

From: Councillors

Date	From	Message
19/02/24	Cllr Duckett	<p>I've had some enquiries about the proposed changes. It's the removal of the catchment school that has them puzzled.</p> <p>At present say for someone in Womesley the catchment secondary school is Brayton, but the nearest school is De Lacey in Knottingley. No one chooses to go to De Lacey so presumably any transport provided would be a taxi. Would they still have the choice of Brayton paying for a permit or have to attend De lacy. I'm using this example as I've had two cases from that area at Transport Appeals .</p>
19/02/24	Cllr Brown	<p>Could I ask for one piece of subtle change to avoid problems. Where there is a selective system as in Skipton can we please make the policy that we will pay for transport to the nearest non selective school. We also need the same subtle change with respect to religious schools</p> <p>We don't want to be in the awkward position of telling a parent we cannot give them any funding because they live next to a Roman Catholic school that won't admit them so they have to travel past it to the nearest comprehensive that will</p>
29/02/24	Cllr Murday	<p>A resident has contacted me regarding the arrangements for their son's transport to and from Nidderdale High School. Up until very recently the taxi provided was based in Ripon. Now the taxi comes all the way from Keighley.</p> <p>She has some concerns about the standard of the drivers of the Keighley-based taxis which is difficult, if not impossible, to substantiate. Of greater concern is the extra mileage involved, which she estimates is almost double. When she contacted NYC, she was told that environmental factors are not part of the decision making process when arranging contracts. But that, of course, is not the case.</p> <p>I would be very grateful if you could let me know the reasons for the change in contracting for the taxi service, or at least direct me to the relevant report and decision.</p>
7/03/24	Cllr Nathan Hull	<p>I am emailing you about some issues in respect of Home to School Transport (which I understand Councillor Andrew Murday has also recently contacted you about).</p> <p>I am aware that NYC transports a number of children within my Division, as well as Councillor Murday's neighbouring Division, to and from school by taxi (presumably because this has been viewed as being more cost effective than laying on a school bus or minibus).</p> <p>However, many parents, myself included, are concerned that the taxis being used to ferry our children around are travelling extremely long distances to pick children up and transport them relatively short distances.</p>

For example, I live in Burnt Yates with my wife and 5 children.

Our middle son, Huey, attends Springwater Special School in Starbeck, 8.4 miles from our home.

The Taxi Firm that takes Huey to and from School is located in Keighley, which is 27.8 miles from our home.

As such, whilst I appreciate that these calculations are not an exact science, the taxi that takes Huey to and from school each day undertakes the following journeys:-

Journey	Destination	Distance
1. am	Keighley to Burnt Yates	27.8 miles
2. am	Burnt Yates to Springwater School	8.4 miles
3. am	Springwater School back to Keighley	24.9 miles
4. pm	Keighley to Springwater School	24.9 miles
5. pm	Springwater School to Burnt Yates	8.4 miles
6. pm	Burnt Yates back to Keighley	27.8 miles
	Total Miles per day	122.2 miles
	Total Miles per week	611 miles
	Total Miles per annum (39 school weeks)	23,829. miles

Whilst I have no particular issue with the individual taxi firm (or driver) that transports Huey to and from his school, in my opinion, NYC needs to revisit this issue.

Indeed, I am aware from other parents in my Division, and other neighbouring Divisions (and therefore presumably throughout North Yorkshire) that many children are transported to and from their schools by taxis from Keighley.

Without knowing the finer details of the contracts entered into with taxi companies, I am struggling to see why it is a good thing to employ taxi firms that are located outside of the County, and many miles away, to take our children to and from school.

Indeed:-

1. In the first instance, whilst I do not know, I would have thought that it would be cheaper to employ local taxi drivers to do this work.

