

ITEM 8a

BEST VALUE/CCT SUB-COMMITTEE

21 FEBRUARY 2000

BEST VALUE TRANSPORT REVIEW

September 1999 – February 2000

Report prepared by

**Dot Metcalf
Service Review Manager
Neighbourhood Services**

Best Value Transport Review

Executive Summary and Action Plan

1. Review Terms of Reference

This review covered the provision, purchase and support of transport for members of the public, by Milton Keynes Council in carrying out its duties in relation to Social Care and Education and in connection with its strategic aim of tackling disadvantage and promoting equality.

2. Introduction

The review aimed to cover the key Best Value areas of Challenge, Comparison, Consultation and Competition by seeking a range of views on transport in Milton Keynes and by gathering information as widely as possible. The review was steered at crucial points by a reference group that included representatives of service users, carers and voluntary groups.

3. Transport and Milton Keynes Council

A range of different provision became the responsibility of the Milton Keynes Unitary Authority in April 1997. The review found little indication of integration of these services since that time.

Transport provision ranges from the individual and specific for example social workers transporting individual clients for a specific reason through group transport to certain destinations for example minibus to school or day centre, to more generalised schemes such as community transport or concessionary fares.

Overall identifiable expenditure on transport in 1998/9 was over £4.5 million (excluding some areas where expenditure could not be differentiated from other costs). Within this the major areas of expenditure are school transport and concessionary fares.

4. Performance Indicators

The only relevant current national performance indicator is for spend per head of population on Public Transport. The 1997/8 figure for Milton Keynes was £13.24 as compared with a unitary average of £8.05. This put Milton Keynes in the top 25% of Unitary Authorities for expenditure on Public Transport. The provisional figures for 1998/9 are £10.73 and £8.85 which indicates a narrowing of the gap. The costs of Community transport and Concessionary Fare Schemes are included in this indicator.

5. Information from Questionnaires

Six Local Authorities provided information about their transport services in response to a questionnaire. This survey was too small to provide a basis for systematic comparison but was helpful in highlighting some of the reasons behind Milton Keynes' higher expenditure, in providing sources of further information on service integration and in laying the foundations for further benchmarking.

6. Information and Recommendations – Service Specific

The review gathered information on transport provision and associated issues for each relevant service area. These are detailed in the full report. The chart below gives an overview of the costs within each service area.

EXPENDITURE	<u>1998/9 COST</u>	<u>1999/2000 BUDGET</u>
Concessionary Fares	£ 883,600.00	£ 894,950.00
Community Transport	£ 364,100.00	£ 354,170.00
Local Bus Subsidies	£ 797,310.00	£ 764,620.00
Home to School Transport	£2,133,820.00	£2,085,154.00
Children's Services	£ 183,644.00	£ 82,810.00
Adult Services	£ 179,535.00	£ 194,390.00
	£4,542,009.00	£4,376,094.00

Recommendations were given for each service area but some of the main themes are as follows:

- (a) Education to work with Passenger Transport to produce a service level agreement for the operations of home to school transport;
- (b) Increased usage of Community Transport for the transport of older people and people with disabilities and social care needs;
- (c) Improvements to 'Customer Care' within Community Transport;
- (d) Transfer of private hire contracting from Children's Services and Mental Health Services to Environment Directorate under agreed Service Level Agreement; and
- (e) Co-operation between all services in the Commissioning of Volunteer Driver Service.

7.0 Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

7.1 Strengths:

- (a) Directorates have a good understanding of their own clients and an informed commitment to meeting their needs;
- (b) Present systems allows use of normal cars/people carriers which are comfortable and don't draw attention to service users;
- (c) Where driving duties are integrated with care people can be transported by drivers who are familiar to them;
- (d) Where transport is provided as part of an individual's care plan or a Directorate's duty the Directorate responsible has good motivation to ensure that it operates successfully; and
- (e) Services are provided promptly and the lowest tenders usually accepted for contracted work.

7.2 Weaknesses:

- (a) Quality thresholds and requirements vary from section to section;
- (b) Lack of clarity/coherence in respect of :
 - (i) Decision-making: enquiries often passed from one officer to another until decision given. This is partly as a result of the blurring of responsibilities at unitary status
 - (ii) Quality assurance: difficult to be consistent when disparate provision across directorates
 - (iii) Complaints including to whom these should be addressed;
- (c) Possible duplication of effort – similar systems maintained in both Learning and Development and Environment to monitor home to school transport;
- (d) The current number of contracts in excess of 200 – this figure will increase as Milton Keynes continues to develop; and
- (e) Contractors in a better position to have an overview which means they can be well placed to dictate terms to a significant degree – an integrated approach to the provision of transport will enable officers to identify linked transport requirements.

