

Appendix B

Proposed changes to the provision of home to school/college
transport - consultation feedback from public meetings

EVENT: POST 16 TRANSPORT CONSULTATION
DATE: THURSDAY 24TH FEBRUARY 2011
TIME: 19:30 to 21:00
VENUE: LOUTH
PRESENT: Debbie Barnes, Dick Pike, John O'Connor, Cllr Hough
ATTENDEES: 20

Question: Reference to website/guidance that points to the relaxation on the ring fence for the fund in schools enabling the Learner Support Grant to be used for transport?

Answer: Unable to point specifically where, we are aware that the Government's direction of travel is to un-ring fence grants. Meeting with college Principals next week and will explore this further. We are seeking further detail from Government.

Question: How can we finish the consultation without knowing the detail of the guidance from Government on hardship support? The county is a rural one and has areas of significant deprivation.

Answer: Yes we are rural but our policies are generous compared to other counties e.g. Yorkshire, Devon, and Somerset. Currently we are on average about £100 less and others are also looking to put up their prices. Government has promised to replace ema with "targeted support for those who face genuine financial barriers to participation"

Question: But more people are on benefits in Lincolnshire compared to Norfolk, have we compared our rise to theirs – have they doubled the cost?

Answer: All are currently consulting

Comment: Some of the inflexibility in provision today could have resulted from the current transport arrangements.

Question: Not fair or equal to those that cannot afford travel, have to buy other kit too?

Answer: So concern is how will people from low income be taken into account? So the feedback is that we should consider the impact on low income families.

Question: In the presentation, Lincolnshire more generous than other LAs. Are any others more generous than us? Citing the full picture is important not just one sided.

Answer: Yes, a few are. The point is noted

Question: £923 actual cost on average but some will not live far away and could be on low income – again picture could be misleading, people should see.

Answer: It is a very difficult area. Should we offer subsidy to those on low income for example or ask everyone to pay the same rate? These other options are what we are trying to capture during consultation so please feed back.

Question: If increase these changes what will you do to address poor service from operators?

Answer: We would recommend that you let Transport Services Group know at Lincolnshire County Council, this can be in addition to informing the operator as well. As we are the contracting body we would like to hear your feedback.

Question: Complaint on 24th September – 10 day reply but nothing yet.

Answer: Details taken to be followed up.

Question: My daughter finishes College on a Friday at 1pm but has to wait 3 hours for the bus.

Answer: Transport is only provided at the beginning and end of the normal school or college day for all students.

Question: Shame Cllr Bradwell or other Executive Members are not here when difficult issues are raised. Few people present this evening maybe due to poor access in the area. Lincolnshire is generous in difficult times. E.g. Does the council have a statutory duty to put £2m into Stamford School Scheme?

Answer: Review was done a few years ago with decision to taper out the provision. Not statutory requirement but pledge given to review again this year. This scheme is not funded through the same budget as transport.

Question: Would be interested in cost per pupil and Executive should look at the privileged few?

Answer: They are two separate budgets – transport and dedicated schools grant (DSG can only be used for schools). There is no flexibility to take £2m from DSG to put into transport.

Question: Could give money to colleges though?

Answer: This cannot be done as the guidance on the use of the DSG is clear.

Question: But could review taper?

Answer: Yes they could.

Question: Council reserves – ask Executive to use reserves?

Answer: Comments will be fed back.

Question: Echo low pay comment/reserves/Stamford. Young person not able to follow through their hopes and dreams – once make a contract with a provider what if the drop out rate increases because they are doing a course they don't want to do, is this wasting money?

Answer: Post 16 group looked at transport as a barrier and it was not the main reason in fact low on the list of barriers. Perhaps one of the issues is a lack of provision in some areas, meaning we have to transport significant distances. Perhaps more should be done to look at the distribution of provision. We should be working with Further Education to ensure all provision is good and equal.

Question: What about a one year course progressing to another one year?

Answer: Progression from year 1 to year 2 honoured.

Question: Does it need to be such a big increase from £202 to £392?

Answer: We needed to frontload our reductions so hence the proposed increase. I'm afraid I can only explain the reasons why.

Comments: For five miles that's a lot of money
The charge is a flat-rate charge for all – yes.

