

Central Bedfordshire  
Council  
Priory House  
Monks Walk  
Chicksands,  
Shefford SG17 5TQ

**This meeting  
may be filmed.\***



**Central  
Bedfordshire**

**please ask for** Rebecca Preen  
**direct line** 0300 300 4193  
**date** 08 November 2018

## **NOTICE OF MEETING**

### **CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Date & Time

**Tuesday, 20 November 2018 10.00 a.m.**

Venue at

**Council Chamber, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford**

Richard Carr  
**Chief Executive**

To: The Chairman and Members of the CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:

Cllrs K Ferguson (Chairman), D Shelvey (Vice-Chairman), N B Costin,  
Mrs D B Gurney, P Hollick, K Janes, Cllr M Liddiard, A Ryan, B Saunders, P Smith,

[Named Substitutes:

R D Berry, Mrs C F Chapman MBE, J Chatterley, P A Duckett,  
Mrs J Freeman and T Swain]

Co-optees: Mrs Deans (Parent Governor), Mrs Rowlands (Parent Governor),  
Mrs Main (Roman Catholic Diocese), and Mr Morton (Church of England Diocese)

All other Members of the Council - on request

**MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND THIS  
MEETING**

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# AGENDA

1. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence and notification of substitute members.

2. **Minutes**

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 11 September 2018 and to note actions taken since that meeting.

3. **Members' Interests**

To receive from Members any declarations of interest and of any political whip in relation to any agenda item.

4. **Chairman's Announcements and Communications**

To receive any announcements from the Chairman and any matters of communication.

5. **Petitions**

To receive petitions from members of the public in accordance with the Public Participation Procedure as set out in Part 4G of the Constitution.

6. **Questions, Statements or Deputations**

To receive any questions, statements or deputations from members of the public in accordance with the Public Participation Procedure as set out in Part 4G of the Constitution.

7. **Call-In**

To consider any decision of the Executive referred to this Committee for review in accordance with Part 4D of the Constitution.

8. **Requested Items**

To consider any items referred to the Committee at the request of a Member in accordance with Part 4D of the Constitution.

9. **Executive Members' Updates**

To receive a brief verbal update from the Executive Members for:-

- Families, Education and Children and;
- Health

10. **Foster Carer Loans Scheme**

To consider the scheme for the provision of an interest-free loan to adoptive/fostering households who wish to extend or convert their homes in order to offer a wider range or number of placements to CBC children in care.

11. **Outcome of the Schools Funding Formula Consultation**

To consider the outcomes of a consultation with schools/academies which commenced on 19 September 2018 and ended on 19 October 2018. The report details the outcomes of the consultation based on the responses received and the local schools funding formula for the 2019/20 financial year.

12. **Home to Education Travel Assistance Policies**

Members of the Committee will receive an update on the work undertaken following a consultation and are asked to provide recommendations to the Executive on adopting the revised Travel Assistance Policies.

13. **Children's Centres Report**

To receive a report detailing the current operating arrangements for the Children's Centres across Central Bedfordshire alongside an update on performance management.

14. **Work Programme 2018/19 & Executive Forward Plan**

The report provides Members with details of the currently drafted Committee work programme and the latest Executive Forward Plan.

## CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held in Council Chamber, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford on Tuesday, 11 September 2018

### PRESENT

Cllr K Ferguson (Chairman)  
Cllr D Shelvey (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors:	Mrs D B Gurney Cllr M Liddiard A Ryan	Councillors:	B Saunders P Smith
Parental Co-optees:	Mrs G Deans Mrs E Rowlands		
Church of England Co-optee:	Mr D Morton		
Roman Catholic Co-optee:	Apologies		
Apologies for Absence:	Cllrs	N B Costin P Hollick K Janes	
		Mrs D Main, Roman Catholic Diocesan representative	
Members in Attendance:	Cllrs	S Dixon	Executive Member for Families, Education and Children and Lead Members for Children's Services
		Mrs A L Dodwell	Deputy Executive Member for Families, Education and Children
		B J Spurr	Executive Member for Health and Chairman of the Health and Wellbeing Board
		Mrs T Stock	Deputy Executive Member for Health
		M A G Versallion	
Officers in Attendance:	Ms L Bartos		Head of Service for SEND
	Mr P Fraser		Assistant Director Education
	Ms J Nason		Head of Commissioning &

Performance

Miss N Phillips

Practice Manager Adoption

Mrs R Preen

Scrutiny Policy Adviser

Ms P Scott

Strategic Safeguarding Partnership  
Manager

Public: 0

CS/18/34. **Minutes**

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 10 July 2018 and the Special meeting held on 25 July 2018 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

CS/18/35. **Members' Interests**

None.

CS/18/36. **Chairman's Announcements and Communications**

None.

CS/18/37. **Petitions**

None.

CS/18/38. **Questions, Statements or Deputations**

None.

CS/18/39. **Call-In**

None.

CS/18/40. **Requested Items**

None.

CS/18/41. **Executive Members' Updates**

The Executive Member for Children, Education and Families highlighted a recent exercise to recruit foster carers in Central Bedfordshire and encouraged Members' involvement in the campaign. Members were appraised of the most recent outcomes of the Schools for the Future project and that progress

updates would be included in the Committee work programme. A recent decision to close Shelton Lower school had been called in to the school's adjudicator, with an outcome expected over the coming months. As a result of the decision to close the school the directorate were monitoring early warning signs in order to minimise any such impacts on other schools facing similar viability issues.

The Executive Member for Public Health outlined the findings of a recent report which suggested that resilience in children and young people was low and in order to help address this a toolkit would be shared with all schools in October 2018. The Health and Wellbeing Board was currently assessing a strategic approach to understand the GP surgery and health infrastructure requirements of new housing developments, highlighting the need for strong community links. The Health and Wellbeing strategy had a strong focus on Mental Health, recognising the need to effectively measure success and identify areas which required action for improvement. Children transitioning from children to adult services traditionally occurred at 18 years of age however providers were being asked to assess individual cases and provide support past the age of 18 where appropriate.

CS/18/42. **Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) annual report**

The Chairman of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) delivered the annual report of 2016-17, highlighting the performance and effectiveness of agencies to safeguard children across Central Bedfordshire. A recent Ofsted inspection had graded the Council's Children's Services directorate as good, with strong governance and robust processes in place to safeguard vulnerable children and young people. As a result of the inspection three recommendations had been accepted by the Council with the directorate working hard to address them.

As a result of the report Members discussed the following in summary:-

- The importance of learning from the LSCB annual report and responding swiftly to the areas of concern identified.
- The need for improved information sharing between the Council and all partners, with particular concern around the rise in cases of unexpected deaths in children. The Chief Constable of Bedfordshire Police had acknowledged concerns raised in relation to safeguarding vulnerable children and the impact of domestic abuse, with a renewed focus on those areas.
- The importance of the delivery of timely reports in the future.
- The measures undertaken to work with schools in relation to the reported lack of resilience in children and young people.
- The need for continued efforts in relation to suicide prevention.
- The importance of effective communication and the use of social media.
- The challenges around appropriately supporting the travelling community in relation to inclusion and education.
- The future of safeguarding children in light of new government regulations.

**NOTED the report and RECOMMENDED:-**

- 1. That the 2017-18 annual report be delivered to the Committee in January 2019.**
- 2. That details of new government regulations in relation to the safeguarding of children and young people be delivered to the Committee at the earliest opportunity.**

CS/18/43. **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Vision and Strategy**

The Head of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) delivered a presentation which set out the implications of the new Children and Families Act 2014. Almost all children with a statement of special educational needs had now transitioned to the new system of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP). Members were appraised of the service's current areas of focus, the effectiveness of processes and procedures and the impact and process of the area inspection. The Head of Service outlined the development of the SEND vision, its overarching principles along with the delivery and action plan.

As a result of the presentation Members discussed the following in summary:-

- The change in age range and the associated impact on the service, numbers had initially increased but were beginning to stabilise.
- That those young people who had previously been discharged from the system had the opportunity to re-enter it between the ages of 18-25 if they wished to do so.
- The importance of preparing for a SEND inspection which could occur at any time.
- The importance of ensuring the transition period between 18-25 years of age was managed effectively and that the needs of young people were met, with all relevant commissioning arrangements in place.
- That the parent forum SNAP was an effective way of measuring feedback on the service provided.
- That overall the levels of children on EHCP's had risen.

