

CHILDREN'S SERVICES PORTFOLIO DECISION SCHEDULE



Tuesday, 12 August 2008

at 10.00 am

in Committee Room A

Councillor Hill, Cabinet Member responsible for Children's Services will consider the following items.

1. KEY DECISIONS
None

2. OTHER ITEMS REQUIRING DECISION

- 2.1 Appointment Of Local Authority Representatives To Serve On School Governing Bodies - *Director of Children's Services*
- 2.2 Outdoor Centre Charges For The School Year 2008/09 – *Director of Children's Services*
- 2.3 Development Of A Practice Manual For Safeguarding And Specialist Services – Proposed Project – *Director of Children's Services*
- 2.4 Children's Centres, Extended Schools And Early Years Outline Programme Of Capital Works 2008 -2011 – *Director of Children's Services*
- 2.5 Home To School Transport Policy – *Director of Children's Services*
- 2.6 Revised Costings Relating To The 2008/09 Schools Capital Works Programme – *Director of Children's Services*

3. REPORTS FROM OVERVIEW OF SCRUTINY FORUMS
None

CHILDREN'S SERVICES PORTFOLIO

Report to Portfolio Holder

12th August 2008



Report of: Director of Children's Services

Subject: APPOINTMENT OF LOCAL AUTHORITY
REPRESENTATIVES TO SERVE ON SCHOOL
GOVERNING BODIES

SUMMARY

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

To request the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services consideration and approval of the recommendations of the General Purposes Committee in respect of the appointment of Local Authority representative Governors to serve on school governing bodies where vacancies currently exist.

2 SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

The report summarises the process for inviting applications for representative governors and the criteria for their selection.

3. RELEVANCE TO PORTFOLIO MEMBER

It is the responsibility of the Portfolio Holder to decide the appointment of Local Authority representative school governors following advice from the General Purposes Sub Committee.

4 TYPE OF DECISION

Non-key decision.

5 DECISION MAKING ROUTE

Portfolio Holder's meeting on 12th August 2008.

6 DECISION(S) REQUIRED

Approval by the Portfolio Holder of the recommendations of the General Purposes Committee, in respect of the appointment of representative Governors to serve on school governing bodies where vacancies exist.

Report of: Director of Children's Services

Subject: APPOINTMENT OF LOCAL AUTHORITY
REPRESENTATIVES TO SERVE ON SCHOOL
GOVERNING BODIES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To request the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services consideration and approval of the recommendations of the General Purposes Committee in respect of the appointment of Local Authority representative governors to serve on school governing bodies where vacancies currently exist.

2. BACKGROUND

Applications are invited from members of the general public, elected members and those governors whose term of office is about to expire or have expired who are interested in serving or wish to continue serving as a Local Authority representative governor on school governing bodies.

The following criteria were agreed by the Borough Council for the recruitment of Local Education Authority representative governors in 2000. Local Authority governors should be able to show:

- demonstrable interest in and commitment to education;
- a desire to support the school concerned;
- a commitment to attend regular meetings of the governing body (and committees as appropriate) and school functions generally;
- good communication/interpersonal skills;
- ability to work as part of a team;
- a clearly expressed willingness to participate in the governor training programme.

A schedule setting out details of vacancies together with applications received in respect of the vacancies was considered by members of the General Purposes Sub Committee at their meeting held on 4th July 2008 (**Appendix 1**).

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Portfolio Holder for Children's Services approve recommendations of the General Purposes Committee in respect of the appointment of Local Authority representative governors to serve on school Governing Bodies. A schedule outlining recommendations of the General Purposes Sub Committee is attached at **Appendix 1**.

4. Contact Officer:

Ann Turner, Governor Support Officer, telephone 523766

Children's Services In Hartlepool

Every Child Matters



2.1
Appendix 1

VACANCIES FOR LOCAL AUTHORITY REPRESENTATIVES JUNE, 2008

Contact Officer: Ann Turner
Telephone: 523766

VACANCIES FOR LOCAL AUTHORITY REPRESENTATIVES ON GOVERNING BODIES

SCHOOL INCLUDING LA GOVERNORS	VACANCIES	POSSIBLE INTEREST	RECOMMENDED FOR APPOINTMENT
Barnard Grove Primary			
Mr. J. M. Kay	3 vacancies including Mr. J. M. Kay -	Mr. J. M. Kay	Mr. J.M. Kay
	term of office expires 20 th September, 08		
Clavering Primary School			
Councillor R W Cook	Councillor R W Cook -	Councillor R.W Cook	Councillor R.W.
Councillor S Griffin	term of office expires 19 th September, 08		Cook
Councillor T Fleming			
Golden Flatts Primary School			
Councillor M. W. Turner	Councillor M. Turner – term of office	Councillor M. Turner	Councillor M.
Mrs. J. Liston	Expires 2 nd November, 08		Turner
Councillor C. F. Hill			
Grange Primary School			
Mr. H. D. Smith	1 vacancy	No nomination	No nomination
Councillor R. Flintoff			
High Tunstall College of Science			
Councillor Dr. G. Morris	Councillor Morris – term of office expires	Councillor G. Morris	Councillor G.
Mr. P. Hamilton	19 th September, 08		Morris
Reverend Dr. A. Craig	Reverend D. Craig – term of office expires		
Mr. R. McGovern	27 th September, 08		
	L A Membership to reduce to one member		

2.1
Appendix 1

SCHOOL INCLUDING LA GOVERNORS	VACANCIES	POSSIBLE INTEREST	RECOMMENDED FOR APPOINTMENT
Jesmond Road Primary			
Mr. K. Gardner	1 vacancy	No nomination	No nomination
Mrs. B. M. Watson			
Mr. M. H. Ward			
Kingsley Primary School			
Mr. S. G. Hanson	Mrs. S. G. Hanson – term of office expires	Mrs. S. G. Hanson	Mrs. S.G. Hanson
Mr. K. Clark	31 st August, 08		
Mr. J. Vale	Mr. K. Clark – term of office expires		
	19 th September, 08		
Lynnfield Primary School			
Councillor C. Richardson	Councillor Richardson – term of office	Councillor C. Richardson	Councillor C.
Mr. A. Armstrong	Expires 31 st August, 2008		Richardson
Councillor V. Tumilty			
Councillor C. Simmons			
Manor College of Technology			
Councillor A. Preece	Councillor A. Preece – term of office	Councillor A. Preece	Councillor A.
	Expires 31 st August, 2008		Preece
Owton Manor Primary School			
Mrs. J. Thompson	Mrs. J. Thompson – term of office expires	Mrs. J. Thompson Mrs. P. Rayner	Mrs. J. Thompson
Mrs. P. Rayner	31 st August, 08		Mrs. P. Rayner
Mr. J. Vale	Mrs. P. Rayner – term of office expires		
Mrs. S. Hayes	20 th November, 2008		

2.1 Appendix 1

SCHOOL INCLUDING LA GOVERNORS	VACANCIES	POSSIBLE INTEREST	RECOMMENDED FOR APPOINTMENT
Rift House Primary School			
Councillor D. Young	1 vacancy	Mr. J. H. Blackham	Mr. J.H. Blackham
Rossmere Primary School			
Mrs. M. Smith	1 vacancy	No nomination	No nomination
Councillor M. Johnson			
Sacred Heart R.C. Primary School			
Councillor G. G. Hall	Councillor G. G. Hall – term of office Expires 19 th September, 08	Councillor G. G. Hall	Councillor G.G. Hall
St. Bega's R.C. Primary School			
Mr. K. Kelly	Mr. K. Kelly – term of office expires 20 th September, 08	Mr. K. Kelly	Mr. K. Kelly
St. Helen's Primary School			
Mrs. S. Sotheran	2 vacancies	Councillor T. Fleming Councillor J. Marshall (Application form awaited)	Councillor T. Fleming
Miss C. Lamb			Councillor J. Marshall
			subject to receipt of form

2.1
Appendix 1

SCHOOL INCLUDING LA GOVERNORS	VACANCIES	POSSIBLE INTEREST	RECOMMENDED FOR APPOINTMENT
St. John Vianney R.C. Primary School			
Mrs. B. J. Cook	Mrs. B. J. Cook – term of office expires	Mrs. B. J. Cook	Mrs. B.J. Cooke
	20 th September, 08		
Throston Primary School			
Mr. H. Clouth	2 vacancies including Mr. H. Clouth -	No nomination	No nomination
Mrs. J. Norman	term of office expires 19 th September, 08		
West Park Primary School			
Mr. M. W. Ward	1 vacancy	Mr. J. H. Blackham	Mr. J.H. Blackham
West View Primary School			
Councillor Mrs. S. Griffin	Mr. Morley's term of office expires	Councillor C. Simmons	Councillor C.
Mr. G. R. Morley	31 st August, 2008		Simmons
Mr. D. Wise			

CHILDREN'S SERVICES PORTFOLIO

Report to Portfolio Holder

12th August 2008



Report of: Director of Children's Services

**Subject: OUTDOOR CENTRE CHARGES FOR THE
SCHOOL YEAR 2008/09**

SUMMARY

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To request the Portfolio Holder to determine the charges to be set by Hartlepool Borough Council for Hartlepool schools attending the outdoor centres covered by the joint arrangements with two former Cleveland Local Authorities (Middlesbrough and Redcar and Cleveland) for the school year 2008/09.
- 1.2 To note the 2008/09 charges relating to external users of the Carlton Centre which have been determined by the Joint Authority Management Group at their meeting of 25th February 2008.

2. SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

- 2.1 The report details proposed charges for Carlton Outdoor Education Centre and Lanehead Centre, Coniston with effect from 1st September 2008.

3. RELEVANCE TO PORTFOLIO MEMBER

- 3.1 The Portfolio Holder has responsibility for Children's Services issues.

4. TYPE OF DECISION

- 4.1 Non key.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

The proposed charges to Hartlepool schools are agreed with effect from 1st September 2008.

Report of: Director of Children's Services

**Subject: OUTDOOR CENTRE – CHARGES FOR
SCHOOL YEAR 2008/09**

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To request the Portfolio Holder to determine the charges to be set by Hartlepool Borough Council for places at the outdoor education centres covered by the joint arrangement.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Two outdoor centres, Carlton and Lanehead, are the subject of a joint arrangement between Hartlepool, Middlesbrough and Redcar and Cleveland Local Authorities. Stockton was previously part of the joint arrangement but withdrew in 2004.
- 2.2 Hartlepool is the lead Authority for Carlton, whilst Middlesbrough leads on Lanehead. Running costs of each centre are funded by annual contributions from the joint authorities in accordance with a Partnership Agreement.
- 2.3 Each authority partially recovers its costs via "subsidised charges" levied by them to the schools in their areas. Schools attend the centre in accordance with an agreed allocation process and each authority sets the charges for its own school parties attending each centre.
- 2.4 The Carlton Centre reopened in 2007 after completion of an extensive capital refurbishment scheme that has significantly upgraded facilities. Hartlepool schools have made full use of their allocated days during 2007 and feedback on the improved facilities has been positive.
- 2.5 In recent years increases have been broadly in line with inflation and come into effect on 1st September to coincide with the school year. For 2008/09 the Portfolio is asked to consider increases which:
- a) Recognise and partially addresses the current divergence in subsidy levels between joint authorities;
 - b) Recognises the substantially improved facilities at the Carlton Centre;

- c) Provides a modest contribution towards the Department's savings target as identified in its 2008/09 budget submission.
- 2.6 In Hartlepool, those pupils whose parents are on low income (e.g. income support, income based job seekers allowance or a family income below £15,575 per annum, the upper threshold for Child Tax Credit) will have their fees remitted in full. In recent years approximately 1/3 of pupils' charges have been funded by the departmental budget, which for 2008/09 has been set at £20,000 for Carlton and £4,500 for Lanehead. Based on previous years demand the proposed increases can be accommodated within these budgets at whichever rates are approved.

