8/6/11 16:31

Good afternoon,

I have just been on the website reading about the proposed changes to free school travel.

We live in Urmston and my daughter goes to Loreto Grammar School. She passed her entrance exam for Loreto and also her 11 plus. The only reason she sat the the 11 plus exam was so that she could get free travel to Loreto as advised by Trafford Council. Surely, you cannot change that now. As we put Loreto as first choice she was never offered Urmston Grammar anyway.

My second point is that you mention children have to have compulsory education until they are 16. This has now changed and my daughter will have to stay on in education until she is 18. Therefore, she should get free transport until she is 18.

I can understand that in the current climate, you have to cut costs but this should be done as a child reaches year 7 not half way through their secondary education.

I would appreciate your comments.

11/6/11 08:56

Dear sir or madam.
I am writing in response to the proposed cutting of the free school travel pass. A couple of points which i hope don't sound like spilt milk, but to quote Deborah Brownlee "in this time of austerity, council needs to save money".
Yet i have seen Flixton play park has just had a large make over.
Davyhulme Park is to have a 49K spent on it. Also Trafford town Hall is to spend 29 MILLION!!!! on a make over. which includes knocking down buildings only built in the 1980's
I know its all from different budgets. All the people in trafford do the same thing every week, have a set income divide it into different budgets to pay bills, feed the family and clothe them. In this age of "Austerity"
people make do and mend NOT do up the gardens and have new extentions.....
The children are our future and will get us out of this problem. not by ripping them out of the schools they have settled into over the last 2-3 years. but by letting them go to the schools we all agreed to and letting them finish there. Get great qualificatiobs and do great things.
If you have to make cuts like all family do in this day and age then do it the right way. No family would turn off the heating in the middle of winter to save money and freeze. To then go and spend in summer on new conifers for the garden and a shed...you keep it on and come summer invest in insulation. Save money on the next years winter bill. You should do the same... honour your comitment to the families and schools and introduce this to the new starters who will understand and can make the right choices

12/6/11 12:56

RESPONSE TO HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT CONSULTATION

I am in broad support of all the proposals contained in the consultation document with the exception of the proposal for Grammar Schools.

I disagree with the intention to continue to provide transport to a child's nearest grammar school, if it meets the distance criteria. This seems to support and promote further inequality in a two-tier secondary education system.

I would favour a proposal in line with denominational schools where low income families **only** can qualify.

20/6/11 20:44

The labour Group has deep concerns regarding the proposal to change the Home to School Transport policy and wishes to object to the significant changes being proposed.

The proposal will adversely affect well over a thousand children and families right across Trafford.

The proposals do not take into account the fact that many families are already struggling to financially make ends meet in these difficult times - with job losses, inflation running high, VAT increases, removal of tax credits, and those in work are having their wages capped.
The proposals also do not take into account the number of children a family may have in Trafford schools who presently benefit with free travel. For instance a family with 3 children presently in receipt of free school travel could find themselves over £1,000 worse off under these proposals.

The report indicates the proposal will protect families with low annual incomes below £16,190, this captures presently 144 children, However over a thousand children will lose their Home to School
Transport service. The low income criteria is set far to low, leaving many families who earn above that level in financial difficulties.

We are concerned at the proposal to change the Home to School Transport for SEN children. Many of the children and families have many difficulties and need as much support as can be given, this proposal will significantly add to those difficulties. Any transport changes that are made for SEN children should be made with the agreement of the child's parents or Guardian.

Trafford has a very complex 11+ selection policy where all the
Grammar Schools conduct their own 11+ test. The proposal does not take into account this fact, and as a result many children and parents will have
their choice of school restricted.

Similarly the proposal does not take into account those parents who choose single sex or religious preferences for their childrens education, this again will result in many children and parents having restricted choice of school.

Trafford Authority is unique in the fact that 95% of Authorities across the Country does not operate a selective system, therefore it is wrong to compare, as the report does, Trafford's Home to School Transport with that of

neighbouring Authorities. The complexities of the Trafford Education System, coupled with the fact that we have pockets of high density of Ethnic minority groups, means that the Authority has to be much more flexible in how it meets the needs of children and parents in terms of Home to School Transport, if we are to continue to give children and parents real choice. The proposals fail to meet those needs. Those needs which have been greatly valued through the years in Trafford.

As stated above we oppose the proposals, however, if the proposals are to be accepted, we have concern with regard to the implementation date. Many children and parents chose their school in the knowledge that they would receive free Home to School Transport. Parents budget in the knowledge that this arrangement will continue through their child's school life, therefore to have that removed whilst their child is still in school will cause great hardship for many families, who chose a school in all good faith in the expected knowledge that the Authority would stick to their agreement when they chose the school for their child. Therefore any change to the Home to School Policy should not affect those children which are already in the school system and are receiving Home to School Transport.

Cllr David Acton
Leader of the Labour Group
On behalf of Trafford Labour Group

22/6/11 14:56

Dear Ms. Brownlee, I would like to register my views in relation to the above matter. If free bus passes are no longer available I think this will discriminate against pupils who choose to travel to faith schools and may be contrary to Article 9 Human Rights Act 1998 which relates to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. A parent might seek to judicially review Trafford Council if any decision to abolish travel assistance can be seen as unreasonable. Finally, I have always assumed that Trafford was in favour of selective education but if parents are faced with extra costs involved in their children travelling further to a Grammar school then this might prevent some children from attending selective schools. In my case I have 3 children who attend Catholic Grammar schools. Even if they had not won places at Grammar schools they would have still travelled by bus to school to ensure they received a Catholic education.

22/6/11 16:28

I am very concerned about the proposed changes to the current home-to-school transport provision.

I have 2 children who attend North Cheshire Jewish Primary School and another who will start in 2014. All three children are likely to attend Jewish secondary schools.

The free transport has several benefits:
1)It allows parents to select the appropriate school for their child regardless of transport costs
2)It reduces traffic at peak times
3)It encourages parents to consolidate their demand into the provision provided.

The likely outcome of removing this provision would be:
1) More parents feeling that there is less viable choice for their children's schooling - chosing to send their children to less appropriate Trafford schools rather than the best school for their children.
2) Increasing traffic considerably at peak time - many parents would rather drive their children than pay for a private bus. Rota's for many parents are unviable because of the number of children that can be fit in the car.
3) With fewer parents chosing to use the bus service, the costs per child would rise considerably.

Essentially, this policy would put a high cost burder on households that are already under pressure, it would be unfriendly to the environment and it would alter family choice of where to school their children.

The Jewish community is already under pressure - with private security firms being employed on all schools and nurseries and regular anti-semitic incidents - my husband and children have been shouted abuse on many occassions whilst walking around Hale. Trafford does not provide any Jewish education so there is no alternative for parents. On top of this, an early implementation would mean that, short of removing their children from a school, parents would have no choice but to either pay or drive. This would seem that this policy is taking advantage of the perception that the Jewish community can well afford to pay for transport. This is simply not true. There are many families that cannot afford to pay for the transport to North Cheshire or Jewish schools in North Manchester.

I hope that you can reconsider.

23/6/11 22:27

Dear Ms Brownlee,
I have the honour to be a governor at Holy Family Catholic Primary School, (Old Hall Road, Sale Moor).

I have been instructed to communicate to you the concerns and objections of the Board of Governors for Holy Family Catholic Primary School, to Trafford Council's Home to School Transport proposals.

