

Report to: Executive Cabinet Member
Environment and
Executive Cabinet Member
Regeneration and Resources

Date: 22nd March 2016

Report of: Director of Place, Stephen Young **Report No:**

Contact Officer: Donna Ball/Kevan Roberts **Tele No:** 6713/6775

Report Title: Review of Social Needs Transport Phase 2

Confidential / Non Confidential: (***Confidential Not for Publication***)
This report is exempt from publication by virtue of Paragraph 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

Purpose: This report follows on from a recent report from the Director of People, which set out details of Phase 1 of the Review of Social Needs Transport, and provides details of the proposals for Phase 2 of the review.

Recommendations: The Executive Cabinet Member is recommended to approve the attached report for consultation purposes with trades unions, staff and stakeholders.

Decision:

Background Doc(s): Reports to Cabinet Executive Member – The Deputy Leader and Executive Member – Environmental Services
11th January – Social needs Transport Savings & Efficiencies Review [Report](#)

14th March – Social Needs Transport Savings & Efficiencies Review – Final Proposals (not yet published)

(for use on Exec
Rep)

Signed:

Leader / Executive
Cabinet Member

Monitoring Officer

Date:

Summary:

An Executive Summary is set out within the report below which includes the following appendix:

Appendix 1 Equality Impact Assessment

Please note that relevant Job Descriptions and Person Specifications are available on request.

Executive Summary

- 1.1 At its meeting on the 10th November 2014, the Council's Cabinet approved the start of consultation on a programme of savings covering the years 2015/16 and 2016/17.
- 1.2 The Council subsequently approved savings options in February 2015, following the December 2014 Local Government settlement, in order to meet an increased savings target of £43.4m for the 2015/17 period.
- 1.3 Following the significant budget reductions already made by Bolton Council, further savings will be very challenging and will result in a reduction in staffing and resources across the Department that will inevitably result in a need to deliver SNT services differently. The Social Needs Transport (SNT) Review aims to deliver savings in the region of £255,000 in relation to the options identified in the budget as "Transport Routing" and "SEN Transport Commissioning".
- 1.4 In January 2016, the Acting Director of Children's and Adult Services (now the Acting Director of People) brought forward proposals for consultation on Phase 1 of a review of SNT. Following consultation, those proposals were recommended for approval for implementation from March 2016 onwards. The changes were primarily around shifting Adult Day Care opening hours by half an hour, to enable the same minibuses to be used to transport children and young people with special needs to and from school, followed by adults to and from Adult Day Care locations, thus enabling a smaller number of minibuses to be used overall. These changes also enabled smarter routing by reducing the number of unnecessary journeys and reducing journey times for adults.
- 1.5 As a result of these changes, subject to Executive Cabinet Member approval, consultation can now begin on Phase 2 of the review, which involves a comprehensive staffing review within the SNT service to enable the merged routes implementation from September 2016.
- 1.6 This report seeks approval to commence consultation with staff and trade unions to agree revised working arrangements for SNT staff from September 2016.
- 1.7 The proposals as set out in this report for consultation indicate a potential overall reduction in staff establishment by an estimated 12 posts.
- 1.8 It is envisaged that the necessary staff savings can be achieved by the disestablishment of existing vacancies. However, in reducing service operating hours it may also be possible to grant voluntary early retirement (VER)/ or Voluntary Severance (VS) in individual cases, where there are cost savings to justify this, and it facilitates the move to the new working arrangements.
- 1.9 The proposals, if agreed, would deliver savings of £255,000, based on the reduction of 6 fleet vehicles.
- 1.10 If agreed, these proposals would form the basis for consultation with trades unions, staff, elected members and key stakeholders. It is anticipated that final proposals would be brought forward after an appropriate period of consultation, with the intention to implement fully in September 2016.

