

HOME TO SCHOOL AND ADULTS SOCIAL CARE TRANSPORT

To: General Purposes Committee

Meeting Date: 22nd October 2019

From: Service Director, Education (Cambridgeshire and Peterborough)

Electoral division(s): All

Forward Plan ref: Not Applicable **Key decision:** No

Purpose: To consider a transformation investment to identify and deliver savings in home to school and social care transport.

Recommendation: The Committee is asked to:

- a) release Transformation funds to provide additional resources to identify the areas where savings can be made across Cambridgeshire;
- b) release funds in support of Independent Travel Training for Cambridgeshire ; and
- c) delegate authority to the Chief Finance Officer to draw down the £410k investment in tranches, in consultation with the Chairman of General Purposes Committee and the Chairman of Children and Young People Committee.

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1. Local Authorities have a statutory duty to provide free transport for pupils of compulsory school age where they meet certain eligibility criteria (**Appendix A**).
- 1.2. The nationally recognised trend of escalating financial pressures from reducing budgets and increasing costs, in a time where complexity of need is also increasing, is placing increasing pressures on the authority in fulfilling the statutory responsibilities for providing transport to and from educational establishments.
- 1.3. In addition to the national trends, Cambridgeshire has the additional challenges associated with the rural nature of the county, together with a limited number of operators with specialist vehicles and difficulties in recruiting passenger assistants.
- 1.4. In recent years both Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) and Peterborough City Council (PCC) have been actively working to address increasing demand, budgetary volatility and the suitability of current delivery models for Adult Social Care, Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND), social care and mainstream transport. At CCC each contract is retendered every three years, resulting in reduced costs overall. For routes starting in September 2019 full year savings of £500k for SEND Transport and £340k for mainstream transport were achieved. Despite these efforts, since 2015/16, the costs associated with these services have increased from £18.3m to £21.2m in Cambridgeshire, and from £3.9m to £4.5m in Peterborough bringing the total service expenditure across both authorities to £25.7m in 2018/19.
- 1.5. Demand across the services has also increased in some areas by up to 13% during the 2015/16 period and it is anticipated that costs will continue to rise unless existing plans to improve demand management and efficiency are accelerated. The SEND Home to School Transport budget has increased to £9.544m for 2019/20 and could reasonably be expected to increase by over £1m a year unless significant changes are made.
- 1.6. CCC has been responding to these growing pressures through a variety of programmes such as joint procurement, sharing of management staff, routes review and high level modelling of budgets. Given the shared management across the authorities, the ambitions that we have around home to school transport and savings will be looked at in parallel with PCC. Some work is already underway in PCC as a result of the Financial Improvement work.
- 1.7. Cambridgeshire children attend schools in Peterborough and visa versa; We have a joint Peterborough and Cambridgeshire school in Hampton, and some Peterborough and Cambridgeshire children attend the same independent special schools, in places such as Lincolnshire. Many Cambridgeshire schools and Peterborough schools are geographically close. It would therefore be sensible to explore whether jointly commissioning transport and routes would reduce duplication and result in efficiencies.
- 1.8. The potential added value of a joint project across CCC and PCC would be primarily derived from two main areas; implementing a joint procurement model and subsequently integrating teams to a centralised model to avoid duplication. A central evidence base would be created by bringing together all service user data from across both authorities, information such as origin and destination of journeys, cross border journeys and cost per

mile would be gathered and analysed. This would facilitate a more targeted procurement mechanism.

- 1.9. In addition, carrying out a single combined project to deliver this will be less expensive for both councils through economies of scale. This Transformation Fund investment bid would only cover the proportion of work on the project for CCC in the event of a joint project

2. PROPOSAL TO DELIVER FURTHER CHANGE

- 2.1. Following on from the early work already undertaken we are requesting an investment of up to £410k from the Transformation Fund to be drawn down in tranches:

- To provide specialist capacity to support the work to review transport policy, processes and procedures across services to enable the authority to fully consider options for centralising teams, joint procurement and to increase the embedding of demand management and independence into the transport services we provide(section 3).
- Develop and embed Independent Travel Training Programme (section 3).

- 2.2 As we are at an early stage of these areas of work we anticipate drawing down the investment in tranches and propose delegated responsibility for the draw down within the £410k be given to the Chief Finance Officer, in consultation with the Chairman of General Purposes Committee and the Chairman of Children and Young People Committee.

- 2.3 An initial scoping document has identified good potential for savings to Cambridgeshire County Council through increased operational efficiencies, implementing a joint procurement model, demand management and supporting independence. We can anticipate savings of £600k being identified across these different areas in for 2020/21

- 2.4 Preliminary research suggests the following could be achieved:

- 2.4.1 Design of a new model for future education and social care transport, supported by outcomes that are strategically consistent and represent appropriate return (in terms of time, cost and management effort). The model will aim to:
- Assess the scope to create further reductions in the cost of transport provision
 - Reduce the overall cost of transport provided through the external framework
 - Reduce opportunities for variance in cost of transport provided through the external framework
 - Increase operational efficiencies and reduce the duplication of cost experienced through 'being in business' twice;
 - Introduce universal independent travel training assessments to reduce demand and promote independence
 - Limit customer expectation through refined policy guidance and adjustments to the referral and assessment pathway
- 2.4.2 Ensure future governance, management and resourcing are all fit for purpose, both in design and execution.

