

Report of: Programme manager, Children's Transport

Report to: Director of Children & Families services

Date: 12 March 2018

Subject: Charges for the Provision of Transport to School Swimming Lessons



Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: 10.4 Appendix 1 to this report is confidential and exempt under Access to Information Procedure Rule 10.4 (3) as it contains information relating to the business affairs of each organisation involved in the procurement it is felt that if this information is disclosed it would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of the Council.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

1. The cost of providing schools with transport to swimming lessons is considerably below commercial rates. Prices have been held down or raised by only very small increments.
2. It is proposed that the costs recharged to schools be increased to a level that remains very competitive whilst returning a revenue that better mitigates the overall cost of school transport.

Recommendations

3. That the cost of services recharged to schools is increased in line with the confidential pricing structure detailed at Appendix 1.

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to recommend that the Director of Children & Families services approves revised recharges to schools for the provision of transport to swimming lessons.

2 Background information

- 2.1 There is a duty placed upon schools to include the provision of swimming lessons within the curriculum. Some schools offer an extended programme of swimming activities. Similarly, there is a duty placed upon the Local Authority and the West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) to cooperate in the provision of school transport services.
- 2.2 Transport arrangements are made by WYCA on behalf of Children & Families services and the net revenue is deducted from the overall cost of school transport.
- 2.3 The charges levied to schools for the provision of this transport has historically increased by very small increments or not at all, and is considerably below commercial rates.

3 Main issues

- 3.1 Within the contractual arrangements for education transport between Children & Families and WYCA, which are arranged under a statutory cooperation agreement, charges are levied on behalf of the council for the provision of primary school swimming transport. This helps to mitigate costs across the whole of education transport provision. The amount that schools are charged for this provision has risen only very slowly over the years and is considerably less than commercial rates.
- 3.2 There is mutual benefit in ensuring that schools continue to receive excellent value and it would not be in the council's interests to set rates that could discourage take-up of this provision. Having sought guidance from WYCA, it is understood that there is considerable scope to raise charges whilst remaining sufficiently competitive not to reduce take-up. It is therefore proposed to increase the charges over three years with effect from September 2018. This will give schools better ability to budget well in advance.
- 3.3 A new pricing structure for implementation over the next three years has been prepared and is included at Appendix 1.

4 Corporate Considerations

4.1 Consultation and Engagement

- 4.1.1 A number of enquiries were received from schools 12 months ago about the future cost of this provision and we advised that a price review was to take place. WYCA has been consulted for views about commercial competitiveness of the service. The Chief Officer for Learning Improvement and the Chief Officer for Audit & Investment have been consulted, as has the Executive member for Children & Families.

4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

- 4.2.1 An EDCI screening exercise has been completed and is attached as Appendix 2 to this report.

4.3 Council policies and Best Council Plan

- 4.3.1 Ensuring that transport to swimming sessions continues to be provided to schools at very competitive prices supports the Children & Young People's Plan to ensure that all children are supported to do well at all levels of learning and have skills for life. The proposals support the C&YP Plan and Best Council Plan to be a Child Friendly City.

4.4 Resources and value for money

- 4.4.2 The proposals support the Best Council Plan to be an efficient and enterprising council.

4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

- 4.5.1 There are no legal implications and is not eligible for call in.
- 4.5.2 Appendix 1 to this report is confidential and exempt under Access to Information Procedure Rule 10.4 (3) as it contains information relating to the business affairs of each organisation involved in the procurement and it is felt that if this information is disclosed it would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of the Council.

4.6 Risk Management

- 4.6.1 The principal risk concerns the potential for increasing the recharges to a level that reduces demand from schools. The proposed pricing structure is not considered likely to reduce demand from schools for this service.

5 Conclusions

- 5.1 Following a number of years of very small or zero price increases for the provision of school swimming school transport, it is now the case that Children's Transport is not adequately supporting the Best Council aspiration to be an enterprising and efficient council. A review of the pricing structure finds that prices can be increased whilst continuing to be very competitive. A new pricing structure is now being proposed.

6 Recommendations

- 6.1 That the cost of services recharged to schools is increased in line with the structure detailed at Appendix 1.

7 Background documents¹

none
