

# Agenda

## Special Meeting Educational Services Committee

**Date:** Friday, 7 July 2023

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**Time:** 10:00

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**Format:** Hybrid Meeting

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**Contact:** Scott Kelly, Committee Officer  
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Dear Member

Please attend a special meeting of the **Educational Services Committee** as detailed above.

Members will have the option to attend the meeting remotely or in person at the Civic Space, 16 Church Street, Dumbarton.

The business is shown on the attached agenda.

Yours faithfully

**PETER HESSETT**

Chief Executive

**Distribution:**

Councillor Clare Steel (Chair)  
Councillor Karen Conaghan  
Councillor Gurpreet Singh Johal  
Councillor Daniel Lennie  
Councillor David McBride  
Councillor Jonathan McColl  
Councillor Michelle McGinty  
Councillor June McKay  
Councillor John Millar (Vice Chair)  
Councillor Lawrence O'Neill  
Councillor Lauren Oxley  
Councillor Martin Rooney

Councillor Gordon Scanlan  
Councillor Hazel Sorrell  
Mrs Barbara Barnes  
Ms Kirsty Connolly  
Mr Gavin Corrigan  
Miss Cara Cusick MSYP  
Miss Ellen McBride  
Ms Hannah Redford  
Ms Julia Strang  
Miss Tian Qi Yu MSYP  
Vacancy

All other Councillors for information

Chief Education Officer

Date of Issue: 16 June 2023

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# EDUCATIONAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

FRIDAY, 7 JULY 2023

## AGENDA

### 1 STATEMENT BY CHAIR – AUDIO STREAMING

The Chair will be heard in connection with the above.

### 2 APOLOGIES

### 3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members are invited to declare if they have an interest in the item of business on this agenda and the reasons for such declarations.

### 4 RECORDING OF VOTES

The Committee is asked to agree that all votes taken during the meeting will be carried out by roll call vote to ensure an accurate record.

### 5 RESPONSE ON STATUTORY CONSULTATION TO DISCONTINUE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE PROVISION OF TRANSPORT FOR PUPILS ATTENDING CATCHMENT SCHOOLS 5 – 67

Submit report by the Chief Education Officer informing of the outcome of the statutory consultation exercise under the terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 on the proposal to discontinue arrangements for the provision of transport for pupils attending catchment schools.



**WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL****Report by Chief Education Officer****Educational Services Committee – 7 July 2023**

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**Subject: Response on Statutory Consultation to discontinue arrangements for the provision of transport for pupils attending catchment schools**

**1. Purpose**

- 1.1** The purpose of the report is to inform the Educational Services Committee of the outcome from the statutory consultation under the terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 on the proposal to discontinue arrangements for the provision of transport for pupils attending catchment schools.

**2. Recommendation**

- 2.1** It is recommended that the Committee:

- (i) Notes the findings from the statutory consultation exercise and the content of the associated Education Scotland report;
- (ii) Agrees to keep the existing home to school distance of 1 mile for primary schools and 2 miles for secondary schools as prescribed in the existing school transport policy; and
- (iii) Agrees to implement an alternative transport related saving maximizing the use of the Under 22 Travel Pass scheme, in place of Council provided travel passes.

**3. Background**

- 3.1** At the meeting on 8 March 2023, the Educational Services Committee approved the launch of the statutory consultation document by the Chief Education Officer under the terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 on the proposal to discontinue arrangements for the provision of transport for pupils attending catchment schools.
- 3.2** Committee further agreed that a report outlining the results of the consultation and making appropriate recommendations be presented to a meeting of the Educational Services Committee provisionally scheduled to be held on Wednesday 5th July 2023, subsequently confirmed as Friday 7<sup>th</sup> July 2023.
- 3.3** The consultation has been undertaken in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 and copies of the proposal document were made available to all stakeholders as prescribed by the Act. The consultation

ran from Thursday 9th March 2023 until Tuesday 9th May 2023, a total of 31 days when the schools were open for pupils.

#### **4. Consultation Process / Considerations**

**4.1** The statutory consultation process was undertaken with a Proposal Paper setting out the proposal on which the Council was consulting being published on the Council's website and stakeholders invited to participate in the consultation exercise. An electronic link to the consultation page and Proposal Paper, was issued by email to the consultees listed within the document and was also published on the Council's website and publicised via the Council's social media channels.

**4.2** As part of the Council's consultation process we undertook the following activities:

- Publicising the consultation and dates of public meetings through the Council's website, through public notices in local newspapers and on social media.
- Advising relevant stakeholders by email of the consultation and providing an electronic link to the website.
- Holding a series of online and in-person public consultation meetings, one in each of the three main population centres of Dumbarton, Clydebank and the Vale of Leven.
- Utilising the Council's consultation web page to make documentation on the proposal, link to the online survey, background information and details on how to participate in the survey available.
- Setting up a direct telephone line and email address to deal with queries.

**4.3** Three public consultations meetings were held between 18 and 25 April 2023 to allow Officers to explain the proposal and enable interested parties to make comment and ask questions regarding the proposal.

**4.4** A total of 48 members of the public attended the public meetings in-person, with a further 8 member of the public attending online. A representative from Education Scotland was also in attendance at the Dumbarton meeting, as part of their role in the statutory consultation process. Minutes were taken at all three meetings (Appendix 1, 2 and 3).

**4.5** An online survey was available during the consultation period, with 542 respondents registering. In answer to the question "*Do you agree that West Dunbartonshire Council should bring transport provision for schools more in line with the safe walking distance to school?*" 347 (64%) stated 'yes', and 195 (36%) stated 'no'. It should be noted however that this response did not correspond with the comments received during the consultation. Comments received in the online survey, by email and during the public meetings were overwhelmingly against the proposed change. A total of 230 respondents chose to provide a reason for their answer in the online survey. On closer inspection, responses stating 'yes' did not reconcile with the comments

offered. When viewing only the 230 responses who also commented, 26 were in favour (11.4%), with 203 (88.6%) being against the proposal. (one comment was excluded, as the response was not a word).

**4.6** The main issues raised by participants in the consultation have been grouped into headings below and the education response to the points raised are detailed within the Consultation Report.

- Safety
- Impact on attendance
- Time taken to walk to school
- Weather
- Households with children attending different establishments
- Contracts for school transport
- Accessibility of consultation
- Identification and realization of benefits
- Provision of public transport
- Promise of provision of transport at the time of OLSP relocation
- Equity of provision
- Impact on denominational schools

**4.7** 15 responses were received by email, and one response was made by phone. Responses were also received from The Archdiocese of Glasgow of the Roman Catholic Church, Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT) and First Bus. None of these responses supported the proposal.

#### Education Scotland Report and Considerations

**4.8** The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 requires HM Inspectors from Education Scotland to be involved in the formal consultation proposal. The full report from Education Scotland (Appendix 6 of the Consultation Report) was published on their website and also published as part of the Consultation Report.

**4.9** As part of this process HM Inspectors undertook the following activities in considering the educational aspect of the proposal:

- attendance at a public meeting held on 18 April 2023 in connection with the Council's proposals;
- consideration of all relevant documentation provided by the Council in relation to the proposal, specifically the educational benefits statement and related consultation documents, written and oral submissions from parents and others;
- consideration of further representations made directly to Education Scotland on relevant educational aspects of the proposal;
- visits to St Eunan's Primary School, Knoxland Primary School, Clydebank High School, St Peter the Apostle High School, Dumbarton Academy, Vale of Leven Academy and Our lady and St Patrick's High School, including discussion with relevant consultees and;

- discussion with relevant consultees, including representatives from the Archdiocese of Glasgow.

### Education Scotland Summary and Recommendations

**4.10** Education Scotland produced a report whose purpose is to provide an independent and impartial consideration of West Dunbartonshire Council's proposal to alter arrangements for the provision of transport by West Dunbartonshire Council for pupils attending mainstream schools.

**4.11** Within the report, Education Scotland concluded:

*"In their proposal, West Dunbartonshire Council state that there will be educational benefits gained through active travel. HM Inspectors agree that the proposal is in line with national guidance and statutory walking distances. HM Inspectors agree that there are potential benefits through active travel. However, HM Inspectors do not agree that the Council have set out sufficiently the potential educational benefits to address concerns raised by stakeholders. Almost all stakeholders raised significant concerns. These include the safety of children and young people while walking to and from school, and the reliability, availability and capacity of public transport to meet increased demand. Most stakeholders also have a concern that the proposal, if implemented, would incur financial costs for families already facing significant financial hardship. Stakeholders are also concerned about the potential for lower attendance which will impact on attainment and achievement. Should this proposal be agreed, it will be important for the Council to work with stakeholders to address their concerns.*

*The online survey main question may have been misunderstood by respondents and therefore the outcome may not be accurate. The survey responses do not fully reflect the comments or the issues raised by stakeholders who met with HM Inspectors. The Council will need to consider if this data should be used to inform the final decision."*

### Next Steps

**4.12** Response to the consultation was overwhelmingly negative, with stakeholders raising significant concerns. As the grounds for the proposal were based on a saving to the Council, a reasonable alternative would be to maintain the existing home to school distance, but remove the provision of bus passes by the Council for use on public service buses, requiring children and young people who use public service buses to make use of their Under 22 travel pass instead. In the exceptional circumstance where a child or young person is unable to obtain or utilise an Under 22 Travel Pass, the Council would ensure the young person was provided with suitable support. This change would have no direct impact on stakeholders, and save the Council in the region of £185,000 per annum. This would be £15,000 short of the projected saving for 2023/24, and £115,000 short of the projected saving for 2024/25.



## Consultation Report

- 4.13** The Council is required to prepare and publish its final Consultation Report when the consultation exercise has been concluded. In preparing the report, the Council must consider the report from Education Scotland and other responses to the consultation. The consultation report must explain how the Council has reviewed the proposal, a summary of the points raised during the consultation and the Council's response to them. It should consider if there are any other reasonable alternatives to the proposal.
- 4.14** The Council is required to publish the Consultation Report and Educational Services Committee cannot take a decision on whether to formally implement a proposal until 3 weeks have elapsed from the date it publishes the Consultation Report. The Consultation Report was published on the website on Friday 16 June 2023.

## **5. People Implications**

- 5.1** There are no people implications within this report.

## **6. Financial and Procurement Implications**

- 6.1** Not implementing the proposal would see the Council fail to make an identified saving of £200,000 in 2023/24, and £300,000 in 2024/25. The alternative suggested in 4.12 above would realize an annual saving of £185,000 from 2023/24. This would be £15,000 short of the projected saving for 2023/24, and £115,000 short of the projected saving for 2024/25.

## **7. Risk Analysis**

- 7.1** HM Inspectors agree that the proposal is in line with national guidance and statutory walking distances. HM Inspectors agree that there are potential benefits through active travel. However, HM Inspectors do not agree that the Council have set out sufficiently the potential educational benefits to address concerns raised by stakeholders. Implementing the proposal of the statutory consultation would bring financial hardship to families, impact on school attendance and attainment and may indirectly influence parental choice of school.

## **8. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)**

- 8.1** This report was considered under the Council's Equalities Impact Assessment process. The Equalities Impact Assessment is included as Appendix 2.

## 9. Consultation

- 9.1 Consultation on the proposed changes was undertaken in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.
- 9.2 Legal Services and the Section 95 Officer have been consulted on the content of this report.

## 10. Strategic Assessment

- 10.1 Undertaking a statutory consultation ensures we meet our responsibilities as defined by the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. It works towards all three of the Community Planning Partnership priorities of 'empowered', 'sustainability' and 'wellbeing' by ensuring that the views of local citizens are sought and incorporated into our plans, and that we work to promote the wellbeing of our children, young people and families.

Laura Mason  
Chief Education Officer

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<b>Appendices:</b>	Appendix 1 – Consultation Report Appendix 2 – Equalities Impact Assessment
<b>Background Papers:</b>	Report and Proposal Paper submitted to Education Committee on 08.03.2023 Equalities Impact Assessment No.749
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All wards



## **West Dunbartonshire Council Education, Learning and Attainment**

### **REPORT ON THE OUTCOME OF THE CONSULTATION RELATING TO THE PROPOSAL**

**to discontinue arrangements for the provision of transport for pupils attending catchment schools.**

**Published 16 June 2023**

This report has been published by West Dunbartonshire Council in response to the statutory consultation undertaken under the terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. The report will be published on the Council's website for a period of no less than 3 weeks prior to final consideration by the Educational Services Committee on 7 July 2023.