- 2.4.3 Identify key risks and mitigating actions relating to changing the delivery models of statutory services.
- 2.4.4 Create a clear case for change, supported by strong evidence that is accepted by key stakeholders.
- 2.4.5 Design a detailed approach for implementation and benefits realisation.
- 2.4.6 In addition to identifying the opportunities for change, the fund, if approved, will support the delivery of a programme of Independent Travel Training, initially focused on post-16 students, and consider the wider role this approach has across other cohorts eligible for local authority supported transport.

3. INDEPENDENT TRAVEL TRAINING

- 3.1 Independent Travel Training is a method for enabling children and young people with SEN to travel independently on public transport, removing the need for Local Authorities to provide costly specialist transport. Local Authorities across the country have embedded Independent Travel Training with success in supporting independence and reducing costs to the local authority. There are a range of travel training packages available allowing students to overcome their own personal barriers to travel and supporting access to the community and education, enhancing confidence as well as career and social opportunities.
- 3.2 As of June 2019 there were 183 SEN pupils travelling to school in individual taxis, with greater numbers travelling in low occupancy vehicles, sometimes with passenger assistants. The programme of Independent Travel Training aims to give pupils the skills to transition from these high-cost low-occupancy vehicles and travel independently, whether this be walking, travelling on a public bus or travelling on an existing, shared home to school transport route.
- 3.3 The transformation funding requested provides investment for 50 pupils to be travel trained over two years, and for two years' of engagement with schools ensuring that the principles of independent travel training are embedded and supported in the curriculum.
- 3.4 We would expect to see cumulative savings for at least 5 years, but in 2022/23 would anticipate some of the savings being taken to create ongoing budget for the programme. This would allow the programme to become part of "Business as Usual" and ensure that the savings made in prior years are not lost.
- 3.5 Working on the assumption of 25 pupils being trained in time for September 2020, and a further 25 each September thereafter we would expect to see the following investment and savings profile:

Recurring Cash Flow	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Revenue Advance	58	71	-58	-71	0	0
Capital Advance	0	0	0	0	0	0
Saving/Income	0	-150	-267	-138	-267	-267

This assumes a saving of £10,700 a year per pupil.

4. INDEPENDENT SPECIALIST RESOURCE

- 4.1 The remainder of the saving is an estimate based on an initial scoping exercise. Assuming £450k is achievable the investment and savings profile is as below:

Recurring Cash Flow	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Revenue Advance	150	-150	-	-	-	-
Capital Advance	0	0	-	-	-	-
Saving/Income	0	-450	0	0	0	0

- 4.2 Officers intend to insert a break clause into any contract to ensure that if early work shows this to be unachievable, the review will cease and the full investment will not be drawn down.

5. COMBINED TRANSFORMATION BID

- 5.1 The table below shows the anticipated investment and savings profile across both requests:

Recurring Cash Flow	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Revenue Advance	208	-79	-58	-71	0	0
Capital Advance	0	0	0	0	0	0
Saving/Income	0	-600	-267	-138	-267	-267

Pay Back Period in Years	2
Savings/Investment Ratio over 5 Years	1:3.1

6. RISK AND CONTINGENCIES

Risk	Contingency
The savings identified do not offer significant improvements or substantial savings	Officers will work with the independent consultant to ensure that they have sight of all the information and data so that all opportunities for savings have been explored. Officers will look to embed a break clause in any contract issued if the return on investment does not represent value for money.

7. ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES

7.1 A good quality of life for everyone

All children must have the opportunity, ability or be provided with the right transport mechanism, in support of getting to and from school and educational settings.

7.2 Thriving places for people to live

There are no significant implications for this priority.

7.3 The best start for Cambridgeshire's children

All children should be able to travel to and from school safely and where they are able to, independently. Where appropriate support is provided to enable all children to travel to and from home and educational settings.

8. SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Resource Implications

Under this proposal there will be a requirement for up to £410k of transformation funding in support of this project.

8.2 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

8.3 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

8.4 Equality and Diversity Implications

No significant implications have been identified at this stage. When money is drawn down and the plan is formalised an Equality Impact Assessment will be carried out.

8.5 Engagement and Communications Implications

The implementation of Independent Travel Training will require significant engagement with schools, individual young people and their families and a communications plan will be developed for the project.

8.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement

There are no significant implications within this category.

8.7 Public Health Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

Implications	Officer Clearance
Have the resource implications been cleared by Finance?	Yes Name of Financial Officer: Tom Kelly
Have the procurement/contractual/ Council Contract Procedure Rules implications been cleared by the LGSS Head of Procurement?	Yes Name of Officer: Gus de Silva
Has the impact on statutory, legal and risk implications been cleared by the Council's Monitoring Officer or LGSS Law?	Yes Name of Legal Officer: Fiona McMillan
Have the equality and diversity implications been cleared by your Service Contact?	Yes Name of Officer: Jennifer Bartlett
Have any engagement and communication implications been cleared by Communications?	Yes Name of Officer: Joanne Dickson
Have any localism and Local Member involvement issues been cleared by your Service Contact?	Yes Name of Officer: Jonathan Lewis
Have any Public Health implications been cleared by Public Health	Yes Name of Officer: Tess Campbell

Source Documents	Location
Home to school Travel Assistance Policy	https://ccc-live.storage.googleapis.com/upload/www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/children-and-families/Home%20to%20school%20travel%20assistance%20policy.pdf?inline=true
Post-16 education transport policy statement 2019-20	https://ccc-live.storage.googleapis.com/upload/www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/children-and-families/Cambridgeshire%20Policy%20Statement%20for%20Post-16%20Students%20in%20full-time%20learning%202019-20.pdf?inline=true