3. CARLTON SLA REVIEW 2007/08

- 3.1 In January 2007 the Carlton Centre Joint Authority Steering group was presented with various options on how future funding of the Centre could be equitably shared. Following Stockton's withdrawal from the joint arrangement in 2004 Hartlepool had been picking up the majority of this additional cost which was acknowledged as being unfair.
- 3.2 The preferred option was essentially for the Centre to be given an external income target to be met from charges levied to users outside the joint arrangement. Although the Centre has had external users in the past this had been relatively small scale during times when joint authority school use allowed this.
- 3.3 For 2007/08 the centre was allocated an income target of £76,778 and a similar target (£79,081) has been included in the 2008/09 budget. Revised charges for 2008/09 were proposed by the Carlton Centre manager and agreed by the Joint Authority Management Group at their meeting of 25th February 2008. These charges are included in schedules B. and C. below for the Portfolio Holder's information and ratification.

4. PROPOSED CHARGES FOR 2008/09 - CARLTON OUTDOOR EDUCATION CENTRE

Hartlepool School Groups

- 4.1 Discussions at the Carlton Steering Group during 2007 brought to light the wide divergence in rates charged by each Authority to the schools in their areas. This has arisen over time and reflects local decisions but Steering Group members feel that these differences are unhelpful and that a move towards standardisation would be a positive step. At present, schools within a few miles of each other are paying different rates to use the same facilities.

- 4.2 Whilst Hartlepool rates have been subject to inflation only increases over recent years, Middlesbrough Council have taken conscious steps to reduce subsidy levels to schools as a necessity in setting a balanced departmental budget. This has also been the case for Redcar and Cleveland.
- 4.3 For 2008/09 two options are proposed for the 24-hour residential rate charge, which is the main source of charging and is currently £17.80 per pupil:
- a) A 3% inflationary increase (rounded) bringing the charge to £18.50 per pupil.
 - This option would comply with corporate guidance for at least inflationary increases but would not contribute anything to the departmental savings target. In year savings of £5,000 would therefore need to be identified.
 - This would also leave Hartlepool diverging from the higher joint authority charges.
 - b) A 12.3% increase bringing the charge to £20.00 per pupil which is moving towards the levels charged by Middlesbrough and Redcar and Cleveland Councils.
 - This option would generate approximately £5,000 extra net income to the departmental budget as included in the 2008/09 budget submission. Schools were notified of this proposal at the 30th January 2008 consultation event.
 - This option would still leave Hartlepool school charges significantly lower than those levied in Middlesbrough and Redcar and Cleveland where proposed 2008/09 charges are £26.00 and £25.00 per pupil respectively.
- 4.4 For all other items charges for 2008/09 have been rounded up to the nearest 25p for ease of cash handling. The amount of income generated from these charges is fairly low.
- 4.5 As noted at paragraph 2.6 above it is relevant to note that historically approximately 1/3 of pupil charges relate to low income families and are in fact funded from the departmental budget.

Table 1	Current 2007/08	Proposed 2008/09
Residential Charges;		
Pupils and teachers/other adults supervising pupils (1 to 12 ratio) per 24 hour period	£17.80	a) £18.50 b) £20.00
Additional instructor per day	£89.55	£95.00
Additional instructor per half day	£50.00	£55.00
Additional charges per person:		
Bed and Breakfast	£10.00	£10.50
Bed Only	£7.00	£7.50
Breakfast Light	£2.50	£2.75
Cooked	£3.75	£4.00
Lunch/Packed Lunch	£2.40	£2.50
Evening Meal / Dinner	£5.30	£5.50
Supper	£1.70	£1.75

- 4.6 It is recommended that for the academic year 2008/09 option b) is supported and that any further convergence of joint authority charges is discussed at future Steering Groups prior to budget cycles.

5. FEES AND CHARGES FROM EXTERNAL USERS

- 5.1 The following charges have been agreed by the Joint Authority Management Group and resulting income will count against the centre's 2008/09 external income target of £79,081. The Centre Manager has proposed these charges to provide him with a degree of flexibility to negotiate external user charges. This recognises the fact that the Centre is selling services in a competitive environment.

School Groups Outside the Joint Arrangement

Table 2	Current 2007/08	Proposed 2008/09
Residential Charges		
Accommodation with instruction / provision per 24 hour standard activity programme (Free staff places on 1:10 ratio)	£35.00	£45.00
Fully catered accommodation only (Free staff places on 1:10 ratio)	£21.35	£27.00
Additional instructor per day	£89.55	£95.00

Additional instructor per half day	£50.00	£55.00
Additional charges per person		
Bed and Breakfast	£13.00	£16.50
Bed Only	£10.00	£12.00
Breakfast Light	£2.75	£3.00
Cooked	£4.00	£4.50
Lunch / Packed Lunch	£2.75	£3.25
Evening Meal / Dinner	£6.00	£8.00
Supper	£1.70	£1.75

External Income - All Other Groups

Table 3	Current 2007/08	Proposed 2008/09
For Catered accommodation		
• Under 18	£21.35	£25.00
• Adults	£28.50	£32.00
(No free places)		
For Instruction / Hire of Instructors / Equipment / facilities	* Subject to requirements	
Use of Centre Grounds Only per person	£2.50	£4.00

NB - * For other users charges will be based on the instructor rates of £95.00 per day but will be negotiated by the Centre Manager based on individual requirements

6. PROPOSED CHARGES FOR 2008/09 - LANEHEAD CENTRE, CONISTON

- 6.1 Lanehead charges have historically been set at higher rates than Carlton but it is recommended that for the academic year 2008/09 the two Centre's charges are broadly in line with each other.

Hartlepool School Groups

Table 4	Current 2007/08	Proposed 2008/09
Residential Charges;		
Pupils and teachers/other adults supervising pupils (1 to 12 ratio) per 24 hour period	£19.30	£20.00
Additional charges per person:		
Bed and Breakfast	£10.10	£10.50
Lunch	£3.20	£3.50
Afternoon tea/supper	£1.10	£1.25
Dinner	£4.80	£5.50

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 It is recommended that the Portfolio Holder:

- Agrees the proposed charges for Hartlepool Schools to use the Carlton Centre as set out at paragraph 4.5 (Table 1) with the daily rate set at £20.00 with effect from 1st September 2008
- Agrees the proposed charges for Hartlepool Schools to use the Lanehead Centre as set out at paragraph 6.1 (Table 4) with the daily rate set at £20.00 with effect from 1st September 2008
- Notes the charges for Carlton Centre users outside the joint agreement as determined by the Joint Authority Management Group as set out at paragraph 5.1 Tables 2 and 3
- Continues to receive a report each year detailing proposed charges.

Contact Officer: Steve Haley
Head of Finance, Asset Management and Student Support, 01429 523858

CHILDREN'S SERVICES PORTFOLIO

Report to Portfolio Holder

12 August 2008



Report of: Director of Children's Services

Subject: DEVELOPMENT OF A PRACTICE MANUAL
FOR SAFEGUARDING AND SPECIALIST
SERVICES – PROPOSED PROJECT

SUMMARY

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek approval for the development of a practice manual for Safeguarding and Specialist Services.
- 1.2 To request a direction for an exemption to the Council's Contract Procedure Rules in respect of the proposed project.

2. SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

- 2.1 The Integrated Children's System (ICS) was implemented in Hartlepool in July 2007 and has radically changed the way in which social workers undertake their work with children and record their interventions. It has presented real challenges to staff both in terms of their use of information technology and their work with children and their families.
- 2.2 The implementation of ICS has meant that all the local procedure and practice guidance documents are out of date as they were based on paper case records and now obsolete government forms. There is an urgent need to address this situation and ensure a Practice Manual is put in place that is fit for purpose, reflects the ICS system and ensures consistent and safe practice.
- 2.3 It is proposed that Jo Fox Associates is engaged to work with Safeguarding and Specialist Services to produce a Practice Guidance Manual.

3. RELEVANCE TO PORTFOLIO MEMBER

- 3.1 The Portfolio Holder has responsibility for Children's Services issues

4. TYPE OF DECISION

Non-key

5. DECISION MAKING ROUTE

Children's Services Portfolio Meeting on 12 August 2008

6. DECISION(S) REQUIRED

- 6.1 To approve the proposed project to produce a Practice Manual for Safeguarding and Specialist Services.
- 6.2 To direct an exception to the Council's Contract Procedure Rules in respect of this proposed project

Report of: Director of Children's Services

Subject: DEVELOPMENT OF A PRACTICE MANUAL
FOR SAFEGUARDING AND SPECIALIST
SERVICES – PROPOSED PROJECT

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek approval for the development of a practice manual for Safeguarding and Specialist Services.
- 1.2 To request a direction for an exception to the Council's Contract Procedure Rules in respect of the proposed project.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In July 2007, the national Integrated Children's System (ICS) was implemented in Hartlepool. ICS is defined as:

'a conceptual framework, a method of practice and a business process to support practitioners and managers in undertaking the key tasks of assessment, planning, intervention and review.....ICS is designed to be supported by an electronic case records system.'

DCSF Every Child Matters website.

- 2.2 The key aim of ICS is to provide front line staff and their managers with the necessary help through information communication technology (ICT) to record, collate, analyse and output the information required. All practitioners and managers working in children's social care services should work in accordance with the ICS framework from case referral to case closure.
- 2.3 The ICS system is not simply an electronic social care database, implementation of the system has radically changed the way in which social workers undertake their work with children and record their interventions. The system includes a set of records and exemplar documents; these are electronic forms which sit within the ICS system. They are designed to assist social workers to collect, organise, analyse and retrieve information about cases and constitute a major component of the e social care record. The forms are lengthy and complex documents and the transition from paper reports, forms and records to full implementation of the ICS system has required a radical shift in working practice.

- 2.3 All local authorities were required to implement the ICS system on 1 January 2007 and are at varying degrees of implementation. Hartlepool purchased its Integrated Children's System from LiquidLogic, one of the national providers of the system. At the time of implementation, the decision was taken to archive the CareFirst database and implement ICS as the main children's social care record. This necessitated the whole system becoming fully operational on the 'go live' date of 17 July 2007. In the longer term, this position will mean that Hartlepool has a complete ICS record and will only be required to roll out the phased changes as these are issued by the Government. Some other authorities, who have adopted a phased implementation process, will need to continue the gradual transition from paper to electronic records as well as updating phased changes.
- 2.4 The implementation process has had a significant impact on staff and working practice. It has presented real challenges to staff both in terms of their use of information technology and their work with children and their families. Earlier this year, it was identified that there was a need to deliver substantial training to staff on the ICS system. Jo Fox Associates was commissioned to deliver training over seven modules to all social care fieldwork staff to ensure they can use the ICS information technology to reflect and improve their practice. This training has been delivered over the past few months and is reaching its conclusion. Jo Fox is a qualified social worker and was the ICS Project Manager responsible for the implementation of LiquidLogic ICS in Cumbria County Council before commencing independent employment.
- 2.5 With the implementation of ICS, all Safeguarding and Specialist Services procedures and practice guidance manuals have become out of date as they were based on now obsolete Government templates and a paper record system. In order to maintain safe practice, build sustainability into the process and ensure social worker have access to local procedures, guidance and standards to inform their practice, it is essential that arrangements are made to develop a new Practice Manual that will be fit for purpose and reflect the Integrated Children's System.