Question: What if buses don't run/doing half course?

Answer: Transport is only provided at start and end of day, Monday to Friday.

Question: Louth resident, which Grimsby College?

Answer: Transport will be provided to either.

Question: Safe walking route decision – I would just like to register my disagreement and how does this fit into ECM agenda?

Answer: Every Child Matters was the previous Government's framework, but the principles still apply.

Question: How is three miles measured?

Answer: Three miles by nearest and most direct available route.

Question: Example £9.20 per week by using North Hykeham to Boston Mega-Rider bus route?

Answer: We think this could be the cost to Lincoln from North Hykeham.

Question: Widening provision: restriction on travel could reduce specialism of colleges and so reduce choice?

Answer: Feedback special cases during consultation please.

Question: Value of courses to tourism but no mention of protection for them?

Answer: Feedback special cases during consultation please.

Question: Any assurance of future years?

Answer: My understanding as an officer is that there are no plans in next few years, but no one knows the future. Future increase above £390 will be directly linked to inflation. We have only had a two year settlement so that's what we are comfortable about.

Comment: Political choices so there are choices for taking funding off other areas the council funds.

Question: How will you influence colleges?

Answer: LSC has been the commissioner previously. LA is the commissioning body so should have more influence but not overnight.

Question: How is this going to affect children in 6th forms?

Answer: Those that are currently in a school sixth form will get transport provided for Y2 if their course is for 2 years e.g. an A level.

Question: What about 11-16 schools or those going to different 6th form?

Answer: 11-16 transport will not be affected by these proposals. If the school does not offer a sixth form then they will be eligible to transport to their nearest school/college (if over 3 miles) but there will be a charge.

Question: My child is currently now at Monk's Dyke and next year will be in Monk's Dyke's sixth form so she will have to pay?

Answer: Yes, statutory requirement to provide free transport up to 16 but discretionary post 16.

Question: The cost is double what it was previously, must it be so large?

Answer: Noted. This point has come through quite clearly.

Question: Unsuitable, criteria have deemed there are risks, who now accept the risk, not yet adults?

Answer: They are deemed unsuitable not unsafe. Some young people at the age of 16 will be making their own transport arrangements if they go to work or undertake training with an employer – the Council does not provide transport in these situations. The Council believes that young people at this age are capable of judging the risks on these journeys.

Question: At what point has thinking around EIA been done?

Answer: The initial EIA has been completed and will be published on the website. The consultation will inform the next stage in the process and will be available to both Scrutiny and the Executive at the time of the decision making.

Question: Will your EIA include socio economic factor?

Answer: Socio-economic factors are not included in the Council's EIA policy as it is not a statutory requirement. Your comments though will be taken to the next Scrutiny meeting and to the Executive meeting. We will raise the point about no SE factor in our policy with colleagues.

Question: What if my child changes to a college after the start of September because of bullying?

Answer: That is not a routine event now, but there is always a discretionary element though. We currently do individual assessments on a case by case basis and that will not change.

Question: But we are being encouraged to raise the participation age?

Answer: Raising the participation age yes, but this is not statutory. Statutory school age is still up to 16 and for this there is free transport. Post 16 is not free but discretionary for the Council.

EVENT: POST 16 TRANSPORT CONSULTATION
DATE: MONDAY 28TH FEBRUARY 2011
TIME: 19:00 to 21:00
VENUE: LINCOLN COUNTY OFFICES
PRESENT: Debbie Barnes, Dick Pike, John O'Connor, David Robinson,
Councillor A. Williams, John Giblin.
ATTENDEES: 41

Question: Is this a consultation meeting as my son's choices have already been decided in his review in December?

Answer: Pupils with statements will have their individual cases looked at. To stress these are proposals and the budget challenge is real.
Picked up after meeting as an individual case

Question: Has anyone looked at bus timetables?

Answer: If already going to college this will continue. If local bus service (public) does not provide a provision then we will make this provision. If proposal accepted we will ensure travel provision is available.

Question: No special student prices, they pay adult fare.

Answer: We would provide concessionary travel rate of £390, but yes the choice of college will be affected.

