

Responses to Councillor Waller's questions regarding the Home to School Transport Report

- 1. Value for money:** All tendered contracts are compared against previous comparable routes and (where appropriate) are costed for provision via the in-house commissioned transport fleet to ensure we achieve best value. The contracts awarded are those that (as a package) represent best value for money. Every year we are scrutinising every route and working through every entitled student in the county's transport requirements to ensure that we are integrating as many routes as possible and that we are using the correct mode of transport to achieve efficiencies. For example we are introducing a further 2 double decker vehicles (instead of 4 separate coaches) onto secondary bus routes this year to remove buses from the road and to achieve lower spend. The contract in this report are not all of our contracts, just those that came up for retendering this year, or those that require adjustment due to demand changes.
- 2. Denominational Transport:** When RCC withdrew support for denominational transport, it was agreed that this would be phased out and any students remaining in the statutory school system would continue to receive the free transport. There is 1 student remaining and 19-20 will be the last academic year where RCC support transport on denominational grounds to the Kings school in Peterborough. This will be a taxi contract for 1 year and the remaining spaces within the taxi will be sold to fare-payers to generate income to help support the contract for the remaining entitled student. Due to the home address of the entitled student, timings, route and school dates etc, public transport is not an option and the taxi contract costs versus any other option is the best value choice for the coming academic year.
- 3. Post 16 Transport:** Our current post 16 transport policy supports assisted transport on fixed criteria (closest college offering courses chosen within 8 miles of the county boundary). Students who are entitled to assisted transport to Harington school via this policy will pay a contribution of £520 for the academic year (they are exempt if evidence of low income shown).
- 4. Public service routes:** We already have, and will continue to, move secondary and post 16 students onto public transport routes wherever possible and where this achieves best value. We also ensure where possible our scholar services are registered as public bus services. For example the 185 and 29 are essentially college /school services that have been registered as public bus services and are therefore available for anyone to use.