7.3 Opportunities

- (a) There is scope for improvement through co-ordination;
- (b) Central Government funding initiatives offer some scope for development;
- (c) There is scope for improved vehicle utilisation; and
- (d) There is scope for "Added Value" as well as Best Value in an integrated transport service.

7.4 Threats

- (a) High costs of present system;
- (b) Dangers posed by lack of attention to both driver and vehicle checks;
- (c) Inertia leading to increased costs and failure to address need for change;
- (d) Service users see the service as fragmented; and
- (e) Links between transport providers in MK are improving, but not strong.

7.5 Recommendations – General

- (a) Creation of a Transport Unit within Environment Directorate to lead on the Action Plan and improve consistency and standards in all areas;
- (b) Overall shift towards increased use of public transport wherever possible; and
- (c) Increased integration of transport services across the Council.

Proposed Action Plan

ACTION		RESPONSIBILITY	TIMESCALES
1	Negotiations regarding use of Community Transport by Disabled and Retired Service Users in accessing social care provision	K. P.? N.S. ? T.K.	To start September 2000
2	Development of Volunteer Driver Scheme	Env. L.R. N.S.	To commence April 2000
3	Negotiations on transfer of responsibilities under S.L.A. Education Children's Services Neighbourhood Services.	M. B./TK LR/JS – Children's Service TK Env N.S. TK Env	Shadow from September 2000 To commence April 2001 To commence April 2001
4	Customer Care Improvements to Community Transport (See full report for details)	TK/PC	September 2000
5	Identification of Staff and Resources for Transport Unit	JB, JI, TK	To commence September 2000
6	School Transport (Transition Issues)	S.W.(As part of SEN Review)	By July 2000
7	Review of Transport Provision at Keystone	K.P.	By Dec 2000
8	Support and Development work on the use of public transport by people with learning disability.	Unit Co-ordinators	Ongoing process
9	Development of criteria for the provision of transport under S17 of the Children Act	L.R.	By May 2000
10	Review of Children's Concessionary Fares	TK	Spring 2001

Best Value Transport Review

BEST VALUE /TRANSPORT FULL REPORT

1. REVIEW TERMS OF REFERENCE

1.1 The Review Universe

The provision, purchase and support of transport for members of the public, by Milton Keynes Council in carrying out its duties in relation to Social Care and Education, or in connection with the strategic aim of tackling disadvantage and promoting equality.

1.2 The review will also take into consideration other provision (such as health service transport) where it makes an impact on Council provision.

1.3 In relation to 1.1 the review will identify:

- (a) What services are currently provided by which parts of the Council, according to what standards, and by what arrangements;
- (b) The current cost of these services;
- (c) Any benchmarks currently used;
- (d) Alternative methods of provision;
- (e) Users and carers' views of the services;
- (f) Comparison of costs and standards between services, and with other services;
- (g) Existing sources of information about the review area from local and national sources; and
- (h) Staff /Trade Union views of current arrangements and alternatives.

1.4 The Review will produce recommendations for future service delivery in accordance with the Best Value requirement to secure continuous improvement in relation to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 The duty of Best Value has been defined as:

“A best value authority must make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness”. (Local Government Bill, 30 November 1998)

Guidance from the DETR on preparing for Best Value states that the purpose of Best Value is:

“To consider new approaches to service delivery, and ensure that demanding but realistic targets are set for all services which take account of both national and local requirements, and which deliver continuous improvement”.

2.2 The four “C”s

The review has aimed to meet the Best Value Requirements for:

(a) Challenge

- (i) By ensuring wide representation on the review reference group; and
- (ii) By considering external challenges such as the trend towards integration.

(b) Comparison

- (i) By looking at National Performance Indicators; and
- (ii) By obtaining comparator information from other Local Authorities.

(c) Consultation

- (i) By using information from previous consultation exercises relevant to the Review;
- (ii) By assembling a reference group to represent a range of service users; and
- (iii) By seeking user views as expressed through complaints to the council.

(d) Competition

By taking into consideration existing mechanisms for competition with regard to transport services and looking at their impact upon the service.

2.3 The overall approach to Best Value

All services are complex and it is possible to undertake a review in great detail. However, in running a review the balance between effort and return should always be borne in mind.

The overall approach is to identify where there are significant variations from the best performers, to draw conclusions as to whether major improvements are needed or not, and to develop an action plan that will secure any necessary improvements.

2.4 The Reference Group.

A reference group which included representatives from relevant service areas within MK Council, the health service, service users, Community Groups and the Voluntary Sector met on three occasions during the course of the review. One further meeting is planned to consider the final report. A Private Sector representative was invited but did not attend. Details of Reference Group Membership are included in **Annex A**.

