



Education Resources

Consultation proposal document

We are looking for your views on the proposal to alter the distance that a mainstream secondary school pupil must live from their catchment school in order to qualify for free school transport from more than 2 miles to more than 3 miles.

Closing date for responses: **Friday 1 March 2024**

The following public meetings will be held between 5pm – 8pm as follows:

Clydesdale Area:	29 January 2024	Lanark Grammar School
Hamilton Area:	30 January 2024	Holy Cross High School
Rutherglen/Cambuslang Area:	31 January 2024	Trinity High School
East Kilbride Area:	1 February 2024	St Andrew's and St Bride's High School

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This document has been issued by South Lanarkshire Council for consultation under the terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

If you need this information in another language or format, please contact us to discuss how we can best meet your needs. Phone 0303 123 1015 Email: equalities@southlanarkshire.gov.uk

1. Proposal and summary of main points

South Lanarkshire Council is seeking views on the following proposal, namely:

To alter the distance that a mainstream secondary school pupil must live from their catchment school in order to qualify for free school transport from more than 2 miles to more than 3 miles.

Summary of Main Points:

The proposal has been made under a backdrop of financial pressure both across the council as a whole and within the budget of Education Resources, with consideration to a review of service priorities including the council's statutory responsibilities.

This proposal only relates to the qualifying distance for free mainstream secondary school transport. Other aspects of the policy remain unaltered, for example, any road safety issues would still be assessed by undertaking road safety checks (in accordance with the [West of Scotland Road Safety Forum guidelines](#)) and assuming the child is accompanied by a responsible adult.

The provision of mainstream primary school transport and transport to ASN (additional support needs) bases and schools are not affected by this proposal.

If the proposal is approved, the change to mainstream secondary school transport arrangements would commence from the start of the school session in August 2025.

Implementation of this proposal would bring South Lanarkshire Council in line with the majority of other local authorities with regards to the provision of free mainstream secondary school transport.

The consultation will run until Friday 1 March 2024. Information on how to submit views or attend planned public meetings are provided within this document.

2. Consultation Process – getting involved

Under the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, if a local authority proposes to discontinue arrangements for the provision of transport for pupils attending a denominational school, they must conduct a statutory consultation.

However, as this proposal could affect all secondary school pupils irrespective of denomination, a decision was taken to consult with all stakeholders potentially affected.

The formal consultation on the proposal within this document will be undertaken under the terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. The consultation period will start on Monday 15 January 2024 and end on Friday 1 March 2024. Written representations must be received by this date to be considered.

Public meeting

The following public meetings will be held between 5pm – 8pm as listed below:

Clydesdale Area:	29 January 2024	Lanark Grammar School
Hamilton Area:	30 January 2024	Holy Cross High School
Rutherglen/Cambuslang Area:	31 January 2024	Trinity High School
East Kilbride Area:	1 February 2024	St Andrew's and St Bride's High School

These meetings will provide those in attendance with an opportunity to:

- Hear about the proposal
- Ask questions about the proposal
- Express views about the proposal.

A note will be taken of the views expressed during the public meetings and of any questions asked. In addition to the public meetings, written representations will be able to be made during the consultation period.

Format of the public meetings

In order to manage numbers, it is proposed that interested parties will be able to book a slot at the public meetings between 5pm – 8pm to allow them to speak with council officers about the proposal and discuss individual circumstances.

Venue	Date	Slot 1	Slot 2	Slot 3	Slot 4	Slot 5	Slot 6
Lanark Grammar School	Monday 29 January	5pm	5.30pm	6pm	6.30pm	7pm	7.30pm
Holy Cross High School	Tuesday 30 January	5pm	5.30pm	6pm	6.30pm	7pm	7.30pm
Trinity High School	Wednesday 31 January	5pm	5.30pm	6pm	6.30pm	7pm	7.30pm
St Andrew's and St Bride's High School	Thursday 1 February	5pm	5.30pm	6pm	6.30pm	7pm	7.30pm

Those wishing to attend must book a slot and are requested to do so by calling 01698 455698 or emailing educationconsultations@southlanarkshire.gov.uk

If emailing, please provide your name(s), venue, date and preferred time slot, with a second choice of time slot. Confirmation of the booking will be made via a return email.