**RECOMMENDED that the Committee acknowledge and support the continued progress of the SEND vision and strategy and that the action plan be delivered to the Committee at a future meeting.**

CS/18/44. **Recommissioning Support Services for Children and Young People**

The Head of Commissioning and Performance delivered a report which outlined the recommissioning process, the scope, approach and the need for effective analysis in order to meet the needs of those accessing services. Members were advised that all stakeholders had expressed positive and constructive feedback about the future arrangements and that changes would enable improved coordination across all services.

In light of the report Members discussed the following in summary:-

The importance of effective information sharing between partners with greater emphasis on an innovative and flexible approach to the delivery of services. That service users were often unsure how to access that which was available to them.



The importance of working closely with schools and equipping them with the requisite skills in order that they understood the future challenges in relation to changes in structure and its associated impact.

The need to monitor contract management, assessing the performance of providers and ensuring measures were in place to bring services back 'in house' if necessary.

The structure and effectiveness of children's centres and targeted youth work.

**NOTED the approach to date and RECOMMENDED that regular performance reports of those external providers commissioned to provide services on behalf of the Council be delivered to the Committee at future meetings.**

CS/18/45. **Regional Adoption Agency**

The Practice Manager within the Adoption and Permanence team delivered a presentation which set out the Council's approach to formulating a regional adoption agency (RAA) which was expected to be live by April 2019. Locally the scope included Central Bedfordshire Council as the lead Authority, in partnership with Milton Keynes Council. It was envisaged other Councils would join the RAA in the future, provided that their vision and values aligned with those of the Central Bedfordshire and Milton Keynes Councils.

In light of the presentation Members discussed the following in summary:-

That the close working relationship between Central Bedfordshire Council and Bedford Borough Council would continue.

That the Government was satisfied that the current model incorporating Central Bedfordshire and Milton Keynes Council could operate effectively.

Concerns around the timeline for delivery and that future projects be brought before the Committee at an earlier stage in their development.

Concerns regarding the future of the RAA's governance structure due to natural changes in officer responsibilities and roles.

The importance of ensuring that the quality of provision not be diluted when other Councils joined the RAA in the future.

**NOTED the arrangements to date for the establishment of a Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) and RECOMMENDED:-**

- 1. That the Executive continue to monitor those Local Authorities wishing to join the RAA in the future.**
- 2. That additional detail in relation to the governance structure of the RAA be delivered to the Executive.**

CS/18/46. **Schools National Funding Formula**

The Assistant Director (AD) for Education provided Members with an outline of changes in relation to the national funding formula for schools. The Committee were advised that a three year 'soft' period would allow for the full implementation of the new formula under a graded system of transition. A further report detailing the allocation to local schools would be delivered to the Committee at a future meeting.

In light of the report Members discussed the following in summary:-

- Concerns regards the reported overspend of the high needs block, which would be considered by the School's Forum.
- In response to a Member query it was confirmed that no school should fall below 1% negativity in funding.
- That the deprivation element and free school meals were now combined to provide a single figure.
- Whether the new funding formula would affect the viability of certain schools, conceding that finances were not the only factor to consider.

**NOTED the report to date and that local figures would be delivered to the Committee in November 2019.**

CS/18/47. **Work Programme 2018/19 & Executive Forward Plan**

**That the Committee work programme be agreed subject to the following amendments:-**

- **The Introduction of a Loans Policy for Foster Carers - 20 November 2018**
- **Local Schools Funding Formula – 20 November 2018**
- **The Executive Response to the Pupil Attainment Task Force Report - January 2019**
- **Validated Exam results – January or March 2019 (TBC)**
- **SEND Vision Action Plan – TBC**
- **Measuring the Progress of the School Improvement Team – TBC**

(Note: The meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m. and concluded at 1.00 p.m.)

Chairman .....

Dated .....

## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

20 November 2018

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### FOSTER CARERS LOAN SCHEME REPORT

Report of: Cllr Steven Dixon, Executive Member for Families, Education and Children and Lead Member for Childrens Services

[steven.dixon@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:steven.dixon@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

Responsible Director(s): Sue Harrison, Director of Children's Services,  
([Sue.Harrison@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:Sue.Harrison@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk))

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#### Purpose of this report

1. This document defines the scheme for the provision of an interest-free loan to adoptive/fostering households, who wish to extend or convert their homes in order to offer a wider range or number of placements to CBC children in care.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

**The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to:**

1. **Consider and support the approval of the draft scheme.**

#### Background

2. The Local Authority has a duty to provide sufficient accommodation for looked after children.
3. Central Bedfordshire Council want to enable foster carers and adopters to alter or adapt their homes, or in some circumstances to obtain a larger home in order to increase their capacity to accommodate looked after children locally and in particular to provide for additional capacity to secure permanence for sibling groups.
4. It is expected that introducing a scheme on loans for carers will support the Local Authority in respect of the medium-term efficiency savings needed. This is because we still have a high volume of children placed in high cost IFA/residential placements. Some of these children may be placed due to a lack of available rooms with our in-house/Family and Friends carers.
5. The average weekly cost of an IFA placement is £778.34, and the average weekly cost of an in-house placement is £421.47. Replacing any of the external

placements with an in house provision will generate considerable savings to the local authority whilst meeting the needs of our children.

6. Carers may want to borrow small amounts of money i.e. £5k to £10k to divide a room, or larger amounts i.e. £25k/£30k to have say ,a loft conversion. Initially a tranche of £100k has been proposed for this scheme. If this proves to be successful this amount could be increased in the future. This initial amount would allow for at least 3 loft conversions or 10/20 room dividers which would obviously increase potential savings to the Local Authority regarding IFA placement costs. Repayment of the funding loan is to be made via a deduction from the foster carer fees payable by the Council to the foster carer over an agreed period of time to be stated in the contract, but to be no longer than 5 years or as an average 5 years or otherwise agreed. The deduction will be made automatically, from the foster carers fee. The actual length of the loan repayment will be based on the circumstances of the individual. For the avoidance of doubt no deductions will be made from the fostering allowance itself as that money is provided to pay for the cost of caring for the child in placement. Repayments and timescales will be agreed in advance of loan payment, all of which will be clearly detailed within the loan contract that will be drawn up between the foster carer and CBC.
7. Offering foster carers interest free loans of up to five years provides another incentive for Central Bedfordshire foster carers which they would not have if approved with an Independent Fostering Agency (IFA). Similar schemes are in operation in a number of Local Authorities.

#### **Issues**

8. The Corporate Parenting Service currently do not have funding to support this scheme.

#### **Reason/s for decision**

9. Not applicable

#### **Reason for urgency**

10. Not applicable.

#### **Council Priorities**

- Children and Families first
- Working as One Team close to the community
- Being a well-managed Service and providing great public care.
- Protecting the Vulnerable: improving wellbeing.
- A more efficient and responsive Council.

#### **Legal Implications**

11. The Local Authority has a duty to provide sufficient accommodation for looked after children as set out in Section 22G of the Children Act 1989. It requires local authorities to take strategic action in respect of the children they look after and for whom it would be consistent with their welfare for them to be provided with accommodation within their local authority area. In these circumstances, Section 22G requires local authorities, so far as is reasonably practicable to ensure that there is sufficient accommodation for those children that meets their needs.
12. The power to provide funding for home extensions is contained in the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 ('the Order'). Article 3 of the Order states that for the purpose of improving living conditions in their area, a local housing authority may provide, directly or indirectly, assistance to any person for the purpose of enabling him to adapt or improve living accommodation (whether by alteration, conversion or enlargement, by the installation of any thing or injection of any substance or otherwise).
13. Article 4 of the Order provides that a local housing authority may not exercise the power conferred by article 3 in any case unless—
  - a) they have adopted a scheme for the provision of assistance under that article;
  - b) they have given public notice of the adoption of the scheme;
  - c) they have secured that—
    - (i) a document in which the scheme is set out in full is available for inspection, free of charge, at their principal office at all reasonable times; and
    - (ii) copies of a document containing a summary of the scheme may be obtained by post (on payment, where a reasonable charge is made, of the amount of the charge); and
  - d) the power is exercised in that case in accordance with that scheme.
14. Article 5 of the Order contains miscellaneous protective provisions governing the arrangement.

### **Financial and Risk Implications**

15. The Corporate Parenting Service does not currently have funding to support this scheme; it is proposed to treat these loans as a balance sheet item (creates a debtor) and to offset this with the monthly repayment. This has nil impact on the general fund so long as the debt is repaid.