Question: Just point out that the EMA replacement is the pupil premium targeted at school age children, who have free school meals.

Answer: Government thinks EMA was targeted too wide and they want to focus funding. We also expect the Learner Support Grant to be un-ring fenced so that it could be used to help with transport.

Question: As parent of children with autism, welcome LLDD exception, although in my instance there are no computer based courses in Lincoln.

Answer: This consultation is about transport, but yes local need is being looked at specifically with regards to children with disabilities.

Question: There are some parents who just can't afford this and so pupils won't go to college, particularly parents of children with educational needs.

Answer: Issues brought up so far recognise the need for an increased contribution but the effect on multiple siblings and choice of courses needs looking at further

Question: Live on A607 so how will we get transport to Newark College, as no local provision available.

Answer: Commercial travel routes do change but please do put forward case study for consideration. The principle is based on nearest 6th form or college but do take point that easier to travel to Lincoln as routes exist and those to Newark do not. We do need though an objective policy so that it can implemented.

Question: How does Council plan to address duty to put on transport for young people to have a reasonable opportunity to choose between different courses available to them at 16?

Answer: Key word is reasonable; we do act within the law and do what is possible.

Question: Choices of courses at Boston and Lincoln very different with one suiting my daughter's needs better

Answer: This is a matter for course providers to consider rather than the LA as the transport provider.

Comment: You are not recognising current transport arrangements and it seems counter-productive to set up new courses

Question: You should not be a surprise that we have a large transport cost.

Answer: We look at statistical neighbour authorities that are geographically similar to ourselves. We benchmark our costs against theirs to see how we compare.

Question: Lord Hill extract - "obliged to ensure that transport is not a barrier and encouraged parents to complain" Can you comment?

Answer: Still a full commitment to access transport to their nearest college, many authorities don't. No matter how difficult we will provide transport.

Question: But cost is a barrier

Answer: We are awaiting clarity over the school/colleges enhanced learner support and removal of its ring fence – but yes suspect that this will not be the same amount of money as the EMA

Question: Has an EIA been undertaken?

Answer: Initial was and informed we need to go to partial

Question: What interested groups have we consulted?

Answer: Public groups and Parent Carer Council.

Question: Specialist course, e.g. Performing Arts & Music

Answer: Will come down to provision that 6th form and college make. Also please feed back any special courses to be considered for adding to the discretionary subjects list.

Question: Sir William Robertson looking to put on a 6th Form

Answer: Next nearest can be provided if nearest provision full. Our view is that the 6th form has to offer a broad range of subjects at either an academic or vocational level to qualify as a sixth form.

Question: Special transport provision for violin courses?

Answer: We would not at the moment and do not expect to in the future

Question: Why transport out of County.

Answer: Legal precedent has guided the Council always to transport to nearest and not just in the County sixth form or college. There have been strong cross-border flows of students for many years.

Question: How did you notify this consultation to people?

Answer: Sent to all schools and colleges and asked to pass on to students and parents. Published on Council's website. Posters distributed county-wide.

Comment: Should have sent to Y11 pupils

Question: Reasonable choice – how does a BTEC compare to an A Level?

Answer: Always have a choice of 6th Form or College.

Question: What if course is not available at nearest 6th Form or College

Answer: Proposals would say you make your own transport arrangements

Question: Unsuitable walking routes: what is unsuitable?

Answer: Unsuitable relates to the route and traffic risks e.g. sight lines round corners, pavements exist, traffic volumes etc; does not include provisions of street lighting.

Question: Once 16 seem to have to get hurt before something done.

Answer: Provision not made for under 3 miles.

Question: Youth unemployment is the highest age group and expect it to rise further. Do we know if colleges etc, have the capacity to take new pupils going to nearest college?
Cost too high per proportion of income and EMA is double hit this will also impact on NEET how will a single parent find the additional money?

Answer: The number of young people with no education, employment or training (NEET) has fallen year on year despite the introduction of charges in 2006 and an annual increase to date. Executive thought that £2 per day was affordable – feed back suggest this is not the case for those families on low income.

Question: Will Council publish saving as a result of their decisions, for every decision?