I would be grateful if you would ensure that our concerns and objections are submitted into the Consultation before the closing date for that process on 13th July 2011 - With Many Thanks.

WE BELIEVE THAT -

Trafford Council is proposing to withdraw subsidised travel support for pupils attending or seeking to attend Catholic schools on the grounds of religion or belief from September 2012.

The Council's proposals to withdraw subsidised transport to schools outside pupils' immediate area from 2012 will place an additional unfair and disproportional

financial burden on those wishing (to date with the Council's blessing) to attend/continue to attend Catholic schools.

Parents sending their children to the nearest Catholic school deserve and have earned the same rights to transport support as those parents sending their children to the nearest Academy schools. Please note that Catholic parents and parishioners have and do contribute to the costs of Catholic schools, creating savings for the Council's education budget via their contributions to buildings and maintenance costs. Please note also that as tax and local council tax payers, they also contribute to cost of transport for eligible pupils to ALL the local authority's schools. Catholic parents should not be faced with further charges for "free" Catholic education.

The withdrawal of transport support will mean the Council breaking long established arrangements. As you are aware, many of the Catholic schools within the authority were located in agreement with Trafford Council itself and in the full acceptance that these schools MUST serve a wide geographical area and with the FULL ACCEPTANCE by the council of the need to provide transport support. At the very least therefore, there is a minimum moral obligation on Trafford Council to maintain subsidised transport to Catholic schools at the current levels. Parents and children, when they choose a school, albeit with local authority support with home to school transport arrangements, have a right to expect the local authority in question to HONOUR IT'S AGREED COMMITMENT.

Indeed, the Secretary of State has said that Councils should not disturb such well established agreements (above) and this Board of Governors trusts that Trafford Council would not wish to see changes in transport which might seriously disrupt the education of pupils at these schools?

Likewise, the changes, if introduced, will make it much harder for parents, particularly those just above the income thresholds for transport support to access popular Catholic schools in the Authority. We would point out that this runs counter to Government policy on extending choice for parents and preventing transport costs from being a barrier to educational choice.

Furthermore, a significant number of children who attend Catholic schools go on to attend Catholic secondary schools and currently receive transport assistance of approximately £10 - £15 per child per week. The obvious and somewhat disquieting outcome of this will be that some parents will simply not be able to afford to send, or to continue to send their children to Catholic schools, particularly those on low incomes but not in receipt of benefit. Responsible Catholic parents seek an ongoing education for their children between the ages of 4-19 years within a Catholic primary school to be followed by a Catholic secondary school/college. Many will not now be able to afford this continuity.

Many parents wish their children to stay together i.e. attend the same schools as their siblings. If brothers and sisters are thus prevented from utilising the same schools because of financial hardships brought about by the withdrawal of transport support, this will in turn impact on family life, disrupt children's education, break friendships and mean even more additional expense (for Catholic families) in the purchase of extra "differing" school uniforms and other items of school equipment not to mention

difficulties brought about by even slight differences in school opening and holiday dates.

Consequently further pressure will be exerted in additional and totally avoidable (if these proposals were NOT introduced) by the increase in road traffic in the vicinity and in the approaches to schools at key times leading (we would suggest) to an increased number of health and safety related issues and traffic congestion due to the extra numbers of private vehicles on the roads at these times.

As it appears to us that under these proposals children attending their nearest zoned Community schools, Academies and even Church of England Controlled schools will continue with their present support, those wishing to attend a CATHOLIC school may well be penalised.

This Board of Governors is wholly opposed to these proposals on the grounds that they are UNJUST, UNFAIR, and DISCRIMINATORY against the rights of people to choose a Catholic education.

School Governor
Holy Family Catholic Primary School, Sale Moor.

25/6/11 17:37

We write with regards to the proposal by Trafford Council to no longer provide free transportation to children attending their nearest demonination grammar school. We feel this is prejudicory towards faith schools, and towards those who wish their children to attend faith schools. This new policy also will create huge hard-ships financially for those on a limited income, but whose children are intellegent enough to pass entrance examinations to get into these elite schools.

We are strongly opposed to the removal of free transportation and feel it is another move towards only providing the best education to those who can afford it. The only children who live near enough to our daugther's school in Altrincham not be penalised by the removal of the free bus fare are the very people who could afford to pay the bus fares in the first place.

Finally, does this mean that places at the nearest grammar school would be offered to the children who live the nearest? The nearest grammar school for us would be Urmston, does it mean that one entrance exam would be sat by all children for all grammar schools in Trafford and the nearest grammar school would be allocated to each child who passed?

30/6/11 13:23

- Discussion of the proposed new home to school transport plan
- M explained how the old and new schemes work
- S said she and E had supported the new policy at a spending challenge event.
- F said she agreed with the new policy but it was unfair on those who had already chosen their schools.
- Most members thought the policy change was unfair and the council could save money elsewhere. However if the policy was to be brought in it should apply to all pupils.

Trafford Youth Cabinet

01/07/11 17:54

Once again Trafford is proposing to provide transport for privileged pupils who attend Grammar Schools, even if it is not their nearest school (but may be their nearest Grammar School) whilst introducing a rationing service for children with Special Educational Needs who have to attend the school determined by their Statement of Special Educational Needs. The rationing it is suggested will be based on their need.

Why should pupils be transported to Grammar Schools without screening (other than walking distance) but not those with Special Educational Needs who necessarily have greater needs and often come from economically challenged families and communities?

We are not only in favour of but also actively promote and develop Independent Travel skills in our pupil group, however, the travel challenges for many pupils to get to the locations of our Special Education provisions means that such rationing for our pupils would only add a further challenge and disincentive to accessing education. Any and all required savings should be targeted at those more privileged pupils, and attending Grammar School is a privilege.

Chair of Governors - Manor High School

06/07/11 20:53

In response to the current consultation on the removal of home to school transport for denomination schools I wish to register my objections in the strongest possible terms.

I am a roman catholic whose children attend a roman catholic primary school in trafford and our only catholic grammar schools are St Ambrose for Boys in Hale Barns and Loretto Grammar School for Girls in Altrincham. It is our belief as roman catholics that we should be able to maintain our children's education within the catholic faith in extremely successful and competitive CATHOLIC grammar schools. These proposals to remove the financial assistance for home to school transport will remove this choice and I strongly object to this.

We pay council tax and income tax to provide state education and I beleive that financial assistance for home to school transport should remain whilst our education system maintains denominational schools.

Once again, this email is to register my objection to your proposal to remove home to school transport for children in denominational schools.

07/07/11 13:20

I am leaving you my feedback about your proposal to scrap the free travel for children travelling to a religion based school. My daughter has attended Loreto Grammar for the last 3 years and the free travel pass has been a god send, she wanted to attend a catholic grammar school and as Loreto is the only one in the area we chose to send her there, I would not be able to afford the amount the buses are now charging for children to travel to and from school, I have another daughter starting at BTH in Altrincham in September, she is attending this school because of the extra support she requires and I know that this school will offer her the support she needs. Please don't scrap the free bus pass for my children it helps us out as a family a lot.

08/07/11 14:21

We as parents having children attending Blessed Thomas Catholic College & St Ambrose College find it outrageous that Trafford Council are proposing to stop free school transport to any school that has a grounding of religion or belief.

