

Leeds Council's decision to cut free transport to religious schools survives challenge

Posted: Fri, 9th Aug 2013

Leeds City Council has seen off an attempt by opposition councillors to derail its plans to cut free transport for children attending "faith schools".

Opposition councillors tried to reverse the policy, which was agreed by the full council last month, but it was allowed to stand by a narrow vote of a scrutiny committee. It is estimated it will save the cash-strapped council £4.76 million a year.

Guiseley and Rawdon councillor Pat Latty said: "This is nothing less than an attack on choice and penalises parents who want to choose the best, most appropriate school for their child.

"The council is just plain wrong on this issue. They have not listened to the concerns of parents and children, and seem determined to axe this funding despite the huge number of passionate objections. I call again for the council to reconsider their plans, even at this late stage, and reverse these unfair cuts."

Terry Sanderson, President of the National Secular Society, said: "This decision may have been made on financial considerations but it also ends an inexcusable discrimination against those who don't want their children to attend a religious school, but who would have to pay their own fares to get to a school of their choice."

Free transport to "faith schools" across Leeds will now stop from 2015 — although it will remain available to pupils from low-income families.

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