

SCRUTINY BOARD (CHILDREN AND FAMILIES)

INQUIRY INTO SCHOOL TRANSPORT

DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE

1.0 Introduction

1.1 At its meeting on 25 July 2013, Scrutiny Board (Children and Families) received a public request for Scrutiny¹. Following the provision of information from the public, Children's Services Officers and the Executive Board Member for Children's Services, the Board resolved to undertake an Inquiry.

2.0 Scope of the inquiry

2.1 The purpose of the Inquiry is to make an assessment of and, where appropriate, make recommendations on the following areas:

- The work undertaken or planned to provide an effective transport service that provides value for money.
- In formulating the revised policy, the consideration of environmental and traffic impact anticipated and how this will be reflected in any sustainable school transport policies.
- Working with partners and schools to deliver sustainable school transport
- The benefits the revised policy will provide for children, young people and their families.
- Next steps and the monitoring of impact as elements of the revised policy come into effect.
- Evidence presented at the call-in meeting 7 of August 2013 and information presented at the public request for scrutiny 25 July 2013.

3.0 Desired Outcomes and Measures of Success

3.1 In conducting the Inquiry the Board wishes to reflect on the processes undertaken in formulating the revised School Transport Policy and identify if lessons can be learnt. In addition the Board will also assess if a robust policy is in place which meets statutory requirements, is sustainable for the Council and also minimises negative impact to children, young people and their families.

3.2 It is also important to consider how the Scrutiny Board will deem if their inquiry has been successful in making a difference to local people. Some measures of success may be obvious at the initial stages of an inquiry and can be included in these terms of reference. Other

¹ Agenda item 7, 'Request for Scrutiny – Transport consultation and the proposed changes to the Children's Services Transport Policy'

measures of success may become apparent as the inquiry progresses and discussions take place.

- 3.3 Following the inquiry the Scrutiny Board will publish its report which will identify clear desired outcomes. These will be reflected in the recommendations made. The director or organisation to whom the recommendations have been made will be responsible for monitoring the impact of each recommendation and for advising the Board accordingly as the Board reviews progress.

4.0 Comments of the relevant Director and Executive Member

- 4.1 In line with Scrutiny Board Procedure Rule 12.1 where a Scrutiny Board undertakes an Inquiry the Scrutiny Board shall consult with any relevant Director and Executive Member on the terms of reference.

5.0 Timetable for the inquiry

- 5.1 The Inquiry will take place over three sessions. Evidence will be gathered by the Scrutiny Board and subsequently by a working group. Membership of the working group will consist of members of the Scrutiny Board. A final report is scheduled to be agreed at the January 2014 Scrutiny Board Meeting.
- 5.2 The length of the Inquiry and range of evidence to be collected is subject to change by agreement of the Board/Working Group.

6.0 Submission of evidence

6.1 Session one – October 2013

Review, Preparation Consultation and Communication

- Chronology of events from February 2013 onwards including issue of admissions information for 2014.
- Consultation methodology employed – communication, identifying and targeting potential consultees, methods utilised and document wording.
- Analysis and interpretation of consultation responses.
- Communication with families who would be affected and timing with regard to school admission process.
- The options considered with regard to the removal of discretionary transport.
- Comparison with other local authorities in relation to withdrawal of discretionary funding.
- Consideration and calculation of anticipated cost saving.

- Petitions received and how these were dealt with.
- Review of statutory transport processes, operations, commissioned services and financing.
- Department of Education Guidance for the provision of School Transport.

6.2 **Session two - October 2013**

Transport, Traffic and Environment

- School Transport and Travel Plans, Sustainable modes of school travel strategies, transport assessment and infrastructure audit for School Transport
- Environmental and traffic considerations in known problem areas
- Negotiation and support from Transport providers
- Negotiation and support from Religious providers of education
- Negotiation and support from other partners including Social Enterprise or VCF sector.
- Development of independent travel training and alternative travel initiatives.

6.3 **Session three – November 2013**

Implementation and Impact Mitigation

- Support for parents in financial hardship that do not meet the statutory definition for free transport.
- Keeping SEN children in education post 16.
- School Attendance
- NEET
- Maintaining diversity in schools in Leeds
- Facilitating reasonable parental choice

Going Forward

- Reflection and Lessons Learned
- Post Call in - Update of work undertaken or planned – Transport Policy, Strengthening Partnerships, Revision of DofE School Transport Guidance, Children and Families Bill, provision of resources to fund transport .
- Timetable for policy implementation.
- How impact will be analysed and reported (see headings under mitigating impact including managing the movement of children to schools closer to residence in the city post October 2013 and in 2015).

7.0 Witnesses

7.1 The following witnesses have been identified as possible contributors to the Inquiry:

- Head Teacher Representatives
- 16 – 19 Education Providers
- Representatives from the Diocese of the Church of England and Catholic Diocese and other religion based providers of education.
- Parents
- Parent Support Groups and Organisations
- Children and Young People
- School transport providers.
- Social enterprises or organisations involved in the delivery of school transport.
- Children's Services Officers
- City Development Officers
- Officers from Strategy and Resources
- Executive Board Member (Children's Services)

8.0 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

8.1 The Equality Improvement Priorities 2011 to 2015 have been developed to ensure our legal duties are met under the Equality Act 2010. The priorities will help the council to achieve its ambition to be the best City in the UK and ensure that as a city work takes place to reduce disadvantage, discrimination and inequalities of opportunity.

8.2 Equality and diversity will be a consideration throughout the Scrutiny Inquiry and due regard will be given to equality through the use of evidence, written and verbal, outcomes from consultation and engagement activities.

8.3 The Scrutiny Board may engage and involve interested groups and individuals (both internal and external to the council) to inform recommendations.

8.4 Where an impact has been identified this will be reflected in the final inquiry report, post inquiry. Where a Scrutiny Board recommendation is agreed the individual, organisation or group responsible for implementation or delivery should give due regard to equality and diversity, conducting impact assessments where it is deemed appropriate.

9.0 Post inquiry report monitoring arrangements

9.1 Following the completion of the Scrutiny inquiry and the publication of the final inquiry report and recommendations, the implementation of the agreed recommendations will be monitored.

- 9.2 The monitoring will be undertaken by the Board which will be done at regular intervals appropriate to the content of the recommendation.
- 9.3 The final inquiry report will include information on how the implementation of recommendations will be monitored.

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