2.0 Introduction and Rationale for review

- 2.1 The SNT Service provides a well-regarded and vital service to vulnerable adults and children and young people who are unable to reach day services or school independently, through a combination of in-house, adapted vehicles and provision via a taxi/minibus contracts. Transport support between home and school for eligible children and young people is a statutory requirement. In addition, the service delivers “Meals on Wheels” lunches to vulnerable adults seven days a week, transport for adult care respite, as well as providing a small amount of transport for adult day service users at weekends.
- 2.2 The customer base and needs are constantly changing for the service, and as a result, children’s routes need to be completely re-planned on an annual basis, once school place allocations have been confirmed, and before the new school year starts in September. Similarly, the needs of adult day care service users are continuously changing, and require adjustment on a regular basis.
- 2.3 A combination of rising demand for special needs provision and an increasing older adult population in the Borough mean that the SNT service and Children’s and Adult Services department have had to develop innovative approaches to providing transport in the context of reducing budgets.
- 2.4 One such approach has been to promote the uptake of independent travel training for young people where appropriate. Not only does this realise savings, but also supports the Council’s aim of helping young people to live as independently as possible and maximise their potential, equipping them with skills to support them into adulthood.
- 2.5 In addition, as part of Phase 1 of the review, work has been done, in consultation with, and with the agreement of, service users and their families/carers, to move them to facilities which are the nearest appropriate location to their homes. This will result in significantly reduced travel times for many service users and also has the benefit of reducing some of the demand on the SNT service.

3.0 Review Process to date

- 3.1 The Phase 1 proposals, which were approved for implementation earlier this month, resulted in a shift in opening times for adult day services, and also the bringing together of different adult client groups, to maximise the potential for efficiencies in routing. Service users can now be transported together into the nearest centre appropriate to their individual needs, however there is no change to service times as a result of this aspect of service improvement. Journey distance and times will decrease as a result, and care packages will be adjusted, where required, to accommodate any revisions to transport times. It is anticipated that this will result in a reduction of at least one route, with associated savings.
- 3.2 The Phase 1 proposals from September 2016 will allow for a shift of the adult transport to run after completion of the school runs, resulting in children and adults being transported sequentially using the same fleet, thus reducing the overall number of vehicles required. Adults and children will continue to be transported separately, with school runs being completed before adult service users are collected.
- 3.3 Adult transport routes will start from points near to where buses drop off at schools, and endeavour to commence pick-ups at addresses nearby, resulting in less time spent traveling to the first adult passenger’s address, and less dead mileage. Adult service users will be picked up and dropped off later, however there will be no reduction in the length of time spent at centres.
- 3.4 These changes will result in more fleet buses being available to transport all passengers (within an overall reduction), leading to shorter journeys and reduced time spent on the vehicles. The smarter scheduling of routes delivers improved utilisation of the vehicles, and therefore vehicle and staffing savings.

- 3.5 Overall there will be a decrease in the overall fleet size, leading to a need to review the SNT service through the Phase 2 review. The reduction in the number of vehicles required across the service will inevitably lead to a reduction in the amount of staff hours needed to deliver the service.

4.0 The SNT Service

- 4.1 Currently the SNT service has 42 fleet vehicles. 19 of these are currently used to transport adults and 19 to transport children with special needs, with 4 spare vehicles. The Council has invested in 34 new fleet vehicles in 2014 and 2015, and currently replaces every seven years. Annual maintenance costs for these are fixed for the period. Eight of the existing fleet are leased, and the contracts can be terminated at any time.
- 4.2 It is anticipated that Phase 2 implementation of smarter route scheduling, made possible by the changes approved at Stage 1 of the review, will reduce the overall fleet vehicle requirement by approximately six vehicles.
- 4.3 The reduced fleet will be available to transport children in the first routes, improving the children's journeys, and then fully available to the adult routes. This means that there will be more vehicles available to all client groups than there are currently.
- 4.4 The availability of more buses for children's routes means less work will be available to taxi/minibus contractors on the framework from September 2016 onwards. The work available to contractors varies from year to year in line with the overall demand for pupil transport.

Current staffing levels

- 4.5 The division has an establishment of 181 posts, made up of 108 permanent staff and 73 vacancies. A detailed breakdown of current staff numbers, roles and working patterns is set out below.

