

CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM No. 8
8 NOVEMBER 2017	PUBLIC REPORT

Report of:	Executive Director People and Communities Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Councils	
Cabinet Member(s) responsible:	Councillor Sam Smith Lead Member Children's Services	
Contact Officer(s):	Sara Thompson - Team Manager - Passenger Transport Operations Bryony Wolstenholme - Specialist Transport Officer Andy Pallas - TACT	Tel. 01733 317452

CHILDREN IN CARE TRANSPORT

RECOMMENDATIONS	
FROM: Nicola Curley Assistant Director Children's Services	Deadline date: N/A
<p>It is recommended that Corporate Parenting Committee:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review transport arrangements for CIC with TACT and Passenger Transport progressing with actions agreed. 2. Ask questions of lead officers 	

1. ORIGIN OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report is submitted to Corporate Parenting Committee following a previous briefing note discussed at a Corporate Parenting Committee on 14th June 2017.

2. PURPOSE AND REASON FOR REPORT

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Committee on their recent request for information.

(a) The request for information was made initially at the informal meeting of corporate parenting on 14 June 2017.

- 2.2 This report is for Corporate Parenting Committee to consider under its Terms of Reference No.

2.4.3.3 Ensure that the needs of looked after children and care leavers are addressed through key plans, policies and strategies throughout the Council overseeing interagency working arrangements.

- 2.3 *This links into the Children in Care Pledge under:*

Safe – *We will keep you safe and help you to keep yourself safe.*

Support – *We will support you in all aspects of your education so you are able to achieve your full potential.*

3. **TIMESCALES**

Is this a Major Policy Item/Statutory Plan?	NO	If yes, date for Cabinet meeting	N/A
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4. **BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES**

4.1 TACT and The Passenger Transport Operations Team have agreed that it had been very helpful to pull the different areas of the service together, and have the opportunity to consider the issues in this complex and critical area in the round. It was recognised that the group needed to continue to meet for the next few months in order to carry through a number of actions to understand and improve the situation. The immediate steps to be taken were:

1. Consideration of the pooled budgets in this area of the business and how they can best be used to improve service delivery, including consideration of new commissioning arrangements
2. Review of the service level agreement between Transport and Children's Social Care, and TACT's new role in this area
3. Refreshed recruitment campaign for volunteer drivers (interviews are already underway this month)
4. Consideration of an audit of all journeys completed for CSC in a snapshot month to review how the service is being used, and consider options moving forward
5. To consider the impact of supervised contact journeys as well as school transportation
6. To consider more flexible taxi booking arrangements for EDT carers
7. All staff to be reminded that journeys to school should be considered as one of the matching criteria for placement, and look at creative solutions to enable carers to take children to school.

4.2 I am able to provide an update as below:

1. Consideration of the pooled budgets in this area of the business and how they can best be used to improve service delivery, including consideration of new commissioning arrangements

4.3 The Children's Social Care transport budget (Transport booked by social workers with Passenger Transport Operations) and the Home to School Transport budget (provided for Education) are managed by Passenger Transport Operations. Transport provided by voluntary drivers is good value for money as the drivers are paid £0.40p per mile. We will continue to actively recruit volunteers to reduce the number of journeys booked with transport providers such as taxi companies. Passenger Transport Services has been reviewed recently and a new Framework Agreement is in place to procure all transport requirements with external providers. We have taxi companies we use to book Children's Social Care journeys. We are using pricing grids which is submitted as part of the tender so we have costs known upfront. The journeys can then be arranged weekly with the relevant provider e.g employed driver, voluntary driver or taxi company.

4.4 A recruitment campaign has been successful in recruiting 4 new volunteer drivers which will reduce the amount of journeys undertaken by taxis companies and reduce spend overall, it is also felt that a better service is provided by volunteer drivers.

2. Review of the service level agreement between Transport and Children's Social Care, and TACT's new role in this area

This piece of work needs to commence as soon as practically possible. The new Service Level Agreement between Transport and Children's Social Care needs to be reviewed and include TACT's new role in this area.

4.5

4.6 It has become evident through discussion that the existing service level agreements (SLA) between Transport and Children's Social Care (school journeys for children placed with Permanency service foster carers and contact) and Transport and Education (school journeys for children attending Special Schools) differ. An example of where they differ is the use of Passenger Assistants.

4.7 Additionally a review and redesign of the transport booking form will be commenced within the next 3 months with social workers direct input. This will make the task less time consuming for social workers and contact supervisors. A working group for the design of the form is being arranged.

3. Refreshed recruitment campaign for volunteer drivers (interviews are already underway this month)

4.8 The recruitment campaign has been successful and we have recruited four new volunteers since the meeting in June 2017 and we have three potential new voluntary drivers currently going through the recruitment / approval process. However some of the new volunteers are part-time so consistency of providing the same driver can still be an issue. Also the driver who left to work for Cambridgeshire has returned to PCC.

