

TOTAL TRANSPORT PROPOSAL

To: **General Purposes Committee**

Meeting Date: **26 July 2016**

From: **Executive Director: Economy, Transport and Environment**

Electoral division(s): **Those divisions substantially affected by the proposal are:**

- **Ely North & East**
- **Ely South & West**
- **Haddenham**
- **Littleport**
- **Soham & Fordham villages**
- **Sutton**

In addition a small number of individual residents of the following divisions may be affected, in so far as transport to Highfield Special School is referred to within the proposal and some pupils reside outside of the pilot area. Additionally a small number of adult social care users travel from outside of the pilot area into day centres in Ely.

- **Burwell**
- **Chatteris**
- **Cottenham, Histon & Impington**
- **Forty Foot**
- **King's Hedges**
- **March East**
- **March West**
- **Romsey**
- **Somersham & Earith**
- **Waldersey**
- **Waterbeach**
- **Willingham**
- **Woodditton**

Forward Plan ref: **2016/038** *Key decision:* **Yes**

Purpose: **The Committee is asked to consider the revised proposals arising from the Total Transport pilot project in the northern half of East Cambridgeshire. The original model which was discussed at the Committee's meeting on 15 March 2016 has been reviewed in light of a public consultation, a formal procurement exercise, and further discussion with both the Total Transport Member Steering Group and Group Leaders.**

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Committee:

- a) notes that revised school bus networks will be introduced in the pilot area from September 2016, along with smartcard technology, and instructs officers to continue to maximise the efficiency of these networks based on the principles set out in this report;
- b) supports the implementation of a new Flexible Minibus Service in the pilot area from January 2017, replacing existing contracts/grants for day centre minibuses, dial-a-ride and once-a-week local bus services;
- c) approves the award of the contract(s) necessary to achieve recommendation (b);
- d) agrees that discounts for concessionary pass holders on the Flexible Minibus Service should be the same as the discounts funded by the County Council on community transport services; and
- e) requires a report to be presented to this Committee (and shared with Adults Committee, for information) by the end of 2016, setting out the results of a detailed assessment of the costs and benefits of altering day care session times to allow transport provision to be integrated with special needs school transport.

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1. In 2015 the County Council was awarded central government funding of £460,000 to research, design, implement and evaluate a Total Transport service in a pilot area.

The Total Transport Concept

- 1.2. The question posed to authorities implementing a Total Transport service is whether a better value model can be created by reviewing all transport together and establishing an integrated approach to planning and delivery. The Council is required to report back on this to the Department for Transport by March 2017.
- 1.3. Currently, the Council issues separate contracts for different transport services, and pays for each on a standalone basis. A minibus may therefore be booked with one company to undertake a school journey at full price, with a second company being contracted by the Council's social care team to do a nearby journey, also at full price. Different levels of integration are possible – from using a single (larger) vehicle to transport both groups at the same time, to amending journey times so that one vehicle can do the second trip straight after the first, to simply issuing a tender for both routes together and seeking economies of scale in the pricing.
- 1.4. In rural areas in particular, integrating the provision of transport could allow scarce resource to be used more efficiently. This could provide some protection for services despite financial pressures. This is particularly important in light of the reduction in the public transport budget set out in the business plan, which will see funding reduced to around one third of its current level by April 2018.

Preparing This Proposal

- 1.5. The proposals made in this report have been developed from the initial paper considered by the Committee on 15 March 2016. Since then, a public consultation and a procurement process have been undertaken. There have also been further meetings of the Total Transport Member Steering Group, to which those members local to the pilot area have additionally been invited.
- 1.6. The discussion originally scheduled for the Committee's meeting on 31 May was deferred, to ensure that all the necessary information was available prior to a decision being taken.
- 1.7. The headline results of the consultation are set out in **Appendix 2**.
- 1.8. The cost of the proposed Total Transport service is set out in confidential **Appendix 4**.