Answer: Full Council has already agreed the savings needed and from what areas. Whole provision has been modelled and this is where the savings were identified. Also external consultants helped with these proposals

Comment: But what if courses can't now run - this could impact further.

Question: Can you explain the proportion of cuts?

Answer: Year 1 - £1 million from transport budget, which comes from Children's Services budget which is made up as follows:

£100m – Children's Services budget

23% saving needed

£30m – spent on pupil transport

£35m - Social care and Safeguarding – we have decided to protect these services from large budget cuts

The rest; e.g. Youth and Connexions services have been hit the hardest along with management and back-office support functions.

Question: £3,654 saving on unsuitable routes, how is it justifiable? Savings vs safety

Answer: Environment does not contribute to suitable walking routes – it is about traffic and walking conditions.

Question: Concerned that others may also be uncertain too

Answer: Details can be found at: <http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/parents/schools/school-transport/>

Question: How will we justify subsidising of old people leisure transport, but not post 16 transport, how can it be right.

Answer: £1 million cut off £5 million transport fund for older people

Question: Unsuitable travel, even though doesn't include lighting is unsafe now

Answer: Unsuitable not unsafe

Question: Impact of low numbers meaning course can't run.

Answer: Incredibly complex, transport being just one factor that could increase unavailability – we can't say that these proposals will reduce availability. Currently pupils don't have a choice around all "A" levels now.

Question: Clarification of proposal 2 – have designated 6th Forms gone?

Answer: Existing DTA's for schools continue

Question: If they are currently eligible for transport in Y1 of lower sixth will they get transport for Y2?

Answer: Yes

Question: Inconsistencies in current system, could this not have been looked at before these cuts?

Answer: 23,000 journeys per day, some provision is case specific, there is a rolling programme looking at each area to review current practice. Cost per mile is comparable to other similar authorities.

Question: If pay termly why are they penalised yet Council tax is not

Answer: The cost is to cover administration, more instalments = more cost. We are not legally entitled to charge for the collection of Council Tax. Do feedback your views on charging for instalments.

Comment: Support for single parent very difficult now.

Question: County Council; how can it ignore paragraph 23.5 of transport guidance – ensure cost is affordable – we cannot afford it especial single parent families with more than one child.

Answer: Executive thought that £2 per day was affordable – feed back is suggesting otherwise for those on low income. In ideal world would not increase costs.

Question: But other Local Authorities have higher income so are not comparable.

Answer: Similar authorities are based on income, rurality and other comparable factors

Question: The scare is the size of the increase, could it not be scaled.

Answer: This point has been noted already and will be fed back.

Question: Will this make any reference to entry requirements e.g. requiring a GCSE grade A in the A level subject to be studied at Gainsborough High School

Answer: Transport will be available to either John Leggott or Scunthorpe College.

Question: But this would add 15 minutes more onto journey time from Naith Park to Scunthorpe as apposed to Lincoln.

Answer: Naith Park is nearer to Lincoln, so transport provision would be made to Lincoln, not Scunthorpe.

Question: Have cuts been made elsewhere in the council e.g. total cost of salaries for staff

Answer: Management review on-going and some high salaries e.g. Assistant Directors, Heads of Service and Service Managers are proposed to be removed – some have already. Also management and back office budgets have been looked at and substantially reduced.

Once 'must do' services are costed, the "could do" service are then looked at to either disbanded or reduced.

Question: When do we get feedback?

Answer: 16th March – Consultation closes
8th April – Children and Young People's scrutiny committee meeting
3rd May – Executive decision made

Question: How do I get hold of papers?

Answer: All papers are in the public domain on the website.

Question: Law states you have to stay in Education, but we have to pay for transport?

Answer: Not quite true – raising the participation age is happening but not raising the statutory leaving age. Do not expect changes in statutory school age or transport for Post 16.

Question: Have we looked at means testing?

Answer: To date the Council favours flat-rate charge, but feed back through consultation. We need to be mindful of the admin costs to such a system though.

Question: Is the County Council going to publish the decision?

Answer: Yes

Question: A question for the Executive Board - are staff salaries being looked at?

Answer: We want to have the right staff to make the right decisions; corporate roles elsewhere would earn many times more the salary of our key decision makers

Question: Are there some areas of the Council that could take a bigger disproportionate hit to prevent transport being affected?