It would also be helpful to know what issues/questions you would like to raise at the meeting.

3. Responding to the proposal

Interested parties are invited to respond to the proposal using the following methods:

Written or electronic submissions on the proposal using the response form in this document no later than Friday 1 March 2024.

A paper copy of the proposal document and the response form will also be available at the following locations:

- Council Offices, Education Resources, Almada Street, Hamilton, ML3 0AA. Phone 0303 123 1023
- All libraries in South Lanarkshire
- The establishments affected by the proposal.

Online submissions on the proposal should be made using the following link:

<https://online1.snapsurveys.com/e4yovd>

Written submissions should be made by emailing educationconsultations@southlanarkshire.gov.uk or by sending to the following address:

South Lanarkshire Council
Education Resources (Central Support Team)
Transport - Consultation Response
Floor 13
Almada Street
Hamilton, ML3 0AA

Please note that responses must be received by Friday 1 March 2024 for them to be considered.

4. Background to the proposal

The statutory responsibility within the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 is to provide school transport for:

- any child aged under 8 years who lives more than 2 miles from their catchment school, and;
- any child aged 8 years and over who lives more than 3 miles from their catchment school.

South Lanarkshire Council currently provides free mainstream school transport for:

- all primary pupils who live more than one mile from their catchment school; and,
- all secondary pupils who live more than two miles from their catchment school.

Therefore, South Lanarkshire Council currently operates a mainstream school transport policy which exceeds what is required by law.

Given the financial challenges currently being faced by South Lanarkshire Council and Education Resources, service priorities have been reassessed and consideration given to no longer providing mainstream secondary school transport at the current level.

The decision was taken that primary school mainstream transport will continue as is, and that this proposal relates only to mainstream secondary school pupils. The provision of transport to ASN (additional support needs) bases and schools is also not affected by this proposal.

This proposal only relates to the qualifying distance for free mainstream secondary school transport. Other aspects of the policy remain unaltered, for example, any road safety issues would still be assessed by undertaking road safety checks (in accordance with the [West of Scotland Road Safety Forum guidelines](#)) and assuming the child is accompanied by a responsible adult.

19 other councils in Scotland, (around 60%), already operate a distance criteria of more than 3 miles for secondary school pupils and have done for a number of years.

Implementation date of the proposal

If the proposal is approved, the change to mainstream secondary school transport arrangements would commence from the start of the school session in August 2025. This would allow a period of smooth transition and give families time to plan for new arrangements.

5. Educational benefits – assessment of the likely effects of the proposal

The council sees education as one of its main priorities, and over the years focus has remained on supporting children and families and on maximising the use of resources to facilitate learning and teaching.

As part of the process of setting a balanced budget each year, the council approves a package of saving proposals. Despite accounting for around half of the total council budget, protection has consistently been given to education as it has contributed a proportionately substantial lower amount of savings than other council departments.

Given the significant financial challenges being faced by the council, including the recent announcement of likely savings of £96m over the next four years, the council has had to reassess service priorities.

Budget savings options which are currently under consideration for financial year 2024/25 for Education Resources total £7m and include reductions to school librarians, teaching support teams for young people with additional support needs attending mainstream secondary schools, classroom resources and teacher cover. This proposal would help protect from further cuts that would impact on schools directly.

In addition, due to rising costs, the annual spend on mainstream school transport has grown from £6m in 2021/22 to a forecast £10m in 2023/24, an increase of £4m, 66%. Against the annual school transport budget, the overspend is currently approximately £4m and this issue is having to be managed within the existing total education annual budget.

Both of these aspects bring pressure on resources and if a review of transport is not considered, this would involve the further identification of other areas of educational provision where service levels and spend levels would require to be reduced, including learning and teaching and resources or other non-statutory services.

If fully implemented it is estimated this proposal could save the council approximately £2m per annum. The benefit of implementing this proposal is therefore the continued protection of resources that are prioritised on frontline learning and teaching, and to maintain provision of other valuable non-statutory services.

In addition, this proposal provides an opportunity to encourage young people to adopt other means of travelling to school such as walking, cycling, and scooting where it is appropriate to do so. The potential benefits include contributing to an active lifestyle with a positive impact on mental focus and mood, and the opportunity to build resilience in our young people including possible increased use of the under 22 free bus travel scheme.

