APPENDIX

AGENDA ITEM:
11.1

COUNCIL

DATE: **16TH APRIL 2013**

SUBJECT: **PETITION – CARDINAL NEWMAN SCHOOL TRANSPORT**

REPORT BY: **CHIEF EXECUTIVE (HEAD OF POLICY & PERFORMANCE)**

CONTACT OFFICER: **NICOLA PERRY 546073**

IMPLICATIONS:

LEGAL	**COMMUNITY SAFETY**
EQUALITIES	**ENVIRONMENT**
FINANCIAL	**CONSULTATIONS**
STAFFING	**OTHER**

WARDS AFFECTED:

PURPOSE

1. The purpose of this report is to advise the Council of the receipt of a petition containing over 500 names, containing the following statement:

   "Councillor Simmons and Executive Councillors of Luton Borough Council, we are opposed to cuts to Cardinal Newman School Transport, and fear for the future of the school and welfare of pupils that attend."

RECOMMENDATION(S)

2. Council is recommended to consider the petition and determine what response should be made to it.

BACKGROUND

3. Over the next three years the Council must make £48 millions of budget reductions. At the same time increased pressures are likely to flow from changes to welfare benefits, greater need for social care and a new duty to improve the public's health.

4. In preparing for the next three years the Council must consider options for removing or closing some services. It will also consider whether more money can be raised through rents and charges. A range of savings proposals have been drawn up, and these have been out to public consultation over the last few months.

5. One of the proposals includes changes to the Council's home to school / college transport policy, as outlined to the Executive on 22 November 2012. This proposal would affect denominational transport which is discretionary (except for secondary pupils aged 11-16 from low income families), and would affect pupils at Cardinal Newman School.

6. Two options have been widely consulted on:

   Option 1 – Withdrawal of funding for all non statutory transport with effect from September 2013. This would include the withdrawal of free transport for pupils currently entitled to discretionary support under the existing transport policy. This option would result in an approximate saving of £278.6k in 2013/14 and £487.8k in 2014/15 depending on the eligibility for free transport in future cohorts,

   Option 2 – Withdraw funding for discretionary denominational transport with effect from September 2013, except for those pupils in Key Stage 4 who would continue to receive transport until the end of year 11. This approach would phase out free discretionary denominational transport over a two year period as new pupils moving into Key Stage 4 from September 2014 onwards would not be eligible for free discretionary denominational transport. This option would result in approximate savings of £198.8k in 2013/14, £411.3k in 2014/15, £470.7k in 2015/16 and £487.8k in 2016/17 and thereafter.

REPORT

7. A petition containing in excess of 500 signatures was received by the Council on 2nd April 2013.

8. The petitioners express their opposition to any cut in the provision of school transport arrangements for Cardinal Newman School.

9. Specifically they state:

   "Councillor Simmons and Executive Councillors of Luton Borough Council, we are opposed to the cuts to Cardinal Newman School Transport, and fear for the future of the school and welfare of the pupils that attend".

10. It should be noted that no decision has as yet been made on this matter. However, a report is programmed to be submitted to the Executive on 29th April 2013 which will report back on the outcomes of consultation on future funding options for home to school/college transport.

PROPOSAL/OPTION

11. That Council consider the petition and determine what response should be made to it.

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS
LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972, SECTION 100D

None.