

Decision Maker: EXECUTIVE

For Pre-Decision Scrutiny by the Education Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee on 02 July 2014

Date:
16 July 2014

Decision Type: Non-Urgent Executive Non-Key

Title: INVEST TO SAVE - TRAINING STATEMENTED PUPILS TO TRAVEL INDEPENDENTLY

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Chief Officer: Terry Parkin Executive Director of Education, Care & Health Services

Ward: (All Wards);

1. Reason for report

- 1.1 To provide an update on the Invest to save travel training programme (report CS12081, 3rd April 2013).
- 1.2 To seek Executive commitment to a travel training programme for a period of three years and seek approval for exemption from tendering for a maximum period of 3 years to:
- i. Provide continuity of service provider and consolidate the networks formed with schools, parents and key stakeholders who have had interactions with families and children with special education needs (SEN) over the past year;
 - ii Award a three year contract to Bexley Accessible Transport Services to provide Travel Training Services from 1/9/2014 – 31/8/2017
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2. **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

- 2.1 Subject to the views of the Education & Executive & Resources Policy & Development Scrutiny Committees, the Executive is requested to:
- i. Consider the outcomes of the Invest to Save Travel Training initiative that was approved at Executive last year;

- ii. Agree the investment of £60,000 per annum to continue the travel training programme for the next three years;
- iii. Subject to (ii) above, to agree the award of a three year contract to the current provider Bexley Accessible Transport Services, (BATS) for a programme of travel training provided:
 - The forecast return on investment continues to be achieved each year in line with the projected savings detailed in the report; and,
 - The quality of training is maintained.

Corporate Policy

1. Policy Status: Existing Policy:
 2. BBB Priority: Supporting Independence:
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Financial

1. Cost of proposal: Total £60,000pa over 3 years = £180,000
 2. Ongoing costs: Recurring cost subject to tender after 3 years
 3. Budget head/performance centre:
136 586 (SEN Transport) , and 136 587 (SEN Transport schools budget)
 4. Total current budget for this head: 136 586 £3,580,820 and 136 587 £330,000.
 5. Source of funding: £60,000 pa funded from the SEN Transport budget from savings achieved.
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Staff

1. Number of staff (current and additional): The service is contracted out to external contractors.
 2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours: N/A
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Legal

1. Legal Requirement: Statutory Requirement:
 2. Call-in: Applicable:
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Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users/beneficiaries (current and projected): There are approximately 825 pupils eligible to receive assisted transport with a minimum of 20 pupils to be trained to become independent travellers during each academic year.
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Ward Councillor Views

1. Have Ward Councillors been asked for comments? No
2. Summary of Ward Councillors comments: N/A

3. COMMENTARY

Background

- 3.1 The Council has a statutory duty to provide transport assistance to pupils with a Statement of Special Education Needs, (SEN) to access their specialist provision. Dependent on need and ability, transport assistance is provided in a range of vehicles,(escorted & unescorted), with a limited number of pupils using public transport. Currently there are 825 pupils eligible to receive transport assistance.
- 3.2 The Special Educational Needs transport budget is £3.9M, made up of £3.6M from the Revenue Support Grant and £0.3M from the Dedicated Schools Grant. The service is outsourced to external providers. Robust contract and budget management and effective gatekeeping processes by the SEN Transport Commissioner and the team has maintained total annual spend within budget for the past 6 years.
- 3.3 In April 2013, Executive approved an Invest to Save bid in the sum of £100,000. This enabled the procurement of a travel training programme to train 28 pupils to gain the skills and confidence to become independent travellers and public transport users, thereby reducing dependency on Council provided transport assistance.
- 3.4 Following a full tender process, undertaken in accordance with the Council's procurement and financial regulations, Bexley Accessible Transport (BATS) was commissioned to deliver the programme in Bromley. The contract started in June 2013 with practical training commencing in the academic year, September 2013.
- 3.5 Teachers and parents are key influencers and best placed to fully understand the capabilities and extent of the pupil's learning 'curve'. Close working between all partners helped identify pupils to participate in the programme from two of the Council's Special Schools; Glebe School in West Wickham and Burwood School in Orpington,.
- 3.6 All training starts with the assumption that the pupils have no prior knowledge or skills to use public transport or travel independently. The training includes classroom based theory, pedestrian & road awareness, stranger danger and route planning. The training is further reinforced with a 'bus day' that involves teachers and the safer neighbourhood teams.
- 3.7 As the pupil's confidence and skill level increases, the travel trainer begins to take a step back and keeps an overview by shadowing the pupil on their journey. Once the trainer is satisfied that the pupil has become a confident independent traveller to and from school and the school and parents agree, the pupil is 'signed' off travel training and is removed from the Council transport routes. A 'certificate award ceremony' is held in school assembly to recognise the pupils' achievements in becoming an independent traveller.