3. PROPOSAL

- 3.1 It is proposed that a Practice Manual is developed for the Council by Jo Fox Associates as they have the specialist skills and knowledge to undertake this complex piece of work. This Manual will be a comprehensive document containing all the policies, procedures and processes that social work practitioners are required to carry out in their day to day tasks within ICS and safeguarding frameworks. In order to produce the Manual, Jo Fox Associates intend to work in collaboration with an Independent Social Care Consultant, who has recently worked as the Interim Safeguarding Manager for Hartlepool

Borough Council, and a social work practitioner with skills and experience in developing guidance on the LiquidLogic system. Jo Fox Associates are the only provider available within the market to meet the highly specialist requirements of this project.

- 3.2 The specification for the Practice Manual has been fully considered by the Safeguarding and Specialist Services Management team. The Manual would encompass policies, procedures, practice guidance and quality standards for social work practice for children. It would sit alongside the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) Safeguarding Procedures providing a comprehensive reference point for all staff and managers. The proposal is that the Manual would be developed as an electronic document that would be located on the Council's intranet and also be available to be downloaded as required. This will ensure that all staff, including those on mobile and flexible working will have open access to the Manual.
- 3.3 The Manual will cover all social work processes from first contact through to case closure and include specialist areas that require additional guidance, for example, children with disabilities, children looked after and mental health. The Manual will provide detailed information on the procedure, standards, guidance on practice, pathway maps and ICS screen shots to assist practitioners in recording information in the electronic record. It will also incorporate case studies giving best practice examples for each process, for example assessments, plans, reports to conference and reviewing arrangements.
- 3.4 The manual will also include the development of a quality assurance framework based on ICS, the *Every Child Matters* outcomes and key performance indicators. This will enable managers to monitor social work practice to ensure compliance with local and national standards. Senior managers will be able to undertake a programme of electronic file audit, considering issues of compliance, but also monitoring quality of work and impact upon outcomes for children.
- 3.5 The proposed project to develop this Practice Manual constitutes a very specialist and complex piece of work. It is envisaged that the finished Manual will bring together in one place all procedures governing practice in children's social care, as well as practice guidance and the process for managing this in the Integrated Children's System. Currently practitioners are working hard to consolidate their practice and the ICS system and the training delivered by Jo Fox has been very well received and regarded by staff. However, it is essential that sustainability is built into the system to ensure that practitioners have a clear reference point that guides their continuing practice and new staff can be guided in their practice and learning. The Practice Manual will be a keystone document in children's social care services.

- 3.6 Consideration has been given to producing this Manual using internal resources within the Safeguarding and Specialist Services division. It is the view of the Divisional Management Team that it would take six to nine months to produce the Manual using existing staff, and that this redeployment would move key staff away from front line service delivery. Moreover, no internal staff have the detailed knowledge and expertise of LiquidLogic's ICS product required to successfully deliver this project. The costs of purchasing such skills from LiquidLogic directly would greatly exceed the costs contained in section five of this report. It is essential that the Practice Guidance is available as swiftly as possible to guide and inform social work practice.
- 3.7 The timescale for completion by Jo Fox Associates is that the Manual will be in place by November 2008. Furthermore, Jo Fox Associates has also discussed with Islington Council (an authority who have also implemented LiquidLogic's ICS product) the release of their guidance manuals to Hartlepool in return for Hartlepool's finished document being sent to them for their use. Islington's guidance manuals can therefore be used as an interim set of guidance whilst the Hartlepool Manual is being produced to assist staff in carrying out their recording on ICS much more effectively and address the concerns that have been raised in the training. It is envisaged this can be put into place very quickly if the project is agreed.

4. EXCEPTION TO THE CONTRACT PROCEDURE RULES

- 4.1 The Council's Contract Procedure Rules for contracts between £20,000 and £50,000 require that at least three written quotations should be obtained wherever possible. However, Part A1 (ii) Application of Contract procedure Rules state that ...'these rules do not apply to contracts with professional persons or contractors for the execution of works or the provision of services in which the professional knowledge and the skills of these persons or contractors is of primary importance...'

In the project to develop the Practice Manual, the professional knowledge and highly specialist expertise of Jo Fox Associates is critical from the social work and ICS perspective and in order to achieve the Council's requirement, Jo Fox Associates intends to work in collaboration with other partners.

- 4.2 Paragraph A1 (iii) states that: 'No exception from any of the rules shall be made otherwise than by the direction of the Executive or the Council...'. The Portfolio Holder for Children's Services is requested therefore to direct an exception to the Contract procurement Rules in respect of this proposed project.

5. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1 The cost of the proposed project to produce a Practice Manual for Safeguarding and Specialist Services is £41,700. It is proposed that this is met in full from a carry forward sum in the training grant. To minimise the financial risk to the department, it is proposed that this would be paid in stages following completion of key milestone tasks as identified in the project plan.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 To approve the proposed project to produce a Practice Manual for Safeguarding and Specialist Services.
- 6.2 To direct an exception to the Council's Contract Procedure Rules in respect of this proposed project

7. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 There is an urgent need to update all policies, procedures and practice guidance documents in Safeguarding and Specialist Services to reflect the implementation of ICS and the move to electronic social care records. Practitioners need a detailed up to date document to inform their current practice and ensure consistent and safe practice.
- 7.2 This project is of a very specialist nature. A comprehensive and detailed working knowledge of social care practice and child care legislation is required. There is also the need to have a detailed understanding of LiquidLogic's particular ICS product as this is the system operational in Hartlepool. Jo Fox Associates are the only provider who have such specialist skills and it is recommended that the Portfolio Holder grants an exception to the Council's Contract Procedure rules to allow this company to undertake this project.

8. CONTACT OFFICER

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CHILDREN'S SERVICES PORTFOLIO

Report to Portfolio Holder
12th August 2008



Report of: Director of Children's Services

Subject: CHILDREN'S CENTRES, EXTENDED SCHOOLS AND EARLY YEARS OUTLINE PROGRAMME OF CAPITAL WORKS 2008 - 2011

SUMMARY

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To seek approval for the outline programme of capital works for children's centres, extended schools and early years 2008-2011.

2. SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

- 2.1 The report provides a background summary of children's centres, extended schools and early years development and outlines the proposed programme for capital works for 2008- 2011.
- 2.2 The capital funding available through the General Sure Start Grant is as follows:

	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010 - 2011
Children's Centres	£295,584	£0	£0
Children's Centres maintenance	£20,111	£34,737	£36,553
Extended Schools	£176,005	£0	£0
Early Years	£351,807	£351,807	£351,807

Children's Centre funding is to be used to develop third phase children's centres which are centres in the 70% non IMD (Index of Multiple Deprivation) areas of town.

Extended Schools funding is to support the development of the extended schools core offer. All schools need to be extended by 2010.

Early Years funding is to support the implementation of the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework which is statutory from September 2008. The funding is primarily aimed at private daycare settings in the first instance.

3. RELEVANCE TO PORTFOLIO MEMBER

The Portfolio Holder has responsibility for Children's Services issues.

4. TYPE OF DECISION

Non key decision.

5. DECISION MAKING ROUTE

Children's Services Portfolio Holder meeting 12th August 2008.

6. DECISION(S) REQUIRED

To approve the planned programme of Children's Centres, Extended Services and Early Years Capital works 2008 - 2011.

Report of: Director of Children's Services

Subject: CHILDREN'S CENTRES, EXTENDED
SCHOOLS AND EARLY YEARS OUTLINE
CAPITAL WORKS 2008 -2011

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To seek approval for the planned programme of capital works for children's centres, extended schools and early years 2008 – 2011.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 Children's Centres and Extended Schools

- 2.1.1 In December 2004 the government published its 10 Year Childcare Strategy. This requires the authority to develop children's centres across the borough by 2010. Centres need to offer early education integrated with childcare, family support and outreach to parents, and child and family health services.

In addition, the local authority (LA) is required to ensure that an extended schools core offer is in place for pupils by 2010. The core offer consists of study support activities, childcare available 8 am – 6 pm, parenting support and swift and easy referral to a range of specialised support services for pupils.

- 2.1.2 A 'Children's Centres and Extended Schools Strategy' document was developed in 2006 which set out the process of ensuring that these two requirements are met in Hartlepool and brought together in one coherent strategy. There was an extensive period of consultation following which it was agreed that children's centres and extended schools activities would be focused around 5 localities across the town.

Cabinet approved the final Children's Centres and Extended Schools Strategy on 19th June 2006 and authorised officers to begin implementing changes required for service delivery.

2.2 Early Years Foundation Stage Framework

- 2.2.1 The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is a statutory framework to be implemented in September 2008 which sets the standards for learning, development and care of children from birth to 5.

The Early Years Foundation Stage builds on and replaces the existing statutory Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage, the non-statutory Birth to Three Matters framework, and the regulatory frameworks in the National Standards for Under 8s Day Care and Childminding.

All registered early years providers and schools will be required to use the Early Years Foundation Stage from September 2008.

3. CAPITAL FUNDING

- 3.1 There is capital funding available through the General Sure Start Grant as follows:

	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010 - 2011
Children's Centres	£295,584	£0	£0
Children's Centres maintenance	£20,111	£34,737	£36,553
Extended Schools	£176,005	£0	£0
Early Years	£351,807	£351,807	£351,807

The funding allocations along with the criteria for children's centres, extended services and early years capital are attached as **Appendix 1**.

- 3.2 The Council is expected to develop eight Children's Centres by 2010 covering the whole of the town. Seven centres have already been designated (Headland, St John Vianney, Chatham House, Lowthian Road, Stranton, Rift House/Kingsley and Rossmere). The LA needs to develop one further Children's Centre to achieve its target.
- 3.3 The government expect all Children's Services capital to be used in conjunction with Primary Capital funding if appropriate. Unfortunately conflicting timescales mean that Children's Centres and Extended Schools capital will not be able to be used with Primary Capital although there may be scope to use 2010/2011 early years funding alongside Primary Capital. Ongoing discussions are taking place between the Sure Start and Schools Transformation team to ensure all plans are joined up.
- 3.4 The funding for early years is to be used to support the implementation of the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework. The

government expect LAs to prioritise support to private settings with support for school settings coming in Year 2 and 3 of the funding.

4. PROPOSALS

4.1 Children's Centres

Government guidance on third phase children's centres indicates that centres should be developed in areas of non –disadvantage. These centres do not have to provide the full core offer. Guidance also highlights the need to base phase three children's centres on existing provision e.g. schools. Data on the number of children reached through the current seven children's centres indicate that there are still a number of children that need access to a children's centre in the Throston, Fens and Seaton areas of town.

Officers are currently looking at possible options for these areas in conjunction with Primary Capital and possible health (Primary Care Trust) developments. Detailed proposals and costs will be presented to the Portfolio Holder for approval over the coming months.

4.2 Extended Schools

Extended Schools funding can be used to support schools to deliver the extended schools core offer which includes childcare, community access and swift and easy access. Stranton Primary School in partnership with NDC (New Deal for Communities) are proposing to add a multi agency team room and community café to the existing centre to allow further community access and ensure that they are fulfilling swift and easy access. The extended schools element of the General Sure Start Grant will match fund an element of this build. This will therefore not only support the school in further developing its extended school offer but ensure that the Integrated Children's Centre team is embedded in the centre.