2.5 Questionnaire to Other Local Authorities

As part of the comparison element of the review a questionnaire was distributed to 13 Local Authorities with the twin aims of obtaining comparator information and learning from others' experience. A copy of the questionnaire and the authorities that responded is attached as **Annex B**.

3. TRANSPORT AND MILTON KEYNES COUNCIL

3.1 The Historical Perspective

In April 1997 the new Milton Keynes Unitary Authority brought together a range of transport provision from the Borough Council and the County Council. The provision includes Community Transport, Home to School Transport, Concessionary Fares, Bus Subsidies and Information and Transport Provided in association with Social Care.

3.2 Transport Overview

EXPENDITURE	<u>1998/9 COST</u>	<u>1999/2000 BUDGET</u>
Concessionary Fares	£ 883,600.00	£ 894,950.00
Community Transport	£ 364,100.00	£ 354,170.00
Local Bus Subsidies	£ 797,310.00	£ 764,620.00
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Adult Services	£ 179,535.00	£ 194,390.00
	£4,542,009.00	£4,376,094.00

- (a) Some Social Care Transport is not represented in the budget figures. This would include Family Centres run by Voluntary Organisations where transport is provided as part of the service but not separately costed and journeys where Social Workers are transporting clients. The figures for transport in adult day centres do not include the driver/general duties posts.
- (b) Transport is provided in response to a wide range of different needs and in a variety of ways.
- (c) Journeys are made to both group and individual destinations.
- (d) Current Transport Provision is not integrated (Directorates and Services make their own arrangements), although transport and care are integrated for some service users.
- (e) Journeys vary from "one off" to routine trips (for example from an introductory visit, to residential care, to daily school attendance).

- (f) Some journeys are the result of assessed need (for example day centre attendance), others are self-determined (for example Community Transport usage).
- (g) Some journeys require assistance with preparation for travel as well as transport.
- (h) Journeys vary in their level of sensitivity for the traveller. The level of sensitivity will be a combination of the purpose of the journey and the nature of the traveller (some travellers by virtue of their age or disability may find every journey a difficult and stressful event).

4. PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions and the Audit Commission have identified five new best value indicators in relation to Public Transport for 2000-2001 as follows:

- (a) BV94 Cost per passenger of subsidized bus services;
- (b) BV101 Local bus services (vehicle kilometres per year);
- (c) BV102 Local bus services (passenger journeys per year);
- (d) BV103 Percentage of users satisfied with local provision of public transport information; and
- (e) BV104 Percentage of users satisfied with local bus services.

The current indicator used, the spend per head of the total population of the Council area, is nearly £10.73 (in 1997/8 it was £13.24 per head of population).

Figures for this indicator and for a selection of other authorities are as follows:

1997/8	1998/9
Milton Keynes £13.24	£10.73
Unitary Average £8.05	£8.85
Luton £5.21	
Derby £9.03	
Brighton and Hove £8.75	
Swindon £10.64	£11.48
Stoke on Trent £3.16	

Durham £4.07	
West Sussex £2.11	
Warrington N/A	£11.05
Peterborough N/A	£ 3.93
Telford and Wrekin N/A	£ 6.13

As yet there are no similar national indicators for Social Care or Education.

5. INFORMATION FROM QUESTIONNAIRES

For details of the questionnaire, replies and the Authorities included see Annex B.

- (a) Thirteen authorities were circulated and six replied in time for inclusion in this report. This size of sample was really too small to provide a real overview, but nevertheless some useful comparisons can be made.
- (b) On school transport the financial information was too limited to draw conclusions, but it was interesting to note that Milton Keynes appears less inclined to make vehicle checks but more inclined to check drivers than other authorities who replied.
- (c) Information on Social Services Transport was too sparse for any useful analysis, but several had models of integration, and more details of this could be sought (the Association of Transport Co-ordinators is also undertaking a survey of integrated provision).
- (d) In relation to Community Transport it was apparent that, in comparison with those that replied, Milton Keynes was unusual in having a scheme provided by a commercial operator and in the level of provision. The only other authority with a scheme with such long hours of availability stated that it was covering costs through charges.
- (e) On concessionary fares it was striking to note that only one other authority offered concessionary fares to children.
- (f) All the authorities that replied showed interest in a benchmarking club. Four were prepared to commit themselves and two asked for further information.