Answer: All areas have been looked at and large cuts have been made elsewhere already. It is only fair that transport is expected to make a contribution to the budget cuts that we are facing.

EVENT : POST 16 TRANSPORT CONSULTATION
DATE: THURSDAY 3RD MARCH 2011
TIME: 19:00 to 21:00
VENUE: GRANTHAM
PRESENT: Debbie Barnes, Dick Pike, John O'Connor, Councillor P Bradwell.
ATTENDEES: 19

Question: What arrangements are there for those who cannot afford them?

Answer: Current proposals state that the charge would be universally applied, without means testing.

Question: Compulsory Education until 18 though

Answer: Statutory School age is up to 16 after that discretionary, but raising participation age is up to 18 – this is not statutory.

Question: Is the £5m just post 16 transport?

Answer: Yes

Question: So what income does this provide?

Answer: An additional £791,000 income pa

Question: What is the saving from £5m?

Answer: £791,000 pa

Question: If there is no transport at the moment then having to put some on will be more expensive.

Answer: Sometimes we buy tickets on service buses, if none available we will put on contracted transport. Providing contracted transport in some circumstances can be less expensive than buying tickets on services.

Question: Impact of more buses going through Leadenham village

Answer: Would be less as more would go to Newark.

Question: What other cuts are the Council making?

Answer: £100m Budget; £30m transport, £35m Social Care, the rest is for other services; e.g. connexions, children's centres. We have to remove £22m from the £100m. We have costed statutory 'must do' services and then savings have made from the rest.

Question: You are proposing to provide transport to nearest college even if course not available there.

Answer: We don't transport now to any 6th form/college for e.g. "A" level courses, only for vocational courses, where a course is not offered. These cohorts tend to be small and so can involve expensive modes of transport against the normal flow of transport.

Question: Is this a consultation if you can't change your mind?

Answer: We can't change how much is to be cut but we can change where, that is what we are consulting on.

Question: Are other Authorities consulting?

Answer: Cannot comment on other Authorities arrangements

Question: When are the decisions made?

Answer: May 3rd for decision, September 1st for implementation on higher charge.

Question: How are 6th Forms affected?

Answer: If currently get transport to school because of statutory school age, then transport to 6th form will be provided, but chargeable.

Comment: Post 16 choice could disappear with introduction of these proposals

Question: Can schools save money by procuring better?

Answer: Schools' budgets are separate to this and the money can't be migrated across budgets. Central procurement often works out better value for money because of the economies of scale involved in purchasing transport to all schools.

Question: Seems odd you can't

Answer: Dedicated Schools Grant and Children's Services budgets cannot be vired across each other. This is Government guidance.

Question: I may not be able to afford year 2 though

Answer: There is no desire to impact on children, but decisions have to be made about budget cuts.

Question: £370,000 + £791,000 = greater percentage cut on the £5m than 22%

Answer: Yes, but some service areas we need to protect e.g. child protection, fostering etc so other areas have larger percentage cut.

Question: What is the cost of not restricting transport to nearest school/college?

Answer: Currently £370,000

Question: What percentage are we expecting to be affected by this decision?

Answer: We expect current numbers of learners to continue.

Question: Has there been any discussions with other LAs?

Answer: Informal discussions only

Question: Many Colleges are one year courses leading in to other courses

Answer: We will continue to provide transport to other than a nearest college if the 2 courses are related and show progression

Question: e.g. Student in 6th Form leaves after one year and then goes to college, what happens then?

Answer: If change from nearest 6th Form to nearest College then we will provide transport

Question: 1200 responses received. Is this how many you expected?

Answer: No expectations, but responses are still coming in.

Question: Students have been having interviews and think they are going through with this with transport.

Answer: Have been receiving applications for transport, where affected we have written pointing out these proposals and pointing out they may not get transport.

Comment: Music only available at Nottingham and Lincoln. Travelling to Nottingham is too expensive on train, so has to be Lincoln. These proposals will prevent talented young people succeeding.

Question: What is the point of transport to nearest college if course not offered there?

Answer: We currently do not transport to a place where a preferred academic course is offered at a college. But, in addition, transport is always offered to the nearest school 6th form as well as the nearest college.

