

- Will the proposal contribute to fostering good relations between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not, for example by tackling prejudice and promoting understanding? If not could it be developed or modified in order to do so? Please identify any findings and how they might be addressed.

The proposals are lawful as they relate only to the discretionary elements of transport provision which the LA is not required by statute to provide. The vast majority of individuals affected by the policy change (6,590 of the 8,750) will be impacted in financial terms. In other words, there will still be a bus service to school but it will cost considerably more than it currently does. However, fares will still be heavily subsidised by LCC and low income families are not impacted by the increased costs (or cessation of other discretions). In addition, individuals will still be able to appeal to the Student Support Appeals Committee which allows parents to make complaints; request a review of a decision around eligibility for transport assistance, or to request discretion on the grounds of special personal circumstances.

Question 4 –Combined/Cumulative Effect

Could the effects of your decision combine with other factors or decisions taken at local or national level to exacerbate the impact on any groups?

For example - if the proposal is to impose charges for adult social care, its impact on disabled people might be increased by other decisions within the County Council (e.g. increases in the fares charged for Community Transport and reductions in respite care) and national proposals (e.g. the availability of some benefits) . Whilst LCC cannot control some of these decisions, they could increase the adverse effect of the proposal. The LCC has a legal duty to consider this aspect, and to evaluate the decision, including mitigation, accordingly.

If Yes – please identify these.

The proposals will impact on hard pressed families that are not defined as 'low income' families, but nevertheless are experiencing financial difficulties as a result of the recession and rising prices. This may be keenly felt if they have more than one child that is affected by the proposal. However, evidence shows that the introduction of a £380 per annum flat rate contributory charge for denominational transport in September 2011 has not had any overall impact on parental preference patterns for schools and Church schools have generally maintained, and even improved, their share of pupils even with the current downturn in the amount of pupils presenting for secondary education.

Question 5 – Identifying Initial Results of Your Analysis

As a result of your analysis have you changed/amended your original proposal?

Please identify how –

For example:

Adjusted the original proposal – briefly outline the adjustments

Continuing with the Original Proposal – briefly explain why

Stopped the Proposal and Revised it - briefly explain

Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools will make the decision on each aspect of the proposed policy changes. However, it will be recommended that the proposals should stand unchanged because:

- the County Council will still be heavily subsidising the costs of discretionary transport and, therefore, shielding parents from the full costs (many other LAs have removed discretionary transport assistance altogether);
- when charges to denominational transport were introduced it had no impact on parental preferences for faith schools, indicating that parents were prepared to pay the charge or find an alternative means of travelling to school rather than select a school closer to home;
- there is the right to appeal to Student Support Appeals Committee to hear individual cases.

Question 6 - Mitigation

Please set out any steps you will take to mitigate/reduce any potential adverse effects of your decision on those sharing any particular protected characteristic. It is important here to do a genuine and realistic evaluation of the effectiveness of the mitigation contemplated. Over-optimistic and over-generalised assessments are likely to fall short of the “due regard” requirement.

Also consider if any mitigation might adversely affect any other groups and how this might be managed.

Children from low income families are not impacted by the proposed changes. There is the right to appeal to Student Support Appeals Committee to hear individual cases.

Question 7 – Balancing the Proposal/Countervailing Factors

At this point you need to weigh up the reasons for the proposal – e.g. need for budget savings; damaging effects of not taking forward the proposal at this time –

against the findings of your analysis. Please describe this assessment. It is important here to ensure that the assessment of any negative effects upon those sharing protected characteristics is full and frank. The full extent of actual adverse impacts must be acknowledged and taken into account, or the assessment will be inadequate. What is required is an honest evaluation, and not a marketing exercise. Conversely, while adverse effects should be frankly acknowledged, they need not be overstated or exaggerated. Where effects are not serious, this too should be made clear.

There is a need to make significant savings to the County Council's revenue budget and a range of policy saving measures is currently being considered across all Directorates. The proposed changes to home to mainstream school transport only affect discretionary elements and low income families are protected from the impacts. If the proposal is not implemented, savings will need to be made in other policy areas, and the negative impacts on groups of individuals sharing protective characteristics may be far greater than those identified in this area.

Question 8 – Final Proposal

In summary, what is your final proposal and which groups may be affected and how?

The final proposal remains the same as identified in the Cabinet Member Report dated 10 October 2013 and throughout this report.

Question 9 – Review and Monitoring Arrangements

Describe what arrangements you will put in place to review and monitor the effects of your proposal.

Parental preferences for admission to schools are monitored on an annual basis. Appeals to Student Support Appeals Committee are monitored regularly.

Equality Analysis Prepared By Lynn Mappin

Position/Role Head of Service: Pupil Places and Access

Equality Analysis Endorsed by Line Manager and/or Chief Officer

Decision Signed Off By

Cabinet Member/Chief Officer or SMT Member