16. This scheme will save Central Bedfordshire Council ongoing recurring costs as it will enable in-house foster carers to care for more children with reliance on more expensive I.F.A.'s – see section 1.
17. There is a risk of non-payment of the loan, however we will look to mitigate the risk by ensuring that foster carers can meet the repayment even if they do not have a child currently in placement (see 2.1 of the scheme).

### **Equalities Implications**

18. Central Bedfordshire Council has a statutory duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and foster good relations in respect of nine protected characteristics; age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race, religion or belief; sex and sexual orientation. This proposal will help accommodate looked after children locally and in particular provide for additional capacity to secure permanence for sibling groups.

### **Conclusion and next Steps**

19. Introducing a scheme to allow carers to access loans for extensions and adaptations to their homes will support the Local Authority in meeting its efficiency requirements. It provides a further incentive for foster carers to choose to foster for Central Bedfordshire Council.

### **20. Recommendation**

For Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider and support the approval of the draft scheme.

### **Appendices**

Appendix A: Foster Carers Loans Scheme Report  
Appendix 1: Foster Carer Funding for Building Works Application Form  
Appendix 2: Examples of Need

### **Background Papers**

None

Annie Craig, Practice Manager - Fostering  
[annie.craig@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:annie.craig@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

## Appendix A

# Foster Carers Loan Scheme

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Background

As part of Children's Service Transformation Programme at Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) the Fostering Service have the following objectives:

- Increase the number of CBC foster carers vs Independent Foster Agency IFA's
- Increase CBC's ability to place looked after children and young people with CBC foster carers, particularly within the Central Bedfordshire area. This approach is based on the requirement to obtain best value and is considered to be a better use of resources rather than looked after children and young people being placed in Independent Foster Agency (IFA) carers and Independent Residential Care Homes, unless the individual's needs indicate otherwise.

One way to achieve the project objectives stated above is to expand the accommodation to the homes of qualifying foster carers thus increasing the number of placements that are offered by any fostering household.

Qualifying carers will sign up to a legally binding arrangement whereby CBC will provide an interest-free loan to a maximum amount, for the construction of an extension, adaptation or loft conversion (building works), providing one or more bedrooms and associated living space.

It is important that a coherent programme of delivery underpinned by a clear and consistently applied scheme is developed. This document will define the scheme for the provision of an interest-free loan to foster carers, who wish to extend or convert their homes in order to offer wider placements to CBC children in care.

## 2. Scheme

### 2.1. Framework

To promote and support enduring solutions for children in care, CBC are able to provide an interest-free loan to support the costs of building works to foster carers homes. This service will apply where the work will enable the child(ren) to have a foster placement which meets the requirements of their care plan.

### 2.2. Process overview

Where a foster carer applies for building works that will help them to continue to care for, or offer increased/wider placements for CBC children, an initial scoping exercise will be undertaken by the Supervising Social Worker to ensure that they meet the eligibility criteria. This will include ensuring the foster carer has the correct approval to care for the proposed number/ages of children etc. A proposal will then need to be submitted by the foster carer to the Fostering Team Manager. The Fostering Manager will review the proposal and write a short report indicating whether they agree in principle or reject the proposal and, if agreed in principle, will submit the report

to the Resource Panel. Any agreement in principle by the FST Manager is not binding on the Council and should not be relied upon by the foster carer. The Resource Panel will make the final decision and will need to establish if the foster carer meets the criteria set out in paragraph 2.4. The final decision on the application including how much funding will be offered to the foster carer will be made by the Resource Panel ensuring that it does not exceed the following costs (excluding VAT):

Type of Accommodation Charge	Estimated cost
1 bed extension/adaptation	£30,000
2 bed extension/adaptation	£40,000
1 bed loft/garage extension/adaptation	£25,000
2 bed loft/garage conversion/adaptation	£30,000

The proposal for funding for works to properties under this scheme is to include the following

- Written request from the foster carer and a report from the Fostering Social Worker/Manager (Appendix 1). The report should provide an overview of the reasons for the application, how the applicant meets the criteria and plans for the proposed work to be carried out
- The plans containing the proposed work will need to include all major items.
- The foster carer will need to provide three work quotations from experienced builders (at this stage the plans can be drawn up by a builder as a guide as to what is possible)

As soon as possible, the Council's legal service should be asked to check the title to the property to establish whether it is freehold or leasehold/shared ownership and also for: charges, restrictions, covenants or any entries that would prevent or hinder the Council placing a charge to secure the loan. It is in the interests of both the applicant and the Council to avoid wasting time and resources if there are serious legal barriers to such a proposal. A valuation of the property should also be undertaken to ascertain whether there is sufficient equity to repay the loan if ever needed.

This quotation aspect will be undertaken by Resources Team ideally needs to be approved by Assets to ensure the building Regulations are adhered to. If they agree then the Resource Panel approves the building works proposal and agrees the funding amount to be given, the foster carer will be notified and can commission the builder for the building works. The funding will not be released until the contract has been signed and returned by the foster carer to CBC and all required consents have been obtained, including, but not limited to, planning, landlord, shared owner, mortgagee. Once the contract is signed and returned, the Council's Resource and Placement Team will be responsible for ensuring that the funding amount is paid to the contracted builder – as staged payments – as and when work is completed.

The funding amount will depend on the work being proposed as stated in the lowest compliant quotation that ensures value for money and has a proven track record.



Repayment of the funding loan is to be made via a deduction from the foster carer fees payable by the Council to the foster carer over an agreed period of time to be stated in the contract to be no longer than an average of 5 years unless otherwise agreed. The deduction will be made automatically, from the foster carers fee. For the avoidance of doubt no deductions will be made from the fostering allowance itself as that money is provided to pay for the cost of caring for the child in placement. Repayments and timescales will be agreed in advance of loan payment, all of which will be clearly detailed within the loan contract that will be drawn up between the foster carer and CBC.

The foster carers will be expected to begin building works at the earliest opportunity. If after 90 days no building work or planning has begun, or no plans have been made for building works to start, then agreement for the funding will be withdrawn. No funding will be released until the commencement of building work.

A legal charge on the foster carers' property must be in place before any payment is made to the builder.

If the works are abandoned by the builders, then the foster carer will be given 90 days to source an alternative builder. The foster carer will need to go through the process again of collecting three quotes and informing the Fostering Manager before a final decision is made on a builder.

Foster carers that apply for and are granted funding for building works will be expected to provide their services as a CBC foster carer for a period of no less than 5 years. If a foster carer is de-registered or resigns during this time, full re-payment of the loan amounts outstanding will be required within 6 months of de-registration/ resignation. **The outstanding amount will accrue interest at the Bank of England bank base rate in force at the time and will be added to the loan which must be repaid in full within 6 months. If the loan is not repaid within 6 months, then interest will continue to accrue at 1% above the Bank of England base rate until the loan is repaid in full. The Council will consider enforcing its charge by way of an order for sale in the event the loan is not repaid within 12 months.**

As above, a charge will be placed upon the foster carer's property to secure the loan monies. The foster carer's own legal costs for this process will be borne by the foster carer. The Council's legal costs will be added to the loan amount, (legal costs will also be applied when the charge is taken off the property). If the foster carer moves to a new house CBC will recover the loan amount in full, from the sale of the property.

Contracts will be drawn up by legal services to include the loan agreement to cover de-registration, resignation or carers moving to a new house.

If the foster carer is successful in their application for funding it will be their responsibility to ensure the following:

- Awareness of any restrictive covenants in the deeds to the property
- Awareness of any known planning issues
- The contracting of an experienced builder and architect services surveyor. The builder and architect must be a member of their recognised trade/professional body and approved by the Council.
- Seeking building control and other approvals
- Mortgagee approval and relevant consents and associated costs
- Joint owners approval and consents (together with relevant legal advice)

- The obtaining of 3 quotes for the required building works.

[Note - If there is a joint-owner both must deal with the legal process as both become a party to the charge and the obligations and responsibilities for repayment.]

### 2.3 Proposal

The proposal from the foster carer and Fostering Manager will need to demonstrate that the placement falls within one of the priority groups as defined in paragraph 2.5 or that the placement is a long-term placement.

### 2.4 Criteria

The eligibility for an interest free loan for building works under this Scheme only applies to home owners and in most cases freehold owners only. In order for the foster carer to be eligible for the funding they must also meet the following criteria:

- The foster carer must have provided at least 12 months of foster care for CBC's children and young people and had a positive annual review
  - There has been no standard of care issues within the last 12 months
  - The foster carer is willing to take "hard to place" children (e.g. teenagers, sibling groups, those with challenging behaviours, or complex disability needs)
- Or
- The works will enable a child to have a long term/permanent placement with that family which could not otherwise be possible.