2. MAIN ISSUES

- 2.1 There were four elements to the original Total Transport proposal presented in March: a flexible minibus service; fixed bus routes; a social car scheme; and a booking & information centre. As a result of the public consultation and in light of the amended timescale for the project, a phased implementation is now proposed, with an initial focus on fixed bus routes from September 2016,

and on the flexible minibus service from January 2017.

Fixed Bus Routes

- 2.2 Approximately half of the County Council's transport spend, whether in the pilot area or county-wide, is on mainstream home-to-school transport.
- 2.3 As part of the Total Transport project, a significant amount of time has been invested in reviewing the networks around Ely College, Soham Village College and Witchford Village College. The focus has been on changing routes to improve efficiency and on combining contracts wherever possible (if necessary this may require vehicles to arrive at or depart from schools slightly earlier/later than at present, but still within a 20 minute window).
- 2.4 The revised networks which will be implemented from September 2016 offer a financial saving of around 10%; more data is provided in Appendix 4. This compares with a 2.5% saving secured last year by the standard review process. The conclusion of this element of the project is that providing sufficient resource and suitable tools for rescheduling is likely to deliver a good return on investment. The purchase of an additional module for the ONE package from Capita in early 2017 is being funded from the Total Transport grant and is expected to support this work for September 2017.
- 2.5 The work referred to in 2.3 has still been based on the assumption that most eligible pupils travel each day; a small number of routes have more pupils allocated than seats, however across the three networks the load factor is expected to be around 94%. As an additional strand of Total Transport, smartcards are being introduced on school buses in the pilot area from September to record actual passenger numbers. If this data confirms that a consistent percentage of eligible pupils do not travel, then it would be possible to reduce the network capacity with minimal risk. This issue has been actively discussed at the Home to School Project Board since December 2015, and has the potential to be applied beyond the pilot area from September 2017.
- 2.6 The possibility of merging current local bus routes and school bus services was raised in the public consultation. Mixed opinions were expressed, with 56% supportive and 39% disagreeing. This approach has therefore not been applied as a matter of principle across the network, but the option has been taken up where there is a specific reason for doing so. This will initially result in a small overload on the school bus from Little Downham to Ely College being allocated to public bus service 125, and in a local discussion about whether the Ely Zipper timetable can be amended to incorporate Witchford Village College.

Flexible Minibus Service

- 2.7 The flexible minibus service (FMS) would be a new way of delivering door-to-door journeys to all members of the community. It would combine the resource currently committed to: day centre minibuses; dial-a-ride grants; once-a-week local bus services; and one route to Highfield Special School. Passengers would book in advance, based on either recurring or one-off journeys. The vehicles would then be scheduled as efficiently as possible, collecting passengers travelling for different reasons at the same time, if their journeys overlap.

- 2.8 An initial fleet of four minibuses would be allocated to the FMS in the northern half of East Cambridgeshire. The costs are set out in Appendix 4; this is considered confidential as it includes tender prices submitted through the formal procurement process, which is still live.
- 2.9 By using wheelchair-accessible minibuses crewed by a driver and a passenger assistant, a high level of service would be provided. Those residents requiring assistance that is not always available on a standard bus or taxi would be able to travel on the same service as their neighbours. It would be designed to be open and accessible to all members of the community.
- 2.10 By opening up the vehicles to all members of the community in this way, and by focusing on accepting as many bookings as possible, the situation would not arise where seats are empty even though people want to travel, just because certain eligibility criteria are not met. The focus of the service would be on helping as many people to travel as possible – so it could include residents or tourists travelling from Ely out to places like Wicken Fen; the current services are only really designed for travel to Ely.
- 2.11 By making the FMS a pre-booked service, and by using modern scheduling software to help plan journeys, there could be confidence that vehicles would only be sent where they are needed and that duplication would be avoided. Although booking in advance is a different way of doing things for some users, it would help ensure vehicles are scheduled efficiently, avoiding wasted fuel, emissions and time.
- 2.12 By doing all of these things, a service could be developed that meets the needs of as many residents as possible, by getting the maximum benefit from an agreed number of vehicles. Priority would be given to adult social care users and Highfield Special School pupils, followed by those with limited mobility who would be less able to use other types of transport.
- 2.13 This principle of building a service around adult social care/special school journeys (which the County Council will need to continue providing), and then opening that service more widely, will help maintain access for residents without a bus route – noting that the planned reductions to the passenger transport budget are likely to increase the number of people falling into the latter category.
- 2.14 The fully integrated Flexible Minibus Service originally proposed on 15 March 2016 would also include all special educational needs (SEN) school transport to Highfield School. This would require immediate changes to day centre times; the public consultation indicated this would cause significant issues. Pending the report proposed in 2.15 below, it is intended that only one SEN route will be included in the initial FMS, but that contractual arrangements for the remainder will be such that future incorporation into the FMS is possible.
- 2.15 A full assessment of the costs and benefits of changing day centre session times should be undertaken, exploring the question of what additional support would be required to minimise the impact on service users, and establishing whether it offers a net overall benefit. It is suggested that a report to this Committee is required at either the September or November meeting.