		<p>2. It surely goes against all of our “green” and “sustainability” policies to have taxis travelling hundreds of thousands, if not millions of miles, each year, with no passengers sat in them, only to pick up children and drop them off at school only a few miles away from their homes. Those taxis then have to make numerous return journeys, each day, with an empty taxi. This wastes time, money, causes damage to the environment, and unnecessarily clogs up our roads (and causes further wear and tear to our highways) during rush hour.</p> <p>3. Whilst I appreciate that you cannot force this issue, and that there are strict tendering rules that govern the awarding of NYC contracts, surely it would be preferable, from an economic standpoint, to award these contracts to North Yorkshire based taxi firms (thus supporting the local economy within North Yorkshire).</p> <p>I would appreciate your thoughts on the above as there are numerous local parents, myself included, who think that the current situation, as outlined above, is not ideal.</p>
17/3/24	Cllr Murday	<p>A resident has contacted me regarding the arrangements for their son’s transport to and from Nidderdale High School. Up until very recently the taxi provided was based in Ripon. Now the taxi comes all the way from Keighley.</p> <p>She has some concerns about the standard of the drivers of the Keighley-based taxis which is difficult, if not impossible, to substantiate. Of greater concern is the extra mileage involved, which she estimates is almost double. When she contacted NYC, she was told that environmental factors are not part of the decision making process when arranging contracts. But that, of course, is not the case.</p> <p>I would be very grateful if you could let me know the reasons for the change in contracting for the taxi service, or at least direct me to the relevant report and decision.</p>
18/03/24	Cllr Hull	<p>Thank you for getting back to me about this delicate subject.</p> <p>However, whilst I appreciate that NYC has to follow strict tendering guidelines and also seek best value for money, the concerns that local parents are raising with me are also in respect of the Department of Education’s guidance regarding Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy published in January 2024.</p> <p>I am told, and I must confess I have not verified this personally, that the guidance on page 46 for 2024 and page 8 for 2014 states that local authorities are to promote sustainable modes of school transport and that NYC must publish our own Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy on our website by 31st August each year as per The Education (school information) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2007 (S.I. 2007/1365).</p> <p>If this is correct, then we may have obligations that are potentially at loggerheads with each other.</p> <p>That is to say, we need to get best value for money, whilst promoting sustainable school transport.</p>

		<p>I am clearly not in possession of all the facts in respect of the tendering process, how much individual taxi companies are paid for their services and which taxi services actually tender to us for these contracts.</p> <p>However, I am struggling to see how employing taxi companies that are covering over 100 miles each day with an empty taxi is sustainable and it is this that I am struggling to explain to parents.</p> <p>Indeed, by my own back of a fag packet calculations, it could well be the case that NYC is employing taxi firms that are collectively driving hundreds of thousands, if not millions of miles each, from outside of the County with cars that, for the majority of the journey, have no children or passengers in them.</p> <p>If that is the case, so that we can balance off any obligations we have to provide Sustainable School Transport (which I take to mean not only value for money but environmentally friendly transport) is the tendering process something that needs to be revisited so that an increased importance is put on sustainability?</p>
28/03/24	Cllr Staveley	<p>I wanted to highlight a potential issue regarding the proposed changes to our home school transport policy, specifically how it might affect my own local school, but also others in similar peripheral border locations.</p> <p>Under the proposals there will be a substantial number of children who would currently head towards the local NYC school in Settle, but under the proposals would be pushed towards the “nearest” school in Kirkby Lonsdale, Cumbria. Which while this is the choice for some even now, is far from the default and if the numbers going to Settle were drastically reduced, would almost certainly undermine the sustainability of Settle College. An issue which has been raised by the College management, including the accuracy of our teams impact assessment on future enrolment numbers.</p> <p>I would also question if as is required when formulating a development plan, there is a duty to cooperate with neighbouring education authorities whose enrolment numbers might be affected by our change in policy? If there isn’t a statutory duty, has there been any consultation with such bodies? I’d be interested to know how many schools on the periphery of North Yorkshire in neighbouring counties will now become the default closest school for residents over existing NYC facilities, information I trust will be available as part of the consultation?</p> <p>So in essence while I support the broad principle of the proposals, I feel there must be recognition of the potential harm and ultimately increased transport costs NYC could incur from closures of schools like Settle College and suggest an amendment to the proposed policy stating that schools outside North Yorkshire should not be considered as the closest option for NYC residents. Thus avoiding the undermining of our own Schooling network and the longer term implications for sustainability and development of our communities as we seek to formulate our future County development plan.</p>