

Minute of Meeting Petitions Board

Date	Time	Venue
Wednesday, 07 June 2017	14:30	CMR 3, Council Headquarters, Renfrewshire House, Cotton Street, Paisley, PA1 1AN

Present: Councillor Jennifer Marion Adam-McGregor, Councillor Bill Brown, Councillor Stephen Burns, Councillor Michelle Campbell, Councillor Neill Graham, Councillor Lisa-Marie Hughes, Councillor Scott Kerr, Councillor Jim Sharkey, Councillor Andy Steel

Chair

Councillor Adam-McGregor, Convener, presided.

In Attendance

J Trainer, Head of Early Years & Inclusion (Children's Services); G McNeil, Head of Amenity Services (Community Resources) and K Graham, Head of Corporate Governance and P Shiach Committee Services Officer (both Finance & Resources).

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest intimated prior to the commencement of the meeting.

1 Petition: Traffic Concerns, Newmains Road, Renfrew

Under reference to item 12 of the Minute of the meeting of the Audit, Scrutiny and Petitions Board held on 28 November 2016, there was submitted a report by the Director of Finance & Resources relative to the petition on traffic concerns on Newmains Road, Paisley, submitted by Mrs Lang. The Convener proposed that consideration of this petition be continued to the next meeting, to allow the petitioner and Police Scotland to attend. This was agreed unanimously.

DECIDED: That consideration of this petition be continued to the next meeting, to allow the petitioner and Police Scotland to attend.

Prior to consideration of the following item, the Convener welcomed Ms Amanda Macdonald petitioner and Ms Jade Lochhead, her supporter, to the meeting.

2 Petition: Carer Transport Costs

There was submitted a report by the Director of Finance & Resources relative to the Board's consideration of the petition which had been submitted in the undernoted terms:

"Transport costs are a massive issue that affects so many carers of all ages, from as young as they start school till older adulthood. Many carers face huge financial difficulty and as a result are unable to have much of a social life of their own as they cannot afford to get around by public transport. The simple task of getting to shops, collecting medication from the chemist or doing many other things that come as part of the daily routine that carers face on a day to day basis.

Alongside a caring role it's important for carers to be able to attend support groups and meet with friends in order to have a healthy social life which many cannot do due to lack of money for buses or even trains depending on where you stay. As a result of being able to get out and about it allows the carer to be less stressed and lowers the chances of developing a mental health issue due to the many pressures of the caring role.

The cost of travel may not seem a lot of money to many however £4.00 per adult a day adds up to £28.00 a week (varies dependent on where you are for bus fares) which is a huge amount of the income a carer receives. Having concessionary travel or even a discount on travel for carers would be huge benefit to so many as many people say companion card is enough. However, people do not realise the cared for has to be present to allow card to be used, a carer is 9 out of 10 times on their own while traveling so as you see companion card is useless at this point.

Forty five per cent of young adult carers (18-25) have reported that they have mental health problems due to their caring role and the struggles they face because of it. Over 68% of older carers say that being a carer has an adverse effect on their mental health. This could be lessened by such a small change like concessionary or discounted travel. For young people aged 16-19 or in full time education who have a

young Scot card you are entitled to a discounted rate of travel however, this discount is only valid on single journeys. In most cases this is no use to a carer as they are making return journeys especially if they are in further education and have a long distance to travel every day or do not live with the person they provide care for. Some carers have to travel many miles just to visit the person they care for if they are in specialised hospitals or care homes.

Being a carer is not all bad it has many positive aspects such as learning crucial skills such as observation skills, listening skills, budgeting skills, organisation skills, being trustworthy and so many more. These skills would be of so much use to the employment field but unfortunately not many employers see this. Carers do this on a daily basis because they care even when the cared for could end up in a hospital, care home or in a looked after residential setting. When this happens the carer will do whatever they can to get to the cared for even if it results in at times not eating or walking miles due to not having money for transport.

This is why I feel so strongly about getting support for carers when it comes to transport. I hope that carers and decision makers will get behind this campaign and help to change so many people's lives for the better.

Is free concessionary transport for carers really too much to ask for when carers dedicate their lives to provide care to others?"

The report advised that the Council had taken a decision on 1 May 2014 on a similar matter, following the motion that:

"Council supports the Scottish Youth Parliament's campaign for young carers.

The cost of travel to school, work and to attend social activities can be prohibitive for young carers and to alleviate that Council calls on the Scottish Government to introduce and fund a scheme of concessionary travel for young people who have caring responsibilities.

Council also calls for the Student Awards Agency for Scotland to recognise young carers as vulnerable and be given access to additional bursaries to allow them to fully take up educational opportunities.

Council finally instructs officers within the Education department to review its policy on payments of the Educational Maintenance Allowance in order to provide clear and flexible guidance for schools when dealing with pupils whose attendance may be affected by caring responsibilities to be reported to a future meeting of the Education Policy Board".

The report indicated that the Head of Early Years and Inclusion had advised that there were new responsibilities for the Council and the Health and Social Care Partnership in addressing the needs of carers. Similarly the Head of Adult Services advised that Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership would jointly produce a Local Carer Strategy to coincide with the implementation of the Carers (Scotland) Act from 1 April 2018. Carers and carer organisations would be involved in planning, shaping and reviewing services for carers through the Partnership's Strategic Planning Group.

The report further indicated that the Regional Child Care Commissioning Co-ordinator had advised that engagement activities with young carers had commenced through the Carers' Centre and the issue of transport had already arisen with through young

people indicating that the cost of travel impeded their ability to have respite/breaks from caring responsibilities. The Regional Child Care Commissioning Co-ordinator had also given an undertaking that the issue of transport would be explicitly addressed in the next sessions with young carers.

The Board heard from Ms Lochhead in support of the petition and from the Head of Early Years and Inclusion.

It was proposed that consideration of the petition be continued to allow the Board to be provided with further information on the number of carers in Renfrewshire. This was agreed unanimously.

DECIDED: That consideration of the petition be continued to allow the Board to be provided with further information on the number of carers in Renfrewshire.