Current permanent staff in post

No	Post	Current Standard Working hours	Current Standard Working arrangements	Comments if applicable
6	Management/ Admin	Shift working (early/late) to cover the period 07.15-17.15	Monday to Friday.	Provide operational management, supervision, and administrative support
5	Driver/ Attendant (Children's routes)	7.30am-9.45am and 2.30-4.45pm (4.5 hours per day, 22.5 hours per week)	Monday to Friday term time only	Some routes start between 7am and 7.30am to accommodate earlier start times at some schools.
26	Driver/ Attendant (Adults routes)	8.00am-10.30am and 2.45pm-5.15pm (5 hours per day, 25 hours per week)	Monday to Friday 52 weeks per year. Adult drivers are a mix of full time (*) and part-time staff	In addition to the morning and afternoon runs, some adult drivers work additional hours to provide respite transport and to deliver community meals at lunchtimes. The meals run allocation is currently 11am-2pm (3 hours per day). (*) 14 Adults Driver/Attendants are employed for 40 hours per week (8 hours per day) over 52 weeks
65	Passenger Assistant (Children's routes)	34 Children's Passenger Assistants are engaged on standard working hours of 3 hours per day (15 hpw) or less. 35 are engaged on hours ranging from 16-35 hpw.	Split shift, Monday to Friday, term time only	The majority of the 65 Children's Passenger Assistants are deployed on contractor taxi/minibus home to school transport runs
4	Passenger Assistant (Adults routes)	8.00am-10.30am and 2.45pm-5.15pm (5 hours per day, 25 hours per week)	Monday to Friday 52 weeks per year	
1	Senior Driver	As per Driver/Attendant (Adults routes) above plus meals route. (8am – 5.15pm – 8 hours per day).	Weekend and Bank Holidays	Some Adult Services transport and lunchtime meals delivery is provided 7 days per week including Bank Holidays.
1	Weekend Driver	As per Driver/Attendant (Adults routes) above plus meals route (8am – 5.15pm – 8 hours per day).	Weekend and Bank Holidays	Some Adult Services transport and lunchtime meals delivery is provided 7 days per week including Bank Holidays.

5 Proposals for Change

- 5.1 The Executive Cabinet Member is asked to consider the recommendations set out below for changes to the SNT Service, for consultation with staff and unions. Following the successful conclusion of the Phase 1 Review, which has allowed the merger of Adult routes and the change to core start and finish hours for Adult Day Services, work can now be carried out via Phase 2 to re-route the same buses for all client groups sequentially, facilitating a reduction in the number of vehicles required overall, with an inevitable reduction in the staff establishment.
- 5.2 Phase 2 proposals will require revised working arrangements for **Driver/ Attendants**, in order to accommodate longer morning and afternoon shifts during school term time. Essentially, the working day will be longer for Driver/Attendants during term time when the transport demand is highest, and there will be fewer hours available outside of term time.
- 5.3 The proposed revised working arrangements for **Driver/Attendant** staff are as follows:

Table 1 - Current and Proposed working hours and patterns – Term Time

	Current am	Proposed am	Current pm	Proposed pm	Current Total	Current Annual working pattern	Proposed Total
Children's Routes	7.30am-9.45am*	7.30am-10.30am	2.30pm-4.45pm	2.45pm-5.45pm	4 ½ hrs per day, 22 hpw	Term time only	6 hrs per day, 30 hrs per week
Adult Routes	8.00am-10.30am		2.45pm-5.15pm		5 hrs per day, 25 hpw	52 weeks per year	

*Some routes start between 7am and 7.30am to accommodate earlier start times at some schools.

Table 2 - Current and Proposed working hours and patterns – Outside of Term Time

	Current am	Proposed am	Current pm	Proposed pm	Current Total	Current Annual working pattern	Proposed Total
Children's Routes*		None		None			None
Adult Routes	8.00am-10.30am	9.00am-10.30am	2.45pm-5.15pm	4.15pm-5.45pm	5 hrs per day, 25 hpw	52 weeks per year	3 hrs per day, 15 hrs per week

*May be some work available in the school summer holidays to transport children into summer Schools.