4.3 Early Years

This funding is to support the implementation of the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework. Government guidance advises LAs to prioritise funding to the private, voluntary and independent sector in the first instance. In light of this the 2008/2009 allocation will be available for private settings to submit proposals for consideration. An initial audit of provision indicated that settings needed to focus on accessibility, outdoor environment and ICT. Therefore priority will be given to these areas in any proposals.

A grant process has been set up to enable private settings to identify key areas of development in relation to capital work. The grant can be used to

- improve the learning environment,
- increase accessibility,
- increase inclusivity,
- increase flexible free nursery entitlement.

5. RISK IMPLICATIONS

Capital works carry a risk that projects may go over budget if building work encounters unforeseen problems. Part of the capital grant will be kept as a contingency fund.

6. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Funding to support this capital works programme is provided entirely through the central government grant for children's centres capital. Actual costs of projects have not been established yet. Estimated costs of projects will be presented to the Portfolio Holder over the next few months.

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS

All capital works must be undertaken in line with the Disability Discrimination Act requirements to ensure that all children's centres are fully accessible with special needs and disabilities.

8. SECTION 17

The development of children's centres supports early intervention to those families who are disadvantaged and in need in order to support them in parenting and supporting successful outcomes for their children.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

The portfolio holder is asked to approve the outline programme of capital works for children's centres, extended services and early years 2008-2011.

10. CONTACT OFFICER

Danielle Swainston, Sure Start, Extended Services and Early Years Manager (01429 523671).

Grant	Criteria	2008 - 2009	2009 - 2010	2010 - 2011	Projects for 2008-09
Children's centre capital	Target of at least one children's centre located outside the top 30% IMD areas, co-located on primary school sites, grant for refurb/modernisations/ extensions only. Grant to be used in conjunction with PCP.	£295,584	£0	£0	Small extension to Throston and Fens Primary Schools to provide accommodation for children's centre services.
Children's centre maintenance (capital)	Maintenance grant for existing children's centres - works to be undertaken include general painting and decorating, urgent heating maintenance and some external play areas.	£20,111	£34,737	£36,553	All existing SureStart children's centre hubs and satellites.
Extended schools	The grant is part of the School Capital Settlement and is to be used to enable schools meet the core offer of extended services including 8am - 6pm childcare.	£176,005	£0	£0	Match fund NDC funding to support community building and multi agency room to increase community access and swift and easy access (Stranton).
Early Years	Year 1 funding to be used primarily in Private/ Voluntary/ Independent childcare settings that deliver free nursery entitlement. Years 2 and 3 likely to be used to improve maintained nurseries. Grant will be used to improve the learning environment, accessibility, inclusivity and increased flexible free nursery entitlement. 11 PVI settings are eligible for the funding. Any unspent funds can be allocated to both Children's Centre and/ or Extended Schools/ Maintenance projects	£351,807	£351,807	£351,807	Grant process - Aldersyde Day Nursery, Footprints Learning for Life, Lonsdale Day Nursery, Playmates Private Day Nursery, Rainbow Nursery, Kiddikins Nursery, Chatham House Nursery, Bush Babies Nursery, Starfish Daycare, Clever Clogs, Scallywags Childsplay.

		£843,507	£386,544	£388,360
Total overall capital budget 08-11	£1,618,411			

Carry forward 06-08 £200,584

This will be all spent on final project invoices and to cover the Kingsley overspend.

Overspend 06-08

Kingsley Children's Centre overspent by £75,926. This was due to unanticipated IT installation costs and also the inclusion of an outside play area as part of the contract. Overspend can be covered in the 06-08 grant allocation.

PORTFOLIO HOLDER REPORT

12th August 2008



Report of: Director of Children's Services

Subject: HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT POLICY

SUMMARY

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report explains why it is timely to review the current Home to School Transport Policy in light of local and national changes. The Portfolio Holder is asked to approve a period of formal consultation on a revised draft policy and to receive a report on the outcomes from this consultation.

2. SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

- 2.1 The aim of a review of the Home to School Transport School Policy is to take account of legislative and local procedural changes relating to free home to school transport.
- 2.2 The attached draft revised policy seeks to establish the criteria by which transport will be provided to pupils and students and the procedures which will be followed by the LA in administering and providing this service.

3. RELEVANCE TO PORTFOLIO HOLDER

- 3.1 To ensure that Hartlepool Borough Council fulfils its statutory duties relating Home to School Transport in accordance with the Education & Inspections Act 2006.

4. TYPE OF DECISION

- 4.1 Non Key.

5. DECISION MAKING ROUTE

- 5.1 Portfolio Holder only.

6. DECISION(S) REQUIRED

6.1 That the Portfolio Holder:

- Approves the revised draft Home to School Transport Policy for consultation.
- Agrees to receive a report on the outcomes of the consultation in September 2008 together with a final draft policy to be implemented with effect from the start of the 2008/09 school year.

Report of: Director of Children's Services

Subject: HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT POLICY

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report explains why it is timely to review the current Home to School Transport Policy in light of local and national changes. The Portfolio Holder is asked to approve a period of consultation on a revised draft policy and to receive a report on the outcomes from this consultation.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Children's Services Student Support Team currently administers transport arrangements and determines entitlement for home to school transport for children resident within the Borough of Hartlepool, in accordance with the parameters laid down in the current Policy for Home to School Transport. In addition to mainstream home to school transport, which currently transports approximately **627** pupils, the team also manages transport for **370** children attending special schools, respite, alternative education, looked after children and children travelling under the concessionary fare scheme. The team also manages the "mega-rider" permit scheme for approximately **160** post-16 students. Figures taken during 2006/07 show approximately **572** mainstream pupils, **375** Special Needs Pupils and **166** post 16 students, demonstrating a minor increase in mainstream pupils being transported.

- 2.2 Under current legislation transport must be provided as follows:

- Free transport must be provided where:
 - The LA considers such provision necessary for any school age pupil to attend school e.g. pupils with Special Education Needs;
 - Any school age pupil attends the nearest suitable school but which is further from home than the statutory walking distance i.e. 2 miles for pupils up to 8 years old and 3 miles for pupils over 8 years old;
- The LA may assist other pupils either wholly or in part at its discretion.

- 2.3 The current Policy for Home to School Transport was implemented in September 2005 and needs to be amended to reflect the transport implications of the Education and Inspections Act 2006. This act includes provisions which extend school transport rights for children from low income groups i.e. those who are eligible for Free School Meals or whose parents are in receipt of Maximum Working Tax Credit.

2.4 The extended rights to transport for pupils from low income families are as follows:

- From September 2007 LAs had a duty to provide pupils aged 8-11 from low income families with free transport to their nearest suitable school where this exceeded a distance of 2 miles from their home (The previous statutory distance was 3 miles but this legislation had no impact on Hartlepool as our local policy, under discretionary powers, already provided free transport to all pupils for distances over 2 miles).
- From September 2008 LAs have a duty to provide secondary pupils from low income groups with transport to any one of the three nearest schools between 2 and 6 miles from their home, and to the nearest suitable school preferred on grounds of religion or belief up to a distance of 15 miles from their home.
- This change will have implications for the following Hartlepool pupils from low income groups:
 - Secondary age pupils currently travelling between 2 and 3 miles must be provided with free transport
 - Secondary age pupils, who exercise their preference to attend a school (one of three) which is above 2 miles away, rather than just the nearest one, must be provided with free transport.
- The criteria relating to religious beliefs is not expected to have any impact in Hartlepool unless:
 - Families with religious beliefs which are not currently provided for in the education system, move in to the Borough.
 - There are no places available in existing Church schools. In such cases the LA would be responsible for arranging travel to neighbouring authorities for journeys of up to 15 miles.

2.5 The Portfolio Holder is asked to note that some aspects of Home to School Transport are evolving and the current policy will need to be reviewed as and when the impact of transport from these initiatives becomes clear, in particular the Extended Services and the 14-19 Agenda, as summarised below.

2.6 The move towards extended services within schools is not covered in the current policy (policy ref 6.12). The Government's stated aim of the extended service agenda is to provide opportunities and services for all outside of normal school hours. It is clear, therefore, that the needs of pupils entitled to free home-school transport should be considered. Service Level Agreements with individual schools will need to be established and appropriate funding is to be identified in order to support the provision of transport relating to extended services.

- 2.7 The 14-19 Strategy and Operational Plan for 2006/09 (policy ref 6.13) has been produced by the Hartlepool 14-19 Strategic Board to develop coherent, high quality, learning opportunities for young people aged 14-19. The agenda will raise significantly the levels of participation in learning opportunities by removing the barriers to learning and meeting individual need. It is, therefore clear, that pupils' transport needs will need further consideration. This education reform will enable students to move from one establishment to another within normal school hours.
- 2.8 This policy confirms that "planned transport" (i.e. organised and scheduled by the local authority) will be the preferred option in order to ensure that timetables are manageable, however alternative arrangements will be made when this is not possible. This form of provision will be identified by the authority and appropriate funding secured. All arrangements will be managed through Service Level Agreements.
- 2.9 In addition to legislative changes the main local changes within the draft policy are as follows:
- (policy ref 2.6) The introduction of a Special Education Needs Transport Panel aims to ensure the best method of provision for SEN pupils. This process will also determine if Passenger Transport Assistants are required. Currently all decisions are made by a single officer within the council.
 - (policy ref 6.7) It is proposed that surplus seats on buses and taxis provided by the Authority continue to be offered to pupils who are not entitled to a free place. However the charge for such seats will be changed to reflect the actual cost rather than a notional concessionary charge.
 - (policy ref 6.7) It is proposed that surplus seats will be allocated to those pupils on a school transport waiting list who have the longest distance to travel. This measure will formalise the process in order to be fair and transparent.
 - (policy ref 2.13) It is proposed that the cost of transport for pupils attending alternative education will be confirmed as the responsibility of the appropriate school. This formalises the current practice.

3. DRAFT HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT POLICY

- 3.1 The revised draft Home to School Transport policy is attached to this report. This document describes the criteria used to determine eligibility for transport assistance to pupils between home and school/college. The document also describes the procedures by which applications are made and administered by the LA.

- 3.2 The draft Policy indicates that, in line with current practice, bus passes for use on public transport will be the preferred option for pupils entitled to transport assistance, where this is practicable, to allow flexibility.
- 3.3 The development of a central Integrated Transport Unit within Hartlepool Council, which, subject to consultation, will include those members of the Children's Services Student Support Team who currently administer Home to School Transport will require a clear, unambiguous policy, to ensure that staff considering eligibility have clear and concise guidance.
- 3.4 The SEN Transport Panel (policy ref 2.6) will have representatives from the following:
- Special Educational Needs Assessment and Review Team
 - Home to School Transport Team
 - Children's Services Health and Safety Officer
 - Integrated Transport Unit Manager (Chair)
- 3.5 The Transport Panel will review individual circumstances and make a determination as to whether or not the child receives free home to school transport and what type of transport is most appropriate.
- 3.6 Surplus Seats (policy ref 6.7) it is proposed that surplus seats on buses and taxis provided by the Authority continue to be offered to pupils who are not entitled to a free place. However the charge for such seats will reflect the actual cost. It is proposed that in future seats will be allocated using a distance and waiting list criteria, for example a child attending a school who requires transport will have the distance between home and school measured. The pupils name will then be added to the appropriate route waiting list. When a seat is available, the place will be allocated to the pupil who lives the furthest distance between home and school.
- 3.7 Alternative Provision (policy ref 2.13) The Transport Policy must reflect the requirement to introduce a managed move for a pupil and the possible placement of pupils in alternative provision in accordance with the department's "Hard to Place Pupils Protocol". It is proposed that, where the transfer from one school to another is agreed to be in the best interests of the pupil, free transport may be provided to the new school even though the distance to the old school is less than the statutory distance. The cost for such travel arrangement will be confirmed as the responsibility of the appropriate school.
- 3.8 School Travel Plans (policy ref section 4). Plans are being introduced to encourage pupils to walk, cycle or use public transport to travel to school. The new draft policy reflects this aim by focusing on use of these methods of travel in preference to others. Section 4 of the Policy (Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy) has already been presented to Cabinet for approval (December 2007).