- 2.16 The proposed approach is therefore for phased implementation, with a new contract issued for four vehicles to be allocated to the FMS from January 2017. This would represent a partial award of the tender issued in April 2016; such a decision is in accordance with the County Council's procurement process, and all bidders have confirmed their willingness to accept a contract on this basis, if offered.

Social Car Scheme

- 2.17 The Social Car Scheme currently provided by Voluntary & Community Action East Cambridgeshire (VCAEC) is considered to be an important part of the transport mix in the pilot area. The County Council would therefore commit to continue funding the scheme and to working with VCAEC to develop its capacity.

Booking & Information Centre / Scheduling Software

- 2.18 In order to create efficient schedules, it is necessary to bring as many journey requests as possible together in one place, with skilled staff then using appropriate tools to allocate work.
- 2.19 The original proposals envisaged a dedicated Booking & Information Centre, delivered by an external contractor. The subsequent changes to the proposals (reducing the initial scope) and the procurement of a modern scheduling software package mean that the intention is now to undertake that role within the County Council. This represents a more affordable and flexible solution for the first phase of the project.

Concessionary Passes

- 2.20 The County Council is required to make a discretionary decision as to whether holders of English National Concessionary Travel Scheme passes should be accepted on the Flexible Minibus Service. The arrangements on each of the services it will replace are different – passes are not accepted on day centre transport; a 50% discount is given on community transport; and free travel is available on weekly bus routes.
- 2.21 The selected approach must be one that could apply county-wide if the Flexible Minibus Service were subsequently extended. In order to balance financial pressures and fairness, it is proposed that the policy on the FMS is set and kept in line with that on community transport. At the launch of the service, that would mean passholders paying 50% of the standard fare; this discount may be removed from April 2017 as a specific part of the business plan, and if so it is expected that the discount on the FMS would also cease.

Project Targets

- 2.22 The success of the Total Transport service would be judged against three criteria: the impact on the Council's total spending on transport in the pilot area, as set out in Appendix 4; the number of trips undertaken; and the satisfaction of service users. It is not necessarily expected that the number of trips would increase, however if the current patronage is maintained (whilst spending is reduced) this would be considered successful.

- 2.23 It is anticipated that once the Total Transport service in the pilot area is established and has been evaluated, options for rolling out this model across the county will be considered. It is, however, noted that new tenders for both ASC and SEN transport are being issued for January 2017; this may limit the potential for Total Transport principles to be applied more widely until the following retender of these services

3. ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES

3.1 Developing the local economy for the benefit of all

The following bullet points set out details of implications identified by officers:

- The Flexible Minibus Service may help younger residents access apprenticeships, jobs or training placements. This would benefit both individuals and businesses, by supporting access to a wider pool of employees or apprentices, including those for whom the cost and/or unavailability of transport are currently prohibitive. The revised proposals in this paper (compared with March 2016) include less scope for this, due to the focus on day centre journeys; in order to maximise these new opportunities, it will be important to broaden out the FMS as soon as concerns regarding changes to day centre times are resolved.
- Increased ability to travel to local shops and service providers may support the economy of East Cambridgeshire, by allowing residents to purchase from local businesses rather than relying on internet shopping or simply being unable to access town and village centres. Residents of Pymoor, for example, would gain an entirely new public transport service, whilst those in Wicken, Barway, Black Horse Drove, and other areas where there is only one return journey per week would now be able to travel on any weekday.