This is discriminating and for those who cannot afford the cost, will put their children in an unsafe situation i.e. having to walk or cycle a substantial distance to school.

It seems astonishing that we cannot look after our own children within Trafford but provide and accommodate for all and sunder?

We would like those who make such decisions to look in more appropriate areas to cut cost and not target 'a soft option' .

We are disgusted and shame on Trafford Council.

08/07/11 14:33

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to object to the proposals for the new Home to School Transport policy as outlined below:

1) I am a single parent with one child currently at Secondary School and my second child commencing in September 2011 and the financial burden on myself would be extremely difficult and this runs counter to Government policy on preventing transport costs being a barrier to parents' choice of educational provision.
2) Both my children attended a catholic primary school in Ashton on Mersey (All Saints)
3) I wish for my children to continue with their catholic education and the secondary school which they attend is the only Catholic secondary school near to my home with which I can send my children.
4) I feel that I should have the opportunity to choose a school for my children in accordance with my religious convictions.
5) I have been made aware that there was a long standing agreement between the Diocese of Shrewsbury and the Council that transport support for eligible parents would be provided for parents seeking denominational education for their children.
6) The local non catholic secondary schools are already over subscribed
7) As a tax/rate payer, I request the same support to access my nearest denominational school as enjoyed by parents who choose the nearest Academy, Community or Church of England controlled school.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any queries.

08/07/11 14:37

I would really like to make it clear that I do not approve of taking the transport facilities away from children attending secondary schools.
My son has no choice but to travel on the metro/bus to his designated school, as it is the only Catholic school available for him.
I know TMBC have to make cuts, but without this travel system some families will be unable to keep children at their schools.

I hope you can reconsider your actions and prove to us that TMBC is better than this. I am sure you have other areas that can take the hit and it does not have to be children's services.

Please consider my plea

08/07/11 15:06

Please reconsider the policy changes on travel. There is no way my husband and I could afford the fares to the schools. Many parents are in the same position. My son worked very hard to get into St Ambrose, we will be lucky to afford the basics to get him through and my other son is flourishing in Blessed Thomas Holford even with dyslexia and hearing difficulties. There is no other schools to send them to as they are full. To just land this on people without any long term notice to make alternative plans is wrong. The children already enrolled in these schools should not be punished for attending them by extra travel charges.

A more reasonable choice would be to warn parents in the future that concessionary travel is not available, that would at least give them chance to chose an appropriate school. If the charges come in we will not be able to send our children to school. How many others will suffer for this poorly thought out idea.

08/07/11 16:49

Dear Trafford Council,

Please note my strongest objections to the proposed change. Parents sending their child to the nearest Catholic School deserve, and have earned, the same rights to transport support as those parents sending their children to the nearest Academy, Community or Church of England Controlled School. Catholic school parents and parishioners have contributed to the provision of Catholic schools and saved the Authority millions of pounds over many years. Parents with children currently at Catholic schools already create additional savings for education via our contributions to building and maintenance costs. As tax and rate payers we also contribute to the cost of school transport for all the eligible pupils in this Authority and we should not be faced with further charges for “free” Catholic education through the imposition of such an additional financial burden.

The withdrawal of transport support will lead to the Council breaking long established arrangements. Many of the Catholic schools within the Authority were located in agreement with the Council in the full knowledge that those schools must serve pupils from a wide geographical area and with full acceptance by the Council of the need to provide transport. At the very least there is a moral obligation to maintain subsidised transport. The Secretary of State has said that Councils should not disturb such well established agreements and I/we* am/are* certain that all parties concerned would not wish to see changes in transport which might disrupt the education of pupils currently at denominational schools.

As a parent I am a taxpayer and a council taxpayer contributing to Trafford’s education budget and to the upkeep of Catholic schools.” I currently have one son at St Ambrose and hopefully will have another starting in September 2012 and I will find it very hard to find the money for the bus fare for both of them and to take them myself in the car will be a struggle as I will still have another child at primary school.

08/07/11 18:11
Dear Trafford
Trafford - Provide transport for children who attend schools further than the statutory walking distance from their home through parental choice eg to attend a denominational or single sex school rather than their nearest qualifying school. This currently accounts for over 80 per cent of our expenditure on mainstream transport.
The above statement has just been highlighted to me by my childs school BTH. That from September 2012 children travelling to denominational schools will have to pay for transport.
Is this not discriminating against pupils \ parents beliefs, any individual deserves the right to follow there own religious path, whatever the colour or religion without being penalised.
There are so many cutbacks at present, take my family as an example, I have lost my business and my 25 and 21 year old still live at home, times are hard.
Take local governments for example, what with the proposed strikes and cutbacks, but you are not the only workforce affected by this current downturn, its not much fun in the Private Sector.

Therefore don't take from St Peter to pay Paul, my attempt at catholic humour, and stop paid public transport for children.
I am sure it will effect attendance. Get your cutbacks elsewhere, increase parking fines I am sure you have missed one or two people, you have not totally brought Altrincham to its knees yet.
Or the best idea yet, stop paid public transport for the children and then book the parents who drop their children off on double yellows, a double whammy.
Please do your housekeeping elsewhere and for once perhaps look towards the silent majority and not the loud minority.

08/07/11 18:26

We live in Davyhulme and chose BTH as the best school for our son to attend, based on all the information available, including the Ofsted reports. However, we don't get, and have never had, free transport for our son. This is because there is a Roman Catholic high school which is nearer to us. The cost of transport really does place a huge financial burden on us. Rather than remove free transport to those who currently receive it, I would like to see everyone treated in the same way so that everyone gets free transport to their choice of school. I don't believe that people should be treated differently since it introduces a two-tier system. I think that either everyone should get it or no-one should.

09/07/11 17:49
I am writing to express my deep concern at the proposals on school transport as they stand. They unfairly hit those families who choose to use their legal right to send their children to a religious school. It is not the reduction of council costs which I opposed but the fact that it is being done by discriminating against religious schools.

St Ambrose College in Hale Barns serves an extremely wide and diverse student body from across Trafford, and is held up as a leading school in results, and rated very highly by Ofsted. However, because it is located in the south of the district it is a fair journey for many pupils. They have chosen to attend because they believe in Catholic education and the value it serves for the whole community of Trafford. Catholic schools already save millions to the tax-payer by contributions to building and maintenance costs. The Council should not balance the books on the backs of parents and low-income Catholic families. To do so is a savage proposal that deliberately hits religious education which already saves the state millions.

To remove the existing transport support is callous and offensive, and the fact that this could be driven through within months is a true affront to local democracy.

Finally, Trafford Council needs to thoroughly assess the impact of increased use of cars on the roads at peak times, and the possible impact of families having to change school because of the burden placed on working families by this proposal. It is a major change which has not been properly understood yet by parents or the Council.

Balance the books yes, but do not single out poor, religious families who seem an easy target. 1040 of Trafford's children are helped by transport to denominational and grammar schools. Do not single out this small, and vulnerable group simply because of their religious beliefs.

09/07/11 22:12

On attending Mass this evening we were very upset and disappointed to hear that Trafford Council is proposing to completely remove travel support for pupils attending Church schools from September 2012.Our Priest only got this information during this last week and so was only able to alert the Parish to the situation today (Saturday),obviously many people will not be able to participate in this consultation due to lack of time to register their protest.We find this lack of time totally unacceptable.

