

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Education Operational Delivery
DATE	17 September 2020
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Lochside Academy – Transport and Safe Routes to School – Annual Update 2020
REPORT NUMBER	COM/20/116
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TERMS OF REFERENCE	1.1.1

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To update members on the performance of the transport services and arrangements for pupils accessing Lochside Academy and on the success of provisions in relation to the safe walking routes to Lochside Academy.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That the Committee note the outcome of the 2020 annual review for transport and safe routes to school for Lochside Academy.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 Background

- 3.1.1 At the Education and Children's Services Committee meeting on 16th November 2017, the committee instructed: "*the Interim Head of Planning and Sustainable Development and the Head of Public Infrastructure and Environment to undertake annual updates reviewing the success of the provision of the free bus travel and the safe routes to school, with the first review to be undertaken in March 2019 and thereafter annually at the end of the third school term with the outcome of each review to be reported to the relevant Committee at the earliest possible opportunity prior to the end of the fourth school term each year.*"
- 3.1.2 The data for this annual update relates to the academic year 2019/20, from August 2019 to July 2020.

3.1.3 As a result Covid-19 and due to the emergency provisions put in place for committee reporting, this report has been delayed in being presented to members. As the Academic school year has commenced no changes to provisions are recommended.

3.2 Current Transport Provision

3.2.1 The Council currently subsidises 5 buses operated by First Aberdeen and First Aberdeen commercially provides 5 bus services (part-subsidised through fare revenue from bus passes) as follows:

- Service 21A: Cove/Charleston – Lochside Academy (Aberdeen City Council) (1 vehicle)
- Service 22A/22C: Balnagask/Torry – Lochside Academy (Aberdeen City Council) (4 vehicles)
- Service 31: Torry – Lochside Academy (First Aberdeen) (2 vehicles)
- Service 181/182/183: Kincorth – Lochside Academy (First Aberdeen) (3 vehicles)

3.2.2 Pupils in Kincorth, Leggart and Torry receive free transport between 07:00 – 18:00 and this is provided as an annual bus pass loaded onto the pupils Accord Card. Pupils in Cove pay to use bus services.

3.3 Transport Performance/Feedback/Recommendations

3.3.1 The transport operated well in the 2019/20 academic year. There has been close partnership working between School, Passenger Transport Unit and First Aberdeen to address any concerns and ensure services operate appropriately. There has been a significant reduction of operational issues in the last academic year as the services have become more established.

3.3.2 The bus pass loaded onto the Accord Card continues to work relatively well, although this is still labour intensive for school staff, due to the volume of lost/damaged cards. No alternative has been progressed to date, this was due to competing priorities both at the Council and First Aberdeen, but further smart ticketing options will continue to be explored with First Aberdeen, including mobile ticketing.

3.3.3 Bus use has been monitored via passenger reports from the ticket machines and by on-site observations. While buses can on occasion run quite full and require pupils to stand, the requirement for standees has been less over the 2019/20 academic year and it is considered that there is enough capacity to accommodate all the passengers.

3.3.4 The services 21A from Cove averages around 50-60 passengers in the morning and 30-40 passengers in the afternoon. There is always a minimum capacity for 80 passengers on the bus operating in Cove.

3.3.5 The services 22A, 22C and 31 from Leggart, Torry and Balnagask, average around 250–300 passengers in the morning and afternoon. There is always a minimum capacity for 400 passengers on the buses operating in these areas, so it is considered there is sufficient capacity for the demand.

- 3.3.6 The services 181, 182 and 183 from Kincorth average around 160–180 passengers in the morning and afternoon. There is always a minimum capacity for 210 passengers on the buses operating in Kincorth, so it is considered there is sufficient capacity for the demand.
- 3.3.7 There has been minimal feedback from school and parents over the 2019/20 academic year and no suggestions for changes to transport have been made.
- 3.3.8 There has been a notable increase in antisocial behaviour on the buses in the 2019/20 academic year, including vandalism to buses. In situations where antisocial behaviour has occurred, School have worked closely with First Aberdeen to identify the children involved and acted promptly to work with the children involved to prevent a repeat. Community policing teams also provided support. There was a marked improvement in behaviour prior to the school closing. This matter will continue to be reviewed and any issues will be dealt with swiftly.
- 3.3.9 Based on the satisfactory operator performance, passenger volumes being met by the available capacity and minimal levels of feedback, no changes are recommended to the transport provision for the 2020/21 academic year.
- 3.3.10 The school transport arrangements were approved initially for a period of three years, which will end at summer holidays 2021. Accordingly, next year Members will be required to consider any future transport provision.