3.2 Helping people live healthy and independent lives

The following bullet points set out details of implications identified by officers:

- The Flexible Minibus Service would help residents to access services, including healthcare, social activities, work, education and day-to-day facilities (e.g. supermarkets). This would assist in reducing both the practical and emotional effects of isolation, particularly in remote rural areas. Benefits would apply across age ranges and levels of need.
- Existing services (including traditional dial-a-ride and patient transport) can achieve some of the same benefits. However eligibility criteria can act as a barrier to these services, and there will always be individuals who fall just the wrong side of the line. The flexible minibus service would remove these barriers, empowering all residents to access the services they need.
- Providing a transport service for all local residents (i.e. not segregated by age or mobility, for example) would support community cohesion and resilience. It may add value through increasing awareness of different needs, and supporting local solutions (both as a result of this awareness and by providing the means to access any new activities).

- Reducing duplication of journeys would minimise unnecessary vehicle emissions, offering a positive environmental and health benefit.

3.3 Supporting and protecting vulnerable people

The following bullet points set out details of implications identified by officers:

- Developing a sustainable model of integrated transport provision would help to protect access to services in the face of financial constraints.
- Focusing on a smaller number of contracts and services would increase the opportunity for a consistent standard of delivery, including accessibility and training requirements. Further, the scheduling software envisaged would allow needs and resources to be matched accurately, in a way that is not always possible with existing systems.

4. SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Resource Implications

The following bullet points set out details of significant implications identified by officers:

- Appendix 4 sets out the forecast cost of the proposals.
- In order to administer Total Transport in an efficient manner in the long term, it will be necessary to create a new pooled budget, drawing on the separate funding currently held for education transport, social care transport, etc. This would represent a cross-service approach, demonstrating that solutions can be found to administrative issues, in order to allow practical changes to be made that cut across service areas.
- Integrating services would deliver best value for money, by avoiding duplication of journeys for purely administrative or eligibility reasons.
- The resources needed to implement Total Transport prior to March 2017 would be funded from the central government grant allocated to the County Council. The long-term structure would be built into the existing Passenger Transport Service, with a specific business case produced for any additional resource.

4.2 Statutory, Risk and Legal Implications

The following bullet points set out details of significant implications identified by officers:

- The Council has statutory obligations to provide certain types of transport, for example home to school transport for eligible pupils. The proposed services would continue to meet these legal obligations, with changes only being made to the method of delivery.
- Changing transport provision may generate criticism from some residents. The consultation work undertaken has identified many of these opinions in advance, and some respondents may be satisfied by the changes made to the original proposals. Others will continue to have negative views, which

may or may not be changed by their actual experiences if the new services are introduced.

- Total Transport is a national initiative, and the Council would therefore be implementing a model that is in line with current Department for Transport expectations.

4.3 Equality and Diversity Implications

The following bullet points set out details of significant implications identified by officers:

- A Community (Equality) Impact Assessment was carried out for the 15 March report; this has now been updated in light of the revised proposals. This identifies broadly positive impacts, subject to the decision on concessionary fares and accepting that some residents will still consider the changes to be negative. This is included in Appendix 1.

4.4 Engagement and Consultation Implications

The report above sets out details of significant implications in Appendix 2.

4.5 Localism and Local Member Involvement

The report above sets out details of significant implications in 1.5, 2.6 and in Appendix 2.