Question: What is next year's cost?

Answer: Could increase at inflationary rate, but not expecting large rise again, however we only know our budget for next two years so we cannot guarantee beyond that.

Question: Do year 11 children now know about these changes for their choice of courses.

Answer: We are holding meetings and have invited responses from schools and the public. All schools were asked to put up posters and advise their students of these proposed changes.

Question: Is post 16 transport public transport?

Answer: Depends if a public service bus exists. If one does then we may buy tickets, if not or not enough room we will contract a bus.

Question: My daughter has to wait around from 1pm until 4pm until bus arrives on a Friday

Answer: We only transport at the start and end of college/school day.

Question: Level 1 course leading to Level 2 e.g. plumbing

Answer: We will honour reasonable progression, in this instance we would honour it for those that have already started.

Question: What if parent can't find this money?

Answer: Currently no proposals to means test, we also expect the ring fence to be removed from the Learning Support Grant – the grant that goes into schools/colleges.

Question: Colleges have curriculum based over three days, rather than five days – savings could be made by changing to a three day transport

Answer: Would require more uniformity between colleges to get these savings e.g. which 3 days will they only be open for?

Question: Why not phase in the approach over four years. e.g. 25% per year

Answer: Have to achieve most of the savings in year one.

Comment: Why so big an increase nothing else has gone up by this amount?

Question: Will you be training staff to ensure that these changes are brought in correctly and will there be an appeals process?

Answer: Yes, appeals provision will be in operation. To date the current staff understand very well the current arrangements and would expect them to easily adapt to these changes.

Comment: Unintended consequences e.g. participation rates and also affects on institutions who have invested in courses/tutors, all of which will impact on the economy of the Country.

Question: Council Tax frozen – Why not increase it to fund this?

Answer: The council tax freeze helps all people in Lincolnshire rather than any one group

Question: Have we worked out the cost to each household to fund this?

Answer: No – we have agreed to keep Council Tax the same

Comment: Need to continue to be responsible for our children's future, the increase needs to be means tested in some way

Question: What arrangement has been made to assess the impact of these proposals?

Answer: Initial equality impact assessment (EIA) directed us to do a partial EIA, Parent Carer Council is present here tonight to help feedback their views as a representative group.

Comment: Can you look at means testing?

Comment: Can it not be spread over two years?

Comment: Can a monthly payment scheme be offered to people more widely?

Comment: Do we know what will happen if people can't afford this?

Question: How many won't be able to pay?

Answer: We don't know this as we do not currently means test.

Comment: Could you not have asked on the questionnaire would you be able to afford it?

Question: Won't 6th forms just get full up and colleges shrink

Answer: Young people have a choice over where they can study and schools and colleges will no doubt respond to any changes in choices that young people make.

Question: What are the consequences?

Answer: When charges were first introduced we did not see a reduction in numbers or when it increased, but we do accept that EMA was in place then.

Question: Are you prepared to means test?

Answer: Has come out as a question from all consultations so far for us to take back.

Question: Have you had discussions with industry/business to stimulate some form of apprenticeship work etc. for those not going to post 16 education?

Answer: Yes we have

Question: Service quality issues

Answer: Have you reported them? – Yes to the bus company, but also report to us (Transport Services Group) as we contract the services.

Question: Why should we stop/reduce subsidy just because other authorities have done?

Answer: We are a generous authority and also spend more on transport. The authority does have to make tough decisions based on priorities.

Question: The effect of these proposals on Stamford College is high, if you don't transport pupils they will not be able to get here as there is no service bus. Why not give £533 to the pupil or college and let them run their own transport provision or make their own choice.

Answer: This has been mentioned previously.

Comment: If you get it wrong there is no turning back

EVENT: POST 16 TRANSPORT CONSULTATION
DATE: TUESDAY 8TH MARCH 2011
TIME: 19:00 TO 21:00
VENUE: SPALDING HIGH SCHOOL
PRESENT: Debbie Barnes, Dick Pike, John O'Connor.
ATTENDEES: 61

Question: Have you been to every secondary school and made all parents aware?