There are many factors to be considered but parents should still have a choice to let their children attend the denominational school of their choice.Catholic parents pay all the usual rates and taxes like everyone else does and so are entitled to be able to send their children to the school they consider to be best for them.When these schools were opened it was on the understanding between the Council and the Diocese that help with transport costs would be availble for these children,and yet now you want to withdraw it!! So we urge you to reconsider this proposal.

As Trafford rate payers and tax payers all our lives we do feel that this is a very unfair and retrograde step to take and in emailing you we wish to register our strongest objections to this proposal and urge you to please reconsider.As we live in a Christian country our faith schools are very important and we need to keep them.

09/07/11 22:34

I am writing as both the parent of a child due to start in Year 7 at Blessed Thomas Holford school this coming September and also in my role as Parent

Governor at Holy Family Catholic Primary School, Sale Moor to formally lodge my objection to the proposed withdrawal of free transport for children attending denominational schools in Trafford from September 2012.

Although the basis of this proposed change is stated as being "...to ensure equality and fairness in the provision of this support..." it is actually penalising one group of children by erecting financial barriers to their pursuance of obtaining an education which reflects their religious values. In these times where moral values are under severe pressure surely Trafford Council should be encouraging more children to attend educational establishments whose mission statements and actions uphold, reinforce and build upon the moral codes we all should be living under.

The leaders in this practice are invariably Catholic educational establishments beginning at nursery/primary school and continuing through secondary school and beyond, all reinforced by the support given by the various Parish churches.

By removing all Catholic schools from the schedule of qualifying schools the Council are penalising those parents wishing to choose a school that accords with their religious convictions.

The Council are also breaking well established arrangements, which were made in full agreement with Trafford Council, concerning where Catholic schools were to be sited within the Authority. It was acknowledged that these schools would be serving a wide geographical area and were built on the full understanding that transport would be provided.

I note that in the consultation document the Council admits it has a duty to provide transport for children of low income families attending a school up to a maximum of 15 miles from the child's home that is preferred by reason of a parent's religion or belief. I'm sure you are aware that one of the Governments key themes is that transport costs should not be a barrier to educational choice restricting the school options available to parents so why then penalise those people who happen to be above the income threshold, especially those who are only just above it?

The consultation document also does not appear to take into account the fact that parents of children at Catholic schools save the Council millions of pounds via their contributions to the Diocesan Building Funds which go towards the upkeep of the schools. This is as well as contributing through their Council Tax to the upkeep of LA funded schools and to the cost of school transport for eligible children to all the schools in the Authority.

Another knock-on effect of this proposed change is that a significant number of parents who decide to continue their childs education at a Catholic school will begin to use their cars as a means of getting them to and from school. This will increase congestion in areas where Catholic schools are situated with the inherent increases in pollution affecting the environment and children's health and safety.

I reiterate that I remain opposed to the implementation of the proposed change to the current transport policy which undermines the educational successes of Catholic schools in the Trafford area and puts serious financial obstacles in the way of parents who wish to provide their child with a set of moral values which a Catholic education delivers.

09/07/11 00:26

We are writing to express our great concern at the suggested proposals for the change in transport arrangements for September 2012.
Firstly, on religious grounds. Our child has the right to attend a faith school and as there is no closer faith school to our home, than one requiring transport. We urge you to consider the effect the proposals this would have on the spiritual life and identity of many family units if they had to attend non denominational schools.

Secondly, there would be a massive knock on for non denominational schools. Children not being able to attend a faith school due to inability to pay for a transport pass would effect the intake of non denominational schools, as competition for places at these schools would increase.

Finally, many families are unable to take on a further financial outgoing, which, if you have more than one child is considerable.

Our child has benefited from the wonderful and efficient system that is in place and working so successfully.

10/07/11 11:43

Trafford council has published a consultation document proposing to withdraw subsidised transport for pupils attending denominational schools from September 2012.
If carried out this will place a huge financial burden on families attending Church schools.

We strongly object to the proposed change.
Parents sending their children to the nearest Catholic School deserve the same rights to transport support as parents choosing to use the nearest Academy Community or Church of England School

Support from parents and parishioners has saved, and will continue to save Trafford millions of pounds.
Parents currently contribute to building and maintenance costs and as tax payers we also contribute to the cost of school transport for all eligible pupils in Trafford..
We should not be faced with further charges to educate our children because we have chosen a Faith school.

We see this as discrimination and the start of a sinister plan to target Faith schools. The local authority should be congratulating these schools on their high standard of education and celebrating their success not trying to jeopardise their future on the grounds of religion.

Many of the Catholic schools were located in agreement with the local authority in the knowledge that these schools would serve pupils from a wide geographical area and the authority would need to provide transport. Therefore, we believe that there is a moral obligation to maintain subsidised transport.

The secretary of state has said that Councils should not disturb such well established agreements and the proposed change would inevitably disrupt the education of pupils who currently attend denominational schools.The propasal also runs counter to Government policy on preventing transport costs being a barrier to parents' choice of educational provision

We would appreciate your support, as our MP, in preventing this unfair and wholly disciminatory increase in the financial burden on constituents.

10/7/11 12:56

I was extremely concerned to hear of Traffords proposals regarding the removal of the transport support for children attending faith schools, not least because I have 2 children attending faith schools in the area. My eldest is currently in Yr11 and my youngest will be going into Yr7 in September.
I strongly object to these proposals.

Parents sending their children to the nearest Catholic school deserve, and have earned, the same rights to transport support as those parents sending their children to the nearest Academy, Community or Church of England controlled school. Catholic school parents and parishioners have contributed to the provision of Catholic schools and saved the Authority millions of pounds over many years. Parents with children currently at Catholic schools already create additional savings for education via our contributions to building and maintenance costs. As tax and rate payers we also contribute to the cost of school transport for all eligible pupils in this Authority and we should not be faced with further charges for 'free' Catholic education through the imposition of such an additional financial burden.

The withdrawal of transport support will lead to the Council breaking long established arrangements. Many of the Catholic schools within the Authority were located in agreement with the council in the full knowledge that those schools must serve pupils from a wide geographical area and with full acceptance by the council of the need to provide transport. At the very least there is a moral obligation to maintain subsidised transport. The Secretary of State has said that Councils should not disturb such well established agreements and I am certain that all parties concerned would not wish to see changes to transport which might disrupt the education of children at denominational schools.

As my MP I would be grateful if you were able to help in preventing this increase in the financial burden on constituents who want their children to attend the nearest Church school.

10/7/11 20:36

I am writing to voice my concerns over the proposals to discontinue bus services to faith schools in Trafford.
I live in Hale and, as a traditional Jewish family, we send our 2 children to North Cheshire Jewish Primary School in Heald Green. In addition to being a parent at North Cheshire I am also co-Chair of the PTA.

If these proposals are passed, as a result of the costs, many parents will not use the bus and will use the car to take their children to school instead.
There will be a number of consequences to this:

1. The service will be unsustainable without an adequate number of children and working parents such as myself will suffer, since I rely heavily on the transport system to get my children to and from school safely and allow myself enough time to get to work. My husband and I are not in a position to be able to change our entire working pattern to take the children to school and arrive at work late and then leave work early to pick them up.
2. The livelihoods of the "helpers" on the bus will be in jeopardy. The staff on the bus have worked on the service for many years and are exceptional.
Without the bus their income will suffer unnecessarily.
3. The environmental impact of many people moving to using their cars at a time when the green agenda is supposed to be a priority for all must be considered.
4. The impact of additional traffic on the roads around the school is also a consideration, particularly to local residents, and may be deleterious to the relationship the school has with the local community, who are currently very tolerant of the Jewish school on their doorstep.

