

## EXECUTIVE

DATE: 25TH APRIL 2005

SUBJECT: REFERENCE FROM LIFELONG LEARNING SCRUTINY  
COMMITTEE – DENOMINATIONAL AND POST 16  
TRANSPORT

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF SCRUTINY

CONTACT OFFICER: GEOFF BOCUTT 01582- 546073

### IMPLICATIONS:

LEGAL ✓ STAFFING

EQUALITIES COMMUNITY SAFETY

FINANCIAL ✓ RISKS

### OTHER

### CONSULTATIONS:

COUNCILLORS CONSULTED SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
CONSULTED

STAKEHOLDERS CONSULTED OTHER

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WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

LEAD EXECUTIVE MEMBER(S): COUNCILLOR PATTERSON

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### RECOMMENDATION(S)

1. Executive is recommended to consider the recommendation of the Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee held on 21<sup>st</sup> April 2005 as set out in paragraph 10 below.

### REPORT

2. At it's meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> April 2005 the Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee considered reports from the Director of Scrutiny on Home to School Transport and from the Director of Children and Learning on Denominational and Post 16 Transport.
3. The reports set out the decisions taken by the Council at the meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> February 2005 in connection with the approval of the Council's budget and the basis on which the projected savings from the introduction of parental contributions had been calculated.

4. Officers explained why the matter was before the committee for consideration and the Executive Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People set out the reasoning behind the decisions.
5. The committee heard from the Head Teacher and Governors of Cardinal Newman Roman Catholic Secondary School and from a number of other people including friends of the school and parents of pupils at the school. Concerns expressed included the adverse effects of the decision on pupils, parents and the school and on other people including the impact of additional traffic on the town generally and on residents in the locality of the school.
6. Concern was also expressed by members of the public regarding the absence of any consultation prior to the decision having been taken and it was asserted that when the Council had taken the decision at their budget meeting it had done so on a false premise in that Members of the Council had been told that consultation had taken place and the school had accepted the proposals this was not the case.
7. Members of the public referred to the original decision to locate the school at Warden Hill Road and several people stated that an undertaking had been given by the Local Education Authority at the time to provide free transport for pupils who lived more than three miles from the school in recognition of the fact that the school would be located on the edge of the town.
8. There were concerns about how the school would change over time and it was suggested that it would become a school for the better off, just serving its local catchment rather than the Roman Catholic community throughout the town.
9. Following a discussion about the level of funding for the school and how this compared with the funding levels per pupil at other Luton secondary schools it was suggested that it was cheaper to send pupils to Cardinal Newman School than to other secondary schools even allowing for the cost of providing free transport.
10. The committee resolved:
  - (i) That the Executive be recommended to reconsider the introduction of parental contributions for denominational and post 16 transport and to reverse the decision to introduce such charges and
  - (ii) that the Executive be advised that such decision should be sustainable in the long term and not just a short term reaction to the present adverse responses from those affected.
  - (iii) That the Council be recommended to advise the Executive to reconsider the introduction of parental contributions for denominational and post 16 transport and to reverse the decision to introduce such charges and that such decision should be sustainable in the long term and not just a short term reaction to the present adverse responses from those affected.
  - (iv) That consideration of options for discounts and other aspects of implementing the Council's decision be deferred and only returned to if and when the Executive refuses to reverse the decision to introduce parental contributions.

## **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

11. The Decision is a matter for the Executive, the Budget having been agreed by the Council. This report as agreed with the relevant solicitor in Legal Services on 22<sup>nd</sup> April, 2005.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

12. The estimate of savings arising from the Council's budget decisions was reported to the Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee and is as follows:

Year	Denominational transport £'000	Post-16 transport £'000	Total £'000
2005/06	Nil	62	62
2006/07	11	122	133
2007/08	28	136	164
2008/09	45	136	181
2009/10	66	136	202
2010/11	88	136	224
2011/12	96	136	232
Thereafter	96	136	232

13. If the Scrutiny Committee's recommendations to reverse the decision to introduce charges were to be implemented compensating savings would need to be achieved in 2005/06 from other sources and adjustments would need to be made to future years' financial plans in order to achieve a balanced budget.

## **OPTIONS**

14. The Executive may accept or reject the recommendations of the Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee or they may decide to defer consideration if further information is required (e.g. the results of any consultation)

## **APPENDIX**

15. Appendix A: Reports to the meeting of the Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee on 21<sup>st</sup> April 2005.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

16. Budget report (ref 7.1) to the budget meeting of the council on 17<sup>th</sup> February 2005.