Answer: Consultation launched on 5th January using the Council's website and at the same time all school and colleges were contacted and asked to make students and parents aware using posters and entries into newsletters etc. We have not written to all parents individually.

Question: This is a substantial increase above RPI – will future years be increased only by RPI?

Answer: Members recognise this is a substantial increase and are not expecting to substantially increase again, only in line with inflationary increases.

Comment: Please state which inflation model is to be used in the policy so we know.

Comment: If previously increased by RPI then this hike would not have been necessary.

Question: Do we pay when they start 6th Form or October?

Answer: Payment in made at the beginning of September in advance of the travel.

Question: Been told will pay £390 by LCC already.

Answer: We are still consulting, these are proposals.

Question: I am paying £280 not £202

Answer: We'll take your details and get back to you – this has since been resolved and a payment of £202 was confirmed

Question: Was a consultation done when these were first brought in?

Answer: Yes – full public consultation did take place.

Question: Now 8th March and first I have heard of this.

Answer: There were 3 public consultation events advertised from 5th January with a further additional one (ie this one in Spalding) added at the request of Elected members. Each event has increasingly become better attended and we have had over 1200 replies to the on-line survey as well. Yes this was late notice for this event, but others were advertised.

Question: Why the approved list of courses – where did they come from?

Answer: Members chose them to reflect the needs of Lincolnshire's economy and desire to preserve specialist land based courses. If you feel that there should not be such a list or that the courses listed should be different then please feed this back.

Comment: But Every Child Matters

Question: Year 11's are already looking at university courses; these proposals restrict post 18 choices

Answer: We don't do that now – we do for vocational courses, but not "A" levels.
Agreed this will impact on vocational choice

Question: But you do for some A levels, don't you?

Answer: Yes, if a student can confirm that a university course states a specific subject as an entry requirement, then we will consider transport.

Question: LLDD vague criteria – who decides?

Answer: Additional Needs Service, Heads of Schools and Connexions Service make decision as to where the child's needs can be met.

Question: What criteria will Additional Needs use? It all sounds vague.

Answer: These arrangements are already in place for current children with additional needs, this is not new. Decisions are often made on a case-by-case basis based on medical need.

Question: Can you confirm that those already in year 1 of a sixth form/college course will still get transport but those due to start in September will be affected?

Answer: Yes that's right, year 2 school/college course needs to show progression of the subject i.e. the same subject progressed and not a new unrelated course.

Question: Question was related to a specific case of a shorter distance.

Answer: If anyone wants to dispute lines drawn on shortest distance then come back to us with your example.

Question: Why is there a greater than 23% reduction?

Answer: We agree we are disproportional affecting the transport budget – Children's Services budgets are made up as follows (in broad figures):
e.g. £100m – total budget for all Children's Services
£35m – Child Protection Work
£30m – Transport
£10m – Youth Work/Connexions
Others e.g. back office functions, commissioning and performance management.
We have not applied 23% across the board as we want to protect some services e.g. Child Protection, which means that other services have to take a harder hit e.g. connexions/Youth work.

Question: Why have you chosen to cut the budget this way and not on others?

Answer: These are political decisions and have been put forward as proposals.

Question: This is too big an increase in one go, why not 50% in year 1 then rest in year 2 to reduce the pain?

Answer: This message has been consistently made at the other events and has been taken on board and noted by Elected Members.

Comment: 3 miles in Lincolnshire is often on roads with no pavement, bends etc, or at least a good proportion of the three miles.

Question: Is £30m figure just on School transport or is it also including taxi fares for Foster Children?

Answer: Just home to school/college transport.

Question: If we pay more will we get better quality buses?

Answer: Quality has been raised before. Advise you to inform Transport Services Group and/or operator also as we commission the service. Not all provision is poor so do feedback specific issues – there is a general trend to under report.

Question: Why is it not a Legal requirement to have seat belts?

Answer: Some are service buses and open to the public. Council meets requirements by Law but to fit seatbelts and newer buses will ultimately increase costs

Question: Parents and students don't have choice as to what is offered, currently use EMA to pay for transport, simply will not be able to afford this. There are few jobs available to supplement income whilst learning. Any further thoughts how parents or those on benefits can afford this?