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Home to School transport costs are a significant element of the Children's Services departments budget with annual spending of approximately £1.3m.
- 4.2 Additional funding has been received from the DCFS in respect of the Education and Inspections Act extending the right to free transport. This funding has been incorporated into the Home to School Transport Budget as follows:
- With effect from 2007/8 (Primary pupils) - £3,296 per year
 - With effect from 2008/9 (Secondary pupils) - £17,840 per year

5. CONSULTATION

- 5.1 Following Portfolio Holder consideration formal consultation will be carried out with schools, colleges, neighbouring Local Authorities and diocesan authorities.
- 5.2 The outcome of this consultation, together with any proposed policy updates, will be brought back to the Portfolio Holder in September 2008 so that a final determination regarding adoption of the policy can be made. A guide to parents summarising the key policy criteria and considerations will also be issued.
- 5.3 It is proposed that the policy be implemented for the 2008/09 school year.

6. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Portfolio Holder approval for formal consultation	August 2008
Consultation Period	August – September 2008
Portfolio Holder approval of revised Policy	September 2008
Implementation and production of updated guide to pupils and parents issued	September 2008

7. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 If the draft policy is not approved the Council may fail to administer its statutory duties relating Home to School Transport in accordance with the Education & Inspections Act 2006 and may be open to legal challenge.

8. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

8.1 The policy review has been drafted in compliance with legislation and regulation relating to:

- Human Rights Act 1998
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Children Act 2004
- Education and Inspections Act 2006

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 That the Portfolio Holder:

- Approves the revised draft Home to School Transport Policy for consultation.
- Agrees to receive a report on the outcomes of the consultation in September 2008 together with a final draft policy to be implemented with effect from the start of the 2008/09 school year.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 Appendix 1: Revised Draft Transport to School Policy

11. CONTACT OFFICER

11.1 Paul Briggs: Assistant Director - Resources & Support Services

Hartlepool Borough Council Children's Services

Draft Home to School Transport Policy 2008/09



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Introduction

Hartlepool Borough Council recognises that it is the responsibility of the parent / carer to ensure that the child attends school and makes any necessary transport arrangements. However, in certain circumstances, the Council will provide home to school transport, and in some cases free bus passes, if criteria are met.

This document describes the criteria used to determine eligibility for home to school transport assistance and supports the local authority in administering statutory duties relating to sustainable travel and the provision of school transport. The policy demonstrates how pupils will be assessed in order to access their entitlement to transport provision. Further information will be available to parents/carers in a home to school transport information to parents guide. This brochure will complement the information identified in this policy.

This policy has been developed in line with current Government legislation and is in accordance with the Education Act, 1996 (particularly relating to sections 444 and 509) and the Education and Inspections Act 2006. This policy will be reviewed and updated periodically to ensure that arrangements adopted within Hartlepool reflect any new legislation and guidance.

Hartlepool's Children's Services Department will continue to offer school places to children that are within a reasonable distance of their place of residence. In some cases this is not always practical, and therefore the Authority will aim to:

- Promote walking to and from school in order to reduce the number of car journeys as part of the Authority's commitment to protecting the environment in which we live and work
- Strive to ensure that journey times to and from school for pupils are reasonable so no pupil is disadvantaged by the routes in use,
- Provide transport, where necessary, which is safe and meets the requirements of all parties whilst remaining cost effective.

Hartlepool Borough Council expects the service delivered to be of a high standard. Those pupils who qualify under this policy can expect that standards will be monitored and maintained.

Legislative Framework

The Education Act 1944 as amended by the Education Acts 1986 and 1996 and the Education Reform Act 1988 sets out the minimum provision for home to school transport which local authorities must provide.

The provision of home to school transport is covered by section 508 (1-6) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

The basic provisions are:

- The Local Authority has a duty to provide free transport if they consider it necessary in order for a pupil to attend school
- The Local Authority may assist other pupils with their fares either wholly or in part

- Free transport is always necessary for a pupil aged between 5 and 16 who attends the nearest suitable school but is further from home than the statutory walking distance.

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 extends Local Authority duties and powers relating to home to school transport by extending entitlement to free home to school transport for low income families.

The Statutory maximum walking distances are:

- 2 miles for a child up to the age of 8 years
- 3 miles for a child over the age of 8 years

In Hartlepool the statutory walking distance is modified by discretionary power to achieve consistency between sectors:

- 2 miles up to the age of 11 years (primary pupils)
- 3 mile from the age of 11 – 16 years (secondary pupils)

These distances refer to “available routes” which the Courts have defined as one “along which a child accompanied as necessary can walk with reasonable safety to school. It does not fail to qualify as “available” because of dangers which would arise if the child was unaccompanied.” i.e. being accompanied or not will not alter the safety aspect of the route being assessed.

Where Transport is provided this would be for the full distance between home and school/unit unless individual assessment allows that pupils may appropriately be expected to walk a short distance to/from the school/unit picking up/setting down point.

The local authority has a duty to provide suitable travel arrangements for eligible pupils of compulsory school age (Schedule 35B Education Inspections Act 2006) **The Authority is not required to provide transport where a child attends, at the parent’s wishes, a school, which is not the nearest to the home.** However this situation will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis if the reason for the pupil attending a parental preference school is because of religious belief.

Mainstream and Low Income Transport Policy (Section 1)

The following information was published in the Home to School Travel and Transport Guide by the Department for Education and Skills (now known as the Department for Children Schools and Families) in 2007. The guidance covers local authority duties and powers relating to sustainable travel and travel arrangements for children and young people.

1.1 Primary and secondary aged pupil entitlement

Transport will be provided free of charge for those pupils of primary and secondary age who are travelling over the statutory walking distance to/from the main entrance of their nearest suitable school.

Pupils may be required to use public transport and in these cases they will be provided with a free bus pass in order for them to use the service.

1.2 Children entitled to free school meals, or whose parents are in receipt of the maximum level of Working Tax Credit.

Primary School Extended Rights to Free Travel (low income families)

Regardless of the level of family income, children of compulsory school age, but under the age of 8 (but 11 by local authority discretion), are entitled to free travel arrangements to their nearest qualifying school more than two miles from their home. In addition, from September 2007, children aged eight, but under age 11 from low income families must have travel arrangements made and provided free where they live more than two miles from their nearest qualifying school. This two mile limit should be measured in the same way as the “statutory walking distance”, i.e. along the “nearest available route”. This might include footpaths, bridleways and other tracks which are not passable by motorised transport.

Secondary School Extended Rights to Free Travel (low income families)

Extended rights for children of compulsory school age will commence September 2008. These rights extend a right to free transport to the most disadvantaged pupils of secondary school age (those entitled to free school meals or those whose parents are in receipt of the maximum level of Working Tax Credit) to include transport to any one of their:

- Three nearest schools between 2 and 6 miles from their home
- To the nearest suitable school preferred on grounds of Religion or Belief up to a distance of 15 miles from their home

1.3 Distance Measuring for Free Transport for Children of Low Income Families

The 2 mile limit is measured in the same way as the “statutory walking distance”. However, the 6 mile and 15 mile upper limits are not walking routes. These routes are those which are passable using a suitable motorised vehicle. In short, the two upper limits will be measured along road routes.

1.4 Grounds of Religion or Belief

Where the distance travelled exceeds 2 miles, pupils will be provided with home to school transport if they attend the nearest approved school of their parents’ practising faith. The eligibility for school transport again relates to the statutory walking distances.

The following is an extract from the DCSF document: Home to School Travel and Transport Guidance; issued to local authorities in May 2007.

The definition of ‘religion’ includes those religions widely recognised in this country such as Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Judaism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Rastafarianism, Baha’is, Zoroastrianism and Jainism. Equally, denominations or sects within a religion can be considered as a religion or religious belief, such as Catholicism or Protestantism within Christianity. The Department for Children Schools and Families

believes that the main limitation on what constitutes a “religion” is that it must have a clear structure and belief system.

For a “belief” to be worthy of protection, it must attain a certain level of clarity, seriousness, cohesion and importance; be worthy of respect in a democratic society; and not be incompatible with human dignity or the fundamental rights of the child. Examples of beliefs are Humanism and Atheism.

Case law suggests that “belief” equates to “conviction”, and based on European case law, it has to be more than an opinion or idea. A belief must be genuinely held and the parent bears a heavy burden of showing that it is the real reason for whatever it is they are doing.

Based on case law, the Department considers that the following example can be considered as philosophical belief in the educational context:

belief in single sex education, where that belief is based on the parent’s religious views.

“Beliefs” which have been considered as not meeting the requirements of cogency, seriousness, coherence, and so on - and are not therefore included in this duty include:

- A wish for a child to attend a particular category of school. The case law concerned a grant maintained school, but the Department would consider a specific wish to attend, for example, a grammar school as fitting this category. In the view of the Department, a Local Authority would not need to have regard to such a wish when determining whether or not to make transport arrangements for a particular child;
- Preference for a particular type of management or governance which does not affect the curricula or teaching at the school;
- A belief that a child should be educated privately;
- A wish for a child to attend school where they will be taught in a particular language;
- objection to rules requiring that a school uniform be worn;
- Content of school curriculum (sex education) provided that the curriculum did not amount to indoctrination incompatible with a parent’s religious or philosophical convictions;
- Objections to the curriculum, where special arrangements made by the school or authorities (such as allowing children to be withdrawn from class) ensure the curriculum is not forced on them contrary to their convictions; and
- Belief that a child should receive a particular type of educational provision.

1.5 Home Address

Transport assistance is based upon the distance from the home address to school and will be verified using the information supplied by the parent / carer to the Admissions Team within the Children’s Service Department. The Admission policy defines a home address as being the address at which the parent / guardian ordinarily resides and with whom the child normally lives.

In situations of joint parental custody, the home address would be the address which the parent / guardian, who is in receipt of the child benefit for that pupil, resides.

1.6 Change of address

If during their school life, a pupil changes address and intends to continue at the same school, it is the responsibility of the parent to ensure that the child attends school. The terms of section 444 (4 & 5) and section 509 (1 & 2) of the Education Act 1996 places no responsibility on the Local Authority to provide home to school transport where a pupil voluntarily changes address.

1.7 Parental preference

If a child is attending a school of parental preference i.e. not the school that the Authority considers being the nearest suitable, within the terms of sections 444 (4) and 509 (1 & 2) of the Education Act 1996, there is no duty to provide free transport.

1.8 Medical cases

In circumstances where a pupil lives within the statutory walking distance but is unable to make their way to school due to a short-term medical condition (e.g. broken leg), free transport may be considered.

Parents are required to make an application in writing to the home to school transport service, and each case will be reviewed on an individual basis and will be granted at the discretion of the Integrated Transport Unit.

If a pupil is attending a school at the parents request and the school is not the nearest to the home, parents may be required to pay their usual daily cost as a contribution towards the cost incurred by the Authority.