4.6 Public Health Implications

The following bullet points set out details of significant implications identified by officers:

- The 2015 Transport and Health Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) report identified that access to healthcare required particular attention. The new services, particularly the flexible minibus service, would provide new travel options for local residents needing to travel to their GP or the Princess of Wales Hospital, for example. Those with mobility issues, those living in rural areas, and those without access to private transport would benefit in particular.
- The commitment of the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to support the provision of patient transport through the flexible minibus service represents a positive starting point for greater cooperation and integration between the Council and the CCG in respect of transport.

Source Documents	Location
Cambridgeshire County Council: Home to School/College Travel Assistance Policy (July 2015)	Room 020, Shire Hall, Cambridge www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk
Department for Education: Home to School Travel and Transport Guidance (July 2014)	Room 020, Shire Hall, Cambridge
Cambridgeshire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (Transport and Health)	Room 020, Shire Hall, Cambridge www.cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk/jsna
Cambridgeshire County Council: Report to General Purposes Committee on Total Transport (15 March 2016)	Room 020, Shire Hall, Cambridge www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk

APPENDIX 1 - COMMUNITY (EQUALITY) IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Directorate / Service Area

CFA and ETE

Service / Document / Function being assessed

Total Transport *(note this is a pilot project, replacing existing school/college transport, social care transport, community transport and passenger transport services in a defined area)*

Officer undertaking the assessment

Name: Toby Parsons
Job Title: Transport Policy and Operational Projects Manager
Contact details: 01223 743787

Aims and Objectives of Service / Document / Function

To meet the Council's statutory and policy commitments in supporting the travel requirements of those needing to access services (including education, social care and healthcare) and of those wishing to travel for general purposes from rurally isolated areas. The intention is to support interventions that are already needed, and to take preventative steps that reduce the likelihood that future interventions will be needed (e.g. supporting individuals to maintain their independence).

What is changing?

The Council currently supports different types of transport service to meet specific needs, for example distinct home to school transport contracts and specific community transport grants. The current focus is on the needs of one group of service users; neither the planning nor the delivery of services is integrated across different groups.

The new service will consider all transport needs together and will seek to deliver an integrated model that improves efficiency. This may allow the impact of reduced budgets on the level of service to be softened.

From a practical perspective, the core of the proposal is to introduce revised networks of fixed bus routes; and replace a number of current small vehicle services with a new flexible minibus service. Following the consultation undertaken from March to May 2016, no significant changes to the times of day centre provision is proposed for the implementation phase of the project; this represents a change from the original proposals.

Who is involved in this impact assessment?

The assessment has been prepared by the Total Transport team, based on feedback received from service users (through surveys undertaken in January 2016 and a full consultation exercise from 18 March to 13 May 2016) and in anecdotal format via email or phone. It is underpinned by an analysis of the data relating to current transport.

What will the impact be?

Age	Neutral (balance of positive and negative)
Disability	Neutral (balance of positive and negative)
Gender reassignment	Neutral
Marriage and civil partnership	Neutral
Pregnancy and maternity	Positive
Race	Neutral
Religion or belief	Neutral
Sex	Neutral
Sexual orientation	Neutral
Rural isolation (local requirement)	Positive
Deprivation (local requirement)	Neutral

What are the positive impacts?

For the four categories identified above (age; disability; pregnancy and maternity; and rural isolation) the main positive impact is increased opportunity to access flexible door-to-door services. A greater choice of times would exist than at present, with more flexibility as to possible destinations. This would support journeys to social and support activities (lunch clubs; parent and toddler groups; activity sessions; etc), as well as assisting with affordable transport to work or volunteering placements. The phased implementation that is now proposed, following the consultation undertaken from March to May 2016, will mean that the initial level of resource available for these opportunities will be lower than originally intended, but with the potential for this to be increased over time.

The establishment of a service open to all local residents would assist with community cohesion, by raising awareness of different needs and interests. Both this greater understanding of what takes place in the local community and the increased ability to access new activities and groups may support the development of local ways of meeting need.