# C O N T E N T S

<b>Section</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Page Number/s</b>
1	Introduction	3
2	Background	3 – 4
3	The Consultation Process	4 – 5
4	Public Consultation Meetings	5 – 6
5	Responses to Consultation Exercise	6 – 8
6	Summary of issues raised by stakeholders and Education Authority response	8 – 16
7	Education Scotland Report and Education Authority Response	16 – 17
8	Alleged Omissions or Inaccuracies	17
10	Compliance with Section 9(1) of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010	17
11	Legal Issues / Next Steps	18
Appendix A	Dumbarton Public Consultation Meeting	
Appendix B	Clydebank Public Consultation Meeting	
Appendix C	Vale of Leven Public Consultation Meeting	
Appendix D	Submission from the Archdiocese of Glasgow of the Roman Catholic Church	
Appendix E	Submission from Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT)	
Appendix F	Education Scotland Report	

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 This is a consultation response report prepared in compliance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 following consultation on the West Dunbartonshire Council (The Council) proposal to discontinue arrangements for the provision of transport for pupils attending catchment schools.

1.2 The purpose of the response report is to:

- Provide a record of the total number of responses made during the Statutory Consultation period;
- Provide summary of the written responses;
- Provide details of oral representations made at the public meetings held on 18, 19 and 25 April 2023;
- Provide a statement of the Council's response to those written and oral representations;
- Provide the full text of Education Scotland's report and a statement of the Council's response to this report;
- State how the Council reviewed the above proposal following the representations received during the Statutory Consultation period and the report from Education Scotland;
- Provide details of any omission from, or inaccuracy in, the Proposal Paper and state how the Council acted on it; and
- State how the Council has complied with Sections 11A to 13 of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 when reviewing the above proposals.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

2.1 On 21 December 2022, Council approved a savings option to reduce School Transport towards statutory limits taking account of safe routes to school and increasing free bus pass update and work with bus companies to increase provision at busy times.

2.2 Because this saving option, if enacted, would involve discontinuing the existing arrangements for the provision of transport to pupils attending denominational schools, the Council was required to carry out a consultation process as detailed in the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, Schedule 1, Paragraph 8 which states:

*“Transport to denominational school proposal to discontinue arrangements for the provision of transport by the education authority for pupils attending a denominational school.”*

2.3 On 8 March 2023 the Educational Services Committee agreed to commence formal consultation on the proposal, and that a report outlining the results of the consultation and making appropriate recommendations be presented to a meeting of the Educational Services Committee that was provisionally scheduled to be held on Wednesday 5 July 2023 (subsequently confirmed for Friday 7 July 2023).

## 2.4 THE PROPOSAL

2.4.1 West Dunbartonshire Council proposed, subject to approval from Education Services Committee and the outcome of the consultation process:

- from August 2023, the discontinuation of the existing school transport arrangements whereby any primary aged pupil who resides more than 1 mile from their catchment school, and any secondary aged pupil who resides more than 2 miles from their catchment school will be provided with transportation;
- replacing the existing school transport arrangements with a revised home to school distance, whereby any primary aged pupil who resides more than 2 miles from their catchment school, and any secondary aged pupil who resides more than 3 miles from their catchment school will be provided with transportation.

## 3. THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

3.1 The statutory consultation process, which requires the Council to adopt a robust and transparent framework for school consultations was undertaken in respect of the proposal. The consultation document developed for consideration included information on the:

- Proposal;
- Consultation process;
- Arrangements for public meetings;
- On how to participate in the consultation;
- Educational benefits of the proposal; and
- Consultation timeline

3.2 An electronic link to the Proposal Paper was issued by email to the stakeholders detailed within that document. The Proposal Paper and details of the consultation were made available on the consultation section of the Council's website: [School Transport Consultation](#)

3.3 The Act requires a consultation period of at least 6 weeks which must include at least 30 school days. The consultation period for this project was from Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> March 2023 until Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> May 2023 inclusive (the period covered a total of 44 days to allow for the "clear days" rule and accommodate 13 days where schools were closed due to an in-service day, a long weekend and the spring break).

3.4 The requirements for consulting on a relevant proposal relating to schools are set out in the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 and the following steps were taken to ensure compliance with the Act:

- Proposal Paper published on Friday 24 March 2023.
- Statutory consultees were sent an email providing a link to the Proposal Paper and details of where, and how to obtain a paper copy free of charge and how to participate in the consultation.

- Schools distributed details of the consultation to staff and parents/carers.
- Proposal Paper published on the West Dunbartonshire Council website and available in paper copy upon request, and information on the consultation published on social media.
- Public notice in the 'Dumbarton Reporter' and 'Clydebank Post' newspapers advising of the consultation.
- Public consultation meetings were held on 18, 19 and 25 April 2023 to facilitate participation, sharing of information and gathering views.
- Education Scotland's involvement consisted of: Proposal Paper being sent to them, attendance at public consultation meetings, follow up consultation meetings with Head Teachers, Pupils, Parent Council representatives, and Church representatives. Education Scotland were also provided with copies of online survey results/comments, written representations and minutes of the public meetings held which contained oral representations.

3.5 In accordance with statutory requirements and good practice, the following relevant stakeholders were consulted:

- Education Scotland;
- The Archdiocese of Glasgow of the Roman Catholic Church;
- the Parent Councils of West Dunbartonshire Primary and Secondary Schools;
- the parents/carers of pupils attending all West Dunbartonshire Primary and Secondary Schools;
- the parents/carers of any children expected by West Dunbartonshire Council to attend the primary schools listed in section 4.1 above within two years of the date of publication of this Proposal Document (with that date of publication being defined in the table included in section 7.2 above), including those pupils attending all private and voluntary pre-school nurseries in the West Dunbartonshire area;
- the pupils attending all West Dunbartonshire Primary and Secondary Schools (insofar as this is possible and taking cognisance of the age and maturity of the pupils);
- the teaching and support staff of all West Dunbartonshire Primary and Secondary Schools;
- the trade union representatives of the above staff;
- the constituency MSPs;
- the constituency MP; and
- Neighbouring local authorities.

#### **4. PUBLIC CONSULTATION MEETINGS**

4.1 Three public consultation meetings were held, one in each of the main population centres of Dumbarton, Clydebank and the Vale of Leven.

4.2 The first meeting was held on 18 April 2023 in Our Lady & St. Patrick's High School (7.00 p.m. – 8.30 p.m.) with 30 members of the public, 5 staff

members and an HM Inspector attending the meeting. It was also possible to attend the meeting online, with 3 participants joining remotely. Notes from this meeting are included as Appendix A.

- 4.3 The second consultation meeting was held on 19 April 2023 in St Peter the Apostle High School (7.00 p.m. – 8.30 p.m.) with 8 members of the public and 4 staff members attending the meeting. It was also possible to attend the meeting online, with 2 participants joining remotely. Notes from this meeting are included as Appendix B.
- 4.4 The third consultation meeting was held on 25 April 2023 in Vale of Leven Academy (7.00 p.m. – 8.30 p.m.) with 10 members of the public and 4 staff members attending the meeting. It was also possible to attend the meeting online, with 3 participants joining remotely. Notes from this meeting are included as Appendix C.

## 5. RESPONSES TO THE CONSULTATION EXERCISE

- 5.1 Members of the public were encouraged to respond to the consultation through the online survey, by phone or in writing.
- 5.2 A total of 542 respondents responded through the online survey as detailed below.

<b>Are you a resident of West Dunbartonshire?</b>	<b>Number of responses</b>	<b>% of responses</b>
Yes	527	97.8%
No	12	2.2%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>539</b>	

- 5.3 A breakdown of category of interest from respondents is detailed below.

<b>From the options below, please select the most appropriate one to indicate your interest in this consultation</b>	<b>Number of responses</b>	<b>% of responses</b>
Child / Young Person in receipt of school transport	97	18%
Child / Young Person not in receipt of school transport	119	22%
Parent / Carer of child / young person in receipt of school transport	111	20.6%
Parent / Carer of child / young person not in receipt of school transport	180	33.3%
Member of teaching / non teaching staff	10	1.9%
Trade Union Representative	0	0%
Representative of School Parent Council	4	0.7%
Other	13	2.4%



<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>540</b>	
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**Note** – ‘Other’ includes (‘Child who will eventually need transport’ (1), ‘Concerned Citizen’ (1), ‘Concerned Member of the public’ (1), ‘Concerned Uncle’ (1), ‘Grandparent’ (1), ‘Grandparent of child travelling from Old Kilpatrick’ (1), ‘Interested individual’ (1), ‘Milton resident’ (1), ‘My daughter has used the school bus before to Milton’ (1), ‘Parent’ (1), ‘Parent of child not yet at school but will benefit from the transport currently offered when he does go’ (1), ‘Parent of future pupil’ (1), and ‘Relative of pupil’ (1))

- 5.4 A summary of the completed online responses to the consultation question ***‘Do you agree that West Dunbartonshire Council should bring transport provision for schools more in line with the safe walking distance to school?’*** is detailed below. Although the majority of the respondents stated they were in favour of the proposal, this does not correspond with the comments received, which is further explored in 5.5 below.

<b>Do you agree that West Dunbartonshire Council should bring transport provision for schools more in line with the safe walking distance to school?</b>	<b>Number of responses</b>	<b>% of responses</b>
Yes	347	64%
No	195	36%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>542</b>	

- 5.5 A total of 230 respondents chose to provide a reason for their answer. On closer inspection, responses stating ‘yes’ did not reconcile with the comments offered. When viewing only the 230 responses who also commented, 26 were in favour (11.4%), with 203 (88.6%) being against the proposal. (one comment was excluded, as the response was not a word).

<b>If you wish, please provide a reason for your answer:</b>	<b>Number of responses</b>	<b>% of responses</b>
In favour of the proposal	26	11.4%
Against the proposal	203	88.6%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>230</b>	

It is clear from this that many respondents had misunderstood the question. This was raised directly as a question at the Vale of Leven public consultation meeting, but not at the Dumbarton or Clydebank meetings.

- 5.6 With 230 responses, it was not possible to respond to each individually. Instead, points raised across all the responses have been grouped into themes below, with a response provided to the theme.
- 5.7 There were 15 responses by email and 1 response by phone. No written responses were received by post. The points raised in the responses have been grouped with the responses to the online survey and the public meetings, as the same themes were raised. We received a submission from

the Archdiocese of Glasgow of the Roman Catholic Church and First Bus during the consultation period, and a response from SPT received out with the consultation period (which has been included).

## 6. SUMMARY OF ISSUES RAISED BY STAKEHOLDERS AND EDUCATION AUTHORITY RESPONSE

- 6.1 From the 230 online response forms that included a comment, the points raised at the public meetings and the submissions received by email, a number of key themes emerged. The theme and response from Education Services is detailed below.

### Theme 1: Safety

*The largest volume of concerns raised related safety. This took many forms, whether it was safety of children and young people walking to school, the routes that they would follow, the availability of suitable crossing points, the speed of traffic on the roads, the suitability of footpaths, the impact of weather, the seasonal variability of daylight, the provision of street lighting, safety of children and young people from other pedestrians (including other children), behavior of children and young people walking to school, gritting of pavements during winter, assessments of safe routes, and independent verification of safety assessments.*

**Response:** Where transport is not provided, it is the parents' responsibility to ensure their children and young people get to school. Only children and young people who have the required road safety sense should walk to school unaccompanied by an adult. A number of routes were regarded as unsafe to walk by the roads team, and will therefore still be eligible for transport. Where a route was regarded as safe to walk, this was due to the suitability of footpaths, crossing points, lighting and gritting of pavements in winter. Where routes were walked by the roads team, it is accepted that this was done at a certain time of day, and did not experience the variety of seasonal conditions, or the volume and behavior of young people also walking the same route. This also did not account for carrying equipment/musical instruments to and from school. It was suggested that independent verification of safety assessments should be provided, but this was not the view of corporate health and safety.

### Theme 2: Impact on Attendance

*Many respondents raised the issue of the impact the increased walking distance would have on attendance. With a greater distance to walk to school, many pupils will simply not attend school on the days where weather is wet or clothing was wet from the day before, or days that they cannot take another form of transportation.*

**Response:** This is an existing risk for children and young people who already walk to school, but it is accepted that the proposed change may increase the

number of children and young people affected. Schools and central staff will monitor attendance of affected children and young people to ascertain if this presents as a pattern or has an impact.

### Theme 3: Time taken to walk to school

*Increasing the distance from 2 miles to 3 miles for secondary age pupils will see some young people having to walk for two hours each day on their journeys to and from school. This has an impact on the length of their day, but also on their preparedness – tiredness, providing suitable clothing and footwear increases costs for households, and some young people have to carry work/materials/sports equipment/musical instruments to and from school.*

**Response:** The 2 miles distance from primary and 3 miles distance from secondary is suggested by the Scottish Government as being a safe walking distance. For those not used to walking such distances each day, it will initially have an impact on energy levels, but regular exercise has been proven to impact positively on mental and physical health. It is accepted that carrying some items to and from school without transportation will be challenging. Providing suitable clothing for walking to and from school will place a burden on households. Some schools already offer a second hand clothing bank where items that no longer fit can be exchanged for others, and all schools would be encouraged to offer similar.