I realise that in these current economic times, it is essential to make efficiency savings and cost improvements, but in the scheme of things this is a relatively small cost saving with a disproportionate impact on Trafford residents.
Trafford Council has recently agreed to spend £30 million on a town hall. I, for one, will never see or directly benefit from these changes and yet other cost savings such as the proposed loss of the bus service, affect me and my family directly.

I hope that you will find in favour of the opposition to these transport proposals.

11/7/11 08:18
I oppose a proposal to remove entitlement for travel support in respect of pupils attending a school purely on the grounds of religion or belief with effect from September 2012. My daughter lives 3.1 miles away from the school and with all other of our outgoings she may have to move schools to one within walking distance.

11/7/11 10:13
I am a parent of two children who currently attend a Catholic Primary school in Sale. I object to the proposals to withdraw transport support on the basis that this will discriminate against parents who wish to send their children to Catholic secondary schools but may not afford to do so if support for transport is taken away. For many families, who will not qualify as a low-income family under the new proposals, this will place considerable financial burden on them in austere times and particularly where they have more than one child using this service and will undoubtedly influence many parents decisions as to which school they send their child.

Many parents will be prevented or deterred from sending their child to a faith school on account of financial hardship or simply because alternative modes of transport will place their children at risk of diminished safety.

Furthermore, It should be noted that parents of children in Catholic schools have been contributing on an annual basis towards building funds since the start of their children's education. For parents with several children, this has been a significant contribution and saved the Local Authority a substantial amount of money.

11/7/11 12:21
I would like to register my objection to the removal of subsidised transport for those attending denominational schools for the following reasons:

It places an unfair and unreasonable financial burden on the families of those attending these schools.

It is discriminatory against Catholics who wish to attend a Catholic School. Catholics schools are strongly supported by the families of their pupils. This has resulted in significant savings for the local authority over many years. Catholics are tax and rate payers too, making a significant contribution to the local area, and supporting the transport of costs of all pupils.
Catholic schools of necessity serve a large catchment area. This has been recognised by the local authority over many decades and the removal of subsidised transport would be a direct attack on the sustainability of these schools. This would be in direct conflict with the view of the Secretary of States that such long established arrangements should not be disrupted.

11/7/11 17:04

I am a parent of children at Catholic primary and secondary schools in Trafford. Trafford council has published a consultation document containing a proposal to withdraw subsidised transport for pupil attending denominational schools from September 2012. The proposal will place a significant financial burden on our family.

Please note my strongest objections to the proposed change. Parents sending their children to the nearest Catholic school deserve, and have earned, the same rights to transport support as those parents sending their children to the nearest Academy, Community or Church of England Controlled school. Catholic school parents and parishioners have contributed to the provision of Catholic schools and saved the Authority millions of pounds over many years. Parents with children currently at Catholic schools already create additional savings for education via our contributions to buildings and maintenance costs. As tax and rate payers we also contribute to the cost of school transport for all the eligible pupils in this Authority and we should not be faced with further charges for "free" Catholic education through the imposition of such an additional financial burden.

The withdrawal of transport support will lead to the council breaking long established arrangements. many of the catholic schools within the Authority were located in agreement with the council in the full knowledge that those schools must serve pupils from a wide geographical area and with full acceptance by the Council of the need to provide transport. The Secretary of State has said that Councils should not disturb such well established agreements and I am certain that all parties concerned would not wish to see changes in transport which might disrupt the education of pupils currently at denominational schools.

As a member of the Local Authority department dealing with teh consultatiion please ensure my comments are included in the consultation process and reported to elected members.

11/7/10 17:31

dear sir this proposal to cut school transport to the catholic schools my son will not travel on public transport as on the 3 occasions he has before he was attacked &injured and will only use the school bus to get o st ambrose college each attack was racialy motivated due to my son being of mixed ancestry will you take responsibility the next time

11/7/10 18:29

Dear Sir/Madam,

Please note my strong objections to the proposed changes to the School transport policy.

The proposal will place a significant financial burden on my family and many other Catholc families too.I feel that there is a frigtening trend to heap financial burden onto the 'middle income' bracket at every oppotunity this being another great example. As a Catholic parent I deserve the same right to send

my children to the nearest Catholic School and have earned the same rights to transport support as those parents sending their children to the nearest Academy,Community or church of England.

12/7/11 10:18

This is in reply to the Home to School Transport Consultation.

Section 4.1 states that "Parents of children who receive the higher rate of the mobility component of Disability Living Allowance DLA, who own or lease a car through the 'Mobtability Scheme' are expected to use this car to transport their child to school."

Trafford's Home to School Transport Policy for Children with Complex Physical and Medical Needs states

"When appropriate, the Authority will discharge it's duty to provide free transport by paying willing parents a travel allowance to take their children to school."

"In cases where parents express a preference for taking their child to school themselves a travel allowance will not normally be offered when there is a place available on existing contract transport and the child does not require trained medical assistance."

These two documents appear to contradict one another and it is not clear whether Trafford expects parents with a motability car to take their children to school or whether they can continue to go on the existing transport provided. If parents are not willing to take their child to school will the authority still take them. These children are eligible children and the authority has to provide transport for them. In order to get the higher rate of mobility a child must be unable or virtually unable to walk due to a physical disability or be severally mentally impaired. All these children qualify for transport provision and the majority will attend one of the special schools in Trafford and as such, the school can be a considerable distance from home. Parents have a legal duty to get their other children to and from school and can't do this if they have to take their disabled child to the only school suitable in the borough. Delamere doesn't start until 9:20 as the children need such a high level of support the teachers do not take a morning or afternoon break. As parents of disabled children we do not have the luxury of dropping them off at breakfast clubs. It is hard enough for us to get work and contribute to the local community. This is making it harder. The local authority will still have to provide transport for children who do not have a motability car, it is the parents of the most severely disabled children who look set to lose this. Does it make sense to have more cars on the road when there will be buses going to these schools anyway. My daughter spent the entire time at primary school without higher rate mobility although she needs constant one to one support whilst out of the house. A lot of these children attend respite, much of it outside the borough. Currently they are taken from school to respite and picked up in the morning and taken to school again by TTP. If the parents had to do this themselves, they would have to give up some of their respite. David Cameron said in his speech 'How we can make life better for disabled people' "If we're serious about helping families, making a big positive difference to their lives then we've got to make it much easier for parents and careers to access respite care." I believe adopting this clause would make it much more difficult. If families cannot access respite they may reach breaking point and the financial cost of that to the local authority would be immense. Going to school in the transport provision currently provided helps promote independent

living for these children. These children already have their needs reviewed annually as it is a legal requirement to review a Statement of Special Educational Needs at least once a year. Transport is always reviewed then.