6.0 INFORMATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS – SERVICE SPECIFIC

6.1 Concessionary Fares/Public Transport Service Information and Recommendations

Reasons for Transport Provision (Legislative Basis etc.):		
Powers under the 1985 Transport Act.		
Strategic aim of Tackling Disadvantage and Promoting Equality.		
Service Recipients		
Anyone over retirement age		
Anyone under 18 in full time education		
People with disabilities with GP's certification.		
Methods of Provision	Cost 98/99	Budget 99/00
1. Concessionary Fares for the Elderly and Disabled		£ 553,470
2. Concessionary Fares for Young People		£ 281,420
3. Smart Cards		£ 32,930
Total	£883,600	£867,820
Management and Administration Arrangements		
Within Passenger Transport Service area, supported by Passenger Transport Officer and Passenger Transport Assistant.		
Policies and Procedures		
Performance Indicators		
No. of journeys p.a. No. of passes issued, renewed and lost.		
Existing User Feedback		
Feedback is hard to differentiate from general comments on the Bus Service.		
Possible Alternatives to Current Arrangements		
Children's concessionary fares account for £281,420 of the budget not all authorities offer this concession.		
Current Issues		
Central Government requirement to introduce ½ rate concessionary fares for the elderly. Consultations taking place on this Transport Bill proposal. The current flat rate fare is more generous than the new proposal for most users. High expenditure on this service. Reports of difficulties in obtaining and using cards by ethnic minorities and people with hearing difficulties.		
Recommendations		
Review of usage of Children's Concessionary fares to explore what impact this provision has that is not also covered by half fares offered by the bus companies.		
Public Consultation with all sections of the Community (specifically including ethnic minorities) on how to improve take up of concessionary fares.		

6.2 Community Transport Service Information and Recommendations

Reasons for Transport Provision (Legislative Basis etc.):		
Powers under the 1985 Transport Act (Section 93/7). Strategic Aim of Tackling Disadvantage and Promoting Equality.		
Service Recipients		
Long term disabled and frail elderly who are unable to use ordinary public transport. For those under 80 a Nurse or Doctor has to confirm eligibility.		
Methods of Provision	Cost 98/99	Budget 99/00
1. Contract with MK Metro*	£364,100	£373,490
2. Grant to Age Concern	£8,510	£ 8,510
	£21,780	£ 21,780
<i>Figure excludes central admin. costs, publicity etc.</i>		
Management and Administration Arrangements		
Community Transport Officer. Booking service provided under contract by MK Metro.		
Policies and Procedures		
Spelt out in guide sent to all users.		
Performance Indicators		
Overall PI on expenditure per head on Public Transport. New PIs to be introduced.		
Existing User Feedback		
Through corporate complaints system.		
Possible Alternatives to Current Arrangements		
In many areas Community Transport is run wholly by the voluntary sector. Hours of operation could be restricted. Charges could be increased (but were raised from 50p to 65p April 99). Number of journeys could be restricted.		
Current Issues		
Lack of systematic customer feedback. Anecdotal information about dissatisfaction with phone service. Peaks and Troughs in demand. Is not used by disabled people attending day centres as part of their assessed needs.		

Compared to some other areas Community Transport in Milton Keynes is generously resourced and has long hours of availability. Nevertheless there are anecdotal reports of discontent with the service. These focus on the telephone booking system and some sections of the Community (ethnic minorities) feeling excluded.

Concern that complaints made to MK Metro do not receive a response.

Reports that drivers have recently become less helpful in seeing transport users to and from their homes.

A recent audit of the scheme has drawn attention to unmet demand and consideration is being given to how access could be refined.

The service appears to be relatively high cost.

Recommendations

There should be active consideration of the advantages of the provision of this service

- ◆ through the voluntary sector when the contract is next due for renewal. Some such organisations could be more in tune with the need of service users.
- ◆ The National Community Transport Organisation suggests “Readibus” in Reading and Ring and Ride in Manchester as examples of schemes, which work well. Information should be obtained about these services.

- ◆ Improve public information about the service and make arrangements for it to reach all sections of the Community.

- ◆ Ensure that all service users know how to complain by publicising complaints procedures to new applicants and renewals, and having information on how to complain available on vehicles.

- ◆ Improve understanding of service users’ needs by mapping use according to geography, category of need and time of travel.

- ◆ Consider an incentive scheme for off peak use, e.g. a longer advance booking scheme.

- ◆ Cost could be reduced by limiting hours of availability or numbers of trips, if this were thought desirable.

- ◆ Wherever appropriate day centre transport for Adults with Disabilities and Older People should be provided by Community Transport. This could result in savings for those services, but would decrease the availability for other C.T. users in the early morning and late afternoon.

- ◆ Survey the amount of usage related to health issues and consider an application for partnership funding to offset the increased usage for social care purposes.