### Theme 4: Weather

*With the weather frequently being wet, children and young people will now be at greater risk of arriving at school wet, and having to sit through school with wet shoes/clothes, only to then have to make the return journey home at the end of the day in wet clothes. Providing suitable wet weather clothing and footwear will negatively impact households financially, as will drying clothes and footwear that has got wet in time for the next day.*

**Response:** This is presently a risk for anyone walking to school irrespective of the proposed change, but a rise in the number of children and young people walking to school would increase this, and increase the financial pressure on households. Some schools already offer a second hand clothing bank where items that no longer fit can be exchanged for others, and all schools would be encouraged to offer similar.

### Theme 5: Households with children attending different establishments

*A number of households have children attending different establishments. It will be impossible for some households to take a child to nursery whilst also walking a child to primary school.*

**Response:** For some households who have children attending multiple establishments this is an existing challenge, irrespective of the change in home to school distance, however the proposed change could see an increase in the number of households affected. Some households choose to ask family or friends to assist, or group together to share the journeys. Nurseries, schools or Parent Council's may be able to offer advice to households looking to group together to share journeys.

#### Theme 6: Contracts for school transport

*There are existing contracts in place for school transport, and some presently being procured for replacement. Many respondents asked about the timescale for changes, and the capacity of existing contracts to carry more children and young people.*

**Response:** The proposal would see changes introduced in two phases – in August 2023 ceasing the provision of WDC purchased travel passes for those children and young people presently making use of public transport to get to and from school, requiring them to make use of the Under 22 Travel Pass to access the same service instead. The second phase in August 2024 would see the removal of dedicated contracts for those children and young people who would no longer be eligible. In effect, there would therefore be no discernable difference for children, young people and families the school session 2023-24, allowing a greater time to prepare for the change.

Contracts would continue to operate for those children and young people that would still be eligible for transport. Due to the size of vehicle used by operators, some of these contracts run with spare capacity – where this occurs, WDC offer a 'privilege seats', where children and young people can make use of these spare seats at a cost. More information about privilege seats can be found on our website at <https://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/schools/school-travel-and-trips/school-transport/>

#### Theme 7: Accessibility of consultation

*A number of responses questioned how accessible the consultation was, referring to publicity of the consultation, the accessibility of the materials published and shared, and the locations of the public meetings.*

**Response:** The method of sharing consultation materials was agreed at committee in March 23. Materials were publicized and shared on the website and social media, and the public consultation were made available online. The locations of the public meetings were chosen to ensure that there was a public meeting in each of the main population centres of Dumbarton, Clydebank and the Vale of Leven. Feedback gathered on the methods of publicity will be used to inform future consultations.

### Theme 8: Identification and realization of benefits

*A number of responses questioned the process to identify benefits, and several responses questioned whether benefits would ever be realized.*

**Response:** Benefits were identified by Council Officers, and did not involve a benefits workshop or scoring mechanism with stakeholders. It is conceded that many of the benefits would only be realized if children and young people swapped the existing bus journeys for a more active method of travel to and from school. Without this, it is anticipated that vehicular traffic to and from affected schools may increase.

### Theme 9: Provision of public transport

*A high number of respondents questioned the provision, availability and suitability of public transport, as many felt that young people would make use of this instead of walking to school, but many respondents felt that the provision was insufficient. It was also suggested that provision of public transport should be guaranteed prior to any change in the policy.*

**Response:** The intention of the change in policy would be to increase the volume of active travel, but it is to be expected that any change would have an impact on both the use of private vehicles and public transport. First Bus responded directly to the consultation stating that 'Any decision should not assume that the required capacity on local service buses will automatically exist or be provided. [We] would strive to accommodate any displaced pupils within [our] existing timetables, however it is unlikely that additional journeys would be provided given the cost to provide this and the variability of school finish times throughout the week.' Whilst the existing services offered would be able to accommodate pupils in the Clydebank area making their way to and from school, the provision in Dumbarton and the Vale of Leven would not.

### Theme 10: Promise of provision of transport at the time of OLSP relocation

*At the time of the consultation on the proposal to move Our Lady & St. Patrick's High School from the previous site in Castlehill to its existing site in Bellsmyre assurances were made about the provision of transport for children and young people from Dumbarton West – particularly the areas of Brucehill, Castlehill and Westcliff and the surrounding streets that would qualify for transportation to school.*

**Response:** The planning condition on the development of the existing OLSP stipulated that a School Travel Plan and Workplace Travel Plan would be produced and implemented. At the time it was noted that the eight services transporting pupils to school would continue, but this was nine years ago, and not a planning condition.

## Theme 11: Equity of provision

*Due to the location of OLSP and the proposed 3 mile distance, privately owned houses at the extremities of Dumbarton West will still qualify for school transport, when local authority and housing association tenants in Brucehill, Castlehill and Westcliff and the surrounding streets would not.*

**Response:** The 2 miles distance from primary and 3 miles distance from secondary is suggested by the Scottish Government as being a safe walking distance. The location of the school would always impact households on either side of the 2 or 3 mile distance. Whilst it is true that the areas of Brucehill, Castlehill and Westcliff would no longer qualify for transportation to OLSP, there are many privately owned houses in the area also affected.

## Theme 12: Impact on denominational schools

*The legislation is there to ensure that any change does not adversely affect denominational schools more than non-denominational schools. It is clear that due to the size of their catchment areas, OLSP, St. Mary's (Alexandria) and St. Eunan's are more affected than others.*

**Response:** Of the schools affected, OLSP shares the same catchment area as both Dumbarton Academy and Vale of Leven Academy combined. The change negatively impacts 130 young people (24.4%) transported to OLSP, whilst 403 young people transported (75.6%) will still receive transportation. Of those being transported to Vale of Leven Academy, 153 are negatively impacted (83.2%), with 31 still receiving transportation (16.8%). Of the young people transported to Dumbarton Academy, 5 will be negatively impacted (22%), with 18 (78%) still receiving transportation. Whilst a small number of children would still be eligible for transport to Linnvale Primary due to the size of the catchment area, no children would still be eligible for transport to St. Eunan's Primary, or St. Mary's (Alexandria). It must be noted however that if you live in West Dumbarton, Dumbarton Academy is physically closer than OLSP, which may indirectly impact people's choice of school.

6.2 A written submission was received from the Archdiocese of Glasgow of the Roman Catholic Church (Appendix D), who, for the following reasons, do not agree with the proposal:

1. *The proposal would further disadvantage pupils who reside in SIMD 1 and 2 datazones by taking a blanket approach to distance – perhaps a clause that allows pupils in these areas more support, considering their personal circumstances, ensuring an equitable approach.*

a. **Response:** The proposal was based on home to school distance, and not a change based on any other criteria.

2. *While you are encouraging 'safe walking' and list benefits of this, many parents will not want their sons and daughters to undertake this mode of travel for safety reasons. This may mean more car journeys or parents having to accompany younger pupils on buses which may impact on their ability to undertake employment thus causing further hardship.*
  - a. **Response:** It is conceded that many of the benefits would only be realized if children and young people swapped the existing bus journeys for a more active method of travel to and from school. Without this, it is anticipated that vehicular traffic to and from affected schools may increase. Parents having to accompany younger children on buses may impact on their employment and cause further hardship.
  
3. *For some, if not travelling by bus, the journey to school will take longer. We consider that this may mean increased absences from school particularly in winter and inclement/cold weather. This may result in a fall in the attainment of those pupils resulting in increased disadvantage for them.*
  - a. **Response:** This is an existing risk for children and young people who already walk to school, but it is accepted that the proposed change may increase the number of children and young people affected. Schools and central staff will monitor attendance of affected children and young people to ascertain if this presents as a pattern or has an impact.
  
4. *If children are walking to school, they will require proper clothing for wet and windy weather if they are to remain healthy and fit to learn. This will place even more financial pressure on parents already struggling in our economic climate.*
  - a. **Response:** This is presently a risk for anyone walking to school irrespective of the proposed change, but a rise in the number of children and young people walking to school would increase this, and increase the financial pressure on households. Some schools already offer a second hand clothing bank where items that no longer fit can be exchanged for others, and all schools would be encouraged to offer similar.
  
5. *It is recognised and appreciated that all young people between the ages of five and twenty-two years in Scotland have access to free bus travel, which in itself is a huge support to families. However, travelling by public transport at peak school times will be problematic not only for pupils but for the wider population, in terms of ease of access, reliability and safety. This may result in increased late coming to schools at the start of the day and a later time home for pupils thus increasing the length of their journeys and their overall 'school' day.*
  - a. **Response:** The proposal was based on children and young people taking an active travel route to school, but it is conceded that many will

look to make use of public transport. Whilst the existing services offered would be able to accommodate pupils in the Clydebank area making their way to and from school, we understand from local providers that the provision in Dumbarton and the Vale of Leven would not.

6. *Given that if this proposal is passed it will impact on the provision of buses and bus timetabled, we note that the bus companies are not included in the list of consultees.*

a. **Response:** School transport is procured through SPT, who responded to the consultation. Some local operators responded through the consultation exercise.

7. *That the two denominational secondary schools have a wider catchment area than the non-denominational secondary schools. In fact, half of the population of Our Lady and St Patrick's High School will lose transport if your proposal goes through. It may be that parents rather, than having their children travel the new distance by foot or public transport, may feel forced to decide to send their son or daughter to the nearest non-denominational school. This could be regarded as indirect discrimination by the Council towards Catholic pupils.*

a. **Response:** Due to assessments of safe walking routes, 403 young people presently transported to OLSP (75.6%) will still receive transportation, with 130 young people (24.4%) no longer being eligible. From the 3 mile boundary of OLSP in West Dumbarton, it is only 2.1 miles to Dumbarton Academy, so it is accepted that it would be quicker and easier to travel to the non-denominational school than the denominational school.

8. *At a reasonable pace an adult will walk 3 miles in one hour. This means that some secondary aged pupils will be adding 2 hours onto their school day. This will impact on their capacity to remain in school for clubs, supported study and on their opportunity to do homework.*

a. **Response:** Increasing the distance for eligibility will impact on the length of time taken to get to school. The existing provision of school transport impacts on the potential of after-school clubs, as buses leave the school at a specific time.

9. *While the intention to encourage walking to school is admirable, there is concern that removing organised school transport will only increase private cars, with parents (who have cars) choosing to drive their children to school, thus causing congestion and pollution at peak times.*

**Response:** It is conceded that many of the benefits would only be realized if children and young people swapped the existing bus journeys for a more active method of travel to and from school. Without this, it is anticipated that vehicular traffic to and from affected schools may increase, resulting in greater congestion and pollution and peak times.



6.3 Submissions were also received from First Bus during the consultation period, and from Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT) (Appendix E) after the consultation period had ended. The main points raised by First Bus and SPT are outlined below:

1. First Bus responded stating that ‘Any decision should not assume that the required capacity on local service buses will automatically exist or be provided. [We] would strive to accommodate any displaced pupils within [our] existing timetables, however it is unlikely that additional journeys would be provided given the cost to provide this and the variability of school finish times throughout the week.’

a. **Response:** The Council welcomes the responses from First Bus notes that whilst the existing services offered would be able to accommodate pupils in the Clydebank area making their way to and from school, we understand from local providers that the provision in Dumbarton and the Vale of Leven would not.

2. SPT responded suggesting that an Equalities Impact Assessment be undertaken prior to any change in policy to ensure that the travel needs of children and young people were understood, the sustainable transport and transport infrastructure were assessed, and that the strategy develops sustainable travel and transport infrastructure in West Dunbartonshire.

a. **Response:** An EIA has been undertaken in relation to this proposal.

3. SPT welcomed the Council’s reference to safety in the proposal and considered this to be the most critical factor in decision making. An analysis of increase in car journeys should be undertaken if the change is implemented, as well as ensuring that it is not a blanket introduction of the change in eligibility, but that safety of individual routes is taken into consideration. It may be that additional infrastructure to promote active travel is required prior to the implementation of any change.

a. **Response:** It is anticipated that vehicular traffic to and from affected schools may increase, resulting in greater congestion and pollution and peak times. A survey of this would be undertaken, with a view to any change measures being implemented. Individual routes have been assessed by the roads team to determine suitability. Regular reviews of schools Travel Plans would accommodate any change in infrastructure at school level, and would fit with the wider Council objective to promote sustainability.

4. SPT highlighted the potential increase in demand for public transport services. Prior to the implementation of any change, the Council should confirm through dialogue with local operators whether the existing infrastructure would be able to accommodate the increase in demand, or whether they would seek to strengthen provision to meet this need. The Council should engage with

Sustrans and continue to promote the uptake of the Under 22 Travel pass scheme.