4. Consideration of an audit of all journeys completed for Childrens Social Care in a snapshot month to review how the service is being used, and consider options moving forward

4.9 The Permanency Service audited the current use of transport for children's social care clients for all journeys completed in May 2017 using data available from Transport and found no evidence that any journeys were booked unnecessarily. Social workers as part of the transport application should consider the best form of transport for the child for example:

- Can the child walk (either on their own or accompanied)
- Can the child cycle
- Can the child travel by public transport (this can be arranged via the social worker, EDT foster carers have now been issued with Megarider vouchers to use or with Passenger Transport if a long term arrangement)
- Transport should then only be booked if a employed/volunteer or taxi is required.

4.10 Children's social workers have the responsibility of authorising transport which may be required in order to assist a child get to school and maintain contact with family members. Whilst the Permanency service holds a clear view on the needs of the foster carers in relation to transport and need to be involved in decision making. No change is necessary in the authorisation of transport bookings at present.

5. To consider the impact of supervised contact journeys as well as school transportation

4.11 The audit did not consider journeys made specifically for contact but there has been a focus on the role of the local authority in stepping in to support any journeys a child makes. This has been considered in the above with TACT now considering where a child attends school and how they will get there in their matching criteria, foster carers are also been asked where appropriate to transport children to and from contact visits.

6. To consider more flexible transport booking arrangements for Emergency Duty Team carers

4.12 An agreement was given for foster carers to change transport arrangements once agreed by CIC from June 2017. This has been well received and worked well in most cases rendering the above unnecessary. It makes more sense for carers to have direct access to the Transport service staff rather than involve third parties; A recent enquiry of Permanency Service staff could only reveal one issue where there had been an issue with transport. The last Foster Carers Committee minutes in September 2017 reminded foster carers to contact Transport

directly if any issues arose and asked that any unresolved issues were escalated to service staff; at the current time we have not had any issues raised.

4.13 Discussions have taken place around the small number of EDT carers being able to book taxis directly with approved transport providers. Whilst this may assist, monitoring usage could be difficult and current arrangements seem to be working well in most cases.

4.14 It is proposed that a survey of foster carers is undertaken within the next three months of which some questions will refer to transport enabling us to double check whether our current construct of the situation is correct.

4.15 Initially the process for Foster Carers to be able to contact Transport directly to make cancellations/ time changes and check arrangements was temporary as we did not know what impact this would have on resources, we have found this arrangement to be beneficial to the service overall with reduction in wasted journeys and better communication with carers. We will now write/ email foster carers to advise them that this will be a permanent arrangement.

7. All staff to be reminded that journeys to school should be considered as one of the matching criteria for placement, and look at creative solutions to enable carers to take children to school.

4.16 When matching children to foster carers the Permanency service considers location of the carers home, schools and the needs of other children in the household both those looked after and birth children.

4.17 It is being made clear with new carers being recruited that the expectation is that carers transport children to school and conversations take place in supervision with current carers to review the family situation and whether transport is still required to be provided by PCC. Consideration of whether breakfast and after school clubs rather than transport to enable foster carers to transport children to different schools will decrease the amount of journeys undertaken and should be better for the child with the carer having regular contact with the schools and children feeling included within the families arrangements.

4.18 The Permanency Service is currently reviewing the overall financial structure of foster carer payments and as part of this will consider how our actions can support PCC in reducing expenditure in this area. It is aimed that this work is completed by December 2017.

5. CONSULTATION

5.1 N/A

6. ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES OR IMPACT

6.1 Improved Service Delivery

7. REASON FOR THE RECOMMENDATION

7.1 Improved Service Delivery

8. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

8.1 N/A

9. IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

9.1 **BUDGET**

£247k 16/17 – Actual spend £265k, overspend £18k

£292k 17/18 - Projected spend £399k, projected overspend £107k

Reduction in number of journeys completed by volunteer drivers (March 2017 to July 2017) due to resource has resulted in negative impact on budget due to large number of taxi journeys with passenger assistants. Recruitment of new volunteers will hopefully improve this from September 2017 to March 2018.

9.2 **Legal Implications**

N/A

9.3 **Equalities Implications**

N/A

9.4 **Other Relevant Implications**

Any changes to Service Level Agreement or booking process will be clearly communicated with relevant teams.