6.3 Home to School Transport Service Information and Recommendations

Reasons for Transport Provision (Legislative Basis etc.):		
Powers and Duties under the 1944 and 1996 Education Acts		
Service Recipients:		
<p>Under 5s with special needs. Under 8s travelling more than 2 miles. Over 8s travelling more than 3 miles. Children with Special Educational Needs.</p> <p>Aim – to get children to school in a safe and timely manner.</p>		
Provision	Cost 98/99	Budget 99/00
Special School Transport	£1,024,077	£975,038
Special School Transport (schools vehicles)	£ 98,449	£ 95,108
Primary, Mainstream, Nursery and Special Departments	£ 451,806	£435,939
Secondary, Mainstream and Special Departments	£ 514,164	£557,951
16+	£ 45,324	£ 13,619
<i>NB: These figures do not include transport on school trips or some children transported to residential schools by Education Welfare Officers.</i>		
Management and Administration Arrangements		
Pupil Services Support Officer combines with other duties.		
Policies and Procedures		
Various guidelines available in draft form.		
Existing User Feedback		
See Annex C . Information from complaints.		
Possible Alternatives to Current Arrangements		
<p>Staggered school day. Group pick up points (with maximum travel times and walking distances).</p>		

Current Issues
<p>Special Needs Transport Provision would be affected by changes in numbers of Children being made subject to “Statements”.</p> <p>Some parents lack confidence in the service.</p> <p>Driver and escort training is just starting.</p> <p>Currently moving to system of police checking all Drivers and Escorts up to 16 seater vehicles.</p> <p>The transfer of school transport to the Environment Directorate has been under discussion for some time.</p>
<p>There have been concerns about a lack of consistent and appropriate safety standards relating to both vehicles and drivers.</p>
<p>Sub-contracting has caused some difficulties.</p> <p>Some disabled parents would like to access school transport for their child.</p>
<p>Some service users and their parents experience difficulties with transport.</p> <p>Some service users and their parents experience difficulties with transport when they make the transition from school to college.</p>
Recommendations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Passenger Transport Section should take over home to school transport on a Service Level Agreement with Education. This should allow the development of improved attention to contracts and contract monitoring, whilst ensuring that the knowledge and experience of Pupil Services contributes to the structure of this service. • Current work on police checking all drivers and escorts should be sustained. • There should be a clear route for decision making on the provision of school transport in exceptional circumstances. • Transition reviews and plans should specifically address young people’s transport needs and ensure that sufficient training, information and preparation is given to enable people to cope without school transport (an information booklet is under development).

6.4 Mental Health Service Transport Information and Recommendations

Reasons for Transport Provision (Legislative Basis etc.):
Mental Health Act
Service Recipients
People Assessed as needing a service by the Mental Health Team

Methods of Provision	Cost 98/99	Budget 99/00
1. Transport to Keystone	£5,365.19	£19,060.00
2. Ad Hoc Journeys Volunteer driver	£ 496.80	£ .00
3. Ad Hoc Journeys Taxi	£ 201.50	£ .00
<i>These figures do not include individual transport by Social Workers.</i>		
Management and Administration Arrangements		
Policies and Procedures		
Performance Indicators		
Existing User Feedback		
Users of Keystone like existing system of individual taxis.		
Possible Alternatives to Current Arrangements		
Increased use of volunteer drivers for Keystone attendees. Introduction of charges for Transport.		
Current Issues		
Need to make sensitive provision for assisting agoraphobics. Current transport budget for Keystone is the result of individual taxi provision for approx. 30 attendees.		
Recommendations		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport needs of Keystone users should be examined as collective provision could result in savings. • Taxi provision should be provided under contract only where specifically needed. • Partnership funding might allow this service to participate in the development of a volunteer driver scheme. 		

6.5 Older Peoples Service Transport Information and Recommendations

Reasons for Transport Provision (Legislative Basis etc.):
National Assistance Act, 1948. NHS and Community Care Act, 1990.

Service Recipients		
Older people assessed as needing a service by the Older People's Team and those choosing to attend Age Concern lunch clubs.		
Methods of Provision	Cost 98/99	Budget 99/00
1. Red Cross Day Centre	£42,852	£42,500
2. Redwood	£15,871	£11,400
3. St. Giles	£10,518	£ 4,800
4. Spot Purchasing	£ 6,449	£ 7,520
<i>*Figures do not include 2 driver/general duty assistant posts.</i>		
Management and Administration Arrangements		
Resource Centre Managers incorporate in other duties.		
Policies and Procedures		
Code of Practice.		
Performance Indicators		
Existing User Feedback		
Possible Alternatives to Current Arrangements		
Elderly mentally infirm clients attending Redwood and St. Giles require a personal approach to transport.		
Some of the "spot" purchases could be reduced by access to community transport.		
Current Issues		
The use of leased cars has already significantly reduced budgeted expenditure.		
Recommendations		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Older Peoples' Team should have access to community transport for individual journeys by clients. • Systems should be put in place to ensure that lease cars operate to the same standard as other Council Provision 		

6.6 Adult (Physical) Disability Services Transport Information and Recommendations

Reasons for Transport Provision (Legislative Basis etc.):
NHS and Community Care Act, 1990. National Assistance Act, 1948.