2.4.1 Loans under this Scheme will not be available for those not meeting the criteria set out above

### 2.5 Priority

In order to prioritise funding, the following priorities apply:

- **Priority 1** - Foster carers who can offer placements to:
  - o Sibling groups
  - o Children aged 12 years old and above
  - o Permanent placements
- **Priority 2** - Foster carers who can offer placements to:
  - o 5 - 9-year olds
- **Priority 3** - Foster carers who can offer placements to:
  - o Under 5-year olds

Applications will be considered in time order (a first come basis) then in the priority order above (i.e. all applications being considered at the same time will be ranked according to priority and those in Priority 1 will be considered first etc). Once the allocation is used there will be no further commitments during the year subject to additional funding being provided.

### 2.6. Information required in support of an application

The proposal must include the following information:

- Legal ownership of the premises via up to date Land Registry documentation together with the consent of any mortgagee or other chargeholder, and any consent form Landlords/shared equity owners etc to be obtained and supplied by the applicant, or their solicitor or by the Council's legal services at the applicant's cost.
- An outline of works to be conducted is required. This needs to cover all known major items as it will be used for setting the budget. A copy of the plans that have been drawn up by a builder will also need to be included.
- Confirmation that once the building works are complete the property will conform to the appropriate Building Regulations, health and safety legislation and all other appropriate legislation
- Evidence that consultation with building control has taken place together with any outcome
- Quotation of costs -three quotations from approved builders is required.
- Financial evidence that the foster carer is able to make repayments from an additional source in the event that they do not have a foster placement for some time through no fault of their own and remain available and willing to take placements (*see paragraphs 2.3.8.1 and 2.3.8.2 for more information*). This evidence will need to include:
  - o Last 3 months bank statements
  - o List of incomings and outgoings
  - o Proof of carer income i.e. payslips
  - o Recent credit check (Credit checks can be conducted online free of charge, recommended site <https://www.noddle.co.uk/>)

## 2.7 Approval process

The Fostering Manager, where necessary, will consult with finance, building control, asset and other departments in relation to risk and other factors to form a decision as to the appropriateness of the proposal and implementation. Legal Services should be consulted at an early stage to ensure the property is suitable for a legal charge. The proposal will then be taken to the Resource Panel for approval of funding. If funding is agreed, the Fostering Manager will write to the foster carer to advise of the decision within 14 days.

1. Whether the proposal is agreed or not
2. If agreed, the agreed loan amount, when available and repayment requirements and other information that is required
3. If applicable, reasons for agreeing a lower level of loan than applied for
4. If not agreed, reasons for refusal of the loan

To ensure consistency of decision making and loans, foster carers should submit all requests and proposals for loans for building works through the Fostering Manager

using the application template in the Appendix to this Scheme. If agreed in principle the Fostering Manager will then submit to the Resource Panel for review and a final decision as detailed within this Scheme.

- 2.8. Consideration will be taken with all relevant stakeholders within the Council once the Scheme has been approved.

**2.9 Contracts**

A contract will be provided by the Council’s solicitors between the Council and the foster carer and any other owners of the property in order to regulate the funding arrangement, stipulate what the funding is being provided for, the level of funding and the repayment arrangements.

Foster carers that apply for and are granted funding for building works will be expected to provide their services as a Central Bedfordshire Council foster carer for a period of no less than 5 years. If a foster carer chooses to resign, or their approval terminated during the 5-year period, then a full repayment of outstanding amounts under the loan will be required within 6 months of their resignation, de-registration or termination. The outstanding amount will accrue interest at the Bank of England current bank base rate in force at the time and will be added to the loan. If the loan is not repaid within 6 months, then interest will continue to accrue at 1% above the Bank of England base rate until the loan is repaid in full. The Council will consider enforcing its charge by way of an order for sale in the event the loan is not repaid within 12 months.

- 2.10 If a foster carer refuses 3 consecutive placements without an acceptable explanation as to why, then full repayment of outstanding amounts under the loan will be required within 6 months of the 3<sup>rd</sup> refusal with interest accruing at the Bank of England current bank base rate in force at the time. If the loan is not repaid within 6 months of the 3<sup>rd</sup> refusal, then interest will continue to accrue at 1% above the Bank of England base rate until the loan is repaid in full. The Council will consider enforcing its charge by way of an order for sale in the event the loan is not repaid within 12 months.

Repayments will be calculated in relation to the loan amount and the agreed repayment term. Please see below an example of sliding scale repayments:

**Monthly Repayments**  
**Amount of Loan**  
**Repayment Period (Months)**

Amount of Loan	Repayment Period (Months)	Amount Payable (Monthly)
£25,000	12	£2,084
	24	£1,042
	36	£695
	48	£521

	<b>60</b>	£417
£30,000	<b>12</b>	£2,500
	<b>24</b>	£1,250
	<b>36</b>	£834
	<b>48</b>	£625
	<b>60</b>	£500
The above is based on various loan amounts and payments over 1 to 5 years. In some circumstances an adjustment to the repayment period will be considered.		

**2.11 How will repayments be made**

Repayments will be made by deducting from the foster carers fee which is £100 per week – Tier 1 or £175 per week - Tier 2. If the foster carer is without a foster placement, which could be for a number of weeks or months, they must ensure that they have sufficient income available to meet the monthly repayments of the loan in these circumstances. Repayments should be paid to CBC by direct debit.

In addition, they will be advised to consider taking out either short-term or long-term income protection in the event that they are unable to make repayments for any reason i.e. accident or sickness. Taking out such protection may be helpful for someone who wants to cover their monthly income, so they do not fall behind with monthly outgoings should they be unable to work. They will be advised to seek independent advice if they are unsure.

**2.12 What happens if a foster carer cannot afford to make any repayments?**

If a foster carer has missed 2 or more monthly repayments, then the Accounts Receivable team will consider taking the appropriate action to reclaim the outstanding balance of the loan in full. This may include the commencement of legal proceedings for repayment of the loan amount outstanding or for an order for sale under the legal charge. Such action will incur further costs and interest which will be payable by the foster carer.

*Any concerns about the building works or the loan (including repayment) should be raised with the supervising social worker as soon as possible in order to discuss the situation and avoid unnecessary action. In exceptional circumstances such as illness or redundancy a revised payment plan or different foster care placements may be considered.*

**2.13 Legal considerations**

The legal charge on the Property will need to be executed by all joint owners and will require the consent of any lender/mortgagee or charge holder. The Applicant would be responsible for obtaining the consent of any chargeholder.

Where a property is already mortgaged an assessment would need to be made of whether there is sufficient equity remaining in the property for security for the Council's charge. This would be by the Applicant obtaining a statement of the amount outstanding on existing mortgages and a reliable valuation of the property.

Only freehold properties would be eligible. Leasehold properties and shared ownership properties are problematic. Structural changes would need consent of the freeholder and extensions would be likely to go beyond the existing demise. Even if the landlord/shared owner agreed to the works they would also benefit from the works but would be unlikely to agree to encumber their interest with the Council's charge.

**APPENDICES:**

Appendix 1: Foster Carer Funding for Building Works Application Form

Appendix 2: Examples of Need

Appendix 1:

**Foster Carer Section**

*(To be completed by the fostering household applying for funding. Once this and the supervising social worker section has been completed, it will be submitted to the Fostering Team Manager)*

<b>1. Personal details of the fostering household applying for funding:</b>					
1.1	First Name (s):				
1.2	Surname (s):				
1.3	Address				
1.4	Supervising Social Worker				
<b>2</b>	<b>Criteria Questions</b>				
2.1	<b>What building works are you requesting funding for?</b> <i>(Loft conversion, extension or other? Please specify.)</i>				
2.2	<b>What is your reason for requesting funding?</b> <i>(e.g. additional space for hard to place children, to enable a child to have a long term/permanent placement which would not be otherwise possible. Please provide details if possible)</i>				
2.3	<b>How long have you been a foster carer with CBC</b>	<b>Years</b>		<b>Months</b>	
2.4	<b>What placements are you able to/will you be able to offer to CBC Children</b>	<b>Now</b>		<b>With Funding</b>	
		<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
	Siblings				
	Children aged 12 and over				
	Children aged 5-9				
	Children under the age of 5				
	Permanent Placement				

2.5	<p><b>Does your Fostering approval categories cover the prepared placements?</b>                  If not, what Fostering Panel will this be presented to, to address any variations.</p>	
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**Please ensure that you enclose all of the following information as part of your application for funding.**

Supporting Documentation	Attached/comment
Official Copies of the Title to your property from the Land Registry – Register and Title Plan if registered. If unregistered the original deeds or certified copies.	
An outline of the works to be conducted <i>(This needs to cover all known major items)</i>	
Copy of the plans that have been drawn up by a builder <i>(at this stage the plans can be drawn up by a builder as a guide to what is possible)</i>	
Estimate of costs <i>(from 3 reputable builders)</i>	
Confirmation that once the conversion/extension is complete that the property will conform to the Standards set out in the H & S and Building Regulations Control	
Last 3 months bank statements	
List of incomings and outgoings	
Proof of household income (i.e. payslips)	

### Declaration

I hereby agree that an amount of £100 per week or £175 per week (delete as applicable) can be deducted from my foster carer fee for the repayment of the loan.

