authority in order to identify any savings opportunities and efficiencies within the current operating arrangements.</p>
1.05	<p>JMP consultants have identified the following areas of discretionary provision as ones that could be considered for further policy development work and consideration by the Local Authority:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Denominational School Transport<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Removal of free transport- Charge a nominal fee• Concessionary Spare Seats<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Increase the fee for spare seats- Withdraw concessionary spare seats• Post-16 Transport<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Removal of free transport- Charge a nominal fee• Remove Benefits Entitlement

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate aligning school times <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - (cost-benefit analysis required)
1.06	The policy change options have not been presented to Cabinet for consideration and will be submitted following consultation with the Education & Youth Overview & Scrutiny Committee, together with any recommendations the Committee wish to make.
1.07	At its meeting held on the 14 th March, 2016, the Task & Finish Group considered the breakdown of information for each policy change option as identified as part of the Integrated Transport Unit Diagnostic review.
1.08	<p>Following a detailed presentation, the Task & Finish Group recommended that in considering any operational and policy changes, Cabinet should:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carefully consider the business cases and implementation plans for any change; • Undertake equality impact assessment in relation to any proposed policy change at an early point in the process; • Consider/mitigate the impact of any charges on families with more than one child; • Consider the impact of any changes on low income families; and • To promote independence for learners (travel training) and alternatives (where appropriate) to individualised transport provision.

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	The savings identified within the diagnostic review are subject to Cabinet approval.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	Statutory consultations and notifications would need to be undertaken prior to adoption of any changes in policy entitlements. Statutory consultations on policy change options have not been considered or authorised by the Council's Cabinet.

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	An equalities impact assessment will be required for any approved policy changes.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	None.

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	<p>None.</p> <p>Contact Officer: Ceri Shotton Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator</p> <p>Telephone: 01352 702305</p> <p>E-mail: ceri.shotton@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	Denominational School Transport – is transport where a child attends a specific school for denominational reasons.
7.02	Concessionary Spare Seats – where spare seats are available on a school bus, these can be sold to pupils who are not entitled to free transport.
7.03	Post-16 Transport – transport for post-16 students to a place of education or training.
7.04	Benefits Entitlement – free transport for people who are in receipt of benefits who reside in Flintshire.