Service Recipients		
People assessed as needing a service by the Adult Disability Team.		
Provision	Cost 98/99	Budget 99/00
1. Very little transport		
2. Day Centre users arrange own transport		
3. Some ad hoc journeys are arranged individually		
Management and Administration Arrangements		
Arrangements made by Admin. staff amongst other duties.		
Policies and Procedures		
No.		
Performance Indicators		
Existing User Feedback		
Possible Alternatives to Current Arrangements		
Ability to access Community Transport for service users when needed.		
Current Issues		
Arranging individual transport for wheelchair users cause this team some difficulty. Some parents with disabilities would like school transport to be provided for their children. This is outside the criteria for school transport, which is provided on the basis of the child's needs.		
Recommendations		
Arrangements should be made to allow the Adult Disability Team to access appropriate Community Transport for their clients when necessary.		

6.7 Adults with Learning Disability Information and Recommendations

Reasons for Transport Provision (Legislative Basis etc.):
NHS and Community Care Act, 1990.

Service Recipients			
People assessed as needing a service by the Adult Disability Team.			
Provision	Cost 98/99	Budget 99/00	
1. Tower Drive Day Centre*	£35,028	£31,380	} Staff not } included } each driven } for
2. Surrey Road*	£45,631	£48,630	
3. Macyntyre	£ 3,258	£ 7,500	
4. Placements	£ 4,252	£ 3,000	
* <i>These are costs of vehicles only. They are driven by approx. 16 FTE driver/general duties assistants.</i>			
Management and Administration Arrangements			
Integrated with Unit Co-ordinator's responsibilities.			
Policies and Procedures			
Still under development.			
Performance Indicators			
Existing User Feedback			
Possible Alternatives to Current Arrangements			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Day Centre transport provided by Community Transport. ◆ Account cards for those able to use Public Transport. 			
Current Issues			
<p>People (and their carers) who are making the transition from Children's Services to Adult Services report difficulties with transport.</p> <p>Carers perceive transport time as part of the day care, so changes in timing of transport cause difficulties.</p> <p>Service users who are profoundly/multiply disabled need to travel with people who know them and their particular requirements.</p> <p>Service users who have challenging behaviour can most safely and appropriately be transported by people who know them.</p> <p>The current fleet of vehicles is said to be due for renewal.</p>			

Recommendations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adults with Learning Disability fear prejudice and impatience when using public transport. These are issues, which the transport service needs to address, but appropriate support in learning how to use public transport would also build confidence. An ongoing programme of training in this area should be developed. • Day Centre transport by the Community Transport Service should be the aim for most service users. This will clearly require considerable adjustment for the services this aim should be taken into account as these services are reviewed. • A system of account cards could be promoted for Day Centre users who were able to use public transport and this could promote independence. • Some drivers/general duties assistants could continue to transport specific client groups (profoundly disabled etc.) others might be deployed to increase the amount of coaching and support available for the use of public transport. • Transfer vehicle budgets to Community Transport as leases come up for renewal.
Transport for those with profound and/or multiple disabilities needs quality improvement.

6.8 Children's Services Transport Information and Recommendations

Reasons for Transport Provision (Legislative Basis etc.):		
Children Act 1989 S.26 Duty to promote contact for children in care. S.17 Assistance for Children in Need. S.31 Exercise of Parental Responsibilities. General duty to work in partnership with parents.		
Service Recipients		
Clients of Childrens' Services.		
Provision	Cost 98/99	Budget 99/00
1. Private Hire Contract	£37,000	£12,280
2. Volunteer Drivers	£95,824	£50,000
3. Boarded Out Travel (Foster Carers)	£20,274	No allocated budget.
4. Contact Visits	£23,891	
5. Accommodated Children	£ 6,555	
Transport is also provided by individual social workers and under agreements with voluntary organisations for day care.		