- a. **Response:** First bus also responded to the consultation. Whilst the existing services offered would be able to accommodate pupils in the Clydebank area making their way to and from school, we understand from local providers that the provision in Dumbarton and the Vale of Leven would not. The Council continue to engage with Sustrans to develop sustainable infrastructure and to support active travel. The Council has a high uptake of the Under 22 Travel pass scheme, with direct intervention in our schools by partners to target individual young people who are yet to benefit from the scheme.

## 7. EDUCATION SCOTLAND REPORT AND EDUCATION AUTHORITY RESPONSE

- 7.1 In accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, a report was produced by Education Scotland on the educational aspects of the proposal. Education Scotland agree that the proposal is in line with national guidance and statutory walking distances. Education Scotland also agree that there are potential benefits through active travel, but do not agree that the Council have set out sufficiently the potential educational benefits to address concerns raised by stakeholders.
- 7.2 The Education Scotland report can be read in full in Appendix F, and the summary conclusions from the report are presented below.
- 7.3 The Council welcomes the report from Education Scotland and accepts its response to the Council's proposal. The report highlighted that almost all stakeholders raised significant concerns. These include the safety of children and young people while walking to and from school, and the reliability, availability and capacity of public transport to meet increased demand. Most stakeholders also have a concern that the proposal, if implemented, would incur financial costs for families already facing significant financial hardship. Stakeholders are also concerned about the potential for lower attendance which will impact on attainment and achievement. Should this proposal be agreed, it will be important for the Council to work with stakeholders to address their concerns.
  - **Response:** The safety of children and young people walking to and from school; the reliability, availability and capacity of public transport to meet increased demand; the financial impact on families already facing significant financial hardship; and the impact on attendance and attainment were amongst the themes identified by stakeholders during the consultation. A number of walking routes were identified as not being safe, so in these instances transport would still be provided. Whilst the existing public transport services offered in the Clydebank area would be able to accommodate pupils making their way to and

from school, we understand from local providers that the provision in Dumbarton and the Vale of Leven would not. Whilst some schools already have facilities in place for families to exchange items of clothing, it is conceded that there would be a financial impact on households catering for children and young people walking to and from school, many of whom are already facing significant financial hardship. The proposed change may also have an impact on attendance and attainment.

7.4 The report also highlighted that the online survey main question may have been misunderstood by respondents and therefore the outcome may not be accurate. The survey responses do not fully reflect the comments or the issues raised by stakeholders who met with HM Inspectors. The Council will need to consider if this data should be used to inform the final decision.

- **Response:** as stated in 5.4 and 5.5 above, the response to the main question in the online survey does not reflect the vast majority of comments made throughout the consultation, as reflected in the 12 themes shown in section 6.1 above. Whilst a small number of comments were in favour of the proposed change, the vast majority were against the proposal.

## 8. ALLEGED OMISSIONS OR INACCURACIES

8.1 Section (10) (3) of the 2010 Act also places a requirement on the Council to provide details of any inaccuracy or omission within the Proposal Paper which has either been identified by the Council or raised by consultees. This section of the 2010 Act also requires the Council to provide a statement on the action taken in respect of the inaccuracy or omission, or, if no action was taken, to state that fact and why.

8.2 In the course of the consultation exercise, there were no areas identified by respondents as being inaccurate or omitted from the Proposal Paper during the consultation period.

## 9. COMPLIANCE WITH SECTION 9(1) OF THE SCHOOLS (CONSULTATION) (SCOTLAND) ACT 2010

9.1 Section 9(1) of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 states that: After the Education Authority has received Education Scotland's report, the Authority is to review the relevant proposal having regard (in particular) to:

- (i) written representations received by the Authority (from any person) during the consultation period;
- (ii) oral representations made to it (by any person) at the public Meeting; and
- (iii) Education Scotland's report.

9.2 Following receipt of the Education Scotland report, the Council has reviewed

the proposal, having regard to the written and oral representations made and to Education Scotland's report.

- 9.3 The feedback from the consultation was considered by officers where all the questions and comments raised were considered in detail. This ensured that the Council met the requirements to review the proposal under section 9(1) and 13(5) of the 2010 Act.
- 9.4 Officers of the Education Authority have listened carefully to the points made at the public meeting and have considered equally carefully the Education Scotland report, online representations and written submission.
- 9.5 The proposal was reviewed to consider whether any of the representations led to the Council to reconsider any other reasonable alternatives to the proposal. It is clear from the responses received that the vast majority of stakeholders are against the proposal.
- 9.6 As the grounds for the proposal were based on a saving to the Council, a reasonable alternative would be to maintain the existing home to school distance, but remove the provision of bus passes by the Council for use on public service buses, requiring children and young people who use public service buses to make use of their Under 22 travel pass instead. In the exceptional circumstance where a child or young person is unable to obtain or utilise an Under 22 Travel Pass, the Council would ensure the young person was provided with suitable support. This change would have no direct impact on stakeholders, and save the Council in the region of £185,000 per annum. This would be £15,000 short of the projected saving for 2023/24, and £115,000 short of the projected saving for 2024/25.
- 9.6 The educational benefits were reviewed in respect of the Education Scotland report and representations made. It is clear that the Council did not set out sufficiently the potential educational benefits to address concerns raised by stakeholders. Further work will be done through school travel plans to increase the uptake of active travel options, and Education will continue to support the wider work of the Council to improve sustainability.

## **10. LEGAL ISSUES/NEXT STEPS**

- 10.1 The Council has complied in full with the requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 throughout this statutory consultation.
- 10.2 Under the terms of the Schools (Scotland) (Consultation) Act 2010, it is a legal requirement that the Council should not reach any formal decision without waiting until a period of three weeks starting on the day on which this Consultation Report is published in electronic and printed form has expired.
- 10.3 This Consultation Report will be published, both electronically and available in written form, if required, on Friday 16 June 2023, this meets the statutory

requirement to publish this report for three weeks before the report on the consultation is considered by Educational Service Committee on Friday 7 July 2023 for final decision. If approved the Council will ensure continued engagement with all stakeholders throughout the implementation of any change to the policy.

## **WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL**

### **PUBLIC CONSULTATION MEETING 1 DUMBARTON VENUE - Our Lady & St. Patrick's High School (Also made available online) Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> April 2023 – 7.00 p.m.**

#### **ATTENDING:**

Laura Mason (LM), Chief Education Officer, WDC  
Andrew Brown (AB), Senior Education Officer, WDC  
Claire Cusick (CC), Senior Education Officer, WDC  
Julie McGrogan (JM), Senior Education Officer, WDC  
Lyn Pennycook (LP), Education Support Officer, WDC  
Sheila Brown (SB), HMIe, Education Scotland

#### **In Attendance:**

30 members of the public in person, and 3 members of the public online.

#### **Welcome and Introduction**

LM opened the meeting and welcomed the members of the public in attendance to the statutory consultation meeting. LM introduced herself and the Council Officers in attendance and outlined the format of the meeting.

#### **Consultation Process**

LM continued by explaining the consultation process, and stated that West Dunbartonshire Council are required by law to conduct a statutory consultation for any proposed change to denominational transport, but have taken the opportunity to consult more widely on the changes for all schools affected. LM advised that presently, around 1,200 children and young people are transported to 12 of our schools. At the meeting on the 8th of March, Educational Services committee approved the launch of this consultation, and agreed that it should run from the 9th of March until the 9th May, and that a report outlining the results of this consultation and making appropriate recommendations be presented to a meeting of the educational services committee in the week beginning the 5th July.

LM continued that in terms of the timeline for the consultation, we aim to provide individual outcomes to those in receipt of transport currently this week. This is the first of our public events for geographical areas, with a further two to take place in Clydebank and the Vale of Leven. When the consultation formally closes all responses will be collated, and provided to Education Scotland who will then undertake some fieldwork - they will sample visit a number of schools, and look to speak with children and young people, the Parent Council and a wider group of parents. Education Scotland will then produce a report to the Council based on how the consultation was conducted, and this report will form part of the material submitted in the report to the Educational Services committee to be held in the week beginning the 5th of July. West Dunbartonshire Council (WDC) are required by law to publish their Consultation Response Report three weeks before the committee meeting.

Should the Educational Services committee agree to implement any changes, it is proposed to do these in two phases - the first phase affecting children and young people who presently use public transport for their journey to school in time for the start of the next academic year, and the second phase to time with the start of the following year in 2024 - this is of course all subject to the findings of this consultation, and committee approval.

## **Proposed Changes**

AB spoke to the proposed changes being addressed in this consultation. The proposal is to increase the distance a pupil resides in order to qualify for transportation. For primary aged pupils that would mean a change from the existing 1 mile distance to 2 miles, And for secondary, a change from the existing 2 miles to 3 miles. AB stated that throughout the documentation we have stated that this is more in line with legislation, as Scottish Government do not specify a distance for local authorities to provide transport, but instead refer to a 'safe walking distance'. WDC have not measured distances 'as the crow flies', but instead have used the West Dunbartonshire Mapping and Geographical Information Centre tool which is developed by ESRI. This is a tool that is used worldwide, and the same tool that is used for all council mapping applications – for example, the tool on the WDC website allowing residents to find out what day their bins are collected. In education, the tool is used for school catchment areas, and for school transport. Using this tool, we first pinpointed the school gates, or access points to school sites which then allowed us to define, on the maps, the distance from our schools to any address.

AB shared a number of images [due to the projected image in the OLSP hall, it was acknowledged that these were difficult to see on screen]. The software can identify routes that are walkable. The image displayed showed part of the Vale of Leven that has walkable routes to OLSP - those routes were shown as purple lines in the image. The software helps to understand which of those walkable routes are within three miles of OLSP shown here, and a similar exercise was undertaken for each of the schools affected. Understandably, the software highlighted areas that are outwith the 2 or 3 mile distance, showing addresses that would be eligible for transport provision. By plotting on the mapping software the location of the home addresses

for children and young people that presently receive transport, allow us to see what this would mean for individuals affected by the proposed changes.

Whilst the mapping software will tell if something is walkable, we need to ensure that it is a safe route to walk. What do we mean by 'safe'? By safe, we mean that there is provision of an accessible footpath, maintained to a suitable quality. There is adequate provision of street lighting, so that this path is lit and can be walked safely. Where crossing points need to be used, is there is safe way to cross the road, and where there is a high volume of traffic, or a higher speed of traffic, this has been taken into consideration. This isn't new to us - we have been providing school transport for decades, so we already have a considerable amount of knowledge and experience in this area. There are presently a number of young people who are provided with transport on the grounds of the being no suitable route for them to walk - this will not change. Where concerns have been raised, we have walked routes, and checked all of those with colleagues in the Roads team.

AB drew attention to two specific areas - the Stirling Road, the A813 at the 'Lions Head' roundabout near the Vale of Leven Industrial Estate, and the junction of the A82 and A814 at Milton to highlight this point - although these are 'walkable' routes - we do not consider them to be a 'safe walkable' routes. So, in the example of OLSP although many of the addresses in the Vale of Leven are within the 3 mile distance proposed, if you are coming from the Vale to attend OLSP, we will still have to provide you with transport, as there is not presently a safe route for you to walk. The same applies for addresses in Milton and Renton. Children and young people attending the catchment schools of St. Patrick's Primary, Knoxland Primary, Dumbarton Academy and OLSP from these geographical area will similarly still be eligible for transport on the grounds of safety.

LM mentioned at the beginning that we would be writing to each family who is presently in receipt of school transport with the outcome of this exercise for your individual circumstances so that each of you know how this will impact you.

AB shared a table highlighting the affect the proposal would have on the number of children and young people presently transported to schools.

School	Existing Numbers	Not Eligible
Gartocharn Primary School	17	
Knoxland Primary School	21	5
Linnvale Primary School	*	*
St. Eunan's Primary School	22	22
St. Mary's (Alexandria) Primary School	16	16
St. Mary's (Duntocher) Primary School	12	*
St. Patrick's Primary School	*	*
Clydebank High School	249	179
Dumbarton Academy	23	5
Our Lady & St. Patrick's High School	533	130
St. Peter the Apostle High School	106	81
Vale of Leven Academy	184	153



If accepted, we would propose to make changes in two phases - first by making the most straightforward change. Many of our children and young people are transported using 'service' buses. At the moment, we pay First Bus to transport our young people on the very same service bus you or I could also get. With the introduction of the Under 22 Travel Pass, young people would be able to get exactly the same transport without additional cost to the council. Technically, the public purse is paying twice for this service. We have been working with SDS, the Senior Phase team and Working4U to maximise the uptake of the travel pass scheme, and would seek to ensure that all young people that need a card have one prior to the summer holidays.

The second phase would see us making changes to the dedicated transport provision that we presently have contractors operating - most notably Marbil, McColls and a number of local taxi providers. We would be looking to make these changes in time for the following session starting in August 2024, due to the terms of the existing contracts and termination clauses and timescales.

## **Education Benefits**

AB highlighted the benefits and dis-benefits associated with this proposal. As LM stated at the introduction, the council needs to identify areas where we could reduce our operating costs, and as already made mention of areas here where the public purse is paying twice. There are of course other benefits associated with this proposal.