1.9 Transport provision for special circumstances (discretionary assistance)

Each application for discretionary assistance will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis and may be granted for a set period of time. Discretionary award of home to school transport is subject to review more frequently than other circumstances, for example children who are placed in alternative accommodation following domestic issues involving the Social Care Team.

1.10 Expected level of behaviour for all Pupils

The consequences of poor behaviour on school buses can be wide ranging. Other passengers may be deterred from using public transport shared with poorly behaved school pupils; in extreme cases, serious injury and even death may result from an accident caused by such behaviour.

The Local Authority will work in partnership with schools to promote appropriate standards of behaviour by pupils on their journey to and from school through rewarding positive behaviour and using sanctions to address poor behaviour. The Education and Inspections Act 2006 requires Headteachers to determine what

measures should be taken to promote self-discipline among pupils; and encourage positive behaviour and respect for others, including the prevention of bullying. The Act also suggests that Headteachers must make and publish rules, and decide on penalties for unacceptable behaviour and empowers them to take action to address unacceptable behaviour even when this takes place outside the school premises and when pupils are not under the legal control of the school.

Guidance for schools on behaviour on school transport is contained within Key Stage 3 Behaviour and Attendance materials. Schools recognise that positive behaviour on the journey can help enhance the school's reputation, and that it also supports good behaviour within the school. The Integrated Transport Unit will work with the police, bus operators the local community and schools to promote positive behaviour, and publish guidance to parents on related matters. It is the Local Authority's view that persistent poor behaviour on the journey to and from school can be grounds for exclusion from transport.

It is the policy of the local authority to withdraw transport, either for a fixed period, or permanently for more serious or persistent cases of misbehaviour in order to signal to pupils and parents that behaviour which endangers other pupils – or indeed the driver and other passengers – will not be tolerated.

Pupils being transported will be expected to follow the same behaviour codes as they do when in school. Unacceptable behaviour will be monitored and appropriate action taken. Parents will be responsible for transporting their own children during any period of exclusion from transport.

When considering whether to exclude a pupil from transport, the Integrated Transport Unit will require written statements from the driver and the Passenger Assistant in support of alleged unacceptable behaviour. Consultation will involve the Head Teacher before any exclusion is implemented.

Pilot schemes will be considered such as driver training, Behaviour Liaison Officers and the installation of CCTV in an attempt to improve behaviour on school buses.

No eating, drinking or smoking will be allowed on any vehicle at any time.

1.11 Inaccurate Applications

The Local Authority will reclaim the cost of any transport provided, if it is found that any incorrect information has been provided to the Local Authority in order to gain free transport.

1.12 Application process

Application forms for Home to School Transport are available from the Integrated Transport Unit and parents will be notified within 5 working days of receipt of the application form, if their application has been successful. Unsuccessful applicants have the right to appeal against the decision taken.

Special Educational Needs Transport Policy (Section 2)

2.1 General

All pupils, including those with a Special Educational Need (SEN), are subject to general Local Authority Transport criteria as described in section 1 for primary and secondary mainstream pupils.

The majority of pupils with Special Educational Needs will not require assistance with home to school transport because they will be attending local mainstream schools and do not need special arrangements e.g. because of a physical disability. In normal circumstances only those pupils who have been assessed or are undergoing assessment and meet the criteria set out in 2.2 will receive assistance.

Each case will be assessed individually in relation to the pupil's school placement. The SEN Manager will bring cases to the attention of the SEN Transport Panel for consideration of special transport needs. The starting point for consideration is that SEN pupils have the same entitlement to transport as any other pupil.

The SEN Manager may, in consultation with parents/carers, recommend an appropriate educational establishment for children with statements of special educational needs. There are also some children with special needs but without statements for whom special arrangements will be required e.g. transport as determined by the SEN Manager. For example a special school, mainstream school, additional resource at a mainstream school or a residential school outside the Borough. The mode of travel and the need for a Passenger Assistant will be considered by the SEN Transport Panel. The majority of special needs transport will be provided by specialised mini-buses and taxis.

Parents are advised that where home to school transport is agreed by the Local Authority, their child will be expected to join an existing transport route and share the vehicle with other pupils unless otherwise specified through the statement process. Where a pupil is educated outside Hartlepool, the Local Authority will explore all cost effective means of transportation before reaching a decision on the type of transport. In some cases where it is felt more appropriate a bus pass may be provided instead of a taxi or mini-bus provision.

The provision of home to school transport is subject to annual review and can therefore be withdrawn if it is no longer deemed necessary by the SEN panel. This action, however, would not normally come into effect until the term following the decision.

2.2 Criteria for SEN Home to School Transport

This policy seeks to develop both inclusion and independence for all eligible pupils. Pupils will be encouraged to develop both educationally and socially. The SEN Transport Panel will consider options on a regular basis to support pupils in accessing independent travel training in order to increase individual mobility.

The SEN Manager will consider at the time of the initial assessment whether or not pupils need assistance with travelling to and from school. This view will be presented to the SEN Transport Panel for further consideration.

The Local Authority considers the individual needs of children and will consult with parents and teachers and may seek professional advice in arriving at a final decision. Assessment may also include face-to-face contact with the pupil in assessing eligibility and the results will be recorded on the transport assessment form.

When deciding if a pupil is to be allocated free home to school transport or a bus pass, the SEN Transport Panel will take the following into account:

- the age of the pupil
- whether the walking route is appropriate for the child
- the nature and severity of the pupil's special need
- whether suitable public transport is available.
- whether the pupil would be a danger to drivers and other passengers if public transport were used
- whether the pupil has serious medical problems, short or long term
- whether the pupil has serious difficulty with walking or general mobility
- whether there are any severe family/personal circumstances which impact on the pupil's ability to attend school that should be taken into account
- the most cost effective mode of transport for journeys to placements outside Hartlepool e.g. trains instead of taxi.
- any other individual circumstance

The list is for guidance only, and satisfaction of one or more of the criteria does not automatically support entitlement to transport assistance.

Where a pupil moves from planned home to school transport to independent home to school travel, an assessment will be made as to whether it is appropriate for the pupil to receive a bus pass.

2.3 Passenger Assistants

Passenger Assistants will be provided where specified on the SEN transport request form and considered by the SEN Transport Panel. There is no minimum and maximum age that determines whether a Passenger Assistant is required.

The needs of each individual child will be assessed to determine whether they will require supervision by a Passenger Assistant taking account of

- risk assessment of the child
- specific needs as determined in the criteria for transport
- length of journey.

The local authority employs Passenger Assistants who will have had specialist training in order to understand the needs of pupils within their care. All Local Authority Passenger Assistants will be subject to an enhanced check by the Criminal Records Bureau.

Passenger Assistants will be responsible for the care and supervision of pupils to and from school. They will oversee the pupil's conduct and safety in such a way that the driver is unhindered in his/her duties.

Provision of a Passenger Assistant at any one time does not guarantee that this will be an ongoing arrangement and the requirement will be reviewed by the SEN Transport Panel on a regular basis and will not be written into the statement of special education needs.

The aim of the home to school transport service is to ensure that young people reach their school or alternative placement in a physical and mental state in which they are fit to learn and benefit from the education provided. To this end, a Passenger Assistant will accompany some vulnerable young people who require additional assistance. The role of the Passenger Assistant includes prevention of self-harm, prevention of harm to / by others, assisting the driver in the loading of passengers ensuring transportation in a safe and appropriate manner.

Most pupils will share vehicles with several other pupils attending the same school or one nearby. In some instances it will be appropriate to consider additional support which will be specified on the application for transport, or having given further consideration to the geographical / economic features of the journey.

Pre-school, Primary and Secondary Pupils

Pupils in the following categories who are eligible for free home to school transport under the Council's policies will be provided with Passenger Assisted transport:

- young people attending schools for pupils with severe learning difficulties
- young people with dual sensory impairments
- young people with severe emotional behavioural and social difficulties who, in the judgement of the SEN Team and Transport Officer require a Passenger Assistant for their own safety and welfare and that of others
- young people of primary school age attending support units and assessment centres
- young people of pre-school age
- young people requiring constant medical oversight
- where more than two wheelchair users are conveyed in a vehicle
- in exceptional circumstances, following further Risk Assessment in response to a request from a parent, or other professionals.

2.4 Post 16 students

Students of this age group are expected to be more mature. Independent travel training will be provided and further consideration will be given to the interim support of a Passenger Assistant if students have additional needs confirmed by the SEN team. These may include but not be limited to the following:

- Students with autistic spectrum disorders
- Where three or more wheelchair users are conveyed at one time
- The medical needs of a student require constant attendance

2.5 Review Process

The requirements of pupils with Special Educational Needs will be reviewed annually by the SEN Transport Panel and will support part of the annual review process.

2.6 Special Educational Needs Transport Panel

The SEN transport panel will have representatives from all of the following:

- Special Educational Needs Assessment and Review Team
- Home to School Transport Team
- Children's Services Health and Safety Representative
- Integrated Transport Unit Manager (Chair)

The transport panel will review individual circumstances and make a determination as to whether or not the child receives free home to school transport and what type of transport is the most appropriate. In the event that consensus is not achieved cases are referred to the Director of Children's Services for a decision.

Where during the course of any school year the SEN Transport Panel determines that the provision of free home to school transport need no longer be provided it will cease at the end of the term in which the Panel's decision was made.

All young people who receive free home to school transport will be subject to review:

- At the end of Year 2 in which the pupil attains the age of 8 years
- At the end of Year 6
- At the end of Y9
- During Year 11 for those children transferring to Post 16 in a maintained school
- Following the successful completion of Independent Travel Training

2.7 Confidential Information

Every effort will be made to ensure that the same Passenger Assistant and driver continue to transport a child. However this may not always be possible and changes may need to be made, for example as a result of staff unavailability / staff turnover / contract renewals. The Local Authority reserves the right to make changes to routes and modes of travel as necessary.

The private hire vehicle operator awarded the contract and the Passenger Assistant provided (if appropriate), will be given information on a confidential basis outlining any particular difficulties or circumstances which they need to be made aware of.

Information will also be made available to key staff involved in transportation as to whether the child being transported is prone to fits or other symptoms, which may affect the journey to and from school.

The Local Authority will ensure that this information is provided to key staff in consultation with parents / carers and the school.

2.8 Residential Schools

Pupils in residential schools for the standard 38 weeks academic year (and who are eligible for transport assistance) will be provided with transport assistance between home and school for the start and end of term period (generally half-terms). This totals 12 single journeys, 4 per term. Transport for pupils in 52-week schools will be determined individually.

Transport assistance for any pupils attending residential schools will not exceed the 12 single journeys. However, if the school has regular intervals of closure this will be reflected in the fees being paid by the Local Authority for the placement and accordingly, transport will be provided to coincide with school closures.

Future transport assistance may be in the form of regional pick-up points. This initiative will be considered through Tees Valleywide developments

2.9 Wheelchair Provision

Any pupil who uses a wheelchair and requires home to school transport, will be transported in accordance with the Passenger Safety Wheelchair Guide from Unwin Safety Systems.

2.10 Parental Responsibility

Parents and carers are required to ensure that pupils are ready for collection at the designated times for transport to and from school.

Parents and carers are responsible for escorting their child to and from the vehicle. Persistent failure to be ready for delivery /collection will result in either temporary or permanent withdrawal of transport. Parents will then be responsible for the pupil's attendance at school.

Parents / carers must provide the Local Authority with emergency contact numbers which must be amended and updated as necessary.