10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

- 10.1 Briefing note -
Children's Social Care Issues And Resolutions – Meeting 27th June 2017

11. APPENDICES

- 11.1 Appendix A – Children's Social Care Transport Briefing Note Request Form

APPENDIX A

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE / COMMISSION REQUESTING BRIEFING NOTE	Corporate Parenting Committee
DATE REQUEST MADE	21/06/2017
RESPONSE REQUIRED BY	
OFFICER REQUESTED TO PROVIDE BRIEFING NOTE	BRYONY WOLSTENHOLME – ACTING TEAM MANAGER, PASSENGER TRANSPORT OPERATIONS
SUBJECT	CHILDRENS SOCIAL CARE TRANSPORT

BRIEFING NOTE REQUEST FORM

RESPONSE:

CHILDRENS SOCIAL CARE ISSUES AND RESOLUTIONS – MEETING 27TH JUNE 2017

Present:

Bryony Wolstenholme

Brian Howard

Sue King

Andy Pallas

Apologies - Dee Glover

Alison Bennett

Alison Bennett spoke prior to the meeting to discuss the social care transport booking form, advised that many social workers find the process too long and onerous due to it being over 16 pages. BW advised that this could be looked in to and the online booking form could be re-designed to be more user friendly, the form was initially introduced to make those booking transport more aware of options available and check that they had considered other options prior including carers transporting, walking, bus passes etc, this was instated on the request of the social care teams managers.

ISSUES

Increase in social care journeys overall:

May-17	2973	May-16	2978	May-15	2160	May-14	2408
Apr-17	1628	Apr-16	2420	Apr-15	1914	Apr-14	2051
Mar-17	3124	Mar-16	2589	Mar-15	2395	Mar-14	2564
Feb-17	2076	Feb-16	2258	Feb-15	1840	Feb-14	1885
Jan-17	2250	Jan-16	2337	Jan-15	2080	Jan-14	2116
Dec-16	2013	Dec-15	2093	Dec-14	2129	Dec-13	1767
Nov-16	2611	Nov-15	2571	Nov-14	2440	Nov-13	1871
Oct-16	2166	Oct-15	2269	Oct-14	2349	Oct-13	2111
Sep-16	2231	Sep-15	2430	Sep-14	2370	Sep-13	2165
Aug-16	989	Aug-15	846	Aug-14	1401	Aug-13	1344
Jul-16	2552	Jul-15	2034	Jul-14	2612	Jul-13	2468
Jun-16	2947	Jun-15	2652	Jun-14	2899	Jun-13	2586
Total	27560		27477		26589		25336

Increase in longer distance journeys, resulting in employed/ volunteer drivers completing less journeys overall: as spending most of their time outside of the city:

- Soham
- Wisbech
- Spalding
- Cambridge

High increase in amount of journeys allocated to taxi companies, journeys being handed back by drivers and taxis last minute causing issues for staff.

Number of complaints/ concerns regarding taxi companies in relation to social care journeys. Issues not being reported back to PTOT as they would with volunteer drivers. Parents/ perpetrators approaching

vehicles at school. Children being dropped off without suitably handing over to staff/ carers. Incorrect seating being provided.

Scheduling of journeys taking over 2 days to complete as software unsuitable – BW has had software providers come and look at this to come up with possible solutions, awaiting feedback.

Decrease in volunteer drivers – 2 doing school journeys for Cambridgeshire as able to offer longer distance school journeys, 1 retired, 1 now in full time employment.

Lack of interest in advertising for volunteer drivers – posters sent June 2016 to all community centres, doctors surgeries, dentists. Only 1 applicant from this advertising who was deemed unsuitable.

Requirement to purchase new car seats for volunteer drivers – currently only have £3k budget for school and social care transport equipment. No additional budget provided by social care.

SOLUTIONS

Team resource – Investment in systems (online booking for social workers to eliminate duplication of effort). Staffing - Currently only one Assistant Transport Officer funded by social care this is not true reflection of time spent within team delivering service.

Recruitment campaign of volunteer drivers for the service – advertisement in newspaper 16.06.2017. 1 new volunteer commencing Monday 19th June, 1 interview 21st June and 2 new applications due in soon.

Reminder that transport should be considered as one of the matching considerations with location of school and other children placed with carers – promote and support foster carers to transport children to school by offering increased mileage allowance (currently 0.28p, 0.45p paid to volunteer drivers) for this, consider and fund breakfast clubs and after school clubs if better option for child overall and makes child feel inclusive in carers family arrangements.

TACT Peterborough and CIC to undertake an audit of all journeys completed for children's social care in the month of May 2017 with a view to identifying how the service is being used and identify options for going forward.

Review to be undertaken of Social Care Transport Policy and the service level agreement with transport

Suggestion from TACT Peterborough that EDT carers (5) are allowed to book transport directly with specific named providers after gaining the agreement of the Permanence service providing the advantages/ risks involved are known to all parties.

Procure social care transport work to reputable reliable provider(s), consider contact supervision/ transport package. New Passenger Transport Framework has company that operates social care routes for Lincolnshire.

BUDGET

£300k 16/17 – Actual spend £265k to date

£292k 17/18