- 5.4 With regards to **Driver/Attendants**, 14 of the 25 full time Adult drivers are currently employed for 40 hours per week over 52 weeks. In order to address this historical anomaly, it is proposed to reduce to the Council standard working hours to a maximum of 37 per week and staff affected would be entitled to a period of two years' earnings protection in accordance with council policy.
- 5.5 In addition to the impact of routes being merged, consideration will also need to be given to the hours available in the middle of the day for delivery of community meals and transport for Adult respite. This provides some flexibility for the service in being able to offer any additional hours needed where split shifts do not fully meet existing contractual hours for Adults permanent full or part time staff.

- 5.6 It is also proposed to realign current **Passenger Assistant** working arrangements with business needs going forward.
- 5.7 The changes will also impact on the working arrangements for the six permanent management/supervisory/admin staff and a rota will need to be implemented to accommodate the extended operating times from 7.15am to 5.45pm (half an hour later in the evening).
- 5.8 It will be necessary to consult with all the permanent staff to establish the position for each, and how they fit into the new working arrangements going forward. This will provide the opportunity to discuss options (as applicable) to:
- Increase/reduce working hours
 - Move from term-time to 52 weeks or vice versa
 - Amend working arrangements to fit with existing contracted hours.

6.0 Organisational Structure

- 6.1 It is envisaged that the necessary staff savings can be achieved by the disestablishment of existing vacancies. However, in reducing service operating hours it may also be possible to grant voluntary early retirement (VER)/ or Voluntary Severance (VS) in individual cases, where there are cost savings to justify this, and it facilitates the move to the new working arrangements.
- 6.2 Clearly the proposed changes to working arrangements need to be managed sensitively to minimise the impact on the existing staff.
- 6.3 Staff will be asked to express an interest in the hours and working pattern of their choice. Where possible management will try to accommodate individual preferences, however where this is not possible, it will be necessary to deploy staff to cover the business need. Management will work with individual staff members and the trades unions to facilitate this.
- 6.4 During the consultation process staff may be asked to complete a preference form indicating their intentions.

7.0 Financial Savings

- 7.1 The financial savings that the proposals will generate ahead of the full re-routing work being carried out, is based on an estimated reduction of six vehicles, the resulting savings would be as follows:

Proposed Savings	£
Employees	168,464
Vehicles	86,619
Total	255,083

8.0 Consultation and Next Steps

8.1 The proposals set out in this report are for consultation only at this stage. Further to the budget report approved by the Cabinet on 10th November 2014 setting out the strategic option and commencing formal consultation, it is intended that the proposals contained within this report be the subject of a period of formal consultation with trades unions, staff and stakeholders. Key features of this consultation include:

- Regular meetings to take place with trades unions to work through the proposals and the implications for staff;
- Time off provided for trades unions officials to meet with and provide support to staff;
- Staff briefings where appropriate;
- Maintaining a staff teamsite and ensuring that all affected staff are kept up to date with key information, dates and frequently asked questions;
- Individual and corporate support sessions for staff; and
- Stakeholder consultation with Taxi/Minibus operators as deemed appropriate.

8.2 Following the close of consultation, proposals will be amended to take account of the responses received and alternatives put forward as appropriate. It is anticipated that formal approval of the final (revised) proposals will take place after an appropriate period of consultation, with full implementation in September 2016.

9.0 Staff and Establishment Implications

Table A The following posts (currently held vacant) would be disestablished:

No posts	Existing Job Title
12	Driver/Attendant (Grade 3)

Table B It is proposed to reduce the hours of the following posts to the Council standard working hours of 37 per week, and staff affected would be entitled to a period of two years' earnings protection in accordance with Council policy:

No posts	Existing Job Title	Current working hours	Proposed working hours
14	Driver/Attendant (Grade 3)	40	Maximum 37

Table C The following posts are vacant and will be filled in line with HR policy:

No posts	Job Title
1	Senior Transport Administrator (Grade 4)
1	Administrative Assistant (Grade 2) – (Part time)

Table D The following posts are vacant and available for the casual workforce in Social Needs Transport. Recruitment to these posts will be in accordance with HR policy.