2.11 Application Process

Staff within the SEN team will be responsible for applying for transport on behalf of the pupil. Due to some of the special needs that pupils may have, transport can take up to 5 working days to be arranged. Transport will not normally be provided if the appropriate application has not been completed, but officer discretion will be applied in exceptional circumstances.

2.12 Pupils from other Education Authorities

Pupils who live outside the borough are not the responsibility of the Local Authority and will not therefore be provided with transport assistance. However, some pupils resident in other Local Authorities may be allowed to travel on Hartlepool transport if it is cost effective and agreed by the home authority. This will be subject to transport capacity. Hartlepool Council will then make a charge to the appropriate Local Authority responsible for that pupil. Hartlepool Council may need to withdraw such places in the event of an in-borough pupil requiring transport assistance.

2.13 Alternative Provision: (Dual Placements / Managed Moves/ Hard to Place)

The Local Authority has a duty to provide home to school transport for those pupils who meet the essential criteria. Home to school transport will consist of 2 journeys per day, to and from home and school. Any other travel throughout the school day is additional to the statutory duty to provide free transport. This

form of provision will be identified by the authority and appropriate funding secured. Some examples of alternative transport provision are given below:

Dual Placement:

Dual placement (where a pupil attends more than one school) may require additional transport, such as transport at lunchtimes etc. The local authority will be responsible for arranging transport however the school will be responsible for the cost of transport. Where a pupil is based full-time in a school but visits another for inclusion or as a guest, the school where the pupil is usually based, as they are receiving full funding for this pupil but the pupil is not attending fulltime, will be responsible for the cost of transport. The local authority will arrange transport during the school day on request.

Managed Move/Hard to Place:

Where a pupil is required to move school, it is for the two schools to determine which school will bear the costs of particular journeys during the school day.

If the Local Authority Transport Provider is used, the transport provider will invoice the school for any such charges via the established "Transfer invoice procedure".

2.14 Parental visits to schools

Transport assistance will not be provided to parents or family who wish to visit the school for any reason. Any arrangements of this nature will need to be agreed directly with the school. However, a maximum of one parent / carer may be provided with transport assistance to school to attend an annual review.

Parents who wish to accompany their child to school on the first day of school will be expected to make their own arrangements. Where a school stipulates that a parent should attend on the first day, transport must be arranged with the school.

2.15 Post 16 and Further Education

Pupils aged 16-19 may be eligible for transport assistance under the Local Authority 16-19 Transport Policy. Pupils aged 16+ with statements of special educational needs may be eligible for additional support where the assessment of the needs of the pupil indicates that such assistance is necessary.

It will remain the responsibility of the SEN Manager to determine if transport assistance is required.

2.16 Pre-school Provision for SEN Pupils

Pre-school pupils with a statement or who are undergoing statutory assessment are considered for discretionary free transport in the context of advice from medical, psychological and education professionals involved. Transport would only normally be considered to the pupil's nearest school/nursery setting or to the school/nursery setting considered appropriate by the Local Authority.

Post-16 Transport Policy (Section 3)

3.1 General

This policy provides for students who are over compulsory school age but under the age of 19. Students must be aged 16-19 on the 1st September at the beginning of the academic year in which they will commence their study. Eligibility is based on distance.

All Hartlepool students aged 16-19 years old are entitled to apply to the local authority for assistance with travel costs. The scheme is open to Students resident within Hartlepool aged 16 to 19. Students who continue to attend full-time courses at a Sixth Form College, Further Education College or alternative education setting more than 3 miles from home, (as measured by the shortest safe walking route), are entitled to a permit. This will allow them to make their journey to college each day between home and College at a reduced rate.

The permit is issued by the Local Authority and operators are reimbursed. Students are normally expected to travel on public transport.

3.2 Transport arrangement for pupils with Special Educational needs

The Local Authority will provide transport assistance for students from 16-19 years old that have a statement of special educational needs if a College course has been identified in order for them to progress their development.

Where a student has special educational needs, the Local Authority will provide transport until the end of the academic year when the student becomes 19 years of age. The transport provision allocated will be determined by nature of the student's requirements.

More detailed information can be found in Section 2 of the policy

The Council operates an Independent Travel Training programme which provides support to post 16 special educational needs students. The programme aims to support the development of skills and confidence in order to maximise student's ability to travel to and from college/school independently.

Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy (Section 4)

The revised Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy was approved by Cabinet on the 10th December 2007. The strategy illustrates how Hartlepool Borough Council intends to discharge the statutory duty within section 508A of the Education & Inspections Act 2006, the local authority duty to promote sustainable travel.

This duty applies to children and young people of compulsory school age and below, and young people over compulsory school age but under 18, in general, rather than to each individual child or young person. Within the context of this strategy, sustainable modes of travel are those that may improve the physical well being of those who use them, the environmental well being of those who use them, or a combination of the two.

Over the past twenty years the proportion of children travelling to school by car has almost doubled, despite many pupils living close enough to school to walk. With traffic continuing to rise, school related travel has a vital role to play in bringing about traffic reduction and creating safer, sustainable and healthier routes to schools and colleges in Hartlepool.

Available transport choices can significantly affect the ability of young people to access suitable education. Poor access to employment, education, health care, shopping, leisure and other opportunities can also result in social exclusion and impact on quality of life. Improving accessibility is the highest priority within Hartlepool's Local Transport Plan.

Both the assessment of pupil need and an audit of the sustainable transport infrastructure that supports travel to school have been paramount in informing the development of this strategy. The strategy is a statement of the authority's overall vision, objectives and work programme for developing an infrastructure to meet the future demands on transport provision for children and young people who live in the Borough of Hartlepool.

The full document has now been uploaded onto the Council web site and can be found at www.hartlepool.gov.uk/travelstrategy

Looked After Pupils (Section 5)

The Children Act 1989 refers to looked after children. This means children who are in the care of the Local Authority, or are provided with accommodation, (defined as accommodation for a continuous period of more than 24 hours). Children can be placed in the care of a Local Authority due to a court order or accommodated under section 21 of the 1989 Act; this is where an agreement is reached with the family as to the best arrangement for the child.

In some cases certain pupils will be allocated a period of placement at an appropriate establishment to allow for their parents or carers to have a period of respite. For this group of pupils, transport will generally be provided as follows.

- If a child is accommodated outside the catchment area of his/her present school for what is likely to be a period of time in excess of one term, transport will be organised by the Home to School Transport Service for the settling in period only.
- When a period of time is likely to be short-term (less than one term), transport will be organised by the Home to School Transport Service for a maximum period of one term if it is the view of the local authority that it is good practice and in the best interest of the child to remain at the present school.

General Information (Section 6)

6.1 Pre-school provision

Transport assistance for 3 and 4-year-old nursery age children attending nursery education provided by the Authority will only be granted in exceptional circumstances and authorised by the appropriate client department, as this is considered to be non-statutory provision.

Any assistance granted would relate to the circumstances of the child, not the parent or carer.

Assistance with travel costs for the parents / carers is not provided.

6.2 Pupil /Student Behaviour

The Authority reserves the right to withdraw free transport permanently or for a fixed period in the event of misuse or wilful damage of any vehicle or equipment. Hartlepool Council, along with the transport providers may also refer matters to the Police for prosecution.

Anyone caught trying to defraud the Bus Company or the Local Authority will also be subject to similar penalties.

Parents / carers will be informed of any such incidents in writing and an outline of the action to be taken will be included. In cases of wilful damage, parents / carers will be required to pay for any damage caused by their child.

Parents / carers will be offered the opportunity to appeal against any decision.

6.3 Complaints

Any pupil, parent or carer wishing to raise a concern relating to Home to School Transport should contact the Integrated Transport Unit Manager in the first instance. If the matter is not satisfactorily resolved formal complaints should be submitted in writing and will be dealt with in accordance with the Council's corporate complaints process.

6.4 Appeals process

If an Officer within the Home to School Transport Service decides that a particular request for free home to school transport, or for subsidised travel arrangements, cannot be provided, the applicant may ask for his or her case to be reviewed by the Integrated Transport Unit Manager. If the case is refused at review, the applicant may appeal to the General Purposes (Appeals and Staffing) Committee. The committee will consider the case further and make recommendation. The committee will be made up of independent members whose aim will be to meet to consider such appeals. In such cases the appellants will be invited to present their case in person.

Appeals should be made in writing to the Integrated Transport Unit Manager, Civic Centre, Hartlepool, TS24 8AY.

6.5 Criminal background checks (CRB) and identity badges

Criminal background checks on all staff are undertaken prior to them being employed on home to school transport. Following a satisfactory check, an identity badge will be issued by the Local Authority which will be worn at all times as proof of approval to undertake the work.

Any concerns regarding the behaviour of drivers or Passenger Assistants must be reported to the Integrated Transport Unit Manager.

6.6 Safety of routes

The Local Authority will monitor the routes and vehicles used, to ensure that they are fit for purpose and do not pose a risk to anyone travelling on the vehicle or using the route to travel to school.

Any vehicle or route found to be unsafe will be withdrawn and alternative arrangements made until normal service can be resumed.

Anyone with a concern over the safety of a route should report his or her concerns in writing to the Integrated Transport Unit Manager.

6.7 Surplus Seats

In some cases, surplus seats may be made available to convey pupils who do not qualify for free travel. Although they may be withdrawn within **FIVE** working days notice should the seat be required for an entitled pupil.

The charge for such seats will however need to reflect the actual cost rather than a notional concessionary charge. Allocation will be administered through a distance criterion, for example a child attending a school on the waiting list who has the longest distance to travel between home and school will be allocated a seat on the appropriate bus.

6.8 Identification of new routes

The Local Authority reserves the right to review all routes in light of any changes to the admission zones or areas of new housing. If such changes mean that a pupil will no longer be entitled to free transport then the notice of withdrawal will be two months from the date of notification to the parent / carer.

Examples of change could include building of new roads, opening of new footpaths, or changes to the safety of a route as determined by the Road Safety Officer.

6.9 Journey times

In the absence of any legal definition of journey time, the Local Authority will make every effort to ensure that in- borough travelling times to and from school do not exceed 1 hour for each journey.

Every effort is made to ensure that the waiting time on school premises, before and after school, and at pick up and set down points, does not exceed 20 minutes.

6.10 Transport and School Closure

If a school decides it is prudent to close early or not open because of severe weather or operational difficulties, every attempt will be made to inform the parents. However, this may not always be possible especially in the case of larger schools. The school will advise parents of their procedures in the event of an emergency closure.

In bad weather conditions, the transport operator is the sole judge of whether to commence or complete a bus journey, giving priority to the safety of the pupils on the vehicle.

Parents must ensure that the pupil is warmly dressed in case the journey to or from school is very slow or even halted in bad weather.

Should the school transport on any route not operate in the morning because of adverse weather conditions, but a parent nevertheless decides to take their child to school, then they will be expected to make their own arrangements to collect the child either at the end of the day or at the time of early closure.

Drivers are required to seek the safest route and may therefore avoid normal routes in order to stay on major roads or to avoid specific hazards. They are instructed that they must only set-down pupils at specific set-down points.

Where a road is too hazardous for school transport in the morning, the transport operator is under no obligation to attempt the afternoon run.

6.11 Parents/ Carers Not at Home

There are occasions when it would not be possible to return a child home having been transported from school. The following guidance is intended for Drivers and Passenger Assistants in order to manage such situations.

