

Committee(s): Policy and Resources Committee	Dated: 16 November 2023
Subject: Annual Bus Passes for Care Leavers	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	Contribute to a flourishing society <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>People are safe and feel safe.</i> 2. <i>People enjoy good health and wellbeing.</i> 3. <i>People have equal opportunities to enrich their lives and reach their full potential.</i> 4. <i>Communities are cohesive and have the facilities they need.</i>
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	Y
If so, how much?	£49,000
What is the source of Funding?	City's Cash - PIF
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	Y
Report of: Judith Finlay Executive Director of Community and Children's Services	For Decision
Report author: Chris Pelham Assistant Director (People), Community and Children Services	

Summary

At the Community and Children Services Committee on 17 July 2023, the Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services, in response to a request from the Chair of the Safeguarding Sub Committee, to provide Care Leavers with annual travel cards.

Members noted that the London-wide Children in Care Council (CiCC) had been negotiating with Transport for London to provide free/low cost annual travel cards. However, this was yet to be agreed, with the current offer being a 50% discount.

Members noted that the provision of 'all zones' travel cards would cost in the region £160,000, whereas the bus pass option would cost just £30,000 pa.

In response to a question from the Chair in respect of available resources for the use of travel cards, rather than bus passes, the Chamberlain advised that there was no current funding for proposal.

Therefore, a permanent local offer would need to be prioritised within the existing risk budget, and this had been flagged as a pressure in a submission to the Resource Allocation Sub Committee.

Members of Community and Children Services resolved that:

- Costs for annual bus passes be approved for all care leavers, for one year, whilst the London CiCC negotiates with TfL (allowing for up to 18 months if negotiations are extended).
- It be noted that the provision of bus passes for care leavers, as part of the City Corporation's permanent local offer, would need to be prioritised within the existing local risk budget.

Recommendation(s)

Members of the Policy and Resources Committee are asked to:

- Approve funding of up to £49,000 to be drawn from your Committee's 2023/24 Policy Initiative Fund (PIF), categorised as 'Communities' and charged to City's Cash, to allow TfL negotiations to complete. The initial cost of £32,500 covers a period of 12 months with an additional £16,500 being the option of extending this by a further 6 months.

Main Report

Background

1. It is a duty under the Children and Social Work Act 2017 that England's local authorities must publish information about the services offered for care leavers. Each London local authority therefore has a care leaver offer, but these are individual to each area and do not provide a consistent and shared offer. Care leavers do not always live in the borough responsible for them, which poses further challenges with the variation in offers. It is also important that the offer to care leavers reaches beyond services provided by local authorities. Partners such as health, education and transport have important roles to play, as do the private and voluntary sectors.
2. The City of London is signed up to the Pan London Care Leavers Compact which provides a framework for developing consistency, breadth and quality in the support offered to London's Care Leavers. [Care Leaving – LIIA](#) .The compact was established in early 2022 to deliver a consistent and high-quality offer for care leavers across the capital.
3. The Chairman of the Safeguarding Sub Committee asked that Care Leavers be given annual travel cards. The offer is in line with the ambitions of the Care Leavers Compact, and in line with our role as corporate parents. Ofsted now inspect our care leaver offer as a distinct category and our aim is that our offer is exceptional for each child.

4. The London-wide Child in Care Council has been negotiating with Transport for London to provide free/low cost annual travel cards. This has yet to be successful, with the current offer being 50% discount. This additional provision would support care leavers in the midst of the cost of living crisis, to ensure their health (emotional and physical) outcomes are met.
5. The current care leaver offer is that travel to school/college/university and to see family or to undertake cultural/religious activity is provided.
6. This report sets out the yearly cost of providing an annual bus pass for each care leaver between the ages of 18-25, for those in education or NEET, and then the total cost for all care leavers over 18 including those who work full time.

Current Position

7. Care leavers, as stated in our local offer, are entitled to the cost of their travel for education, and to support contact with family and also for religious/cultural activities. Those who are in education each has a zip card to reduce the cost.
8. To help with the cost of living, and to give more freedom to care leavers, it is proposed that an annual bus pass is provided. The administration costs would reduce and it would give more autonomy to care leavers.

9. *Costs of bus passes*

- The cost of an annual bus pass in London for a child aged 16+ is £492
- The cost of an annual bus pass in London for a student aged 18+ is £692
- The cost of an annual bus pass in London for adults is £988.
- There is not an annual bus pass for those who are not yet in work, the monthly cost is: £47.30. Annually this would cost £567.60
- Note: some young people are outside of Greater London. The above figures have been used as an approximation.

10. *Numbers of Care Leavers*

- There are 16 aged 16/17 who are all in education
- There are 53 care leavers who are 18 or over
 - 40 are in college (or university)
 - 10 are currently not in education or training
 - 3 are working full time

11. All care leavers are entitled to funding for college/education. Currently we provide funding for the weeks they attend. Our spend for travel in the financial year 2022/23 was £11,642.90.

Options:

Option A:

12. For Policy and Resources to agree to additional funds up to £49,000 be paid from the Policy Initiative Fund which would demonstrate our commitment to our Care Leavers until the London Compact work resolves the TfL deal. A bus pass covers all zones in Greater London.

a. Costing for one year of an annual bus pass:

16 x £492.00 = £7,872	[16/17 year olds]
40 x £692.00 = £27,680	[18+ in education]
10 x £567.60 = £5,676	[10 NEET (including parents)]
3 x £988.00 = £2,964	[3 full time work]

Total for one year: £44,192

b. After deducting the current annual spend, £11,642. the additional monies sought total **£32,550 (12 months)**

c. Should the TFL negotiations take longer, the cost for 18 months of an annual bus pass is: **£48,825 (18 months)**

Option B:

13. For Policy and Resources not to provide the additional funds. This would mean Community and Children Services either having to reprofile the current local risk budget position and business planning priorities to provide the offer from the current budget or not provide the offer

Impact:

14. The bus pass would give care leavers autonomy and freedom, without having to ask often for additional monies. The pass would assist care leavers with the rising cost of living, and would, in part, offset food/laundry/bill rises.

Proposal(s)

15. For Policy and Resources to support Option A

Corporate & Strategic Implications

16. Strategic implications – Providing an annual bus pass ensures the Corporation's offer is in line with the Care Leaver Compact.

17. Financial implications – There will be an additional cost per annum, which is set out above. It is requested that funding of up to £49,000 to allow TfL negotiations to complete, is approved from your Committee's 2023/24 Policy Initiatives Fund, categorised as 'Communities' and charged to City's Cash.

The current uncommitted balance in the 2023/24 Policy Initiative Fund is £606,226 prior to any other allowances being made for other proposals on today's agenda.

18. Resource implications – Administrative costs will be lessened given the annual cost. Termly payments will no longer be needed.

19. Legal implications – None.

20. Risk implications – There is a corporate risk if care leavers are not provided with an outstanding service.

21. Equalities implications – This promotes inclusion and opportunity to our care leavers – a vulnerable group comprised largely of young people from minoritized backgrounds. This assists with financial inequality.

22. Climate implications – None

23. Security implications – None

Conclusion:

24. This report seeks approval from the Policy and Resources Committee to fund up to £49,000 from the Policy Initiative Fund to meet the cost of Bus Passes for all CoL Care Leavers. These costs are aimed to cover the period that the London Children in Care Council completes negotiations with TfL to establish a permanent offer. If approval is given, this will support CoL Care Leavers during the cost of living crisis.

Appendices

None

Background Papers

Report to Community and Children Services 17 July 2023.

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