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child Article 3 which affirms that 'in all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration', so in all of our decision making, we need to ensure that the long term benefits for our young people are at the centre of our thinking.

The Scottish Government is committed to a long term vision for active travel that encourages promotes walking, cycling, public transport and car sharing in preference to single occupancy car use for movement of people, and encourages efficient and sustainable freight.

There are a number of benefits associated with physical health:

- The World Health Organisation reported that walking for 30 minutes or cycling for 20 minutes on most days reduces mortality risk by at least 10%
- Active commuting is associated with an approximate 10% decrease in risk for cardiovascular disease and a 30% decrease in type 2 diabetes risk
- Cancer-related mortality is 30% lower among bike commuters
- The Scottish Health Survey of 2021 identified 28% of children at risk of being overweight. An active lifestyle combined with a healthy diet can help to reduce this

Equally, there are benefits to mental health:

- Improve focus – in one study, brain activity in the areas of focus and attention were increased following a period of walking. Walking to school can therefore improve focus on school activities
- Walking has been found to improve people's mood and develop creativity

Building relationships with those you walk with. Whether it be a group of friends or family, spending time walking together can help build relationships as people talk about their day or other things that are on their mind. For those children that do not have the required sense of road safety to walk unaccompanied, parents or carers may have to accompany their children on the journey to and from school. In other local authorities, many parents have benefitted from sharing this with a group of other parents whose children live near them. This has reduced the impact on individuals, led to increased connections with neighbours, and an increased sense of community.

Reducing the number of people taking car or bus journeys can help to improve our air quality.

A walking survey in 2021 found that participation was lower amongst residents of the 10% most deprived areas.

Whilst there are benefits to making a change, there are equally dis-benefits associated with this proposal:

- Journey time – for some, the journey to school time will increase if not travelling by bus. This may result in an earlier start to the day for some, as they plan for their journey taking longer.
- Inclement weather – weather in the West of Scotland is frequently inclement, resulting in families having to equip children and young people for wet and windy weather. This may increase financial pressure on households.
- Some benefits are only realised if children and young people swap the passive bus journey for an active means of getting to school

AB concluded by highlighting that The Eco-Schools Scotland programme (with which all of our school are engaged) encourages active travel for our children and young people.

The programme promotes:

- encouraging and enabling parents and children to walk, cycle and use public transport;
- setting up a working group with school, parent, local authority, community, police, and transport representatives to run a school travel or 'safer routes to school' project;
- writing and implementing a school travel plan;
- running an effective road safety awareness programme for pupils;
- raising awareness of the damage caused by transport to the environment and people's health, and;
- providing adequate support and information about travelling to school for pupils and staff who wish to walk, cycle or use public transport.

All schools will be encouraged to revisit their school travel plan to encourage an increasing uptake of active travel.

## Questions

LM opened the meeting for questions from those in attendance.

### **Q. Will Milton be impacted?**

A. Transport will still be provided to children and young people from Milton who attend St. Patrick's Primary, Knoxland Primary, Dumbarton Academy and Our Lady & St Patrick's High School on the grounds of safety.

### **Q. Re dedicated buses, child didn't get a bus pass (Dumbarton Academy).**

A. Bus passes were ordered through our partner SPT. We were not aware that they had not been provided to Dumbarton Academy pupils, as this hadn't been brought to our attention. We will pick this up with both SPT and the school.

**Comment. Suggestion that transport to secondary schools be removed but retain primary transport.**

**Q. Was it taken in to account that Milton Primary closed and pupils were transferred to Knoxland which is the next school. The stress this could cause of child walking this distance, ability to concentrate, lot to ask of a 4 year old.**

A. Yes, this was taken into account, and children living in Milton will still be provided with transport.

**Q. Pupil at Knoxland, lives in Garshake, with undiagnosed ASN. Queried whether individual circumstances would be considered. If did not qualify could people come back re this?**

A. Transport provision for children with ASN is not governed by the same criteria, and individual assessments and outcomes are made for individual needs. ASN queries can be followed up with the school.

**Q. Is A82 considered a safe walking route?**

A. The A82 has a number of controlled crossing points.

**Q. Various people were looking for confirmation whether they would be affected or not.**

A. Individual outcomes for those presently in receipt of school transport will be provided.

**Q. Question about transport from Renton, as there are concerns of safety walking from Renton due to roads, lorries, safety, blind spots.**

A. Children and young people travelling from Renton to OLSP would still be provided with transportation on the grounds of safety.

**Comment. Concern re reliability of bus from Milton. Noted that on occasion First Bus drives past the stop as does not want to pick up school pupils.**

**Q. Query if there would be an increase in First Buses due to increased demand?**

A. Should the recommendation be implemented, we will provide local service operators with the data we have showing the number of children and young people we would no longer be transporting.

**Q. Timeframe for dedicated serviced (2024) - will this end in 24 and would we have to go through this process again?**

A. If implemented, we would propose to end the dedicated services for those no longer eligible at the start of session 2024/25, so they would still have transport up until then.

**Comment. On understanding the health benefits, some routes may be considered safe to walk but not safe due to behaviours.**

**Q. What provision will be in place for ASN children?**

A. Transport provision for children with ASN is not governed by the same criteria, and individual assessments and outcomes are made for individual needs. ASN queries can be followed up with the school, with a 'Team Around the Child' meeting in the first instance.

**Comment. Safe routes may not be the same for all due to behaviour of children - noted removal of crossing patrollers.**

**Comment. Suggested that there are not any educational benefits from this.**

**Q. Who walked the routes and are the results published?**

A. Routes have been walked by Education Transport and checked by Roads. Documentation can be provided.

**Q. Will the safety report be independently verified?**

A. This has not been a requirement that we have been made aware of, but will discuss further with Corporate Health & Safety.

**Q. Does this take in to account pupils who are carrying art work, instruments, time for exams etc. and the stress/anxiety this could cause pupils.**

A. Adults were involved in the assessment of routes with an understanding of the needs of children attending school.

**Q. If we don't agree with the report will there be time to walk the route to log disagreement?**

A. Yes.

**Q. The bus will be picking up in Milton so why not pick up at Garshake?**

A. The size of vehicle used is determined by the number of pupils being transported. There are occasions where there are spare seats on vehicles, which are offered through our 'Privilege Seat' process. Further information can be found about this on the Education Transport page of the website.

**Q. Where is the saving? Kids who are being put off the bus are being put at risk.**

A. The saving is being made by no longer paying for the transportation of some pupils.

**Comment. The traffic is fast on the A82 and poses a risk to life.**

**Comment. Weather is awful, and kids will have to walk far in it.**

**Q. Further question on reliability of busses which don't stop and make pupils late for school.**

A. Reliability of service would be a matter for the operator.

**Q. Could we look at savings from elsewhere (Young Scot Cards)?**

A. Savings would be made from not paying for a bus pass for those already making use of service buses and their Young Scot card.

**Q. Brucehill/Castlehill/Westcliff - people living in different streets would be not eligible from someone living in the next street. Would the bus pick them up?**

A. The bus would only pick up those eligible for transport, or those with a privilege seat.

**Q. Would we be looking at smaller busses for areas?**

A. The size or type of vehicle is determined by the operator on the basis of the number of pupils transported.

**Q. What is the course of action if disagree with safe route?**

A. A process is already in place for such queries. If you contact education transport they will be able to assist.

**Q. Request for slides to be made public.**

A. Slides will be published on the consultation page of the West Dunbartonshire website.

### **Next Steps**

LM addressed what will happen next in the consultation. The consultation remains open until midnight on 9<sup>th</sup> May 2023, and anyone wishing to make their views on the proposal known can do so in a number of ways including: online survey (this asks whether you are in favour of the proposal - yes or no), by phone, in writing, or by email. At the end of the consultation period all documents and views obtained through the consultation process are collated and shared with Education Scotland, who will undertake fieldwork to assist them with writing an independent report on the consultation, and respond to Laura Mason. Andrea McMillan and Sheila Brown from Education Scotland will undertake meetings with parents/staff/children from a number of schools affected in the week beginning 15<sup>th</sup> May 2023. A report including recommendation will be submitted to the Education Services Committee in July 2023 to make a final decision.

### **Close of Meeting**

LM thanked everyone for attending and reminded those attending that views on the consultation can be made through the online survey, by email letter, phone or through an informal chat and you have until 9<sup>th</sup> May 2023 to submit your response.

## **WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL**

### **PUBLIC CONSULTATION MEETING 2 CLYDEBANK VENUE - St. Peter the Apostle High School (Also made available online) Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> April 2023 – 7.00 p.m.**

#### **ATTENDING:**

Laura Mason (LM), Chief Education Officer, WDC  
Andrew Brown (AB), Senior Education Officer, WDC  
Claire Cusick (CC), Senior Education Officer, WDC  
Julie McGrogan (JM), Senior Education Officer, WDC  
Lyn Pennycook (LP), Education Support Officer, WDC

#### **In Attendance:**

8 members of the public in person, and 2 members of the public online.

#### **Welcome and Introduction**

LM opened the meeting and welcomed the members of the public in attendance to the statutory consultation meeting. LM introduced herself and the Council Officers in attendance and outlined the format of the meeting.

#### **Consultation Process**

LM continued by explaining the consultation process, and stated that West Dunbartonshire Council are required by law to conduct a statutory consultation for any proposed change to denominational transport, but have taken the opportunity to consult more widely on the changes for all schools affected. LM advised that presently, around 1,200 children and young people are transported to 12 of our schools. At the meeting on the 8th of March, Educational Services committee approved the launch of this consultation, and agreed that it should run from the 9th of March until the 9th May, and that a report outlining the results of this consultation and making appropriate recommendations be presented to a meeting of the educational services committee in the week beginning the 5th July.

LM continued that in terms of the timeline for the consultation, we aim to provide individual outcomes to those in receipt of transport currently this week. This is the

second of our public events for geographical areas, with one taking place last night for the Dumbarton area, with a further one taking place next week in the Vale of Leven. When the consultation formally closes all responses will be collated, and provided to Education Scotland who will then undertake some fieldwork - they will sample visit a number of schools, and look to speak with children and young people, the Parent Council and a wider group of parents. Education Scotland will then produce a report to the Council based on how the consultation was conducted, and this report will form part of the material submitted in the report to the Educational Services committee to be held in the week beginning the 5th of July. West Dunbartonshire Council (WDC) are required by law to publish their Consultation Response Report three weeks before the committee meeting.

Should the Educational Services committee agree to implement any changes, it is proposed to do these in two phases - the first phase affecting children and young people who presently use public transport for their journey to school in time for the start of the next academic year, and the second phase to time with the start of the following year in 2024 - this is of course all subject to the findings of this consultation, and committee approval.

## **Proposed Changes**

AB spoke to the proposed changes being addressed in this consultation. The proposal is to increase the distance a pupil resides in order to qualify for transportation. For primary aged pupils that would mean a change from the existing 1 mile distance to 2 miles, And for secondary, a change from the existing 2 miles to 3 miles. AB stated that throughout the documentation we have stated that this is more in line with legislation, as Scottish Government do not specify a distance for local authorities to provide transport, but instead refer to a 'safe walking distance'. WDC have not measured distances 'as the crow flies', but instead have used the West Dunbartonshire Mapping and Geographical Information Centre tool which is developed by ESRI. This is a tool that is used worldwide, and the same tool that is used for all council mapping applications – for example, the tool on the WDC website allowing residents to find out what day their bins are collected. In education, the tool is used for school catchment areas, and for school transport. Using this tool, we first pinpointed the school gates, or access points to school sites which then allowed us to define, on the maps, the distance from our schools to any address.

AB shared a number of images from the Clydebank area. The software used can identify routes that are walkable. The image displayed showed part of Clydebank that has walkable routes to St. Peter the Apostle High School - those routes were shown as purple lines in the image. The software helps to understand which of those walkable routes are within three miles of St. Peter the Apostle High School shown here, and a similar exercise was undertaken for each of the schools affected. Understandably, the software highlighted areas that are outwith the 2 or 3 mile distance, showing addresses that would be eligible for transport provision. By plotting on the mapping software the location of the home addresses for children and young people that presently receive transport, allow us to see what this would mean for individuals affected by the proposed changes.



Whilst the mapping software will tell if something is walkable, we need to ensure that it is a safe route to walk. What do we mean by 'safe'? By safe, we mean that there is provision of an accessible footpath, maintained to a suitable quality. There is adequate provision of street lighting, so that this path is lit and can be walked safely. Where crossing points need to be used, is there is safe way to cross the road, and where there is a high volume of traffic, or a higher speed of traffic, this has been taken into consideration. This isn't new to us - we have been providing school transport for decades, so we already have a considerable amount of knowledge and experience in this area. There are presently a number of young people who are provided with transport on the grounds of the being no suitable route for them to walk - this will not change. Where concerns have been raised, we have walked routes, and checked all of those with colleagues in the Roads team.

