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**Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council**

**Home to School Transport**

**Stage 2 Consultation**

March 2015

**Consultation for pupils attending mainstream schools**

**Why do we need to make changes?**

We currently spend £800,000 on providing home to school transport for pupils attending mainstream schools. Of that figure, £550,000 is spent on providing transport assistance that is not a legal requirement. Overall, the Borough Council is faced with making savings in the region of £31 million over the next three years. We therefore need to look at all of our spending, especially our spending on services we do not have a legal requirement to provide.

**What are we consulting you on?**

This is a second consultation following on from the one that ran from November 2014 to January 2015. The first consultation included questions on additional support referring to Discretionary Transport. These were aspects of transport support in addition to the Council’s legally required transport provision.

Statutory school transport services will not be affected by any changes to discretionary services. Pupils from low income families will also not be affected by these proposals.

**Why are we holding a second consultation?**

The responses to questions in the first consultation fall into 3 categories:

* Broad agreement with the proposals – majority of respondents agreed with the proposals
* No clear majority view but proposals are non-controversial or have minimal impact
* Disagreement or controversial – majority of respondents disagreed or the impact on some parents is significant.

The main issue was over the potential increases in the daily fare for pupils who did not receive a statutory pass. We are consulting further on fare levels from September 2016 for all non statutory travellers by introducing a fare table based on mileage.

**Statutory entitlement to free transport is provided in the following circumstances:**

* Qualifying distance from the nearest suitable school
* Unsuitable routes sometime referred to as dangerous journeys, as referred to in the Home to School Transport policy.
* Low income families\*

Details on these statutory entitlements can be found in the Council’s Home to School Transport Policy through the following link : <http://bit.ly/bwdh2stc>

\* Low income families are those pupils whose parents are in receipt of the maximum amount of working tax credit or the pupils are eligible for free school meals

1. Please read the instructions carefully.
2. Please use a black pen to fill in the questionnaire.
3. Please check you have answered all the appropriate questions.
4. Please email your completed on line questionnaire by 15th May 2015 and email to: hometoschool.transport@blackburn.gov.uk or alternatively you can return by post to the Director of Children’s Services, 10 Duke Street, Blackburn, BB2 1DA.

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| **Increasing the fares/cost of season tickets on contracted school bus services** |

Pupils with no statutory entitlement to transport assistance can travel on school contracted bus/taxi services by paying a daily fare to the driver or by purchasing a season ticket, subject to space being available and the service not costing the Council anymore. Individual fare levels and season ticket costs (which are based on the fare levels) are subsidised, which do not in most areas reflect commercial fare levels. The current fare structure on our contracted school service is:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Single Fare | Return Fare |
| All journeys | £1.25 | £2.50 |
|  |  |  |

Season tickets can be purchased termly or yearly and the above costs are multiplied by 190 days for a full school year. A 10% discount is then given.

**After the first consultation started, some schools have agreed that they are prepared to contribute significantly to the cost of the school transport.  Our proposal is that pupils travelling over 3 miles to those schools should benefit from these contributions.  However, this would mean that pupils travelling over 3 miles to schools that do not contribute to the cost of school transport, would pay more for their daily fares.**

 **How strongly do you agree or disagree with this proposal?**

**Q1**

 Please tick one box only

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Strongly** | **Tend to** | **Tend to** | **Strongly** | **Don’t** |
| **agree** | **agree** | **disagree** | **disagree** | **know** |

**If the return fare was higher for longer journeys over 3 miles, the Council would propose the maximum cost is £3.50.  (If the proposal above (Q1) was accepted then the fare would be lower for pupils travelling to the schools who contribute significantly to the cost of school transport).**

 **How strongly do you agree or disagree with this proposal?**

**Q2**

 Please tick one box only

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Strongly** | **Tend to** | **Tend to** | **Strongly** | **Don’t** |
| **agree** | **agree** | **disagree** | **disagree** | **know** |

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| **Efficiency savings on contracted school bus services** |

In order to maintain lower fares and reduce the cost burden on the Council, we tender our school bus services on a regular basis. This year, as part of our tendering process, we will be seeking efficiencies through a review of bus routes and capacities.

**We are proposing to undertake a review of bus capacities and routes currently provided in order to provide as efficient and economical a service as possible.**

 **How strongly do you agree or disagree with this proposal?**

**Q3**

 Please tick one box only

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Strongly** | **Tend to** | **Tend to** | **Strongly** | **Don’t** |
| **agree** | **agree** | **disagree** | **disagree** | **know** |

**COMMENTS**

**If you have comments about this or any of the Borough Council’s Home to School Transport Policy proposals please write them in the box below.**

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| --- |
| **About you** |

Please answer the following questions about you where applicable. We will use this information to make sure the services we provide meet the needs of different types of people – it will not be used to identify you individually.

 **Are you…?**

 Please complete as many as apply

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| A parent/guardian of a pupil at |  |
| A parent/guardian of a future pupil at |  |
| A pupil at |  |
| A member of staff at |  |
| A school governor at |  |
| Other (please write in) |  |

 **Are you…?**

 Please tick one box only

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Male |  |
|  |  |
| Female |  |

 **What was your age on your last birthday?**

 Please write in below

 Years

 **Which best describes your ethnic background?**

 Please tick one box only

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| White |  |
|  |  |
| Asian or Asian British |  |
|  |  |
| Black or Black British |  |
|  |  |
| Mixed e.g. White and Asian |  |
|  |  |
| Other |  |

**Thank you for taking part in this consultation.**

**Please email your completed questionnaire online by 15th May 2015 to** **hometoschool.transport@blackburn.gov.uk** **or alternatively by post to the Director of Children’s Services, C/o School Transport Consultation, Floor 3, 10 Duke Street, Blackburn, BB2 1DA.**