What are the negative impacts?

From an objective point of view, the only specific negative impact is the introduction of a 50% charge for holders of concessionary bus passes. This charge may act as a disincentive to travel for some residents.

It should be noted that, whilst the assessment is that a comparable or improved service would be provided, there would undoubtedly be residents who would continue to be opposed to the replacement of their local bus service and who would therefore consider the proposals to have a negative impact.

What issues or opportunities need to be addressed?

The flexible minibus service and the social car scheme, in particular, could be developed over time. The ability to plot all journeys in one place would improve efficiency and would allow demand to be reviewed as a whole, rather than in a fragmented way. It would be important that sufficient resource were in place to maximise the benefits available; close involvement with service users, community groups, local members, etc would be needed, all of which requires time.

What is the impact on community cohesion?

There is potential for a positive impact on community cohesion, as set out above (i.e. greater awareness of needs within local communities, and increased ability to access new groups and activities). Continued engagement with service users, community groups and local members would be important.

The intention to establish user groups for the Ely Zipper and route 125 would encourage genuine local debate about the future of public transport in those areas, against the background of the financial challenges that are faced.

APPENDIX 2 – CONSULTATION

Background






The consultation was launched online on 18 March, and closed on 13 May 2016. The link to the survey was distributed via the Ely Schools Partnership, to Parish Councils, and to those groups and individuals who have been added to the Total Transport mailing list during the project; it was also available on the Council website. Survey forms were also printed and distributed via libraries, operators of current services, day centres, and by post to registered school transport users.

Four drop-in sessions were held, at Ely, Littleport and Soham libraries, and at Little Downham book café. These generated considerable in-person discussion. In addition presentations were made to Haddenham and Wilburton Annual Parish Meetings, Soham Town Council, City of Ely Council and the East Cambridgeshire Access group.


Consultation Results

The results to each question are shown below; not all respondents answered every question, and for question 5 additional analysis has been included, filtered by those who identified themselves as users of the current 117, 125 and 129.






(1) We propose reserving the flexible minibus service for special school pupils only from 7:30am to 9am and from 3pm to 4:30pm.

			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Strongly agree		19.88%	68
2	Agree		33.33%	114
3	Neutral		28.95%	99
4	Disagree		7.60%	26
5	Strongly disagree		10.23%	35


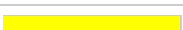



(2) Would the limited availability of transport from 7:30am to 9am and from 3pm to 4:30pm cause you particular problems?

			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		17.31%	58
2	No		82.69%	277

(3) We propose opening the flexible minibus service to all members of the community when it is not being used for school journeys; this means that it will carry mixed passenger groups.






			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Strongly Agree		21.93%	75
2	Agree		40.35%	138
3	Neutral		24.27%	83
4	Disagree		6.73%	23
5	Strongly disagree		6.73%	23

(4) We believe that the flexible minibus service will provide new opportunities to access local services and amenities.

			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Strongly agree		19.53%	67
2	Agree		37.90%	130
3	Neutral		30.03%	103
4	Disagree		5.54%	19
5	Strongly disagree		7.00%	24






(5) We propose replacing routes 117, 125 and 129 with the flexible minibus service.

Answers based on all respondents






			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Strongly Agree		5.26%	18
2	Agree		15.50%	53
3	Neutral		54.68%	187
4	Disagree		9.06%	31
5	Strongly disagree		15.50%	53

(5) We propose replacing routes 117, 125 and 129 with the flexible minibus service.






Answers based on those who identified themselves as using these services

			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Strongly Agree		5.45%	3
2	Agree		3.64%	2
3	Neutral		25.45%	14
4	Disagree		16.36%	9
5	Strongly disagree		49.09%	27






(6) On some routes we propose mixing primary and secondary age pupils.

			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Strongly agree		2.83%	10
2	Agree		18.70%	66
3	Neutral		23.23%	82
4	Disagree		21.81%	77
5	Strongly disagree		33.43%	118

(7) Where a community will have no other bus service, and there is local support, we propose opening the school service to other passengers.