LM mentioned at the beginning that we would be writing to each family who is presently in receipt of school transport with the outcome of this exercise for your individual circumstances so that each of you know how this will impact you.

AB shared a table highlighting the affect the proposal would have on the number of children and young people presently transported to schools.

School	Existing Numbers	Not Eligible
Gartocharn Primary School	17	
Knoxland Primary School	21	5
Linnvale Primary School	*	*
St. Eunan's Primary School	22	22
St. Mary's (Alexandria) Primary School	16	16
St. Mary's (Duntocher) Primary School	12	*
St. Patrick's Primary School	*	*
Clydebank High School	249	179
Dumbarton Academy	23	5
Our Lady & St. Patrick's High School	533	130
St. Peter the Apostle High School	106	81
Vale of Leven Academy	184	153

If accepted, we would propose to make changes in two phases - first by making the most straightforward change. Many of our children and young people are transported using 'service' buses. At the moment, we pay First Bus to transport our young people on the very same service bus you or I could also get. With the introduction of the Under 22 Travel Pass, young people would be able to get exactly the same transport without additional cost to the council. Technically, the public purse is paying twice for this service. We have been working with SDS, the Senior Phase team and Working4U to maximise the uptake of the travel pass scheme, and would seek to ensure that all young people that need a card have one prior to the summer holidays.

The second phase would see us making changes to the dedicated transport provision that we presently have contractors operating - most notably PJ Travel and a number of local taxi providers. We would be looking to make these changes in time

for the following session starting in August 2024, due to the terms of the existing contracts and termination clauses and timescales.

## **Education Benefits**

AB highlighted the benefits and dis-benefits associated with this proposal. As LM stated at the introduction, the council needs to identify areas where we could reduce our operating costs, and as already made mention of areas here where the public purse is paying twice. There are of course other benefits associated with this proposal.

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child Article 3 which affirms that ‘in all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration’, so in all of our decision making, we need to ensure that the long term benefits for our young people are at the centre of our thinking.

The Scottish Government is committed to a long term vision for active travel that encourages promotes walking, cycling, public transport and car sharing in preference to single occupancy car use for movement of people, and encourages efficient and sustainable freight.

There are a number of benefits associated with physical health:

- The World Health Organisation reported that walking for 30 minutes or cycling for 20 minutes on most days reduces mortality risk by at least 10%
- Active commuting is associated with an approximate 10% decrease in risk for cardiovascular disease and a 30% decrease in type 2 diabetes risk
- Cancer-related mortality is 30% lower among bike commuters
- The Scottish Health Survey of 2021 identified 28% of children at risk of being overweight. An active lifestyle combined with a healthy diet can help to reduce this

Equally, there are benefits to mental health:

- Improve focus – in one study, brain activity in the areas of focus and attention were increased following a period of walking. Walking to school can therefore improve focus on school activities
- Walking has been found to improve people’s mood and develop creativity

Building relationships with those you walk with. Whether it be a group of friends or family, spending time walking together can help build relationships as people talk about their day or other things that are on their mind. For those children that do not have the required sense of road safety to walk unaccompanied, parents or carers may have to accompany their children on the journey to and from school. In other local authorities, many parents have benefitted from sharing this with a group of other parents whose children live near them. This has reduced the impact on individuals, led to increased connections with neighbours, and an increased sense of community.

Reducing the number of people taking car or bus journeys can help to improve our air quality.

A walking survey in 2021 found that participation was lower amongst residents of the 10% most deprived areas.

Whilst there are benefits to making a change, there are equally dis-benefits associated with this proposal:

- Journey time – for some, the journey to school time will increase if not travelling by bus. This may result in an earlier start to the day for some, as they plan for their journey taking longer.
- Inclement weather – weather in the West of Scotland is frequently inclement, resulting in families having to equip children and young people for wet and windy weather. This may increase financial pressure on households.
- Some benefits are only realised if children and young people swap the passive bus journey for an active means of getting to school

AB concluded by highlighting that The Eco-Schools Scotland programme (with which all of our school are engaged) encourages active travel for our children and young people.

The programme promotes:

- encouraging and enabling parents and children to walk, cycle and use public transport;
- setting up a working group with school, parent, local authority, community, police, and transport representatives to run a school travel or 'safer routes to school' project;
- writing and implementing a school travel plan;
- running an effective road safety awareness programme for pupils;
- raising awareness of the damage caused by transport to the environment and people's health, and;
- providing adequate support and information about travelling to school for pupils and staff who wish to walk, cycle or use public transport.

All schools will be encouraged to revisit their school travel plan to encourage an increasing uptake of active travel.

## **Questions**

LM opened the meeting for questions from those in attendance.

### **Q. What will happen on dark winter mornings?**

A. Under the proposal, more children would be walking to school, or using alternative modes of transport.

**Comment. Feel it is dangerous for young children.**

### **Q. What is the saving to the council?**

A. The saving will be made by no longer requiring certain contracts to transport children. The saving would be between £200,000 - £300,000 per annum.

**Q. Will this be put back into education?**

A. No. Savings are made to help the council present a balanced budget.

**Q. Currently live 1.5 miles from primary school, and am concerned about safety of children walking to school.**

A. If the proposed changes are brought into effect, then only children with the required road sense should be walking to school unaccompanied.

**Q. Have alternative methods of transport been considered? For example, bus instead of taxi?**

A. The provision is largely determined by the operator, considering the number of children to be transported, and their needs.

**Q. Traffic management around schools. Have these considerations been factored in due to timeframes for families in the morning? St. Eunan's specific example of congestion in the morning, and availability of parking in the area.**

A. Example given of schools revising their travel plan to best advise parents of getting children to school safely.

**Comment. I have a 10 year old and a 4 year old, and am considering registration in my local non-denominational school instead.**

**Comment – should be considered for secondary only as opposed to primary – too dangerous for young children**

**Comment – additional burden for working parents. If changes take place then parents will require support to plan alternatively.**

**Comment – concerns re behaviour of secondary pupils impacting on primary children walking to school.**

**Comment – concern about youngest children being able to access buses safely.**

**Comment – request for a bus bay to be installed in St. Eunan's.**

## **Next Steps**

LM addressed what will happen next in the consultation. The consultation remains open until midnight on 9<sup>th</sup> May 2023, and anyone wishing to make their views on the proposal known can do so in a number of ways including: online survey (this asks

whether you are in favour of the proposal - yes or no), by phone, in writing, or by email. At the end of the consultation period all documents and views obtained through the consultation process are collated and shared with Education Scotland, who will undertake fieldwork to assist them with writing an independent report on the consultation, and respond to Laura Mason. Andrea McMillan and Sheila Brown from Education Scotland will undertake meetings with parents/staff/children from a number of schools affected in the week beginning 15<sup>th</sup> May 2023. A report including recommendation will be submitted to the Education Services Committee in July 2023 to make a final decision.

### **Close of Meeting**

LM thanked everyone for attending and reminded those attending that views on the consultation can be made through the online survey, by email letter, phone or through an informal chat and you have until 9<sup>th</sup> May 2023 to submit your response.

## **WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL**

### **PUBLIC CONSULTATION MEETING 3 VALE OF LEVEN VENUE – Vale of Leven Academy (Also made available online) Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> April 2023 – 7.00 p.m.**

#### **ATTENDING:**

Laura Mason (LM), Chief Education Officer, WDC  
Andrew Brown (AB), Senior Education Officer, WDC  
Claire Cusick (CC), Senior Education Officer, WDC  
Julie McGrogan (JM), Senior Education Officer, WDC

#### **In Attendance:**

10 members of the public in person, and 3 members of the public online.

#### **Welcome and Introduction**

LM opened the meeting and welcomed the members of the public in attendance to the statutory consultation meeting. LM introduced herself and the Council Officers in attendance and outlined the format of the meeting.

#### **Consultation Process**

LM continued by explaining the consultation process, and stated that West Dunbartonshire Council are required by law to conduct a statutory consultation for any proposed change to denominational transport, but have taken the opportunity to consult more widely on the changes for all schools affected. LM advised that presently, around 1,200 children and young people are transported to 12 of our schools. At the meeting on the 8th of March, Educational Services committee approved the launch of this consultation, and agreed that it should run from the 9th of March until the 9th May, and that a report outlining the results of this consultation and making appropriate recommendations be presented to a meeting of the educational services committee in the week beginning the 5th July.

LM continued that in terms of the timeline for the consultation, we aim to provide individual outcomes to those in receipt of transport currently this week. This is the third and final of our public events for geographical areas, with two having taken

place last week for the Dumbarton and Clydebank areas. When the consultation formally closes all responses will be collated, and provided to Education Scotland who will then undertake some fieldwork - they will sample visit a number of schools, and look to speak with children and young people, the Parent Council and a wider group of parents. Education Scotland will then produce a report to the Council based on how the consultation was conducted, and this report will form part of the material submitted in the report to the Educational Services committee to be held in the week beginning the 5th of July. West Dunbartonshire Council (WDC) are required by law to publish their Consultation Response Report three weeks before the committee meeting.

Should the Educational Services committee agree to implement any changes, it is proposed to do these in two phases - the first phase affecting children and young people who presently use public transport for their journey to school in time for the start of the next academic year, and the second phase to time with the start of the following year in 2024 - this is of course all subject to the findings of this consultation, and committee approval.

## **Proposed Changes**

AB spoke to the proposed changes being addressed in this consultation. The proposal is to increase the distance a pupil resides in order to qualify for transportation. For primary aged pupils that would mean a change from the existing 1 mile distance to 2 miles, And for secondary, a change from the existing 2 miles to 3 miles. AB stated that throughout the documentation we have stated that this is more in line with legislation, as Scottish Government do not specify a distance for local authorities to provide transport, but instead refer to a 'safe walking distance'. WDC have not measured distances 'as the crow flies', but instead have used the West Dunbartonshire Mapping and Geographical Information Centre tool which is developed by ESRI. This is a tool that is used worldwide, and the same tool that is used for all council mapping applications – for example, the tool on the WDC website allowing residents to find out what day their bins are collected. In education, the tool is used for school catchment areas, and for school transport. Using this tool, we first pinpointed the school gates, or access points to school sites which then allowed us to define, on the maps, the distance from our schools to any address.

AB shared a number of images from the Vale of Leven area. The software used can identify routes that are walkable. The image displayed showed part of the Vale of Leven that has walkable routes to Vale of Leven Academy - those routes were shown as purple lines in the image. The software helps to understand which of those walkable routes are within three miles of Vale of Leven Academy shown here, and a similar exercise was undertaken for each of the schools affected. Understandably, the software highlighted areas that are outwith the 2 or 3 mile distance, showing addresses that would be eligible for transport provision. By plotting on the mapping software the location of the home addresses for children and young people that presently receive transport, allow us to see what this would mean for individuals affected by the proposed changes.

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changes in time for the following session starting in August 2024, due to the terms of the existing contracts and termination clauses and timescales.

## **Education Benefits**

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Equally, there are benefits to mental health:

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AB concluded by highlighting that The Eco-Schools Scotland programme (with which all of our school are engaged) encourages active travel for our children and young people.

The programme promotes:

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- writing and implementing a school travel plan;
- running an effective road safety awareness programme for pupils;
- raising awareness of the damage caused by transport to the environment and people's health, and;
- providing adequate support and information about travelling to school for pupils and staff who wish to walk, cycle or use public transport.

All schools will be encouraged to revisit their school travel plan to encourage an increasing uptake of active travel.

## **Questions**

LM opened the meeting for questions from those in attendance.

**Comment – consultation document should make reference to the source of research.**

**Comment – There is too much reliance on public transport that is already a poor service .You can't take what works in other parts of the country and expect it work here.**

**Comment – example given of an 11 year old walking to school if there is poor lighting, gangs and possible predators.**

**Comment – the proposal actually encourages travel by car, and will not encourage active travel. There is a potential increase in the volume of traffic. The reader is obliged to check legislation to respond to the question in the consultation.**

**Q. Can you give an indication of the response so far?**

A. There have been approximately 400 responses received to the online survey to date.

**Q. Has safety been a theme in the other consultation meetings? Why was safety not one of Officers main concerns?**

A. Safety has been raised at the two previous meetings. Where routes were not regarded as safe, transport would still be provided.

**Q. Was it not considered that children walking along a 40mph route was a safety risk?**

A. Colleagues in the Roads team did regard this as a safety issue in some locations, and therefore recommended that some routes were not safe.

**Q. What is the safe walking route for my child, and how do I know?**

A. It is the parents responsibility to get their child to school.

**Q. The Milton bus will still run and go by Garshake. Why is this a saving?**

A. The bus will still run for those addresses in Milton eligible for transport. Where there is spare capacity on any contract, we offer 'privilege seats'.

