

Report to Audit and Governance Committee

High Impact Area – SEN Travel

1. SEND:

- 1.1. Local authorities play a crucial and unique role as the shaper of places, taking a strategic position within the system as champions of children, young people and their parents. This involves shaping and supporting the diverse schools system to ensure the educational needs of all learners are met, while retaining specific responsibilities to ensure more vulnerable children, including those with SEND receive the support they need to reach their full potential.
- 1.2. Research by the Association of Directors of Children Services (ADCS)¹ has indicated the key issues which are driving demand and costs at a local level. A number of key themes have been identified:
- LAs are transporting an increasing number of children with SEND (partly because of the SEND reforms and the extension of support to young people aged up to 25), many of whom have highly complex needs (health and behaviour) so require individual transport, escorts and specialist vehicles.
 - There is a shortage of local mainstream school places and specialist educational provision and as a result, LAs are required to transport children to educational facilities out of area. In addition, a lack of local foster care capacity is resulting in an increased number of out of area placements which require transport to school.
- 1.3. The geographical nature of some LAs means that a significant number of children live outside of the 'statutory' walking distance. This is coupled with a lack of public transport so LAs must provide other, more costly forms of transport. All of these themes play out in the context of the current significant challenges around demand and cost. As of June 17 the totals being transported at a cost to the local authority are detailed below:

Type of Travel	Number	%
Multiple Travellers- taxi	649	73
Single Travellers-taxi	97	11
Personal Travel Budget	100	11
Petrol Wear and Tear	21	2
SEN Call Off	25	3

- 1.4. Demand and costs have for the last financial year resulted in a significant overspend and there are projections that this budget will overspend is likely for the current financial year. Work has been ongoing to challenge the mix of travel type, pushing further to increase the number Personal Travel Budgets taken up by parents. As a result actions have been taken or are planned to happen and these are summarised in the table (see paragraph 2.5).

¹ ADCS Home to School Transport

2. ADULT SERVICES:

- 2.1. It is a priority for Adult Services to achieve good value for money from all types of transport services, linked to anticipated changes in the way individuals choose to meet their needs. Discussions regarding the future commissioning and provision of day services, particularly those provided by Tricuro, have been taking place over recent months. By the end of September 2017 it is hoped that the 'vision' can be described and that this will enable potential demand for transport to be clarified. More people are expected to use their Personal Budgets creatively and to take them as a Direct Payment, which will result in changes to the way people buy day services and what they chose to purchase – with a more personalised approach and less emphasis on traditional forms of commissioned service. However, it is recognised that for some people (particularly those with complex needs) there will continue to be a need for high quality, trusted provision based in centres.
- 2.2. Adult Services need to achieve savings against their Social Care transport budget and support the proposed investment in resources to enable the re-scheduling of vehicles, whereby service users with different needs can be supported to travel together. In addition, the Directorate supports further investigation into options to introduce back-to-back SEN and Adult Services transport.
- 2.3. This support is based on feedback from Nottingham City Council, where this was successfully introduced in 2011, with the achievement of significant savings to both Children's and Adults Services. Detailed analysis of the logistics and impacts will need to be undertaken and proportional consultation with service users, carers and staff will be required at centres where changes to opening hours may be necessary.
- 2.4. The Directorate recommends that Dorset Travel seek additional feedback from Nottingham City Council Transport Team to ensure that the benefits and any potential pitfalls can be fully established, prior to any changes. The Directorate would also wish for any changes to be introduced on a phased basis, possibly via a pilot in a mutually agreed locality.
- 2.5. Activity and time lines for SEN and Adult projects.

Activity	Timeline	RAG Status
A review of Adults and Learning Disability to be implemented to allow redeployment of the Adult Fleet to SEND Travel	September 2017- December 2017	
Policy Reviews with particular reference to eligibility for travel assistance and personal assistance.	NOW but linked to the wider transport consultation this autumn	
Sufficiency project to reduce need for out of county placements (additional benefit on HNB pressure.	2018	
Passenger Assistant- linked to increasing volumes of PTB and eligibility criteria.	September 2017 – December 2017	

Alternative Provision – Data examination to assess potential for reducing cost for non-attendance.	Autumn 2017	
SEN post 16 two stage appeals process	NOW	
Acceleration of personal travel budget take up-linked to policy review	NOW	
Tender awards - aim to reduce value of contracts enabling improved overall budget management	September 2017	

3. DORSET TRAVEL

3.1. Dorset County Council has now awarded new contracts for supported public and schools transport services. The new contracts, which replace those which expired in July, cover seven core public transport routes and 13 secondary/upper schools (plus five middle schools). These have been awarded to four local bus companies:

- Go South Coast (Damory);
- First Hampshire and Dorset;
- South West Coaches; and,
- Vale Coaches.

3.2. The new contracts cover two elements of travel support provided by the council, which represent a significant step towards realising the council's Passenger Transport Strategy:

- a core network of seven public bus routes between Dorset's market towns that help support Dorset's economy by helping people travel to school, college, training or work; and
- 13 school contracts allocated on a 'one school, one operator' basis. This provides a more simple approach, allowing schools to develop working relationships with a single bus company.