			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Strongly agree		14.86%	52
2	Agree		31.43%	110
3	Neutral		15.14%	53
4	Disagree		14.29%	50
5	Strongly disagree		24.29%	85

(8) We propose that some buses will arrive/leave up to 20 minutes before/after the start of the school day.

			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Strongly agree		7.20%	25
2	Agree		37.75%	131
3	Neutral		28.82%	100
4	Disagree		11.24%	39
5	Strongly disagree		14.99%	52

(9) Comments If you'd like to add general comments, please use the space below.

		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Open-Ended Question	100.00%	145

Question 10 invited users to provide their own comments. The full text is available, however summaries have been pulled together under the following headings. Please note that most respondents who made a comment also answered questions 1 to 9, so their views will also have been captured statistically in the above graphs.

Public transport

20 comments were made about public transport; of these 11 focused on the network (lack of services to certain areas, or the need to change bus), whilst 7 referred to the

level of service (most commonly the lack of an evening of Sunday services). 1 comment suggested that there is currently excess capacity and proposed reducing frequencies. The remaining comment noted that buses were not accessible.

Mixing age groups

22 comments were made about mixing age groups; of these 8 referred generally to behaviour, with 5 focusing on bad language and 3 on bullying. 2 made general points about supervision and safety, whilst 4 related to safe-guarding concerns, e.g. noting that a 17 year old may be a “threat” to a younger child even though they are not technically an adult.

Mixing pupils and public

20 comments were made about mixing pupils and the public; of these 15 referred to child protection in general, with a further 3 specifically questioning DBS commitments. 1 respondent queried whether sufficient capacity would be available. The remaining comment was that behaviour might improve if members of the public were travelling on the same vehicle.

Mixing adult social care users

4 comments were received; 2 of these focused on the need for those with learning difficulties to have their own tailored service, with the remaining 2 advising there would be significant impact if timings were changed.

School bus times

5 comments were made about changing times, by allowing a 20 minute window at the start and end of the school day. 3 of the comments related to the need for shelter in the event of bad weather; the other 2 questioned supervision arrangements.

Post-16 transport






4 comments were made about the (lack of) availability of transport to and from post-16 education facilities, particularly colleges in Cambridge.

Flexible minibus service

3 comments were made regarding the difficulty for some users in having to pre-book journeys on the proposed flexible minibus service.

Other comments

3 other comments were made; 1 noted that bus services are important in maintaining friendships. A second considered the cost of discretionary school transport (i.e. for those not attending their designated school) to be too expensive; and the final one proposed the introduction of parking charges in Ely.

(11) Thinking about the punctuality and overall quality of service, do you agree with the statement that current transport in the Ely area meets your needs?				
			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Strongly agree		8.80%	30
2	Agree		31.38%	107
3	Neutral		37.24%	127
4	Disagree		11.44%	39
5	Strongly disagree		11.14%	38

Questions 12 and 13 asked respondents where they live and which services, if any, they currently use.

Email Submissions

In addition to the statistical results above, specific emails were received during the consultation period from six groups/organisations, as well as a late submission from Soham Town Council (after the paper for the Committee's meeting on 31 May had been submitted).

The full text of the responses is available, however the follow summaries are provided;

- City of Ely Council – broadly supportive of the proposals.
- East Cambridgeshire Access Group – noted the need for affordable, accessible transport in rural areas in particular, but also highlighted safeguarding concerns in mixed user groups.
- Ouse Washes Landscape Partnership – emphasised the opportunities for widening and creating access to the countryside.
- Prickwillow Engine Museum – supportive of a new service if it improves access to/from rural areas for all residents, including those with disabilities.
- Wicken Fen Nature Reserve – encourages better services for visitors to area who don't have a car.
- Haddenham Parish Council – broadly supportive of the proposals, particularly the fact the Ely Zipper is proposed to continue.
- Soham Town Council – strongly against most aspects of the proposals, believing they will not save any money and will not offer an improvement in service.

