

REPORT TO: EDUCATION COMMITTEE – 6 DECEMBER 2010

**REPORT ON: PROPOSAL TO AMEND THE GUIDELINES ON HOME-SCHOOL
TRANSPORT ARRANGEMENTS**

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

REPORT NO: 714-2010

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 This report is a proposal to amend the current guidelines on home-school transport arrangements. The proposal is to extend the provision of bus passes for secondary pupils in receipt of free school meals (FME) who live more than two miles but less than three miles from their designated secondary school.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 The Education Committee is recommended to:

- i. note the content of this report;
- ii. approve the proposal; and
- iii. instruct the Director of Education to amend the existing guidelines and introduce the proposed change with effect from 6 January 2011.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 The financial implication of providing bus passes to secondary pupils who are in receipt of free school meals and who live between 2 and 3 miles away from their local school would be £7,300 in a part year and £22,460 in a full financial year.

3.2 The part year costs can be met from the transport budget within the Education Department Revenue Budget 2010-2011, and provision will require to be made for the additional cost in 2011-2012 within the draft 2011-2012 Revenue Budget.

4.0 MAIN TEXT

4.1 The current travel policy in Dundee is that transport is provided in the form of a bus pass for primary pupils who live more than 2 miles from their local school and for secondary pupils who live more than 3 miles from school. No bus pass is issued to pupils who attend a school as a result of a placing request. Alternative arrangements are in place for pupils with additional support needs.

4.2 The existing arrangement is satisfactory for almost all secondary schools across the city given that most pupils live within an acceptable travel distance from their designated school. One major exception to this rule has been identified at St Paul's RC Academy where a significant number of pupils are required to travel to and from school from across the city by public transport. Under the current home-school transport arrangements, only pupils who live in excess of 3 miles from the school are entitled to a bus pass.

- 4.3 The emerging situation, particularly in St Paul's RC Academy, is that a significant number of pupils who are entitled to free school meals live more than 2 miles but less than 3 miles from the school. Given the travel distance involved and the requisite need for these pupils to use public transport, this places additional financial pressure on families who are required to pay transport costs. This situation is greatly increased when two siblings or more attend the school. Whilst it would be feasible for this group of pupils to walk to school by the safest walking route, it is accepted that a potential walk of up to 6 miles each day represents a considerable distance, particularly if families lack the necessary money to pay travel costs.
- 4.4 Based on current FME information, the proposal to amend the current guidelines would provide bus passes for an additional 104 pupils across the city, of whom 94 attend St Paul's RC Academy. It would ensure that these pupils were not disadvantaged in attending their designated school because of location, family circumstances or financial constraints.

5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 This report has been screened for any implications in respect of sustainability, strategic environment assessment, anti-poverty, equality impact assessment and risk management. There are no major issues. An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out and will be made available on the Council website:
www.dundee.gov.uk/equanddiv/equimpact/.

6.0 CONSULTATIONS

- 6.1 This report has been subject to consultation with the Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Support Services) and the Director of Finance.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 Equality Impact Assessment

Jim Collins
Director of Education

16th November 2010

JC/MW/MM