4. Progress to date

- 4.1 The programme has been well received with only a limited number of parents being too anxious to allow their child to be trained to travel independently and unwilling to support the programme. Where pupils and parents have fully embraced the programme, good outcomes and positive feedback has been received.
- 4.2 The safety and well-being of pupils is paramount to maintaining the confidence of the pupil, parents, schools and the wider stakeholder groups. In some rare instances some pupils were only able to sustain a single journey on public transport between home and school due to health or their special needs. Whilst initially this may not realise the full financial savings from the

training, it delivers intangible benefits for the future with increased confidence and greater independence in the pupil and parents.

The following table demonstrates the progress to date.

Pupils identified for training	Fully passed	Part passed	Pupils to revisit	Pupils not completed
50	33	4	9	4

- 4.3 In a limited number of cases, some pupils were identified to be unsuitable for the training due to their special needs or did not demonstrate the maturity to adequately deal with the 'new found freedom' of being independent travellers. In these cases the pupil was either removed from the programme with sensitivity, or their training placed on hold for review at a later date when the pupil has greater maturity and understanding.
- 4.4 For some pupils, with a previous poor attendance record, schools report that travel training has had a negative impact as there is now a greater responsibility on parents and the pupil to ensure the pupil arrives in school on time. This would be a consideration when selecting pupils who are deemed to be suitable for travel training in the future.
- 4.5 These areas would be explored further during the next training programme and appropriate changes will be implemented where necessary.

5. **Continuation of the Travel Training Programme**

- 5.1 It is proposed that travel training should be an integral part of the 'menu' of transport assistance offers. Following an initial comprehensive assessment of need for each pupil, continuation of transport assistance needs will feature in the regular reviews at key stages in the pupil's education timeline. To ensure new cohorts of pupils are trained to travel independently as they become suitable, it is proposed that a longer term commitment is made to travel training providing the investment continues to deliver annual savings.
- 5.2 The SEN reforms introducing the new Education Health & Care (EHC) plans and the Care Act provide the stimuli for services to collaborate and provide a seamless assessment and review process, together with choice and control for the individual. This thinking sits comfortably with the aims and aspirations of the EHC plans where the focus of interventions is to support the development of the individual with measureable outcomes. Enabling children with SEN to travel independently will reduce the number of adults seeking transport assistance, which will have a positive impact on the adult transport budget.
- 5.3 The 33 pupils who have successfully completed their travel training programme will no longer be reliant on council funded transport assistance. The development of this key life skill will provide intangible benefits that greatly enhance their independence and their ability to access higher education, employment and other opportunities in their adult lives.
- 5.4 Bexley Accessible Transport Services (BATS) the travel training provider, were awarded the contract in 2013 following the Council's full tender process and have demonstrated their ability to successfully deliver the programme. Partnership working with school staff and the engagement of parents has built confidence in the pupils and contributed to the success of the programme. Additionally, BATS have built up a good network of key local stake holders in addition to parents and school staff; in particular the staff at the bus garage in Bromley Common

and the Road Safety team. These networks ensure a greater understanding of the needs and behaviours of pupils with SEN on public transport, and inclusivity within the community.

- 5.5 In view of the success of the programme and the fact a full tender process was undertaken in 2013 it is proposed that BATS should continue with the delivery of any future travel training programme. This will enable BATS to consolidate the networks formed in the first year of the programme. The continuity of provider and programme will further help to build parental support and confidence in the programme.
- 5.6 The Executive is requested to:
- a) Consider the outcomes of the Invest to Save Travel Training initiative that was approved at Executive last year
 - b) Agree the investment of £60,000 per annum to continue the travel training programme for the next three years from 1/9/2014 – 31/8/2017.
 - c) Subject to Executive approval to (b) above, delegate the award of the three year contract to the current provider Bexley Accessible Transport Services, (BATS) for a programme of travel training, to the Director of Education and Care Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holder provided :
 - i. The forecast return on investment continues to be achieved each year in line with the projected savings detailed in the report
 - ii. The quality of training is maintained

6. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The proposals reflect the Council's strategic objectives for children and young people with disabilities and the commitment in Building a Better Bromley by supporting people to live as independently as possible within the community

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The Invest to Save Report CS12081 highlighted that financial savings and a gross reduction in pupil volumes would be seen in the academic year following the training. The report proposed that, subject to a satisfactory outcome, member approval would be sought for the ongoing reinvestment of savings of £40,000 per annum over a 3 year period to train 15 pupils in each subsequent year. In view of the success of the programme, a request is now being made to invest savings in the sum of £60,000 per annum over the next three years.
- 7.2 This longer term commitment is requested to embed the programme as an integral part of the menu of transport assistance offered.
- 7.3 The original report was based upon 28 pupils becoming independent travellers. The table has been updated to demonstrate the additional 5 pupils who have been travel trained.

	Children	£
Estimated Investment in Travel Training		100,000
Average cost of SEN transport provision per pupil per annum		4,300
2013/14		
For the £100,000 investment in 2013/14		
Number of children becoming independent travellers:		
From 1/9/13	5	12,513
From 1/1/14	10	10,750
From 1/4/14	13	0
Total savings in 2013/14	28	23,263
Additional 5 pupils trained (from 1/4/14)	5	
2014/15 Full year savings of 33 pupils @ £4,300pa	33	141,900
Cumulative savings over a 2 year period		165,163
Payback (net of investment- 2 year period)		65,163
Gross return on investment		65.2%

7.4 The table above recognises that the initial cohort of pupils trained to travel independently will move on from SEN Transport services. There will be approximately 2 years where SEN Transport will fully benefit financially from the investment in training although the benefits for pupils will be realised throughout their lives.

The following table demonstrates the financial implications for training 20 pupils per annum over the next 3 years and incorporates the additional 5 pupils trained in 2014 and reinvestment of savings.

20 Pupils a year and £60,000	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
	£	£	£	£	£
Initial Invest to Save funding	100,000				
Savings (13/14 cohort)	-23,263	-141,900	-141,900	-40,133	0
Reinvestment 14/15		60,000			
Savings (14/15 cohort)		-25,043	-86,000	-86,000	-28,664
Reinvestment 15/16			60,000		
Savings (15/16 cohort)			-25,043	-86,000	-86,000
Reinvestment 16/17				60,000	
Savings (16/17 cohort)				-25,043	-86,000
	76,737	-106,943	-192,943	-177,176	-200,664
Payback initial I2S	-23,263	-76,737			
Savings with annual reinvestment					
Net savings per annum		-30,206	-192,943	-177,176	-200,664
Net cumulative savings		-30,206	-223,149	-400,325	-600,989
Savings without annual reinvestment					
Net savings per annum		-65,163	-141,900	-40,133	0
Net cumulative savings		-65,163	-207,063	-247,196	-247,196

7.5 The following base assumptions are used in compiling the tables above:

- Set up an initial training programme to achieve 28 pupils trained to travel independently from the £100,000 Invest to Save funding
- Continue with the training to secure the achievement of 20 pupils to be travel trained from the re investment of £60,000 from annual savings

- £100,000 resulted in 33 pupils travel trained and therefore it is assumed £60,000 will deliver 20 pupils travel trained
- Average cost of transport saved per pupil per academic year £4,300

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The councils Contract Procedure Rules (23.7.3) and 13.1 allow for an exemption from tendering a contract where there is no extension provision, providing the Chief Officer, in agreement with the Director of Corporate Services, and Director of Finance, consider the arrangement to be of benefit to the council and allowed by the relevant legislation. The services are Part B services for the purposes of the Public Contract Regulations 2006 (as amended). This means they are not subject to the full national and European Procurement regime. There are sound operational and business reasons for the extension after which services will be offered to the market There is always a slight residual risk of challenge where contracts are extended without competition but the limited nature of the extension, the relatively low value of the contracts and the stated intention to seek competition in future make this unlikely.

Non-Applicable Sections:	Personnel Implications
Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)	<p>Report CS12081, 3rd April 2013)</p> <p>Paper relating to an earlier Bromley travel training scheme seeking approval from the Environment Portfolio Holder http://sharepoint.bromley.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=127&MID=3573#A17515</p> <p>Department for Education web page devoted to travel training (referred to in the report above) http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/youngpeople/studentsupport/a0064797/travel-training-itt</p>