**Q. How do I go about getting a privilege seat?**

A. Further advice is given about this on the website.

**Q. The existing provision is above the statutory requirement. When this was put in place, what were the original reasons for this? What was it based on?**

A. Unfortunately, this predates officers and records. The existing provision dates back to Strathclyde Regional Council days.

**Comment – Previous Director of Education promised a provision of transport when OLSP moved from Castlehill to Bellsmyre. This is poor to now change this.**

**Comment – I feel this is impacting on the education of Catholic children more than others.**

**Comment – the consultation does not feel inclusive. Accessing meetings should have been easy for those most affected. Should have been held in Brucehill or Castlehill.**

**Comment – the materials produced were not accessible.**

**Q. HMIe will speak to parents and children – is this cherry picked?**

A. Schools will work directly with Education Scotland to identify focus group members.

**Comment. The consultation question feels loaded to gather a specific response.**

**Q. Who was involved in identifying benefits? Were a wide group of stakeholders involved?**

A. Central officers were involved in identifying benefits. A wider group of stakeholder were not used.

### **Next Steps**

LM addressed what will happen next in the consultation. The consultation remains open until midnight on 9<sup>th</sup> May 2023, and anyone wishing to make their views on the proposal known can do so in a number of ways including: online survey (this asks whether you are in favour of the proposal - yes or no), by phone, in writing, or by email. At the end of the consultation period all documents and views obtained through the consultation process are collated and shared with Education Scotland, who will undertake fieldwork to assist them with writing an independent report on the consultation, and respond to Laura Mason. Andrea McMillan and Sheila Brown from Education Scotland will undertake meetings with parents/staff/children from a number of schools affected in the week beginning 15<sup>th</sup> May 2023. A report including recommendation will be submitted to the Education Services Committee in July 2023 to make a final decision.

### **Close of Meeting**

LM thanked everyone for attending and reminded those attending that views on the consultation can be made through the online survey, by email letter, phone or through an informal chat and you have until 9<sup>th</sup> May 2023 to submit your response.



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2 May 2023

Ms Laura Mason  
Chief Education Officer  
West Dunbartonshire Council  
16 Church Street  
Dumbarton G82 1QL

## **A Proposal Document**

to

### **Alter arrangements for the provision of transport by West Dunbartonshire Council for pupils attending mainstream schools**

#### **Response of the Archdiocese of Glasgow**

The Archdiocese of Glasgow welcomes the opportunity to respond to the proposal within this consultation paper and to be involved in any discussions about denominational education within West Dunbartonshire Council.

It is important to state that we, in the Archdiocese, understand and appreciate that Local Councils, are in severe economic straits and need to use their funds to ensure the best possible outcomes for all people in their authority.

We note, therefore, that West Dunbartonshire council is proposing to discontinue their transport arrangements for primary and secondary pupils and reverting to the provision of conveyancing of pupils between home and school contained in the 1980 Education (Scotland) Act recommendation of a safe walking distance of 2 miles for primary children and 3 miles for secondary pupils.

This is disappointing given that West Dunbartonshire is one of the most deprived Council areas in Scotland with many of its families residing in Quintile 1, SIMD 1-2, regarding (Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation).

It is obvious therefore, that families face great hardship in trying to feed and clothe their children and young people as well as striving to provide heating, lighting, electricity, and rent, in order to survive in these unprecedented times of economic hardship.

However before taking your transport proposals for pupils in West Dunbartonshire further, we would urge you to consider:

- That by this travel proposal you may be promoting further disadvantage for pupils in Quintile 1 (SIMD 1-2), as you are proposing a blanket approach for all pupils. Perhaps there should be a clause that allows pupils in these areas more support, considering their personal circumstances, ensuring an equitable approach.
- While you are encouraging 'safe walking' and list benefits of this, many parents will not want their sons and daughters to undertake this mode of travel for safety reasons. This may mean more car journeys or parents having to accompany younger pupils on buses which may impact on their ability to undertake employment thus causing further hardship.
- You note in your Consultation Paper that for some, if not travelling by bus, the journey to school will take longer. We consider that this may mean increased absences from school particularly in winter and inclement/cold weather. This may result in a fall in the attainment of those pupils resulting in increased disadvantage for them.
- If children are walking to school, they will require proper clothing for wet and windy weather if they are to remain healthy and fit to learn. This will place even more financial pressure on parents already struggling in our economic climate.
- It is recognised and appreciated that all young people between the ages of five and twenty-two years in Scotland have access to free bus travel, which in itself is a huge support to families. However, travelling by public transport at peak school times will be problematic not only for pupils but for the wider population, in terms of ease of access, reliability and safety. This may result in increased late coming to schools at the start of the day and a later time home for pupils thus increasing the length of their journeys and their overall 'school' day.
- Given that if this proposal is passed it will impact on the provision of buses and bus timetabled, we note that the bus companies are not included in the list of consultees.
- That the two denominational secondary schools have a wider catchment area than the non-denominational secondary schools. In fact, half of the population of Our Lady and St Patrick's High School will lose transport if your proposal goes through. It may be that parents rather, than having their children travel

the new distance by foot or public transport, may feel forced to decide to send their son or daughter to the nearest non-denominational school. This could be regarded as indirect discrimination by the Council towards Catholic pupils.

- At a reasonable pace an adult will walk 3 miles in one hour. This means that some secondary aged pupils will be adding 2 hours onto their school day. This will impact on their capacity to remain in school for clubs, supported study and on their opportunity to do homework.
- While the intention to encourage walking to school is admirable, there is concern that removing organised school transport will only increase private cars, with parents (who have cars) choosing to drive their children to school, thus causing congestion and pollution at peak times.

Given our points for your consideration raised above we do not agree that West Dunbartonshire Council should bring transport provision for school more in line with the Government's safe walking distance to school. We wish you well in your decision making for the pupils of West Dunbartonshire.

We, in the Archdiocese, look forward to ongoing discussions on this and any other proposals which might affect denominational education in your Council area.

With my very best wishes for your continued work.



+William Nolan  
Archbishop of Glasgow



EDUCATION, LEARNING  
AND ATTAINMENT

18 May 2023

23 MAY 2023

Laura Mason  
Chief Education Officer  
West Dunbartonshire Council  
16 Church Street  
Dumbarton  
G82 1QL

RECEIVED

Our ref: PRJ/0200/11/8599LJB  
Your ref: N/A  
Direct Dial 0141-333-3407  
Email: Gordon.Dickson@spt.co.uk

Dear Laura

**Changes to mileage limits for mainstream home to school transport**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed changes to free school transport distance eligibility for primary and secondary school pupils in West Dunbartonshire. Having considered the proposal, we have set out a number of comments in the attached appendix.

Bearing in mind SPT's role as agent for the provision of school transport on behalf of West Dunbartonshire Council our comments are restricted to the potential impacts of any change in the Council's policy specifically in relation to home to school transport.

We hope these comments are helpful. It is a priority for all of us to ensure the safety of our young people travelling to school and it is essential that every appropriate consideration has been given to ensuring that any change to the policy on distance eligibility for free school transport has been fully considered and appropriate mitigations put in place.

SPT is committed to working with the Council to achieve this and we welcome the mitigations and measures contained in the proposal to ensure the ongoing safety of pupils

SPT would be happy to discuss our comments further if helpful.

Yours sincerely

Gordon Dickson  
Head of Bus Strategy & Delivery



## APPENDIX

Changes to mileage limits for mainstream home to school transport – SPT comments.

### Comments

The introduction of the proposed new policy on distance eligibility for free school transport may have a range of impacts including on the following:

- Pupil safety
- Road safety and congestion
- Modal shift / emission
- Demand for public transport services
- Timetable for changes

In considering whether to implement this policy change, the Council is required to have due regard to the potential impact on service users with protected characteristics such as age and disability (for those children not covered by Special Needs Transport).

As such, WDC may wish to consider, if not already undertaken or in process, and prior to any decision being taken, that an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) be undertaken to address potential differential impacts on service users and any appropriate mitigations that may be required to address negative impacts.

The benefits of home to school transport include reduced car journeys and congestion, and improved safety especially around schools as well as helping support pupils' attendance. An EIA should therefore consider:

- An assessment of the travel and transport needs of pupils.
- An assessment or audit of sustainable travel and transport infrastructure.
- A strategy to develop the sustainable travel and transport infrastructure within West Dunbartonshire so that the travel and transport needs of children and young people are best catered for.
- Promotion of sustainable travel and transport modes.

### Safety / environmental impacts

Safety will be the critical factor in any decision to change free home to school distance eligibility. We welcome the Council's reference to safety in its proposals and the consideration being given to what represents a safe walking and cycling route which would encompass road type, crossing points, general road speeds, road lighting, passive surveillance etc.

Analysis should be undertaken on the likely impact arising from any change to reduce distance eligibility of free school transport of more car-based school trips to schools both in terms of the immediate vicinity of schools and also the wider road network. This could result in localised congestion and, if there are not effective measures to restrict car parking at school gates, to potential safety issues for pupils and car drivers. We note reference in the proposals to the potential for improvements to air quality and these should be considered in relation to any potential increase in car journeys to schools.

There may also be a high impact for a minority of pupils either living in areas with limited or no access to either public bus services or private transport at appropriate times. For pupils in rural areas there may be issues of road safety on country roads and consideration needs to be given here as to what is considered a 'safe' journey. A blanket approach may not be appropriate in all circumstances and there should be an opportunity for parents / guardians to appeal the policy on a case by case basis reflecting their local circumstances.

We would also note that pupils who become ineligible / no longer meet the criteria may be more likely in future to be driven to school on more occasions given the longer walking distances especially during adverse weather or winter dark.

In undertaking this assessment, consideration should be given to whether there will be any requirement for additional active travel infrastructure / measures required to be installed ahead of the introduction of the new policy.

#### **Demand for public transport services**

Any change to limit the distance eligibility for free home to school transport may have impacts on the demand for public transport services. As such consideration will require to be given to what those impacts are likely to be and whether any mitigations, adjustments or interventions are required to ensure continued safe and available transport services are available. As such we would suggest an assessment be undertaken to establish the following:

- The impacts on demand for supported or commercial bus services arising from such a policy change
- Whether any additional demand will impact capacity on commercial and supported bus services especially in the am/afternoon peak.
- The availability of public transport options and whether there is likely to be any requirement to strengthen supported service provision as a consequence of this change to policy.

Ahead of any decision to implement the new policy, the Council should undertake discussions with local bus operators to consider the potential impacts on commercial bus services of the policy's introduction and whether there is sufficient capacity under current provision to accommodate additional pupils on commercial services.

We welcome the Council's reference to promote School Travel plans and the engagement in the Eco-Schools Scotland programme to provide parents and pupils with advice on sustainable and safe travel to school and discourage unnecessary car travel to schools. Sustrans School Transport Planning Toolkit is also useful resource as is Living Streets who are keen to talk to Councils about opportunities around their WOW Walk to School campaign. Related to this, it will be important that WDC as with all councils maximises the promotion of uptake of the Under 22's NEC card.

We would recommend that impacts of the any policy change be subject to monitoring and evaluation including general impacts on traffic levels in addition to those immediately adjacent to schools as noted above in relation to safety.

#### **Timetable for proposed change**

It is also essential to be clear on the timescale associated with any change to eligibility. SPT begin the contract specification process in late September / early October and, as such, it will be essential to obtain confirmation of WDC requirements by this point ahead of any procurement exercise in early 2024 ahead of schools returning in August 2024. This is a critically important point.

# Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal by West Dunbartonshire Council to alter arrangements for the provision for pupils attending mainstream schools.

May 2023

## 1. Introduction

1.1 This report from Education Scotland has been prepared by His Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HM Inspectors) in accordance with the terms of the [Schools \(Consultation\) \(Scotland\) Act 2010](#) ("the 2010 Act"). The purpose of the report is to provide an independent and impartial consideration of West Dunbartonshire Council's proposal to alter arrangements for the provision of transport by West Dunbartonshire Council for pupils attending mainstream schools. Section 2 of the report sets out brief details of the consultation process. Section 3 of the report sets out HM Inspectors' consideration of the educational aspects of the proposal, including significant views expressed by consultees. Section 4 summarises HM Inspectors' overall view of the proposal. Upon receipt of this report, the Act requires the council to consider it and then prepare its final consultation report. The council's final consultation report should include this report and must contain an explanation of how, in finalising the proposal, it has reviewed the initial proposal, including a summary of points raised during the consultation process and the council's response to them. The council has to publish its final consultation report three weeks before it takes its final decision.

1.2 HM Inspectors considered:

- the likely effects of the proposal for children and young people of the schools; any other users; children likely to become pupils within two years of the date of publication of the proposal paper.
- any other likely effects of the proposal;
- how the council intends to minimise or avoid any adverse effects that may arise from the proposal; and
- the educational benefits the council believes will result from implementation of the proposal, and the council's reasons for coming to these beliefs.