No posts	Existing Job Title
19	Driver/Attendant (Grade 3) (Part time)
39	Passenger Assistants (Grade 3) (Part time)
1	Weekend Driver/Attendant (Grade 3) (Part time)

10.0 Equality Impact Assessment

10.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, the council must have due regard to:

- Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- Advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and
- Fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

10.2 It is therefore important to consider how the proposals contained within this report may positively or negatively affect this work. To support this analysis, an Equality Impact Assessment ("EIA") screening form has been completed for the proposals outlined in this report, and is attached at Appendix 1.

10.3 The EIA looks at the anticipated (positive and/or negative) impacts of the proposal on people from Bolton's diverse communities, and whether any group (or groups) is likely to be directly or indirectly differentially affected.

10.4 At this stage it is not anticipated that the proposals will have a disproportionate impact on any of Bolton's diversity groups.

10.5 The analysis of equality impact will be tested during consultation, and an updated EIA will be included with the report setting out the final proposals.

11.0 Recommendations

11.1 The Executive Cabinet Member is recommended to approve the proposals as set out in this report for consultation purposes with trades unions, staff and stakeholders.



Equality Impact Assessment Part 1: Screening Form

Title of report or proposal:
Review of Social Needs Transport Phase 2

Department:	Department of Place
Section/SIAP unit:	Community Services
Date:	22 nd March 2016

This report is for decision and is therefore subject to an Equality Impact Assessment. The following questions have been completed to ensure that this proposal, procedure or working practice does not discriminate against any particular social group.

Equality Impact Assessment Questions

1. Describe in summary the aims, objectives and purpose of the proposal, including desired outcomes:

The Phase 1 review of Social Needs Transport (SNT) proposed a shift in opening times for adult day services and the bringing together of different adult client groups on transport to maximise the potential for efficiencies in routing. The proposals also allow for adult transport to run after the completion of the school runs, resulting in children and adults being transported sequentially using the same fleet, thus reducing the overall number of vehicles required.

The changes proposed in Phase 1 which were approved for implementation on 14th March 2016 and will result in more fleet buses being available to transport all passengers (within an overall reduction) leading to shorter journeys and reduced time spent on the vehicles. The smarter scheduling of routes delivers improved utilisation of the vehicles, and therefore vehicle and staffing savings. There will be an overall decrease in fleet size, inevitably leading to a reduction in the amount of staff hours needed to deliver the services.

Phase 2 proposes changes to working arrangements for SNT staff from September 2016; including:

- Revised working arrangements for Driver / Attendants, in order to accommodate longer morning and afternoon shifts during school term time, when the transport demand is highest. There will be fewer hours available outside of term-time when transporting adults only.
- Those currently employed for 40 hours per week over 52 weeks will have their hours reduced to the Council's standard working hours of maximum 37 per week (staff affected would be entitled to a period of two year's earnings protection in accordance with Council policy)
- Passenger Assistants' working arrangements realigned with business needs going forwards
- Implementation of a rota for Management / Supervisory / Admin staff to accommodate the extended operating times from 7:15am to 5:45pm.

During the consultation period options will be discussed with all permanent members of staff. Staff will be asked to express an interest in the hours and working pattern of their choice and where possible management will try to accommodate individual preferences, however where this is not possible, it will be necessary to deploy staff to cover the business need. Management will work with individual staff members and the trades unions to facilitate this.