Evidence shows that exercise plays a significant part in improving mental and physical health and, in addition, a reduction of vehicles around schools could contribute to the council's sustainability agenda by reducing carbon emissions.

6. Assessing the impact on the local community affected by this proposal

It is recognised that some benefits will only come to fruition if more sustainable or active travel methods are taken up for the journey to and from school.

Some parents may opt to take their child to school by car which would create traffic congestion, however, alternative options that could be considered are:

- Parent Led Transport - many parents may wish to arrange transport privately for a group of children from their area. Education Resources can provide a list of contractors which can be issued to parents on request.

- Park and Stride options – where families could be encouraged to drive only part of the journey with the final section completed by foot. This could increase partnerships within the community by approaching local supermarkets or businesses.
- Car Sharing – beyond active travel, parents will be encouraged to car share when transporting their children to school if there are no other suitable alternatives for travel.
- Car Free Zones - pilots could be considered in some schools where this would be appropriate, and community and school support is strong.
- Public Transport - the under 22 free bus travel scheme allows all school age pupils the ability to travel on buses free of charge.
- Additional road safety/active travel education and training delivered by schools to increase road safety skills and the confidence to walk, cycle or use other sustainable travel modes.
- Participation of the school community within road safety and active travel themed focus weeks, events, or challenges, aiding towards safer school environments and incentivising the uptake of non-motorised travel.
- Road safety assessments where parents may have concerns over a walking route.

There are many different aspects to travelling to and from school and some of these are outlined below: -

- Active travel can improve health and mental wellbeing, contributing to an active lifestyle with potential benefits to mental focus and general mood.
- Schools can promote active travel and road safety initiatives, encouraging wider participation in active travel options, while enhancing opportunities for social interaction.
- Where pupils do not have the required road safety skills to walk unaccompanied, parents or carers may have to accompany them. By parents sharing this responsibility with other parents, and walking in groups, this could reduce the impact on individual families and increase a greater sense of community by fostering relationships within local areas.
- Independent travel can build resilience.
- Reduced traffic around schools if pupils engage in active travel.
- Reduced carbon emissions and improved air quality if pupils engage in active travel.

The situation will require to be monitored and schools should seek to build in as many positive factors as possible to support and encourage safe, sustainable, and active travel within their School Travel Plan.

All schools will be encouraged to revisit or compile a School Travel Plan to target an increased uptake of active travel as well as improved road safety within the school community. Transport audit visits by Health and Safety Officers will also be taken into consideration which provide further focus for relevant action relating to school grounds and the surrounding environment during school run periods.

7. Other aspects of the consultation process

Education Scotland

The council will provide the proposal document to Education Scotland at the start of the consultation period. When the consultation period has ended, the council will collate all the relevant written representations received during the consultation period and oral representations made at the public meeting. Thereafter, the following information will be provided to Education Scotland:

- A copy of relevant written representations made to the council on the proposal (or summary of them if agreed with Education Scotland)
- A summary of oral representations made at the public meeting
- Other relevant documentation, so far as is practicable.

Education Scotland will prepare a report on the educational aspects of the proposal taking account of the above, and in so far that Education Scotland considers them relevant, any written representations made directly to them.

Education Scotland may also visit schools affected by the proposal or attend the public meetings. Education Scotland require to send its report to the council no later than 3 weeks (15 school days) (or longer if agreed with the council) after having received the information from the council.

Consultation report

After receiving Education Scotland's report, the council will review the proposal taking account of relevant written representations received during the consultation period, oral representations made during the public meeting and Education Scotland's report. The council will then prepare and publish a consultation report which will include a recommendation on the proposal and make it available for inspection. The council will inform any person who made relevant written representations on the proposal of the publication of the report. The consultation report will be published 3 weeks before it is formally considered by the council.

Inaccuracies or omissions

Where the council is notified or discovers inaccuracies in, or omissions from, this proposal document, the council will determine whether relevant information has been omitted or, if there has been an inaccuracy. Appropriate action will then be taken by the council which may include issuing corrections, issuing a corrected proposal document or an extension of the consultation period. In any of these events all relevant consultees (and where applicable the notifier(s) of any omissions or inaccuracies) and Education Scotland will be advised of the appropriate action. Notifiers of any omissions or inaccuracies will also be given the opportunity to make representations if they disagree with the council's determination of and any action on the matter, which may result in the council making a further determination/decision on the matter.