Carers' Group Meeting

The following note was made by the Total Transport Project Officer, following a discussion with a group of carers at Ely Community Centre.

The group seemed very resistant to changing travel times, saying that this would have a negative impact on: personal care; routine; centre activities; and centre staff. The group suggested that there would be a negative impact on family members who need to get to work and additional care costs if transport changes.

Service users are sensitive to and would be upset by any change to their routine. One parent explained that her for her son going to Larkfield is "like his job" and that he would be "devastated" by any change.

It was thought that later arrival times would reduce the time available for activities in the morning, especially for service users whose routine is defined by medical treatment. The view of the group appeared to be that not only would service users lose out on morning activities, but that this represents a threat to the continued viability of the centre. The argument being that if activities are reduced, users will stop attending; the centre would close; staff would lose their jobs; and, there would be an increase in care costs because the centre wasn't there.

There was a strong sense that the group think that adult social care is a “Cinderella” service, that’s always under threat and is first in line for cuts or changes. One question asked was why schools can’t change their times? There were several suggestions that we could look at earlier travel times, or having some of the flexible minibus fleet based at Ely Community Centre.

There was some recognition of positive aspects of the flexible minibus service; if tighter scheduling meant shorter journey times this would be a good thing (but also some scepticism about whether there could be any improvement). It was suggested by others in the group that one lady could use the flexible minibus to see her daughter, who is in residential care, more frequently – although her preference is to visit at weekends.

Members of the group also expressed a desire to attend / be represented at GPC when Members discuss proposals so that Members are left in no doubt about the strength of feeling against possible change.

APPENDIX 3 – IMPACT ON DIFFERENT GROUPS

The proposed Total Transport services are intended to deliver a more comprehensive service within the financial constraints facing the Council. They involve changes to existing services and to the way in which resources are used; there is no injection of new funding or capacity.

The following table therefore gives specific examples of how different service users and local residents might be affected, both positively and negatively.

Secondary school pupil with free home to school bus pass from Pymoor to Ely College	Journeys would be at a similar time to now; there would be the possibility of a joint service for primary and secondary school pupils in the afternoon. Those wishing to stay late at school would be able to book a flexible minibuss journey at a later time, subject to capacity and paying any required fare.
Primary school pupil with free home to school bus pass from Wicken to St Andrew's	Journeys would be at a similar time to now, but in the afternoon the bus would be shared with pupils from Soham Village College. A passenger assistant would be present to monitor behaviour, and options such as having separate primary and secondary areas on the vehicle would be considered.
SEN pupil with place on taxi from Stretham to Highfield	Journeys may be with a different operator from January 2017 (although once a new routine is established, this would be kept as consistent as possible). More pupils would travel on a slightly larger vehicle, as minibusses would be used rather than taxis wherever possible.
Local resident in Prickwillow, using bus 129 to Ely each Thursday	The current Thursday-only bus service would stop after December 2016. Residents would also be able to use the flexible minibuss service, offering more choice of times and days, but requiring booking in advance.
Adult with social care transport from Littleport to Bedford House (day centre)	Journeys would be at similar times to now, but would be on the flexible minibuss service from January 2017; this would potentially carry other residents, for example travelling to shops or healthcare.
Resident of Coveney who uses community transport (dial-a-ride) to the shops	The flexible minibuss service would offer a very similar way of travelling, but with greater choice of times (not just one journey per day).
Resident of Haddenham who travels on Ely Zipper to town	The Ely Zipper would continue largely unchanged, other than some small adjustments to the timetable (for example, to include a school journey). A user group would be set up to support the service actively in the local communities, to help it become more sustainable.
Young adult from Isleham wanting to start part-time job locally	The flexible minibuss service would be able to provide journeys to and from work, subject to capacity and payment of the appropriate fare (noting that no evening or weekend service is anticipated).