Management and Administration Arrangements
Admin. Manager and Team Clerks incorporate amongst other duties.
Policies and Procedures
Under development, for example Driver conduct Agreement with Skyline.
Performance Indicators
Existing User Feedback
Parental concern over too many adults being involved in transporting their children. Some parents of disabled children want a disabled parking space outside their homes.
Possible Alternatives to Current Arrangements
Volunteer driver recruitment. More regimented approach to contact.
Current Issues
Young people find the buses hard to use, but would like to see reduced car usage in Milton Keynes. Concern over use of taxi transport in sensitive situations. Volunteer drivers not supported, and no new recruits.
Recommendations
Private hire contracting should be provided under an SLA with the Transport Integration Unit. Clear policy guidelines for access to transport under the Children Act should be developed. Children's Services should work with Neighbourhood Services and Environment Directorates on increasing their usage of volunteer transport, which would be more appropriate than taxis for some of their clients. Childrens' Services contribution to such a scheme might be met through "Quality Protects". Promote the use of Children's Concessionary fares amongst Children Looked After by the Local Authority.

6.9 Social Necessary Local Bus Service Information and Recommendations

Reasons for Transport Provision (Legislative Basis etc.):
Powers and duties under the 1985 Transport Act.

Service Recipients
All residents in Council area can access local services and information on these services via various media including timetable booklet/timetable card/interactive terminal, telephone enquiry line and Internet.
Methods of Provision
Contracted Service.
Management and Administration Arrangements
Passenger Transport Officer x 2, Survey staff x 2,+ Passenger Transport Assistant (publicity).
Policies and Procedures
Public Transport policy statement published by Bucks CC in 1994 – needs revision and update. Sustainable Integrated Transport Strategy (SITS) by MKC + Local Transport Plan 2000-2005.
Performance Indicators
Existing User Feedback
Corporate complaints process, regular feedback from users surveyed on vehicle (Average 50 letters of complaint per year).
Possible Alternatives to Current Arrangements
Express services along grid roads rather than through grid squares.
Current Issues
A review was carried out in Summer 1999 with regard to subsidies of mainstream bus services, this being due to significant increases at re-tendering required a reduction in the number of contract vehicles provided to remain within existing budget. Providing Park and Ride – introducing Quality Bus Initiatives. Low evening and Sunday frequency and poor coverage relatively high cost of local bus services.
Recommendations
Continue with introduction of QBI initiatives – review provision of low floor vehicles under 1985 Act S106 to improve and access for those having difficulty using services.

7. CURRENT SITUATION – STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, THREATS

7.1 Strengths:

- (a) Directorates have a good understanding of their own clients and an informed commitment to meeting their needs;
- (b) Present systems allows use of normal cars/people carriers which are comfortable and don't draw attention to service users;
- (c) Where driving duties are integrated with care people are transported by drivers who are familiar to them;
- (d) Where transport is provided as part of an individuals care plan or a Directorate's duty the Directorate responsible has good motivation to ensure that it operates successfully; and
- (e) Services are provided promptly and the lowest tenders usually accepted for contracted work.

7.2 Weaknesses:

- (a) Quality thresholds and requirements vary from section to section;
- (b) Lack of clarity/coherence in respect of :
 - (i) Decision-making: enquiries often passed from one officer to another until decision given. This is partly as a result of the blurring of responsibilities at unitary status
 - (ii) Quality assurance: difficult to be consistent when disparate provision across directorates
 - (iii) Complaints process including to whom these should be addressed;
- (c) Possible duplication of effort – similar systems maintained in both Learning and Development and Environment to monitor home to school transport;
- (d) The current number of contracts in excess of 200 – this figure will increase as Milton Keynes continues to develop; and
- (e) Contractors in a better position to have an overview which means they can to dictate terms to a significant degree.

7.3 Opportunities

- (a) There is scope for improvement through co-ordination;
- (b) Central Government funding initiatives offer some scope for development;
- (c) There is scope for improved vehicle utilisation; and

- (d) There is scope for “Added Value” as well as Best Value in an integrated transport service.

7.4 Threats

- (a) High costs of present system;
- (b) Dangers posed by lack of attention to both driver and vehicle checks;
- (c) Inertia leading to increased costs and failure to address need for change;
- (d) Service users see the service as fragmented; and
- (e) Links between transport providers in MK are improving, but not strong.

8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS – GENERAL

8.1 Overall Direction and Strategy

- 8.1.1 There is a need to improve standards of safety and passenger safeguards and to apply those standards consistently across the Council.
- 8.1.2 Improved Co-ordination of Contracting and increased use of volunteer drivers could result in savings.
- 8.1.3 There should be an improvement to the “fit” between the degree of sensitivity of the journey and the method of transport used.
- 8.1.4 There is a need to promote efficient use of available vehicles.
- 8.1.5 The overall strategy should promote independent travel wherever appropriate for the individual whilst providing an individual and personal service for those who need it. Investment in training and support in using these means of transport could benefit both the services and the individuals.