8. Employee implications

None.

9. Financial implications

If fully implemented it is estimated this proposal could save the council approximately £2m per annum.

10. Appendix 1 – Distribution list

Notification of the proposal will be provided to the following consultees:

- The parents of pupils at all affected secondary schools
- The Parent Council or combined Parent Council of affected secondary schools
- The parents of any children expected to attend an affected secondary school within 2 years of the publication of this proposal document
- The pupils within affected secondary schools
- All South Lanarkshire Council employees in affected secondary schools;
- Trade union representatives
- Community Councils within the affected localities
- South Lanarkshire Community Planning Partners (this includes for example Police, Fire, SPT)

A copy of this proposal document will be made available to:

- All Elected Members of South Lanarkshire Council
- South Lanarkshire Youth Council
- Education Scotland (formerly Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education, HMIE)
- The Constituency MSP of the affected schools
- List MSP for the area of the affected schools
- The MP of the affected schools
- Care Inspectorate
- North Lanarkshire Council
- Glasgow City Council

The steps listed below have also been taken to ensure that the proposal document is widely available:

- Notice of the proposal and of publication of this proposal document has been placed within the Hamilton Advertiser, East Kilbride News, Rutherglen Reformer, Carluke and Lanark Gazette
- All affected schools will promote this consultation through existing communication routes (for example school newsletters, school website)
- The proposal document has also been promoted through the Council's social media and published on the South Lanarkshire Council website: www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk
- If you need this information in another language or format, please contact us to discuss how we can best meet your needs. Phone 0303 123 1015 Email: equalities@southlanarkshire.gov.uk

A paper copy of the proposal document and the response form will also be available at the following locations:

- Council Offices, Education Resources, Almada Street, Hamilton, ML3 0AA. Phone 0303 123 1023
- All libraries in South Lanarkshire
- The establishments affected by the proposal.

Consultation Response Form

If you are unable to access the online response form, please use this form to let us know what you think about the proposal. Return to:

South Lanarkshire Council, Education Resources (Central Support Team), Secondary School Free School Transport- Consultation Response, Hamilton, ML3 0AA;
or as an email attachment to educationconsultations@southlanarkshire.gov.uk

The closing date for receipt of comments is **Friday 1 March 2024**

Proposal

South Lanarkshire Council is seeking views on the following proposal, namely:

alter the distance that a mainstream secondary school pupil must live from their catchment school in order to qualify for free school transport from more than 2 miles to more than 3 miles..

Name

Address

I agree with the proposal to alter the distance that a mainstream secondary school pupil must live from their catchment school in order to qualify for free school transport from more than 2 miles to more than 3 miles.

Yes **No** **Undecided**

If you do not agree with the proposal, or are undecided, please indicate below any areas of concern by ticking the appropriate box(es)

After referring to West of Scotland Road Safety Forum Guidelines I still have a concern over the availability of safe walking routes for my child/me http://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/9594/west_of_scotland_road_safety_forum_guidance_and_faqs	
Lack of alternative transport modes for my child/me	
Childcare arrangements	
Impact on local communities around the school	
Other reason (please specify below)	

I am responding in my capacity as a *(please indicate by ticking the appropriate box)*

Pupil at (please enter school name)	
Parent of pupil at (enter school name)	
Parent Council at (enter school name)	
Community Council (enter Community Council name)	
Member of staff (enter school name)	
Trade Union	
Member of the public / community	
Elected representative	
Other interested party (please state which capacity of interest)	

Please use this space if you wish to comment further:

Handling your response - Please note that:

- We will use the information you provide for the purpose(s) of this consultation, including statistical and analytical purposes;
- We will pass a full copy of your written response to Education Scotland or a summary of it if agreed with them; and

- *We are subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 and therefore would have to consider any request made under that Act for information relating to written responses/records of oral representations made to us relating to this consultation.*

Electronic publication and additional copies

This consultation, and all other consultation exercises, can be viewed online on the consultation web pages of the council website at www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk.

You can find out about your nearest public internet access point at your local library.

Thank you for taking the time to respond.