Name: (Printed) \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



<b>Social Worker Report</b>		
<b>1. Reason for funding request:</b> <i>(State whether the funding is for a loft conversion, extension or other – give details)</i>		
<b>2. State if the applicant(s) meet the relevant criteria?</b>		
Criteria	Yes/No	Any additional information that may support the application
3.1	Approved foster carers	
3.2	Has there been any standard of care issues within the last 18 months?	
3.3	Is the fostering household willing to take 'difficult to place' children? (E.g. teenagers, sibling groups, those with challenging behaviours)	
3.4	Will the works enable a child to have a long term/permanent placement with that family that would not otherwise be possible?	
<b>3. Which priority do the applicants(s) sit within? Delete as applicable</b>		
	<b>Priority Information</b> <b>Foster Carers that can offer placements to:</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>
One	Sibling Groups	
	Children over the age of 11	
	Permanent Placements	
Two	5-9 Year olds	
Three	Under 5 year olds	
<b>4. Has the following information been included in the applicant(s) application?</b>		
	<b>Information</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>
5.1	Confirmation from the Council's Legal Service that there is nothing on the property title to prevent the Council registering a charge to protect the loan. [This should be carried out at the beginning of the process]	

	(ii) Confirmation of consent from any existing mortgage lender or chargeholder and any landlord or shared equity owner	
5.2	An outline of the works to be conducted <i>(This needs to cover all known major items)</i>	
5.3	Copy of the plans that have been drawn up by a builder <i>(at this stage the plans can be drawn up by a builder as a guide to what is possible)</i>	
5.4	Estimate of costs (from 3 reputable builders)	
5.6	Confirmation that once the conversion/extension is complete that the property will conform to the Standards set out in the H & S and Building Regulations Control	
5.7	Last 3 months bank statements	
5.8	List of incomings and outgoings	
5.9	Proof of household income (i.e. payslips)	
6.	Has the foster carers approval to care for additional children or children on a permanent basis been presented to Fostering Panel (this will be required before proceeding with the application.	
7.	<b>Recommendation of Social Worker:</b> <b>Name:</b>	

Declaration

I hereby verify that I have checked the application and I am satisfied that the applicant(s) fit the criteria for the required loan.

Name: (Printed) \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Recommendation of Fostering Manager

(In liaison with the Practice Manager)

1.	<b>Do you recommend the applicant(s) is/are suitable candidates to receive funding?</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>
	<b>Notes:</b>	
2.	<b>Does the applicant(s) have the relevant fostering approval to proceed?</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>
	<b>Notes</b>	
3.	<b>What is the recommended funding budget?</b>	<b>£</b>
	<b>Notes:</b>	

I confirm that I have checked the application and I am satisfied that the applicant(s) fit the criteria for the required loan.

Name: (Printed) \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Date of Resource Panel Application:</b>	
<b>Notes:</b>	
<b>Decision of Resource Panel:</b>	<b>Agreed / Declined</b>
<b>Notes:</b>	

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## Appendix 2.

### Foster Carer Loans Scheme – Examples of Need

#### Examples 1:

One of our current foster carers is keen to provide care for a sibling group of 3 (her current accommodation means she can only take 2). If we were to be able to offer her an interest free loan she would happily extend her property to accommodate a further child. This would not only mean she could provide an additional placement, but it would also allow her to look after a larger sibling group which would be a valuable resource to the department. Sibling groups are always difficult to accommodate as not many carers have 3 free bedrooms empty and available for fostering. This means that often children are split up from their siblings or, when separation is not suitable, the children are placed together in external more expensive placements. The difference in cost of an in-house placement for 3 children compared to an IFA is significant. An in-house placement for a sibling group of 3 children aged 5-10 would cost between £788 - £1,000 a week compared to £2,400 a week in an Independent Fostering Agency (IFA). Therefore, offering a free interest loan to this foster carer would be an invest to save making a minimum saving of £1,300 per week whilst the carer repays her loan.

#### Financial Implications:

- 5-year-old coming into care until 18<sup>th</sup> Birthday = 13 years.
- **In House placement costs** £379 per week (based on average costs) \* 52 = £19,708 \* 13 years = £256,204
- **IFA placement costs** £800 per week (based on average costs) \* 52 = = £41,600 \* 13 years = £540,800

**Savings if we can offer a loan for an extra bedroom over the 13 years = £284,596.**

#### Example 2:

Another current example we have is regarding a couple Family and Friends Foster Carers who care for a baby from their extended family. The carers currently live in a 3 bedroomed home with their 2 children aged 12 and 8. In order to keep the baby within its family the carers need financial support to install a partition in one of the bedrooms so that each child can have their own room. Initially the baby has been sharing with the 8-year-old, however this has had a significant impact on him as he has lost his privacy and space and his mother can no longer spend time reading him a bedtime story in bed in case they wake the baby. Also, this arrangement is not sustainable long term.

The carers are providing excellent care to the baby and wish to care for him on a long-term basis, but their accommodation doesn't support this or meet the baby or

carers son's needs. They are on a low income and cannot afford to pay for the work to be completed, however if they were to be provided with an interest free loan this would allow for the work to be done.

This would be a great outcome for this baby who would be able to remain living within his extended family on a permanent basis.

On this example, the cost incurred by the Local Authority would be the cost of paying the foster carers' allowance until he reaches his 18<sup>th</sup> birthday as we would do for any other child who is placed with Foster Carers. However, the outcome for the child would be better as he would remain to live with his family promoting his identity, sense of belonging and attachment, which in turn will contribute to a stable placement, reduce the risk of break down and the need of more expensive placements down the line.

This option is also in the best interest of the child as it will allow him to stay with the family rather than being adopted when there are family who are able and willing to offer him a forever family

## Central Bedfordshire Council

Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny

20 November 2019

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### Outcome of the schools funding formula consultation 2019/20

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**Report of:** Cllr Steve Dixon  
([Steven.Dixon@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:Steven.Dixon@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk))

**Responsible Director(s):** Sue Harrison  
([Sue.Harrison@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:Sue.Harrison@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk))

**This report relates to a decision that is Key/Non-Key**

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### Purpose of this report

The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) for Local Authorities is allocated in four blocks: schools; high needs; early years; and central schools services. Each is calculated on the basis of a different national formula.

The local authority must engage in open and transparent consultation with all maintained schools and academies in its area, as well as with its schools forum, about any proposed changes to the local funding formula for the schools block including the method, principles and rules adopted. The consultation with schools/academies commenced on 19 September 2018 and ended on 19 October 2018. This paper sets out the outcomes of the consultation based on the responses received and the local schools funding formula for the 2019/20 financial year.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to:

1. note and comment on the outcomes of the consultation.

### Issues

#### 1 The national funding formula for 2019/20

- 1.1 On 17 July 2017, the Secretary of State for Education announced changes to school funding arrangements to support the move to a National Funding Formula (NFF).