- If the Parent or Guardian is not at home the Driver or Passenger Assistant must notify the Integrated Transport Unit to seek advice.
- Where possible, make a return visit to the family home to check if the Parent or Guardian has returned.
- If the Parent has not returned by the end of the run, the Driver or Passenger Assistant must contact the Integrated Transport Unit to inform them of the situation.
- The Integrated Transport Unit will then inform the Head Teacher and / or the School Attendance Team.
- Drivers and Passenger Assistants will receive further instructions following the advice given by the Head Teacher and the School Attendance Team and may be required to travel back to school to hand over the child to staff at the school or a School Attendance Officer.
- If a child attends a school outside of Hartlepool, a Driver or Passenger Assistant may be required to take the child to the Education Development Centre and hand the child over to a School Attendance Officer.
- In all cases, a note must be left for the parent containing details of who they should contact and the whereabouts of the child using the message pad issued to you by the Authority.
- If an incident happens after 5pm Monday – Thursday and after 4.30pm Friday, contact should be made with the Emergency Duty Team

All incidents will be recorded and considered further by the Transport Panel

6.12 Extended Services

The Government's stated aim of the extended school agenda is to provide opportunities and services for all outside normal school hours. It is clear, therefore, that the needs of pupils entitled to home-school transport will need further consideration.

This policy confirms that bus passes for use on public transport will be the preferred option for pupils entitled to transport assistance, where this is practicable, to allow flexibility however alternative arrangements will be made when this is not possible. All arrangements will be managed through Service Level Agreements

6.13 14-19 Agenda

This 14-19 Strategy and Operational Plan for 2006/09 has been produced by the Hartlepool 14-19 Strategic Board which develops coherent, high quality, learning opportunities for young people aged 14-19. The agenda will raise significantly the levels of participation in learning opportunities by removing the barriers to learning and meeting individual need. It is, therefore clear, that pupils transport needs will need further consideration.

This education reform will enable students to move from one establishment to another within normal school hours

This policy confirms that planned transport will be the preferred option in order to ensure that timetable are manageable, however alternative arrangements will be made when this is not possible This form of provision will be identified by the authority and appropriate funding secured. All arrangements will be managed through Service Level Agreements

6.14 Lost or Damaged Passes

The bus pass is the responsibility of the pupil and if lost the local authority will charge replacement fee of £5.50.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES PORTFOLIO

Report to Portfolio Holder
12th August 2008



Report of: Director of Children's Services

Subject: REVISED COSTINGS RELATING TO THE
2008/09 SCHOOLS CAPITAL WORKS
PROGRAMME

SUMMARY

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To seek approval to the revised costings relating to the 2008/09 Schools Capital Works Programme and to advise the Portfolio Holder of the creation of a Schools' Forum Capital Sub-Group.

2. SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

- Report requiring a decision
- Revised programme of works
- Reference to the School's Forum Capital Sub-Group

3. RELEVANCE TO PORTFOLIO MEMBER

The Portfolio Holder is responsible for all matters relating to Children's Services.

4. TYPE OF DECISION

Non key decision (implementing earlier key decision).

5. DECISION MAKING ROUTE

Children's Services Portfolio Holder meeting 12th August 2008.

6. DECISION(S) REQUIRED

That the revised costings for the 2008/09 Works Programme be approved.

Report of: Director of Children's Services

Subject: REVISED COSTINGS RELATING TO THE
2008/09 SCHOOLS CAPITAL WORKS
PROGRAMME

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To seek approval to the revised costings relating to the 2008/09 Schools Capital Works Programme (as detailed in **Appendix 1**) and to advise the Portfolio Holder of steps taken by the authority to improve the co-ordination of investment in schools via the establishment of a School's Forum Capital Sub-Group.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 On 7th April 2008, the Director of children's Services submitted to the Children's Services Portfolio Holder a report outlining the overall Capital Works Programme for 2008/09.
- 2.2 The report provided detail of the funding available and a proposed list of projects to be achieved. At that stage, the estimated costs for individual schemes suggested that the overall programme could be 10% over budget.
- 2.3 The Portfolio Holder approved the programme of works in the knowledge that a revised set of costings would be presented for confirmation.

3. UPDATE – REVISED COSTINGS

- 3.1 The majority of projects included in the programme are now fully costed. As expected, there has been a number of variations against the original estimates but rather than a balance with some schemes coming in higher and others lower, costs have shown a general increase.
- 3.2 In order to counter escalating costs a number of actions have been taken:
 - Some schemes have been modified to match the original estimate;
 - A number of schools have contributed to schemes;

- A small number of schemes have been put on hold until later in the year – if necessary these schemes will be deferred until 2009/10.

3.3 The variation in costs on individual schemes is reflected in **Appendix 1** and is presented for Portfolio Holder approval.

3.4 The Portfolio Holder's attention is drawn, in particular, to three schemes identified in **Appendix 1** where the 'revised cost' figure has changed significantly:

1. St Hild's – Classrooms of the Future

This is a diocese-led initiative which may well cost close on £1 million over a two year period. The £30,000 figure represents the authority's initial contribution for 2008/09 which has reduced from £100,000 following negotiations with the Diocese.

2. Building Schools for the Future – mobile units

The overall cost for mobile units catering for additional pupil numbers at High Tunstall, English Martyrs, Manor College and Catcote schools is estimated to be in the region of £879,000. Additional resources have been identified to increase the capital programme as follows:

£270,000	Schools Capital Works Programme
£290,000	Secondary Schools Devolved Capital
£202,000	Dedicated School Grant underspend from 2007/08
£81,000	A2L reserve
<u>£36,000</u>	Capital receipt – Burn Valley
£879,000	

This increased funding will be reported to Cabinet for approval along with the Quarter budget monitoring position in August.

3. Ward Jackson – office reform

This is a school initiative which is currently being developed. The authority has currently committed £12,000 in support of this workforce reform project which is likely to cost in the region of £40,000-£50,000.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The report presented to the Portfolio Holder in April 2008 indicated a works programme costing £2,381,000 against a budget of £2,094,000 a potential deficit of £287,000.

4.2 The revised programme shown in **Appendix 1** shows an overall cost of £3,056,905 against a budget of £3,015,625 (see table) leaving a current deficit of £41,280.

Original budget:

	£
Modernisation Programme	969,443
Basic Needs	274,862
Access Initiatives	158,682
RCCO	556,071
Uncommitted Funds	135,000
	<hr/> 2,094,058

Plus additional sums:

Carried over from 2007/08	34,000	(West Park)
From individual schools	278,567	(See Appendix 1)
Relating to mobile units	609,000	(See paragraph 3.4ii)
	<hr/> 921,567	

Revised budget **3,015,625**

- 4.3 Whilst a deficit of £41,000 does seem high it should be noted that the revised price for each individual scheme includes a contingency figure of 5% against the contractor's cost. Collectively, over the whole programme, that figure represents a monetary value in excess of £130,000. So with prudent use of that contingency, we can expect the overall cost of the programme to be within the overall budget.
- 4.4 During the year further reports monitoring the Capital Works Programme will be presented for Portfolio Holder information or approval. In addition, Cabinet will receive on a quarterly basis, corporate Capital Monitoring Reports which makes specific reference to progress on all capital projects.

5. SCHOOLS FORUM – CAPITAL SUB-GROUP

- 5.1 A newly formed sub-group from the Schools Forum met for the first time on 9th July 2008.
- 5.2 The sub-group comprises seven school representatives supported and informed by officer representation from Children's Services, Neighbourhood Services and Central Finance.
- 5.3 Draft terms of reference for the newly formed group are to:
1. To consider and make recommendations on an annual programme of capital works drafted by the LA, to be submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services for approval.

2. To monitor progress on the approved programme of capital works, initially on a termly basis, consider significant in-year variations and propose changes to the approved programme, subject to Council's standing orders and/or Portfolio Holder approval.
3. To promote a strategic overview of all funding streams that result in school capital investment.

6. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 6.1 This report is concerned with the maintenance, protection and development of Council assets, i.e. school buildings.
- 6.2 The programme of works referred to in this report has been compiled on the basis of sections of individual buildings showing clear signs of failure or fatigue, addressing these issues removes a significant element of risk.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 The Portfolio Holder is asked to:
 - Approve the revised costings relating to the 2008/09 Schools Capital Works Programme, as detailed in **Appendix 1**; and
 - Note the establishment of a Schools Capital Forum Sub-Group.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 8.1 2008/09 Schools Capital Works Programme.

9. CONTACT OFFICER

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2008/2009 CAPITAL WORKS PROGRAMME – UPDATE (25.7.08)

SCHOOL	PROJECT	OUTLINE COST £ (Previously Approved)	REVISED PRICE £	SCHOOLS AND OTHER CONTRIBUTIONS
Brierton	Roofwork	92,000	108,562	
High Tunstall	Roofwork	95,000	77,134	38,567
Manor	Ext. decorations	32,000	20,846	
Manor	Ext. doors	20,000	40,333	
St. Hild's	Classrooms of the future	100,000	30,000	
Catcote	Window replacement	66,000	75,700	
Catcote	Roofwork (kitchen)	14,000	28,463	
BSF	Mobiles	200,000	879,000	290,000 (School) 319,000 (other)
Barnard Grove	Window replacement	46,000	40,594	
Barnard Grove	Roofwork	92,000	*	
Barnard Grove	Caretaker – floor	10,000	*	10,000
Brougham	Window replacement	20,000	20,797	
Clavering	Roofwork	40,000	22,085	
Eldon Grove	Fencing	15,000	10,354	
Fens	Heating distribution	62,000	59,231	
Fens	Window replacement	70,000	77,701	7,000
Golden Flatts	Heating distribution	60,000	**	
Golden Flatts	Window replacement	32,000	41,392	
Grange	Window replacement	41,000	49,141	4,000
Greatham	Window replacement	15,000	66,407	40,000
Jesmond Road	New kitchen	100,000	143,640	20,000
Jesmond Road	Reception heating	14,000	13,530	
Kingsley	Roofwork	39,000	42,024	
Kingsley	Window replacement	54,000	88,345	4,000
Kingsley	Resource area	60,000	50,899	17,000
Lynnfield	Toilets	35,000	33,092	

SCHOOL	PROJECT	OUTLINE COST (Previously Approved)	REVISED PRICE	SCHOOLS AND OTHER CONTRIBUTIONS
Ow ton Manor	Window replacement	99,000	99,992	
Rift House	Toilets	85,000	101,649	10,000
Rift House	Car park	35,000		
Rossmere	Window replacement	82,000	90,950	
Springw ell	Hydrotherapy pool	30,000	**	
Springw ell	Mobile unit	50,000	150,569	30,000
St. Helens	Roofw ork	75,000	71,088	
Stranton	Window replacement	44,000	37,963	
Throston	Lift	30,000	53,776	
Throston	Rew ire	85,000	71,817	
Ward Jackson	Roofw ork	60,000	**	
Ward Jackson	Window replacement	35,000	42,909	
Ward Jackson	Office reform	12,000	50,000	38,000
West Park ^Ø	Toilets	34,000	97,380	60,000
West Park	Fencing	45,000	*	
West View	Replace w indow s	50,000	51,005	
Various	Kitchen inter locks	30,000	**	
Various	Cavity insulation	10,000	**	
Various	Emergency response	100,000	**	
TOTALS		2,415,000	3,056,905	887,567

* Price to be confirmed.

** On hold (Easter 2009/10).

Ø This scheme w as carried over from the 2007/08 programme w ith a budget of £34,000, the revised price reflect an increase in the number of toilets to be replaced. The school is to fund the additional w ork.