12/7/11 10:49

I am writing in response to the news that Trafford are considering removing the free transport for children attending schools out of their local area because of religion or beliefs. I feel very strongly that this would be a detrimental decision to both families and the church. I feel that it would be extremely unfair to take away a Childs right to a religious education which is exactly what Trafford will be doing to many children who will not be able to afford to pay for transport. The bus fair for children is already extortionate even with an IGO bus pass.
I am a practicing catholic and so are my children. We live in Partington and there is only one high school in the area which is not a catholic school or a religious school. The free bus pass has been in place since I attended the school and it is the only help towards the cost of high school education some of us receive.
I believe that taking away this support would be a very bad and very unfair decision!

12/7/11 16:50

I would like to place on record my objection to your proposal to withdraw the school buses that my two grandchildren use to travel to and from there schools. They live in Lymm, and have to travel to Hale and Altrincham.
The financial burden this would impose on there mother ,who is a single parent would be enormous.
Why should pupils who attend church schools be discriminated against those who do not . Parents have the right to send children to schools of there choice.
My grand daughter is 12 years old, how do you think I feel about her using a service bus in this day and age ,when we have all sorts of predators prowling about ,waiting to abduct young children.
I urge you to think again in this matter, and do not withdraw bus services for church schools.

12/7/11 19:58

I am appalled at the proposal to remove subsidised transport for pupils attending denominational schools from September 2012. My children who attend such school have earned the same rights to transport support as those children who do not attend such schools. As parents we have contributed to the upkeep of these schools via maintenance contributions and should not have to endure further charges for transport.This couls also lead to increased car use, presenting risk to the environment and health and safety of our children. Please could you ensure my comments are included in the consultation process and reported to elected members.

12/7/11 20:51

Trafford Council has published a consultation document containing a proposal to withdraw subsidised transport for pupils attending denominational schools from September 2012.
The proposal will place a significant financial burden on families attending Church schools.
Please note my strongest objections to the proposed change. Parents sending their child to the nearest Catholic School deserve, and have earned, the same rights to transport support as those parents sending their children to the nearest Academy, Community or Church of England Controlled School. Catholic schools parents and parishioners have contributed to the provision of Catholic schools and saved the Authority millions of pounds over many years. Parents with children currently at Catholic schools already create additional savings for

education via our contributions to building and maintenance costs. As tax and rate payers we also contribute to the cost of school transport for all the eligible pupils in the Authority and we should not be faced with further changes for "free" Catholic education through the imposition of such an additional financial burden.
The withdrawal of the transport support will lead to the Council breaking long established arrangement. Many of the Catholic schools within the Authority were located in agreement with the Council in the full knowledge that those school must serve pupils from a wide geographical area and with full acceptance by the Council of the need to provide transport. At the very least there is a moral obligation to maintain subsidised transport. The Secretary of State has said that Councils should not disturb such well established agreement and I am certain that all parties concerned would not wish to see changes in transport which might disrupt the education of pupils current at denominational schools.
As a member of the Local Authority department dealing with the consultation, please ensure my comment are included in the consultation process and report to elected members.

Vice-Chair of Governors of St Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School, Sale
Father of three children directly affected by the proposed changes to the transport policy.

12/7/11 20:58
Trafford Council has published a consultation document containing proposals to withdraw subsidised transport to denominational schools from 2012. These proposals will place an additional financial burden on families attending Church schools.

Please note my strongest objections to the proposed changes. Parents sending their child to the nearest Catholic school deserve, and have earned, the same rights to transport support as those parents sending their children to the nearest Academy, Community or Church of England Controlled School. Catholic parents and parishioners have contributed to the provision of Catholic schools and saved the Authority millions of pounds over many years. Parents with children currently at Catholic schools already create additional savings for education via our contributions to building and maintenance costs. As tax and rate payers we also contribute to the cost of school transport for eligible pupils attending all the Authority's schools. We should not be faced with further charges for "free" Catholic education.

The withdrawal of transport support will lead to the Council breaking long established arrangements. Many of the Catholic schools within the Authority were located in agreement with Trafford Council in the full knowledge that those schools must serve a wide geographical area and with full acceptance by the Council of the need to provide transport. At the very least there is a moral obligation to maintain subsidised transport. The Secretary of State has said that Councils should not disturb such well established agreements and we are certain that all parties concerned would not wish to see changes in transport which might disrupt the education of pupils currently at denominational schools.

12/7/11 22:07
Dear Mr Coupe,

Trafford Council has published a consultation document containing a proposal to withdraw subsidised transport for pupils attending denominational schools from September 2012. The proposal will place a significant financial burden on families attending Church schools.

Please note my strongest objections to the proposed change. Parents sending their child to the nearest Catholic School deserve, and have earned, the same rights to transport support as those parents sending their children to the nearest Academy, Community or Church of England Controlled School. Catholic school parents and parishioners have contributed to the provision of Catholic schools and saved the Authority millions of pounds over many years. Parents with children currently at Catholic schools already create additional savings for education via our contributions to building and maintenance costs. As tax and rate payers we also contribute to the cost of school transport for all the eligible pupils in this Authority and we should not be faced with further charges for “free” Catholic education through the imposition of such an additional financial burden.

The withdrawal of transport support will lead to the Council breaking long established arrangements. Many of the Catholic schools within the Authority were located in agreement with the Council in the full knowledge that those schools must serve pupils from a wide geographical area and with full acceptance by the Council of the need to provide transport. At the very least there is a moral obligation to maintain subsidised transport. The Secretary of State has said that Councils should not disturb such well established agreements and I am certain that all parties concerned would not wish to see changes in transport which might disrupt the education of pupils currently at denominational schools.

Then please use one of the following three options as appropriate.

As my local Councillor I would appreciate an acknowledgement that this letter has been received and an indication as to whether you support the withdrawal of subsidised transport support. Please also advise if elected members will be holding any public consultation meetings to explain proposals to their constituents.

12/7/11 22:10

My wife has just informed me that you are considering withdrawing free bus passes for children attending schools other than their nearest qualifying school.

Please reconsider your stance on this issue as it will have a severe adverse financial impact on my family and many other families living in Trafford that send their children to faith schools.

My family is Jewish and our children attend North Cheshire Jewish Primary School in Cheadle. Apart from it being a fantastic school, it also allows my children to learn about their culture and heritage, the food is Kosher and the school calendar is designed around the Jewish festivals. No other primary school in Trafford, South Manchester or Cheshire provides this and so while you might think we chose to send our children to North Cheshire, in reality we don’t have a choice.

We live near the airport and my wife works in Knutsford which is completely the other direction from the school. One of the reasons why we were able to live in Trafford and send

our children to North Cheshire was that for the past 20 years, Trafford has provided children with free school bus passes.

From September 2012, we will have 3 children attending North Cheshire. I have been told that the proposed charge for a bus pass will be around £350 per child and so it will cost us over £1,000 per year which is simply unaffordable.

Furthermore, if you do intend to go ahead with your proposals to stop free bus passes, just think of the environmental impact this will have on our already overcrowded roads, the Health and Safety Aspect of the school having to deal with probably double the number of cars dropping children off and also the impact of this on the school's neighbourhood which is almost entirely residential.

I realise that we live in an age of austerity but on certain issues, especially when that issue concerns children in our community and their welfare, I believe there should be no compromise.

Please please reconsider your stance on this matter.