- 1.2 It was recognised that the introduction of the national funding formula represented a significant change. To provide stability for local authorities and schools through the transition, it was previously confirmed that for 2018/19 and 2019/20 the local authority will continue to set a local schools formula in consultation with schools. These local formulae determine individual schools' budgets. To continue to support a smooth transition to the NFF, the Department has confirmed this will continue in 2020/21.
- 1.3 Any consultation should include a demonstration of the effect of modelling such changes on individual maintained schools and academies. Local authorities are required to communicate proposed formula changes to all bodies affected by the change. The authority is responsible for making the final decisions on the formula and must ensure there is time to gain political approval before the deadline for submission to the Education Funding Agency on 21 January 2019.
- 1.4 In Central Bedfordshire the move to the NFF would involve some significant changes to the current allocation against the 14 factors identified by DfE. Therefore, we agreed to work with schools to begin to move towards the NFF in 2018/19 based on the factors that government guidance suggested were unlikely to change until the full NFF is adopted.
- 1.5 A consultation was carried out with all schools between 19 September and 19 October 2018. The consultation asked schools to respond to 16 questions relating to 2019/20 schools block funding.
- 1.6 There are two 'compulsory factors' for the 2019/20 schools block:
  - **basic entitlement** (called the age weighted pupil unit, abbreviated to AWPU): the proposal is that this will be funded by the remaining budget after applying all the other proposed factors; and
  - **deprivation**, for which no changes are proposed.
- 1.7 There are a wide range of optional factors for: Looked After Children; pupil mobility; the lump sum; split sites; rates; sparsity; and exceptional premises factors. The council does not propose any changes to these.
- 1.8 The key changes and elements proposed for 2019/20 were as follows:
  - It was proposed that the Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) be set at minus one percent – in 2018/19 it was set at zero percent.
  - It was proposed to request Schools Forum to agree the transfer of 0.5 percent of the schools' block into the high needs block to meet the demand for spend – 0.5 percent was transferred in 2018/19.
  - It was proposed that the Prior Attainment factor is applied at 50 percent of the NFF rate to smooth the transition to the full NNF.
- 1.9 All of the other funding factors remained unchanged from the previous year.
- 1.10 Appendix 1 of the consultation document showed the implications of these changes and the effect they will have on all mainstream schools - this was the model we consulted on.
- 1.11 Following discussions at the Schools Forum on 13 September a number of models, in addition to the one being consulted on, were also shared with schools in appendix 2 of the consultation document to help them in considering their responses to the consultation. These showed the impact if:
  - the MFG was applied at zero percent;
  - the transfer to the high needs block was not applied; and
  - the Prior Attainment factor was applied at 100 percent, rather than 50 percent.



1.12 All of the modelling was based on the October 2017 pupil count and were indicative figures only. They do not represent a final budget figure.

## 2 Central Bedfordshire's proposed formula for 2019/20

2.1 The formula for the current (2018/19) financial year forms the starting point for the 2019/20 proposals. The table below provides a summary of the proposed changes for 2019/20 based on the model being consulted on and a comparison with the previous year.

Factor		2018/19	2019/20
A basic per pupil entitlement	Primary AWPU	£3,066	£2,960
	Key Stage 3 AWPU	£4,328	£4,222
	Key Stage 4 AWPU	£5,037	£4,931
Deprivation	Primary and Secondary FSM	£440	£440
	Primary FSM6	£540	£540
	Secondary FSM6	£785	£785
	Primary IDACI band A	£575	£575
	Primary IDACI band B	£420	£420
	Primary IDACI band C	£390	£390
	Primary IDACI band D	£360	£360
	Primary IDACI band E	£240	£240
	Primary IDACI band F	£200	£200
	Secondary IDACI band A	£810	£810
	Secondary IDACI band B	£600	£600
	Secondary IDACI band C	£560	£560
	Secondary IDACI band D	£515	£515
	Secondary IDACI band E	£390	£390
	Secondary IDACI band F	£290	£290
	Looked After Children		£0
Prior Attainment	Primary	£0	£511
	Secondary	£0	£775
EAL		£0	£0
Lump Sum		£110,000	£110,000
Split Site		£120,000	£120,000
Rates		Based on actual	Based on actual
PFI		£0	£0
Pupil Mobility		£0	£0
Exceptional Premises factors	Joint Use	£98,330	£98,330
	Rent	£37,760	£37,760
Sparsity		£0	£0
MFG		0%	-1.0%
Capping		2.27%	4.41%

2.2 School gains have been capped by 4.41% (this is calculated in line with the MFG on a per pupil guarantee). The cap is necessary to fund the required protection calculated for MFG.

### **3. Summary of responses**

3.1 Overall, 16 responses were received via the online consultation. The table below summarises the responses to each question.

## Summary of results

### Consultation responses

	Lower	Primary	Middle	Secondary	Upper	Other*	TOTAL
Academy	2	1	1		1	1	6
Maintained	7	1		1		1	10
	9	2	1	1	1	2	<b>16</b>

*Combined school*

#	Consultation question	Responses
4	How far do you agree or disagree that basic per-pupil entitlement (AWPU) is the balance of funding, taking into account all other factors and the minimum levels permissible in line with the Department's guidance?	<p>3 strongly agree</p> <p>8 agree</p> <p>3 neither agree nor disagree</p> <p>1 disagree</p> <p>1 strongly disagree</p>

5	How far do you agree or disagree that the deprivation funding continues to be aligned with the national funding formula, as in 2018/2019?	<p><i>3 strongly agree</i></p> <p><i>9 agree</i></p> <p><i>2 neither agree nor disagree</i></p> <p><i>2 disagree</i></p>
6	How far do you agree or disagree that the LAC factor continues to be aligned with the national funding formula, as in 2018/19?	<p><i>3 strongly agree</i></p> <p><i>13 agree</i></p> <p><i>- neither agree nor disagree</i></p> <p><i>- disagree</i></p> <p><i>- strongly disagree</i></p>
7	How far do you agree or disagree with the proposal to introduce this factor for 2019/20?	<p><i>4 strongly agree</i></p> <p><i>4 agree</i></p> <p><i>3 neither agree nor disagree</i></p> <p><i>2 disagree</i></p> <p><i>3 strongly disagree</i></p>
8	How far do you agree or disagree with the transitional rate set at 50% of the NFF?	<p><i>1 strongly agree</i></p>

		<p><i>5 agree</i></p> <p><i>6 neither agree nor disagree</i></p> <p><i>3 disagree</i></p> <p><i>1 strongly disagree</i></p>
9	How far do you agree or disagree with the proposal to continue to exclude English as an Additional Language (EAL) as a factor in the funding formula for 2019/20?	<p><i>- strongly agree</i></p> <p><i>10 agree</i></p> <p><i>4 neither agree nor disagree</i></p> <p><i>- disagree</i></p> <p><i>2 strongly disagree</i></p>
10	How far do you agree or disagree with the proposal to continue excluding pupil mobility as a factor from the funding formula for 2019/20?	<p><i>- strongly agree</i></p> <p><i>6 agree</i></p> <p><i>7 neither agree nor disagree</i></p> <p><i>2 disagree</i></p> <p><i>1 strongly disagree</i></p>

11	How far do you agree or disagree that the lump sum factor continues to be aligned with the national funding formula, as in 2018/19?	<p>3 strongly agree</p> <p>9 agree</p> <p>2 neither agree nor disagree</p> <p>2 disagree</p> <p>- strongly disagree</p>
12	How far do you agree or disagree with the continuation of funding schools through a split site factor?	<p>1 strongly agree</p> <p>3 agree</p> <p>8 neither agree nor disagree</p> <p>3 disagree</p> <p>1 strongly disagree</p>
13	How far do you agree or disagree with the continuation of funding rates on an actual basis?	<p>7 strongly agree</p> <p>5 agree</p> <p>4 neither agree nor disagree</p> <p>- disagree</p> <p>- strongly disagree</p>

14	How far do you agree or disagree with the proposal to continue not to include a sparsity factor for 2019/20?	<p>- <i>strongly agree</i></p> <p>10 <i>agree</i></p> <p>5 <i>neither agree nor disagree</i></p> <p>1 <i>disagree</i></p> <p>- <i>strongly disagree</i></p>
15	How far do you agree or disagree with the proposal to continue funding the joint use arrangement?	<p>- <i>strongly agree</i></p> <p>2 <i>agree</i></p> <p>12 <i>neither agree nor disagree</i></p> <p>2 <i>disagree</i></p> <p>- <i>strongly disagree</i></p>
16	How far do you agree or disagree with continuing a rent factor for schools that meet the criteria?	<p>- <i>strongly agree</i></p> <p>6 <i>agree</i></p> <p>9 <i>neither agree nor disagree</i></p> <p>1 <i>disagree</i></p> <p>- <i>strongly disagree</i></p>