3.3. The council's Cabinet agreed these changes last September, following a public consultation on the proposals between May and July 2016. There is a total of around 100 public transport routes in Dorset, of which 35 are currently supported by the county council – please see attachment for details of affected routes. About 70 per cent of existing public transport routes will continue to operate after July. These routes account for over 90 per cent of public transport usage in the County.

3.4. The county council is working with the operators to retain some currently subsidised routes on a commercially operated basis. We will keep you updated with progress as more certainty is gained about these services. The council is also working very closely with communities to advise on community transport alternatives.

3.5. The seven public transport routes between Dorset's market towns started on 24 July. These are:

- **Route 1** – Blandford to Sherborne – South West Coaches (currently operated by Damory as Service X10)
- **Route 2** – Shaftesbury to Gillingham – South West Coaches (currently operated by Damory as Services 59 and 158)
- **Route 3** – Blandford to Shaftesbury – South West Coaches (currently operated by Damory as Service X9)
- **Route 4** – Sturminster Newton to Gillingham – South West Coaches (currently operated by Damory as Service 309)
- **Route 5** – Blandford to Dorchester – First Hampshire and Dorset (currently operated by Damory as Services X12 and 187)
- **Route 6** – Blandford to Salisbury – Go South Coast (currently operated by DCC as Service 20)
- **Route 7** – Sherborne to Dorchester – South West Coaches (currently operated by Damory as Service X11)

3.6. The new school transport contracts started in September. The council has been working closely with bus operators and schools to make any changes to services as smooth as possible. The following list gives the schools and operators on the 'one school, one operator' (OSOO) contracts.

First (Hampshire and Dorset)

- Beaminster School;
- Sir John Colfox School, Bridport; and,
- Woodroffe School, Lyme Regis.

Go South Coast (Damory)

- Allenbourn Middle School, Wimborne;
- The Blandford School;
- Dorchester Middle School;
- Ferndown Middle School;
- Ferndown Upper School;
- Lytchett Minster School;
- Purbeck School, Wareham.
- Queen Elizabeth's School, Wimborne;
- Shaftesbury Upper School;
- St. Michael's Middle School, Wimborne;
- The Thomas Hardy School, Dorchester; and,
- West Moors Middle School;

South West Coaches

- Gillingham School; and,
- Gryphon School, Sherborne.

Vale Coaches

- Sturminster Newton High School.

School Transport Update:

- Routes for September have been finalised.
- Discussions are taking place about route safety from overhanging trees.
- Service agreements have been sent to providers to establish service quality from day one.
- Smart cards and bus passes will be sent direct to pupils' homes.
- One school one operator system in place – conversations with schools have taken place to explain how this works.
- Operators will be managing the surplus seat allocation. Communication with applicants is planned.

Community Transport:

- 64 established community transport schemes in Dorset.
 - Plus 20 trial schemes that have been introduced since April 2016.
 - 91% of Dorset (by area) has access to a community transport scheme.
 - More than 720 volunteer drivers.
 - A community transport directory is available on the community transport webpage on www.dorsetforyou.com.
 - Seed funding of up to £2,000 is available from POPP to set up a community car scheme. With a downloadable toolkit to help start-ups.
- 3.7. Working together with local members and town and parish councils a few schemes have started for a trial period over the summer holidays using a number of different bus operators. Social media and traditional media communications will be used to spread the message of encouraging independence.

4. Dorset CCG: Clinical Services Review

- 4.1. The Clinical Services Review is making good progress. Over 160 clinicians, including GPs, primary care teams, nurses, paramedics, mental health specialists and the clinical and medical directors and consultants from Dorset's three acute hospitals, have taken part in four working groups to discuss and develop models of care for the future pattern of NHS health services in Dorset.
- 4.2. As part of STP governance and delivery the CCG have agreed to create a Transport Reference Group to lead key work in identifying the opportunities to address access to care. It has been agreed that there are two initial requirements. The need to provide a robust review and assurance report for the CSR decision making process. And secondly a strategic plan for the pan-Dorset approach to 'movement' and access to services including NHS and Local Authority transport resources.
- 4.3. A holistic movement strategy that will be implemented from September. Likely to be in an incremental way. This strategy to cover everything from non-movement through to specialised transport under blue light to tertiary centres. It will cover how digital, new ways of working, the integration of the citizen, local communities, voluntary sector, third sector, public organisations and commercial organisations will address the balanced between do we need to move to what is the best person centred experience. Both are going to require a focused amount of effort

and the agreement of partners to provide resource and expertise (the way DCC and CCG have).

5. Conclusion

- 5.1. There is a considerable amount of work going on and there are real opportunities to join up. What is clear is that through the utilisation of our own fleet, more SEN travellers on mainstream routes, and the use of commercial routes to move people around there is considerable scope to think differently about SEN transport. The desired increase in personal travel budgets needs to be managed carefully through targeting the right routes to achieve cost reductions, but it is clear from the analysis attached to this document that we can make considerable savings from this source.