12/7/11 22:32

As a Trafford resident and taxpaper I am very surpised to hear thatTrafford Council are proposing to withdraw subsidised transport for pupils attending denominational schools with effect from September 2012.
We are already contributing to the cost of school transport for all eligible pupils in this Authority and we should not be faced with further charges for 'free' Catholic education.
These changes will place an added financial burden on families who are already struggling in the current economic climate.
Children attending Catholic schools should receive the same benefits as those attending the nearest Academy, Community or Church of England Controlled school.
Catholic parents and parishioners have worked hard to make a substantial financial contribution to their schools over many years, thus saving Trafford millions of pounds.
I am very concerned that this very obvious display of discrimination could undermine all the work we, as parents and teachers, do to raise our children to respect people of all demoninations and none. It could create resentment and divisions within our community if the children see that they are being penalised for their beliefs.

Please ensure my comments are included in the consultation process and reported to elected members.

12/7/11 22:43

Trafford Council has published a consultation document containing a proposal to withdraw subsidised transport for pupils attending denominational schools from September 2012. The proposal will place a significant financial burden on families attending Church schools.

Please note my strongest objections to the proposed change. Parents sending their child to the nearest Catholic school deserve, and have earned, the same rights to transport support as those parents sending their children to the nearest Academy, Community or Church of England Controlled schools. Catholic school parents and parishioners have contributed to the provision of Catholic schools and saved the Authority millions of pounds over many years. Parents with children currently at Catholic schools already create additional savings for education via our contributions to building and maintenance costs. As tax and rate payers we also contribute to the cost of school transport for all the eligible pupils in this Authority and we should not

be faced with further charges for “free” Catholic education through the imposition of such an additional financial burden.

The withdrawal of transport support will lead to the Council breaking long established arrangements. Many of the Catholic schools within the Authority were located in agreement with the Council in the full knowledge that those schools must serve pupils from a wide geographical area and with full acceptance by the Council of the need to provide transport. At the very least there is a moral obligation to maintain subsidised transport. The Secretary of State has said that Councils should not disturb such well established agreements and we are certain that all parties concerned would not wish to see changes in transport which might disrupt the education of pupils currently at denominational schools. As a member of the Local Authority department dealing with the consultation please ensure my comments are included in the consultation process and reported to elected members.

12/7/11 23:16

I have just bought a house on Park Road in Hale. One of the main reasons for choosing this house is it's close proximity to the school bus stop. My eldest boy is at North Cheshire Primary School and my eldest daughter will start at the school in September. Our aim was to send them on the school bus, but I believe you are looking at removing the free school bus passes for Children and charging £350 per child. Our children attend North Cheshire as we want them to have a Jewish Education - there is no other alternative in the local area. A main reason for wanting to send the children on the bus is to help the environment and allow them the opportunity to socialise with their friends. It also helps us with our work schedules. As much as we'd love to walk our children to school this clearly isn't possible and I believe you'd be discriminating against children going to the school by withdrawing this service.

I hope you'll consider the thoughts of the parents when making your decision and understand the impact if you impose the charge as it will be financially impossible for us to use the service

13/7/11 00:06

I have been made aware of the local governments proposal to remove financial support for our school bus service.

This is a crucial service which is widely used by children in South Manchester’s only Jewish school.

Sending our children to North Cheshire Jewish Primary School in Cheadle, whilst we live in Altrincham, should not be considered a ‘non-local’ or unnecessary journey for the following reasons:

1) Road congestion is already very poor all around the Manchester Airport area. Removal of support will indefinitely lead to more parents driving themselves. Removal of support must be considered a false economy and counterproductive to effective management of transport infrastructure and environmental impact.
2)There are many families who would suffer financial hardship both with the proposed fee and work commitments would be adversely affected.

3) It is our only local Jewish preparatory School. A more local option with our faith criteria is not available. We should not be fiscally penalised for this choice.
4) North Cheshire JPS is one of the UK's top schools. It is a credit to the Stockport Education Authority. Removal of the means to send kids from local areas will directly impact its intake of Jewish children, which is already under threat from schools in North Manchester.

Also to note, I am sure that the majority of parents using the bus facility feel the same way. Most new parents will not have been made aware of the government's proposals, as only the existing parents have been made aware. This is unfair for any consideration of public views on this issue.

Please urgently reconsider this proposal.

13/7/11 05:56

I understand that there is a proposal to levy a £350 pa charge on bus passes, currently free, for children travelling to their school if it is further than their closest qualifying school. This does affect our family financially as our daughter attends North Cheshire Jewish Primary School.
In addition to the extra cost, the reason I am objecting to this proposal is that I am concerned that this will have the effect of changing the travel habits of many families who will regard this addition cosy as prohibitive and will force more families to transport their children by car, especially in the morning. As a driver who commutes throughout the year around Manchester, I recognise the huge difference in the density of early morning traffic between a regular school day and during the school holidays.
I am concerned that your policy will put more vehicles on the road and add further to early morning traffic density.

13/07/11 07:59

I am writing as part of your consultation exercise to object o any removal of travel support for pupils attending denominational schools.

- Such a removal would increase the burden on families choosing to send their children to denominational schools
- parents had no idea this support would be withdrawn when they chose the school – such support should continue until they leave school
- the extra financial burden will impact on other family memebers
- the change would mean more cars on the road with the consequent increase in congestion and pollution
- the schools themselves will suffer as pupil numbers will decrease.

Can I therefore urge you not to remove this support for travle costs for families choosong to sent their children to a faith school of their choice?

13/7/11 08:51

We would like to place a strong objection to the proposed stopping of free bus passes for children travelling to North Cheshire Jewish Primary School. There are many reasons why this is a poor decision -

1. Many families have several children who travel on the school bus and the financial impact on those families will be difficult to overcome.

2. There will be many more cars travelling to the school causing a negative impact on the environment and causing health and safety implications at the school which has limited car parking space as there has always been a certain amount of children coming by bus.

3. The option of sending our children to a more local school is not an option for many because it is the only Jewish Primary School in the South Manchester area - and people shouldn't be forced to compromise their faith because of financial restraints. Funding should be provided by the state to cover travel costs - if this is the only option for them.

These are just a few points - there are many others as well.

Please reconsider your viewpoint.

13/7/11 09:13

I understand that you are considering withdrawing free bus passes for children attending schools other than their nearest qualifying school.

This will have an adverse financial impact on my family and many other families living in Trafford that send their children to faith schools.

My family is Jewish and our children attend North Cheshire Jewish Primary School in Cheadle. Apart from it being a fantastic school, it also allows my children to learn about their culture and heritage, the food is Kosher and the school calendar is designed around the Jewish festivals. No other primary school in Trafford, South Manchester or Cheshire provides this and so while you might think we chose to send our children to North Cheshire, in reality we don't have a choice.

Please would you reconsider your stance on this matter.

13/7/11 09:29

I am writing to protest about the end of the free school bus for north Cheshire. Some families depend on this service financially so they can go out to work knowing their children are looked after.

In addition it makes perfect sense from an environmental perspective as fewer cars will be driving to and from home each day.

Please can you keep this important facility of the free school bus for all.

13/7/11 10:44

I have just heard that you are considering withdrawing free bus passes for children attending schools other than their nearest qualifying school. This leaves us in a very difficult position as we send our children specifically to North Cheshire as it is a Jewish School which we think is important for their formative years although we live in our community in Altrincham. The school is a fantastic school with a great educational ethic as well as having Kosher facilities and a calender that works around the Jewish festivals...so in reality we have no choice but to put our children here as no other schools cater for these needs.