17	How far do you agree or disagree with the proposal to fund the Minimum Funding Guarantee at minus 1.0%?	<p>- <i>strongly agree</i></p> <p>10 <i>agree</i></p> <p>3 <i>neither agree nor disagree</i></p> <p>2 <i>disagree</i></p> <p>- <i>strongly disagree</i></p>
18	How far do you agree or disagree with the proposal to continue to cap those schools that gain in order to fund the Minimum Funding Guarantee?	<p>1 <i>strongly agree</i></p> <p>13 <i>agree</i></p> <p>- <i>neither agree nor disagree</i></p> <p>1 <i>disagree</i></p> <p>1 <i>strongly disagree</i></p>
19	How far do you agree or disagree with the proposal to transfer 0.5% from the School Block to the High Needs Block?	<p>- <i>strongly agree</i></p> <p>5 <i>agree</i></p> <p>1 <i>neither agree nor disagree</i></p> <p>7 <i>disagree</i></p> <p>3 <i>strongly disagree</i></p>



- 3.2 Whilst the majority of responses received did not support the transfer of funding from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block (question 19 in the table above), the very small response rate mean that objections have only been received from a small proportion of Central Bedfordshire's schools (7.5%).
- 3.3 The High Needs Funding Operational Guidance 19/20 states that '*We expect that most proposals by local authorities to move funding from their schools block will arise as a result of pressures on their high needs budgets.*'
- 3.4 In line with many other local authorities the High Needs Block in Central Bedfordshire is under substantial pressure. The anticipated overspend in 18/19 is currently forecast to be £1.6m.
- 3.5 The f40 organisation estimates that across England High Needs Blocks are underfunded by a total of approx. £1.5bn.
- 3.6 The two major areas contributing to the overspend are a growth in Education Health and Care Plans EHCPs, which have increased by 20% over the last three years, and the changing age range for supporting young people beyond the age of 19 up to age 25.
- 3.7 The High Needs Block allocation to local authorities has not been updated sufficiently to cover the change in requirements on the age range, due to the anticipated introduction of the National Funding Formula.
- 3.8 In order to fund the overspend in 2018/19 previously accumulated reserves from other areas of the DSG will need to be used e.g. Early Years and Growth Fund, along with underspends in 2018/19. This clearly poses a risk as these will no longer be available to fund requirements in any block going forward.
- 3.9 A number of measures have been introduced in order to begin mitigating the overspend. However, many of these will not have any significant impact until 2019/20 and beyond.
- 3.10 Despite these changes it is anticipated that the High Needs Block funding will not support all the requirements for the spend in 2019/20 and therefore a transfer is essential to support the children and young people in Central Bedfordshire who have a Special Educational Need and are attending both mainstream and special schools, as well as alternative education provision.
- 3.11 At the point at which the National Funding Formula comes on stream it is important that the High Needs Block funding is more realistic and a transfer in 2019/20 will help to establish this as a point of principle.
- 3.12 A formal request is therefore being made to enable this transfer to be take place with the support of the Schools Forum, in order not to need to apply to the Secretary of State for disapplication.

### **Council Priorities**

- 4.1 The budgets described in this report support two of the council's priorities, listed below
  - a) **Improving education and skills**
  - b) **Protecting the vulnerable; improving wellbeing**

### **Corporate Implications**

- 5.1 There are several corporate implications. The first is the reputation of the council, through public perception of schools in its area – and funding is critical to schools' performance and pupil progress and outcomes.

- 5.2 The others are largely financial risks for the council. These arise from the lack of flexibility, when the 'hard' formula is implemented, to seek de-delegation or top-slicing from the schools' block. There are now two LA blocks – high needs and central – that must be contained within budget, unless they are funded from council budgets.

## **Legal Implications**

- 6.1 The formal terms of grant given by the secretary of state under section 16 of the Education Act, 2002 require that the specific grant (the DSG) must be used in support of the schools' budget as defined in the School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations [2018]. It can be used for no other purpose. The council has a legal duty to set the four blocks of the DSG by 21 January 2019.

## **Financial and Risk Implications**

- 7.2 The DSG is a council budget, and it is the responsibility of the council to set the schools budget annually. Under current regulations, the council can seek the agreement of Schools Forum to top-slice up to 0.5 per cent of the schools block and transfer to the High Needs Block and the council has done this in the current year 2018/19. This will not be permitted when the NFF is implemented. There is a risk to the council if either Schools Forum or the Secretary of State for Education does not agree to the transfer of 0.5 per cent of the schools block to fund the High Needs Block.

## **Equalities Implications**

- 8.1 Central Bedfordshire Council has a statutory duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and foster good relations in respect of nine protected characteristics; age disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The uplift in funding for schools with disadvantaged cohorts will give those schools more resources to meet these pupils' needs.
- 8.2 Council officers have considered the needs of a range of vulnerable groups, including children looked after by the council, pupils with low prior attainment, English as an additional language and children who have high rates of mobility.

## **Conclusion and next Steps**

- 9.1 It is the council's decision to set the local schools funding formula, in consultation with the Schools Forum. Following the consultation with schools the council proposes to set the MFG at minus one percent and the Prior Attainment factor at 50 percent of the NFF in 2019/20. The Schools Forum is being asked for their agreement to transfer 0.5 percent from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block to meet current demand.

## **Appendices**

Appendix A – Schools Funding Consultation Report

Appendix 1 – Modelling School Funding Proposal

## Appendix 2 – Local Schools Funding Formula

### **Background Papers**

None

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Appendix A

# Proposed School Funding for 2019/20

Consultation document

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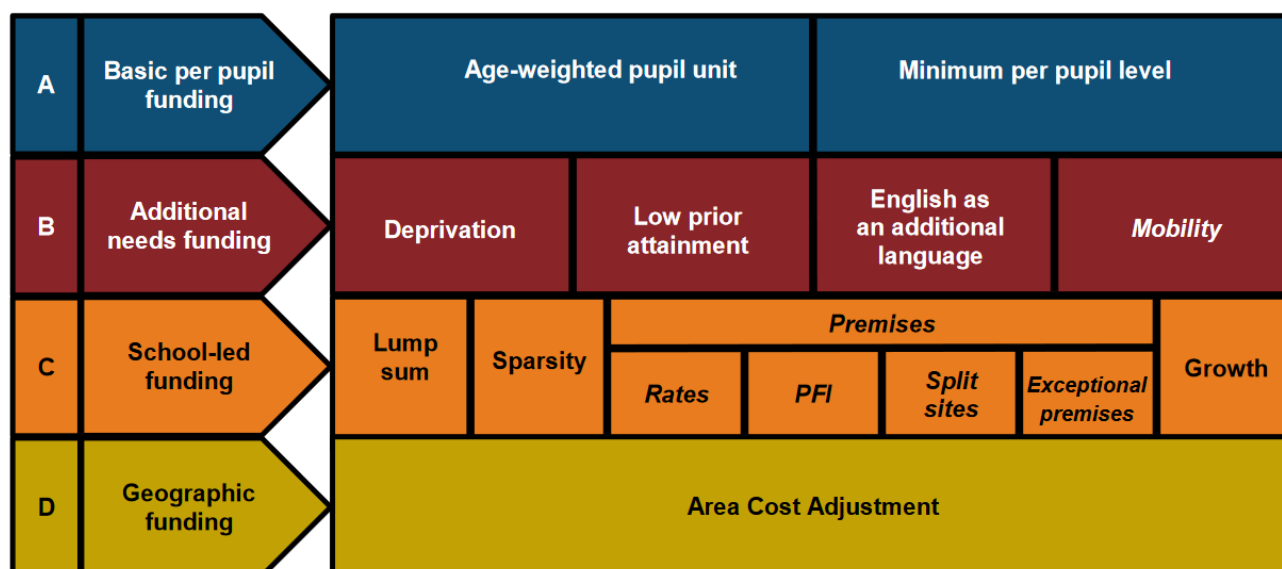
Please read this consultation document and then answer the questions on our proposals for school funding in 2019/20 by completing our [online form](#). All responses must be received by 19<sup>th</sup> October 2018.

## Introduction

1. On the 24<sup>th</sup> July 2018 The Minister of State for School Standards, Nick Gibb, announced details of the school revenue funding for 2019/20, through three of the four blocks of the dedicated schools grant; the school block, the high needs block, and the central school services block. Funding allocations for the early years block will be published later in the year.
2. School funding has already benefitted from the introduction of the National Funding Formula (NFF) in April 2018. Resources are now being distributed according to a formula based on the individual needs and characteristics of schools. As announced last year, the department has updated elements of the formula for 2019/20; in particular a new approach for allocating funding to local authorities to support schools with significant in-year growth, which brings this funding into a formula rather than allocating on a historical basis.
3. It is recognised that the introduction of the national funding formula represented a significant change. To provide stability for local authorities and schools through the transition, it was previously confirmed that for 2018/19 and 2019/20 the local authority will continue to set a local schools formula, in consultation with schools. **These local formulae determine individual schools' budgets.** To continue to support a smooth transition to the NFF, the Department has confirmed this will continue in **2020/21**.