Answer: Recognise double hit of this and loss of EMA. The Government has said that it will replace the EMA with "targeted support for those who face genuine financial barriers to participation". We assume this relates to the, now un-ring fenced, Learner Support Grant that goes into schools/colleges, but we recognise that this grant will not be the same size as that of the EMA.

Question: Have they thought about unintentional consequences?

Answer: Point made at all meetings so far. We do have to take tough decisions to meet financial pressures.

Question: Just too much of an increase

Answer: We will ensure this is made clear to members.

Question: Has consideration been taken where taxis' are used to transport individuals where they could catch a bus and walk from one school to the other where only about ½ mile away

Answer: Review team does do this on a rolling basis and is making substantial savings, approx. £600k to date.

Question: If majority of people disagree, what next?

Answer: It is a Political decision so please do contact your Elected Member. Following these events your views and those received through the on-line/paper consultation will be summarised and presented back to the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee. They will make comments/recommendations before it is passed to the Executive for decision.

Comment: Quality of buses, LA – does nothing and bus companies think you're stupid. I would recommend that people actually contact VOSA as they have been effective in the past.

Comment: £1.06 to £2.05 nearly 100% increase – on a daily basis. Doubling is just too much and it looks like pupils won't want to do the course anyway.

Comment: By Principal of Stamford College
All four college Principals have been objecting, please do go on-line and give your thoughts. There is a view that this is a done deal and already children are coming back to us saying they can't come to the college now. New Stamford College will make transport provision for children if LCC does not.

Question: But can you afford it?

Answer: I'll have to find where to get the money from by making cuts elsewhere.

Comment: Really pleased to hear what you have just said. I am a student too and wouldn't be able to afford both myself and daughter to study. Only Stamford offers the course for my daughter.

Question: I still pay all my taxes but yet no local transport services.

Answer: You would get transport to a college or 6th Form if the distance is over 3 miles, but not necessary for the preferred course.

Question: First the increasing of the leaving age and now reduced access to preferred course plus benefits start to taper off post 16...

Answer: Raising the school leaving age to 18 is not quite right; it is a participation age that is raised i.e. non-statutory. Statutory school age is still up to 16. This point has been noted from other sessions too.

Question: Daughter going to Stamford, but now not eligible for transport

Answer: She will be able to get transport for the second year of her course.

Question: If service already runs now I'm prepared to pay to get her there.

Answer: This would change with the proposals as transport provided by the Council would be to nearest 6th form or college only.

Question: Would you consider transporting to a hub to allow children to then transport to connexions put on by college?

Answer: Complex but noted: often it is easier to see how this might work for individuals but difficult when considering all travel requirements.

Question: If people are paying for the bus why can't you just run it?

Answer: Subsidised by Council so generally cost prohibitive.

Question: Money would be wasted if people do courses that don't work

Answer: We are not stopping people going to any college, we just won't transport them there if it is not their nearest.

Question: If in future you will be transporting less people, will we be charged more?

Answer: No - contracts would be retendered as fewer places, this would then be cheaper.

Comment: Best proposal tonight is the hub model. Call connects exist but you have to pay for it

Question: What if can't afford it?

Answer: Council opinion is £2 per day is affordable in these proposals.

Question: Have you worked out how many people will be on the dole if courses are over-subscribed? For example what if I can't get on a course in a 6th form (where I could walk to) as there are only 30 places, but say 60 applied I would then have to pay to go to Boston, but I can't afford this?

Answer: It is not possible to model this as there are many variables involved.

Question: Everyone wants to be transported to Stamford and not Boston, so why can't you allow this?

Answer: Significant numbers go from Spalding to Boston already and large numbers go to Stamford too.

Comment: Can't go to college
Can't go to University
No Doctors, Lawyers
All then paid to sit at home

Comment: Difficult to get young people motivated on a course they don't want to do.

Question: Can't you give every child an amount of money and let them decide where to go and if more, then they pay the rest

Answer: Practical suggestion if there is a local bus service, but infrastructure does not support this. An alternative view is to give money to school/college to sort.

Comment: Buses will follow the money

Comment: LCC should be supporting the choices of young people

Comment: We don't feel we have a choice