What you are suggesting would not only impact us financially but would cause real disruption with 2 of our 3 children next year going to different schools so I'm not sure how we would be able to be in different places at different times to collect them....unless you expect that we have no choice as to where we put our children and force them all into 1 local school.

I would like to ask you to please reconsider your stance on this issue. One of the reasons why we were able to live in Trafford and send our children to North Cheshire was that for the past 20 years, Trafford has provided children with free school bus passes.

From September 2012, we will have 3 children attending North Cheshire. I have been told that the proposed charge for a bus pass will be around £350 per child and so it will cost us over £1,000 per year which is simply unaffordable.

Furthermore, if you do intend to go ahead with your proposals to stop free bus passes, just think of the environmental impact this will have on our already overcrowded roads, the Health and Safety Aspect of the school having to deal with probably double the number of cars dropping children off and also the impact of this on the school's neighbourhood which is almost entirely residential.

I realise that we live in an age of austerity but on certain issues, especially when that issue concerns children in our community and their welfare, I believe there should be no compromise.

Please please reconsider your stance on this matter.

13/7/11 14:00

I am writing in response to this consultation to lodge an **objection** to the proposed changes on the ground that I consider them to be discriminatory towards the parents of children attending Catholic schools in our Borough, in particular because the withdrawal of transport support would impinge most severely on people who would be least able to afford the cost of paying for daily transport for their child(ren) and especially the parents of Catholic secondary school children living in Partington.

Furthermore I consider that the withdrawal of support would in general remove the choice which is supposed to be available to parents to send their child(ren) to a school which they consider most appropriate for their child(ren)'s education.

My locus standi for submitting this objection is that I am a Catholic and a Governor at Blessed Thomas Holford Catholic College which is the only non-selective Catholic secondary school in the south of Trafford, but all three Catholic secondary schools in south Trafford also serve Partington because it is within the Catholic Diocese of Shrewsbury. The limited public transport link between Partington and Altrincham would make it very difficult for children from Partington to get to and from those schools should the provision of school buses be terminated. I also consider that the changes would renege on previous commitments to provide such transport, notwithstanding the fact that the provision is discretionary.

I appreciate that in these dificult economic times all possible savings need to be identified, but I submit that this is a step too far and should therefore not be taken. At the very least I would request that a more refined way of reducing the cost of the transport support be examined and discussed with schools to see where savings could be made which would not penalise those least able to cope please.

13/7/11 14:02

I would like to register my objection to the proposed changes to the above policy.

I strongly object to the proposal to remove funding from children attending denominational schools further that the statutory walking distance. This is nothing more than discrimination

on religious grounds. The Council is supposed to have policies in place to stop this happening- why does this not extend to children's school transport? Has it not occurred to Ms Brownlee that if all children attended the nearest school, they would not be able to do so as there would not be enough places at the local school?

Providing transport for children attending grammar schools only is a blatant discrimination against those attending secondary schools. How would siblings attending different schools feel when some appear to be more favourably treated than others? I assume that it has nothing to do with the fact that most parents of children attending the grammar schools are Conservative voters.

Similarly, if parents want to send their children to a single sex secondary school of which there are only 2 in Trafford, why should they not be able to do so? The present government and previous ones have all loudly supported parental choice in educational matters. The numbers of children affected in these schools must be very small.

Providing transport to only those children from families on a low income discriminates against all children. Families with several children may have a low disposable income whilst their nominal income may seem to be average or above. The current economic climates puts a squeeze on ALL household budgets. Those families with income just above the income threshold, with more than one child are even more disadvantaged. The same applies for working lone parents. Providing bus passes to children from low income families marks them as as being "poor" which is unfair to them as it could stigmatise them and provide a reason for bullying.

The Council should continue to support parents of children with special needs and should not have the additional worry of how to get them to school as they grow older. These families have enough to cope with.

The cost of providing transport is relatively small. The Council can easily make cuts elsewhere.

Finally, i can only conclude that this is mainly another attempt at discriminating agfainst those parents who choose to send their children to Catholic secondary schools. My own children attend Catholic grammar and secondary schools which are not within statutory walking distance. May i also remind you that Catholic parents are also tax payers and voters. The Council will not receive my vote again if this policy is adopted.

13/7/11 14:19

I am writing to object to this proposal, two of my children attend blessed thomas holford and a further one has recently left. I too attended this school as did the generation before me and I am on the understanding transportation has always been provided. This is the nearest school to offer a catholic education to my children and others in the area and feel this will be detrimental to all affected.
Has there or will there be any meetings about this? if so when and if any have already been held why haven't we as parents been invited to attend.

13/7/11 14:33

Dear Mrs Duffield,

Trafford Council has published a consultation document containing a proposal to withdraw subsidised transport for pupils attending denominational schools from

September 2012. The proposal will place a significant financial burden on families attending Church schools.

Please note my **strongest objections** to the proposed change. Parents sending their child to the nearest Catholic School deserve, and have earned, the same rights to transport support as those parents sending their children to the nearest Academy, Community or Church of England Controlled School. Catholic school parents and parishioners have contributed to the provision of Catholic schools and saved the Authority millions of pounds over many years. Parents with children currently at Catholic schools already create additional savings for education via our contributions to building and maintenance costs. As tax and rate payers we also contribute to the cost of school transport for all the eligible pupils in this Authority and we should not be faced with further charges for “free” Catholic education through the imposition of such an additional financial burden.

The withdrawal of transport support will lead to the Council breaking long established arrangements. Many of the Catholic schools within the Authority were located in agreement with the Council in the full knowledge that those schools must serve pupils from a wide geographical area and with full acceptance by the Council of the need to provide transport. At the very least there is a moral obligation to maintain subsidised transport. The Secretary of State has said that Councils should not disturb such well established agreements and I am certain that all parties concerned would not wish to see changes in transport which might disrupt the education of pupils currently at denominational schools.

Should these proposed changes be implemented it will cost me approximately £40 per week to send my children to St Ambrose College in Hale Barns. I have 2 boys at the school and they need to get the tram to Altrincham and then a bus to school (costing each child £4 per day).

As my local Councillor I would appreciate an acknowledgement that this letter has been received and an indication as to whether you support the withdrawal of subsidised transport support

13/7/11 15:23

I am writing on behalf of my constituents regarding the possible loss of school transport for the children of Trafford but especially those in Partington and Carrington.
I am sure you are aware that Partington is classified in the lowest 10% of the country for deprivation etc hence its obtaining European funding to help re-generate the area in the past.
The facts also are that though we are very fortunate to have a Roman Catholic Primary school(our lady of Lourdes).once any child then progresses to secondary school age then they have
NO ALTERNATIVE but to travel out of the area to one of Trafford many Catholic secondary schools.
I and my colleagues and constituents feel this is grossly unfair and definitely causes a disadvantage to children and parents who are supposed to have a choice of school,yet ALL SUCH CHOICES require public transport to obtain such secondary education.

I do feel therefore that Partington and Carringto should be looked at as a special case and urge that such transport subsidy is not withdrawn from this community..

I also urge that as the secretary of state has set up a review body to look at school transport you also postpone any decisions until the outcome of this review be declared.

Yours sincerely

Councillor Ian Platt
Bucklow St Martins ward