3.4 COVID-19 Transport measures

- 3.4.1 The school time services will continue to operate as local bus services; however these have been re-designated as school only services, which means only school children can travel on these services and no adults will be permitted to travel, this means, in line with dedicated school transport, no physical distancing is required. This is an option, which can only operate in the 2020/21 academic year, as by summer 2021, such services will require to have seatbelts in place.
- 3.4.2 Children using public transport services, such as those operated for Lochside Academy, should wear a face covering for the duration of all journeys, except for those for whom doing so would create a medical risk.
- 3.4.3 Transport Providers have appropriate enhanced cleaning regimes in place, in line with public health guidelines.

3.5 Safe Routes to School

- 3.5.1 There have been no recorded incidents involving a school pupil from Lochside Academy over the period.
- 3.5.2 No amendments have been identified or made to the routes to school over the past year.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The current transport provision for Lochside Academy is met from existing budgets, although the Lochside element represents a considerable proportion, with around 14% of the school transport spend.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no legal implications as a result of the recommendations in this report.

6. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

Category	Risk	Low (L) Medium (M) High (H)	Mitigation
Strategic Risk	N/A	N/A	N/A
Compliance	Risk of breaching seatbelts on school transport legislation, if services continue to operate, emergency Covid provisions, into the 2021/22 academic year.	M	Alternative transport delivery will be required. Options are available which will be reviewed if required.
Operational	Risk of not being able to deliver transport for all pupils, if further Covid-19 measures come in restricting capacity on bus services.	M	Further transport would require to be procured.
Financial	<p>As a result of continuing transport services for Lochside Academy there is a significant risk in overspend of the School Transport budget.</p> <p>A risk of increased costs if further Covid-19 measures come in restricting capacity on bus services, requiring more transport to be procured.</p>	H	<p>Officers will work closely with Education to identify reductions in transport to mitigate the risks of overspend.</p> <p>This will be managed in line with business continuity by prioritising transport services and identifying any Covid-19 funding streams from Scottish Government.</p>

Reputational	N/A	N/A	N/A
Environment / Climate	N/A	N/A	N/A

7. OUTCOMES

<u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN</u>	
Impact of Report	
Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement	The proposals in this report have no impact on the Council Delivery Plan.
Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan	
Prosperous Economy Stretch Outcomes	The proposals in this report have no impact in the delivery of Prosperous Economy Outcomes.
Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes	The proposals within this report support the delivery of Children & Young People Stretch Outcomes 4 to 6 in the LOIP. The provision of transport supports wellbeing and safety of all children attending Lochside and supports attendance at school, which will help with wellbeing, prospects and attainment.
Prosperous Place Stretch Outcomes	The proposals within this report support the delivery of LOIP Stretch Outcome 14 – reducing Aberdeen's carbon emissions by 42.5% by 2026. The provision of transport supports reducing carbon emissions as without the transport provision to Lochside Academy, it is likely more children would be transported by car to school.
Regional and City Strategies	The proposals in this report support the Local Transport Strategy - a high quality public transport system is important for any thriving economy in transporting people to work and education and directly support the business and education sectors and ensures the workforce can travel effectively and that all have access to appropriate education opportunities and access to all facilities in a cost-effective way. The provision of transport to Lochside Academy will ensure appropriate access to education.
UK and Scottish Legislative and Policy Programmes	The proposals in this report have no impact on UK and Scottish Legislative and Policy Programmes.

8. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Impact Assessment	Not required
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

9.1 N/A

10. APPENDICES

10.1 N/A

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