

Open Report on behalf of Richard Wills, Executive Director (Development Services)

Report to:	Councillor William Webb
Date:	12 July 2010
Subject:	Non Entitled School Transport - BusLincs Reduced Fares Scheme
Decision Reference:	01752
Key decision?	Yes

Summary:

Since 1989 a pupil reduced fare scheme has been available on BusLincs services operated under contract to the County Council. The scheme applies a charge of £1 per week per family for pupils, who are not entitled to free transport, between their home address and their designated school.

Recent decisions to charge for concessionary seats makes this arrangement inconsistent with the charges made on dedicated contracts. The scheme is also inequitable with all other travel charges. There is a considerable amount of administration required to manage this scheme that is disproportionate to the charge made.

Recommendation(s):

Not allow any more entrants to the scheme from 1 September 2010 and to withdraw the scheme from 1 January 2011 which will mean that the pupils will have to pay the full commercial fare or, where available, concessionary seats on closed school contracts.

Alternatives Considered:

1. Increase the cost of the fare card to £1.00 per day from September 2010 and then remove it altogether in September 2011 and do not allow any new entrants to the scheme.

This would not initially reduce the administration costs and could result in seats being paid for that may not be available if there are large numbers of passengers using the service.

2. Do nothing.

This would leave an inequitable scheme in place at cost to LCC

Reasons for Recommendation:

To remove a scheme that is inequitable with other school travel charges. The provision of this arrangement reduces fare income and will therefore impact on the cost of procurement of supported local bus services.

1. Background

- 1.1 In the Academic year 2009/10, 234 pupils have participated in the scheme. Where more than one child within the family resides at the same address, they travel free ie a family of 3 children will all travel for just 20p per day.
- 1.2 The scheme has not been reviewed or costs increased since its introduction until the recent Fundamental Budget Review of Transport which identified this inequitable scheme as one that should be ceased.

2. Conclusion

- 2.1 This scheme is inequitable, however, it does provide cheap transport to some families to transport non-entitled pupils to school, and if the recommendation is approved it is likely that it will lead to complaints from those affected.

3. Legal Comments:

The Executive Director [Development Services] has been delegated the function, in the Council's Constitution, of entering into agreements to provide for the supply of passenger transport services to school pupils. This decision by the Executive Councillor, in consultation with the Executive Director, is therefore lawful and within his remit.

4. Resource Comments:

Withdrawing the non-entitled pupils reduced bus fare scheme will save the Council approximately £80,000 p.a. some of which would be released through new contract prices and possible fares on CallConnect services. This saving may either be removed from the current Accessibility and Policy revenue budget or used to offset future high priority cost pressures.

5. Consultation

a) Has Local Member Been Consulted?

n/a

b) Has Executive Councillor Been Consulted?

Yes

c) Scrutiny Comments

n/a

d) Policy Proofing Actions Required

There will be an impact on some pupils not accessing bus services.

6. Background Papers

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

This report was written by Chris Briggs, who can be contacted on 015223050 or chris.briggs@lincolnshire.gov.uk.