2. Who are the main stakeholders in relation to the proposal?

- Executive Members
- Social Needs Transport Staff
- The Trade Unions
- Taxi / minibus operators (as deemed appropriate)

3. In summary, what are the anticipated (positive or negative) impacts of the proposal?

The following positive impact has been identified:

- Improved service efficiency and an estimated financial saving of £255,000 based on the reduction of 6 fleet vehicles
- It is envisaged that the necessary savings can be achieved by the disestablishment of existing vacancies

The following negative impact has been identified:

- Changes to working arrangements of SNT staff

This negative impact is mitigated by:

- Staff will be asked to express an interest in hours and working pattern and where possible this will be accommodated.
- Two years' earnings protection in accordance with Council policy where applicable
- It may also be possible to grant voluntary early retirement (VER)/ or voluntary severance (VS) for individual cases where the cost savings justify this and it facilitates a move to the new working arrangements

4. With regard to the stakeholders identified above and the diversity groups set out below:

	Is there any potential for (positive or negative) differential impact?	Could this lead to adverse impact and if so what?	Can this adverse impact be justified on the grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for one group, or for any other reason?	Please detail what measures or changes you will put in place to remedy any identified adverse impact
Race	There is no impact anticipated at this stage in the proposals.	N/A	N/A	N/A
Religion	There is no impact anticipated at this stage in the proposals.	N/A	N/A	N/A
Disability	There is no impact anticipated at this stage in the proposals.	N/A	N/A	N/A
Gender (including gender reassignment)	There is no impact anticipated at this stage in the proposals.	N/A	N/A	N/A
Age	There is no impact anticipated at this stage in the proposals.	N/A	N/A	N/A
Sexuality	There is no impact anticipated at this stage in the proposals.	N/A	N/A	N/A

Caring status (including pregnancy & maternity)	There is no impact anticipated at this stage in the proposals.	N/A	N/A	N/A
Marriage and civil partnership	There is no impact anticipated at this stage in the proposals.	N/A	N/A	N/A
Socio-economic	There is no impact anticipated at this stage in the proposals.	N/A	N/A	N/A
Other comments or issues	<p>The report proposes that, where applicable, two years' protection of existing salary will be applied.</p> <p>The proposals mean that staff will experience a change in working practices, processes and in overall structure. However feedback from staff and their unions will be sought during the consultation process during which they can comment on any aspect of the proposals. This feedback will be used to inform the final proposals. The Council maintains its commitment to supporting staff with caring responsibilities by continuing to offer flexible working options to those affected by changing working patterns.</p>			
<p>Please provide a list of the evidence used to inform this EIA, such as the results of consultation, service take-up, service monitoring, surveys, stakeholder comments and complaints where appropriate.</p> <p>If you have undertaken consultation as part of the proposal, the consultation manager will upload it on to the corporate database.</p>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular meetings will take place with trades unions to work through the implications for staff • Staff briefings and individual and corporate support sessions for staff • A teamsite will be maintained ensuring staff are kept up to date with key information, dates and frequently asked questions 	

Appendix 1 – Equality Impact Assessment

5a Are there any gaps in your evidence or conclusions that make it difficult for you to quantify the potential adverse impact?

Consultation on the proposals contained within this report will be undertaken with relevant staff, trade unions and Elected Members as appropriate. The results of this consultation will then inform the final proposals.

5b If so, please explain how you will explore the proposal in greater depth or please explain why no further action is required at this time.

As above

You may wish to consider undertaking secondary data analysis, further consultation or research or investigating best practice. If you are planning to undertake further consultation or research as a result of this EIA, please contact the Principal Consultation and Research Officer on ext. 2012.

This EIA form and report has been checked and countersigned by the Departmental Equalities Officer before proceeding to Executive Cabinet Member(s)

Please confirm the outcome of this EIA:

No major impact identified, therefore no major changes required – proceed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adjustments to remove barriers / promote equality (mitigate impact) have been identified – proceed	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Continue despite having identified potential for adverse impact/missed opportunities for promoting equality – this requires a strong justification	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stop and rethink - the EIA identifies actual or potential unlawful discrimination	<input type="checkbox"/>

Report Officer

Name: Kevan Roberts

Signature: -----

Date and Contact No: 10th March 2016, Tel 01204 336775

Departmental Equalities Lead Officer

Name: Donna Cooper

Signature: -----

Date and Contact No: 10th March 2016, Tel 01204 332012