1.3 In preparing this report, HM Inspectors undertook the following activities:

- attendance at a public meeting held on 18 April 2023 in connection with the council's proposals;
- consideration of all relevant documentation provided by the council in relation to the proposal, specifically the educational benefits statement and related consultation documents, written and oral submissions from parents and others;
- consideration of further representations made directly to Education Scotland on relevant educational aspects of the proposal;
- visits to the site of St Eunan's Primary School, Knoxland Primary School, Clydebank High School, St Peter the Apostle High School, Dumbarton Academy, Vale of Leven Academy and Our lady and St Patrick's High School, including discussion with relevant consultees and;
- discussion with relevant consultees, including representatives from the Archdiocese of Glasgow.

## 2. Consultation process

2.1 West Dunbartonshire Council undertook the consultation on its proposal(s) with reference to the [Schools \(Consultation\) \(Scotland\) Act 2010](#).

2.2 The consultation ran between 9 March and 9 May 2023. The council published information on the proposal on its website and provided printed versions at the council headquarters and in all

the affected schools, including alternative formats and in translation. The council created an online survey for stakeholders to provide their views on the proposal. Responses were also accepted by telephone, letter or email. West Dunbartonshire Council held three public meetings about the proposal. These took place on 18, 19 and 25 April 2023. A total of 48 stakeholders attended these public meetings in person. A further eight attended using an online link.

2.3 The council received 542 survey responses. Parents and carers submitted the majority of responses. Children and young people submitted a minority of the responses. Representatives of Parent Councils, school staff and other local residents submitted a few responses. West Dunbartonshire Council received additional submissions by email or letter from a few individuals. Most of these individuals opposed the proposal. The consultation survey asked, 'Do you agree that West Dunbartonshire Council should bring transport provision for schools more in line with the safe walking distance to school?'. Most stakeholders who engaged with the consultation through the online survey answered 'yes' to this question. However, 'yes' responses do not align with the comments which are negative overall. A few respondents specifically commented on the lack of clarity in the survey question. Less than half of survey respondents left a comment in the survey. However, of those that did, most were not in agreement with the proposal. Respondents who identified themselves as Roman Catholic were less likely than others to answer 'yes' to the survey question.

2.4 A few stakeholders who made a positive comment identified the potential health benefits of the proposal in terms of children and young people walking to school. Stakeholders who completed the survey and those who attended public meetings expressed a range of concerns, including safety of the proposed walking routes to school. These concerns covered the proximity of some routes to busy roads and a lack of suitable crossing places. Stakeholders also expressed concern about the distances children would be walking, especially younger children. A minority of respondents noted a lack of reliable public transport which does not align with school day timings. A minority of negative comments expressed concern about the impact on wellbeing for children and young people, for example when walking in poor weather conditions. A few stakeholders consider that if the proposal is agreed, this would lead to greater traffic congestion, since more parents may choose to drive their children to school. A few commented that this may lead to higher levels of carbon emissions, which the proposal hopes to reduce. A few stakeholders suggested that the proposal may lead to challenges for families. For example, working parents and carers finding it difficult to walk or drive their children to school. There are also concerns about how this might impact on children's participation in after-school activities. In some schools staff carried out consultations with young people. However, there was not a coordinated approach to consultations with young people in their schools.

### 3. Educational aspects of proposal

3.1 The council believes that the proposal, if implemented, will bring educational benefits through improved health and wellbeing. Active travel to school brings opportunities for physical activity and social interaction which support physical and mental wellbeing. There would also be a positive impact on the environment if parents encourage children to participate in active travel. A few stakeholders who met with HM Inspectors agree with the health benefits of walking. The council have acknowledged that some of these benefits will only be realised if children and young people walk to school. HM Inspectors agree that walking to school has potential health and wellbeing benefits. However, HMI Inspectors do not agree that the council have not fully demonstrated the educational benefits of the proposal to stakeholders, including young people.

3.2 Almost all stakeholders reject the environmental benefits put forward by the council. A few parents that spoke to HM Inspectors feel that there may be an increase in traffic if more parents drive their child to school. They are concerned that this contradicts the council's stated benefit to

active travel, leading to increased emissions from the volume of traffic. Congestion at school gates at peak times is already a concern of both staff and parents who met with HM Inspectors. Parents at St Eunan's Primary School are particularly concerned as this will result in school transport being withdrawn completely from their school. The council should have further dialogue with these parents to discuss ways to address the issues raised.

3.3 Almost all stakeholders, including young people, who met with HM Inspectors are against the proposal. They feel strongly that walking longer distances to school will potentially lead to an increase in late coming. This will have a detrimental impact on attainment and achievement. Stakeholders expressed concerns about both the safety of walking routes to schools and the reliability and frequency of public buses. Whilst recognising that many young people will have a Young Scot Card, not all parents are happy for their child to travel on the public bus. Stakeholders cited examples of public buses being full and not picking school pupils up. Currently, monitors on school buses help to regulate behaviour, but this would not be available on a public bus leading to an increase in anti-social behaviour. Parents are also concerned that young people will be reliant on the continuation of Young Scot Under 22 travel scheme. Most stakeholders feel that walking three miles to school is not acceptable, particularly in bad weather. They are worried that this means sitting in classrooms all day in wet clothing. Young people and staff at Clydebanks High School do not think that this proposal will have a significant impact for them. Many young people who would be entitled to school transport are using their Young Scot card to access public buses.

3.4 Staff who met with HM Inspectors also had reservations about the proposal. There is concern that the most deprived communities in West Dunbartonshire will be adversely impacted. In a few schools, attendance of young people from these communities is already lower than those from other areas. They fear that the proposals may lead to some children and young people not attending on days they face challenges getting to school. As a result, they may not be able to access free school meals.

3.5 HM Inspectors met with a representative of the Archdiocese of Glasgow. They are not in favour of the proposal. The Diocese expressed concern that the proposal, if implemented, may further disadvantage pupils living in the most deprived areas. In line with other respondents, they are concerned that young people may have to walk long distances in inclement weather. This may restrict after-school activities and homework. There is also a concern that the withdrawal of the bus service from some pupils will lead to a negative impact on attendance and ultimately educational attainment. The Archdiocese believes that Roman Catholic parents may then choose to send their child to a non-denominational school, due to transport difficulties.

3.6 A few parents who met with HM Inspectors raised concerns about the online survey and the process of engagement for the proposal. They felt that the survey question was unclear and potentially misleading. As a result, they do not think that this was an open and fair process.

## 4. Summary

In their proposal, West Dunbartonshire Council state that there will be educational benefits gained through active travel. HM Inspectors agree that the proposal is in line with national guidance and statutory walking distances. HM Inspectors agree that there are potential benefits through active travel. However, HM Inspectors do not agree that the council have set out sufficiently the potential educational benefits to address concerns raised by stakeholders. Almost all stakeholders raised significant concerns. These include the safety of children and young people while walking to and from school, and the reliability, availability and capacity of public transport to meet increased demand. Most stakeholders also have a concern that the proposal, if implemented, would incur financial costs for families already facing significant financial hardship. Stakeholders are also concerned about the potential for lower attendance which will impact on attainment and

achievement. Should this proposal be agreed, it will be important for the council to work with stakeholders to address their concerns.

The online survey main question may have been misunderstood by respondents and therefore the outcome may not be accurate. The survey responses do not fully reflect the comments or the issues raised by stakeholders who met with HM Inspectors. The council will need to consider if this data should be used to inform the final decision.

**HM Inspectors  
May 2023**





<b>AssessmentNo</b>	749	<b>Owner</b>	andbrown
<b>Resource</b>	Transformation		<b>Service/Establishment</b> Budget Ed
	First Name	Surname	<b>Job title</b>
<b>Head Officer</b>	Laura	Mason	Chief Education Officer
	(include job titles/organisation)		
<b>Members</b>	Laura Mason - Chief Education Officer Andrew Brown - Senior Education Officer Kathy Morrison - Senior Education Officer Julie McGrogan - Senior Education Officer Claire Cusick - Senior Education Officer Ellen Moran - Principal Educational Psychologist		
	<i>(Please note: the word 'policy' is used as shorthand for strategy policy function or financial decision)</i>		
<b>Policy Title</b>	Statutory Consultation to alter arrangement for school transport		
	<b>The aim, objective, purpose and intended out come of policy</b>		
	To undertake a statutory consultation on the proposal to alter arrangements for school transport, bringing it more in line with the safe walking distance to schools of 2 miles for primary and 3 miles for secondary schools.		
	<b>Service/Partners/Stakeholders/service users involved in the development and/or implementation of policy.</b>		
	Consultation with affected stakeholders - children and young people, parents and carers, staff, Parent Councils, local elected members, Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT) and the Archdiocese of Glasgow of the Roman Catholic Church.		
<b>Does the proposals involve the procurement of any goods or services?</b>		<b>Yes</b>	
<b>If yes please confirm that you have contacted our procurement services to discuss your requirements.</b>		<b>Yes</b>	
<b>SCREENING</b>			
<i>You must indicate if there is any relevance to the four areas</i>			
<b>Duty to eliminate discrimination (E), advance equal opportunities (A) or foster good relations (F)</b>		<b>Yes</b>	
<b>Relevance to Human Rights (HR)</b>		<b>Yes</b>	
<b>Relevance to Health Impacts (H)</b>		<b>Yes</b>	
<b>Relevance to Social Economic Impacts (SE)</b>		<b>Yes</b>	
<b>Who will be affected by this policy?</b>			
Children and young people who will attend our schools, but reside between 1 and 2 miles from their catchment primary school, or between 2 and 3 miles from their catchment secondary school. This proposed change in policy will also impact on parents and carers due to an increased financial pressure on households, and on school attendance.			
<b>Who will be/has been involved in the consultation process?</b>			
West Dunbartonshire Council was required to undertake a statutory consultation under the terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 on the proposal to discontinue arrangements for the provision of transport for pupils attending catchment schools. Children and young people, parents and carers, staff, Trade Unions, Parent Councils of affected schools, Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT), and the Archdiocese of Glasgow of the Roman Catholic Church were all consulted as part of this			

process. Education Scotland provide an independent view and assessment of the process in their own report.

**Please outline any particular need/barriers which equality groups may have in relation to this policy list evidence you are using to support this and whether there is any negative impact on particular groups.**

	<b>Needs</b>	<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Impact</b>
<b>Age</b>			
<b>Cross Cutting</b>			
<b>Disability</b>			
<b>Social &amp; Economic Impact</b>	Low income households.	Introducing this policy change would adversely affect low income households. Households would need to provide suitable clothing and footwear for walking longer distances to school.	Negative
<b>Sex</b>	Women/single parents; Priority group in terms of child poverty	Around 90% of single parents are women. They would be disproportionately affected by the introduction of this policy, as they would need to provide suitable clothing and footwear for walking longer distances to school. A greater number of single parent households would also have to manage the challenge of potentially getting children to multiple locations (ie one child at nursery, and one at primary school) each day.	Negative
<b>Gender Reassign</b>			
<b>Health</b>			
<b>Human Rights</b>			
<b>Marriage &amp; Civil Partnership</b>			
<b>Pregnancy &amp; Maternity</b>			
<b>Race</b>			
<b>Religion and Belief</b>	We are required to	The introduction of	Negative

	provide access to denominational and non-denominational schools for children and young people living in our catchment areas.	this change in policy would adversely affect choice of school, due to some non-denominational schools being easier to access than denominational schools.	
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>			
<b>Actions</b>			
<b>Policy has a negative impact on an equality group, but is still to be implemented, please provide justification for this.</b>			
The response to the statutory consultation was negative, and highlighted impacts on equality groups as noted above. Through the consultation, an alternative was identified, whereby a saving could still be made on the cost of providing transport (by asking a number of young people to make use of their Under 22 Travel Pass instead of a local authority provided bus pass to access the same transport to and from school), but by not implementing the proposed change to the policy. This would therefore not impact the equality groups.			
<b>Will the impact of the policy be monitored and reported on an ongoing bases?</b>			
The proposed change to policy will not be implemented, but instead an alternative pursued whereby some young people make use of their under 22 Travel Pass instead of being provided with a local authority bus pass. Officers will work with partners to ensure uptake of the Under 22 Travel Pass scheme, ensuring that no young person is without a pass to get to and from school. Head Teachers and Central Education Officers will report back to Educational Services committee the progress with implementing this change, but the policy will stay the same.			
<b>Q7 What is your recommendation for this policy?</b>			
Modify			
<b>Please provide a meaningful summary of how you have reached the recommendation</b>			
EIA 749: Introducing the proposed change to the school transport policy would adversely affect low income households, single parent households and may indirectly affect parental choice of denominational or non-denominational school. It is recommended that the change proposed in the consultation is not introduced, but that savings are made in another way that does not affect equality groups.			