8.2 Creation and Function of a Transport Unit.

- 8.2.1 A Transport Unit operating within the Environment Directorate could take the lead on achieving transport integration within Milton Keynes. The unit could develop separate service level agreements with each service area including home/school transport, day care transport and Private Hire Contracting for individual journeys. Transferring these functions on a service level agreement should allow maximum flexibility in freeing the resources for the transfer of the management of transport provision as well as the transport itself and allow crucial quality issues to be addressed in partnership between the unit and the directorate involved. Integration could then be achieved incrementally with the aim that as reductions in cost are achieved resources should be freed for further work on the integration agenda. Timescales should be set for this process as part of the Review Action Plan.
- 8.2.2 The unit would be expected to achieve savings through improved co-ordination and contract monitoring.
- 8.2.3 The unit could be set up on a time-limited basis as an interim step towards the development of a fully integrated transport service.
- 8.2.4 Further work is needed to identify the number, range and specialisms of staff required and whether they could be funded from projected savings. The alternative would be to invest in order to accrue financial benefits within an agreed timescale. Detailed information on the current management/administrative resource used in organising transport would facilitate planning.
- 8.2.5 Appropriate IT support also needs to be the subject of detailed consideration.
- 8.2.6 The unit would be expected to establish common standards and support their attainment in the following areas:

- (a) Passenger Safeguards (driver checks and conduct);
- (b) Driver training and appropriate driving;
- (c) Use of escorts;
- (d) Vehicle and Passenger Safety; and
- (e) Contracts and Contract Monitoring.

8.2.7 The unit could also have responsibility for co-ordination of the following:

- (a) Promoting stability and consistency;
- (b) Policy;
- (c) Publicity and public information;
- (d) Quality assurance; and
- (e) The development of a Transport Users' Charter (see **Annex E** for example from Newham).

8.2.8 The unit leads on the development of a volunteer driver service, working in partnership with Children's Services and Adult Social Care, with the aim being to commission a well supported volunteer scheme from the voluntary sector. Use of volunteers offers significant potential for both improving the service and reducing the costs. (See **Annex D** for more details of this proposal).

8.2.9 The unit could explore methods of minibus brokerage operating in other parts of the country with a view to improving the co-ordination of minibus use across the Public and Voluntary Sectors. Areas of common ground and mutual advantage could be identified with a view to service improvement and cost reduction.

8.2.10 The unit should aim to develop a pilot "Integrated Provision" area exploring the feasibility of the integration of school and public transport with other types of provision (for example, the postbus system). A rural area would be the most suitable for this.

8.2.11 Given that three key elements of any service are likely to be the vehicle, the driver and the escort, these could be provided in varying combinations, for example the vehicle and the driver could be available through the "pool" whereas the escort could be deployed on site.

8.2.12 The unit would also have a role in developing and monitoring Local Performance Indicators.

8.2.13 Added Value

As well as "best value" there is potential for "added value" in an integrated transport service:

- (a) As already suggested whilst there may be a need initially to “invest to save”, there could be cost reductions over an agreed timescale, for example three years;
- (b) There should be increased consistency in the quality of provision overall; and
- (c) It may be possible to reduce the amount of “avoidable” expenditure; whilst it is difficult to quantify there may be saving to be made in areas such as access arrangements, social work visits and school trips.

8.3 Promoting Public Transport Usage

Whilst not within the agreed terms of reference a number of issues came to light during the review, and as they impact upon the demand from other transport they are included:

- (a) Integrated ticketing would assist Public Transport Users; whilst this is already available to a certain extent, publicity is required to increase the general public’s awareness of how to access it;
- (b) There appears to be a lack of public confidence in the bus service with many sectors of the community fearing rudeness by drivers, and an approach to driving which is unhelpful to anyone who is frail or unsteady;
- (c) Concerns were expressed about many elements of the service including routing, ease of ticket purchase, accessibility and overgrown bus stops; and
- (d) The Council should continue to work with providers and service users to minimise barriers to bus usage.

9. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

Environmental considerations support the principle of maximising use of public transport, and of making “group journeys” wherever possible. For some individuals a more individual and personal service will continue to be required in order to provide a reasonable standard of care.

10. EQUALITIES

Easy access to transport is a major factor in relation to quality of life, and in this respect Public Transport has a major influence on the lives of those without access to cars or the ability to drive. The Disability Discrimination Act is having some impact on accessibility to all forms of Public Transport and should continue to lead to increased usage of Public Transport by people with disabilities.

11. LIST OF ANNEXES

- A. Reference Group Membership
- B. Questionnaire to Other Local Authorities and Summary of Information.
- C. Information from Complaints
- D. Volunteer Driver Scheme – Detailed Proposals
- E. Sample Transport Users’ Charter – London Borough of Newham
- F. Consultations which contributed to this Review