## The schools national funding formula in 2019/20

The structure of the schools national funding formula in 2019/20 is not changing. The figure below shows the 14 factors that comprise the formula.



## Updating the schools national funding formula in 2019/20

4. The updated allocations are based on the latest available pupil characteristics data. By updating the data driving the formula on an annual basis, it is ensuring that the school funding system is responsive to changing levels of need across different areas.
5. Three key areas of the formula have been updated in 2019/20, in line with the commitments set out last year. These are:
  - **The minimum per pupil funding levels** - for secondary schools will increase to £4,800 and for primary schools will increase to £3,500.
  - **The funding floor** – will increase to ensure that all schools will attract at least a 1% gain per pupil against their 2017/18 baselines.
  - **The gains cap** - will increase to 6.09% per pupil against 2017/18 baselines.

## Growth funding for 2019/20

6. Growth funding enables local authorities to support schools with significant in-year growth, which is not immediately recognised by the lagged funding system. Local Authorities **will continue** to manage their growth funding locally in 2019/20 as they did in 2018/19.
7. In 2018/19 growth funding allocations were based on planned spend in 2017/18. Allocating growth funding on a historical basis is not a long-term solution as it assumes growth will follow the same pattern as previous years. In 2019/20 the Department is introducing a formulaic approach to allocations based on actual growth that individual local authorities are experiencing.
8. For each local authority the growth factor will allocate:
  - £1,370 for each primary 'growth' pupil
  - £2,050 for secondary 'growth' pupil
  - £65,000 for each new school

Growth allocations for 2019/20 will be based on pupil data from the October 2018 census compared against pupil data from the October 2017 census.

9. It is not expected that local authorities use these rates in their local arrangements for funding growth. The growth factor in the NFF is a proxy for overall growth costs at a local authority level and not at the level of individual schools. It is not expected that local authority spending on growth will match the sum allocated and the local authority will have the ability to 'top slice' the overall school block funding to fund pupil growth.

## Minor changes to the 2019/20 schools' formula

10. The following minor changes have been applied in 2019/20:



- Protection for new schools to ensure these schools are funded on a fair basis compared to other schools in the local authority
- Adjusting the Primary Low Prior Attainment (LPA) factor value from £1,050 to £1,022 but maintaining the total proportion of spend on Primary LPA
- Changing the minimum per pupil funding levels for middle schools, Key Stage 3-only and Key Stage 4-only schools. For 2019/20 a new minimum per pupil for KS4 only schools of £5,100 and both KS3 year groups in middle schools and KS3-only schools of £4,600
- Premises and mobility factors; will be on the same approach as in 2018/19 (premises - rates, split sites and exceptional circumstances) and based on 2018/19 spend. However, the longer-term approach is continuing to be considered

## Block movements in 2019/20

11. The local authority has flexibility to transfer funding to other areas, particularly high needs, where there is a strong rationale for doing so. These transfers will continue to be limited to 0.5% of the school block and will require the agreement of the schools forum and consultation with all schools. Reasonable requests for exceptions to these rules will be considered.
12. With effect from 2019/20 the Department intends to tighten the rules governing deficits in local authorities' overall DSG accounts. It is intended that a report will be required where a DSG deficit of more than 1% as at March 2019, to explain the local authority's plans for bringing the account back into balance. This report will need to be discussed with the schools forum.

## Next steps on the schools NFF

13. Local authorities will continue to determine local formula in 2020/21.
14. Work will continue with stakeholders to consider technical improvements to the following factors:
  - **Growth** – recognising concerns about the lagged nature of this funding and to explore options in the future including the potential use of projections and in-year adjustments
  - **Mobility** – developing an accurate and robust indicator to replace the use of historic spending in 2020/21
  - **Premises** – explore how funding for these factors could be allocated according to a formula in the future
  - **Low prior attainment** – consider longer term changes to improve targeting of funding to need
  - **Sparsity** – continue to consider how the distance measure used in sparsity funding could be refined in the future

## Central Bedfordshire's current 2018/19 funding formula for schools

15. The table below reflects the distribution of the School Block DSG to individual schools in **2018/2019**:

Factor			
		Primary	Secondary
A basic per pupil entitlement	Primary AWPU	£3,074	
	KS3 AWPU	£4,336	
	KS4 AWPU	£5,045	
Deprivation	FSM	£440	£440
	FSM6	£540	£785
	IDACI Band F	£200	£290
	IDACI Band E	£240	£390
	IDACI Band D	£360	£515
	IDACI Band C	£390	£580
	IDACI Band B	£420	£600
	IDACI Band A	£575	£810
Looked After Children		£0	
Prior Attainment		£0	
EAL		£0	
Lump Sum		£110,000	
Split Site		£120,000	
Rates		Based on actual	
Pupil Mobility		£0	
Exceptional Premises factors	Joint Use	£98,330	
	Rent (school specific total)	£40,060	
Sparsity		£0	
MFG		0%	

## Reviewing and consulting on the pre-16 funding formula 2019-20

16. The local authority must engage in open and transparent consultation with all maintained schools and academies in the area, as well as with its school forum, about any proposed changes to the local funding formula including the method, principles and rules adopted.

17. Any consultation should include a demonstration of the effect of modelling such changes on individual maintained schools and academies. Local authorities should communicate proposed formula changes to all bodies affected by the change. **The authority is responsible for making the final decisions on the formula** and must ensure there is time to gain political approval before the APT deadline in January 2019. Political ratification means approval in line with the authority's local scheme of delegation.

18. Local authorities should also ensure that enough time is allowed for wider consultation with schools, agreement by their school forum, and political approval if they wish to transfer funding out of the schools block, or submit a disapplication request.
19. We are keen to hear your views before we make our final decision on the funding arrangements for 2019/20. You will notice that we have included questions throughout this document to support you in thinking about these changes. To find out how you can respond to these questions, please read the consultation section at the end of this document.
20. The table below provides a summary of the timetable for implementation of the 2019/20 funding arrangements.

When	Activity
19 September 2018	Consultation with schools commences
1 October 2018	Discussion with School Forum
19 October 2018	Consultation with schools ends
20 November 2018	CBC Overview and Scrutiny
30 November 2018	Deadline for submission for dis-applications.
4 December 2018	CBC Executive to approve the 2019/20 Funding distribution
December 2018	DfE confirms DSG Schools Block for 2019/20
21 January 2019	Councils submit final pro-forma to Education Funding Agency
28 February 2019	Council issues Individual School Budgets

## Proposed Formula Factors for Distributing the 2019/20 Schools Block

### Compulsory Factors

#### Basic per-pupil entitlement (AWPU)

21. This factor assigns funding on the basis of individual pupils, with the number of pupils for each school or academy based on the October pupil census.
22. Funding is allocated according to an age-weighted pupil unit (AWPU). There is a single rate for primary age pupils, which must be at least £2,000. There may be different rates for key stage 3 and key stage 4, with a minimum of £3,000 for each.
23. The LA proposes that this factor will be funded based on the balance of the overall funding envelope once all other factors within this consultation have been applied. This will take into account the minimum funding levels.

**Question: How far do you agree or disagree that this factor is the balance of funding, taking into account all other factors and the minimum levels permissible in line with the Department's guidance? (Please answer Q4 on the consultation response form).**

### **Deprivation**

24. Local authorities can use free school meals (FSM), the income deprivation affecting children index (IDACI), or both, to calculate the deprivation factor. Eligibility for current free school meals is derived from the previous October census, and Ever6 FSM (pupils entitled to free meals at any time in the last 6 years) is measured at the previous January census. If using FSM, local authorities can choose to use either current or Ever6 FSM, or both.
25. The IDACI measure uses 6 bands and different values can be attached to each band. Different unit values can be used for primary and secondary within each band.
26. In 2018/19 the local authority aligned this factor with the National Funding Formula (see the table in paragraph 16). There are no changes proposed for 2019/20.

**Question: How far do you agree or disagree that the deprivation funding continues to be aligned with the national funding formula, as in 2018/2019?**

**(Please answer Q5 on the consultation response form if applicable).**

### **Optional factors**

27. The council recognises it is important for head teachers and governors to see the effect on their budget of any proposed changes.
28. The key changes for 2019/20 are as follows:
- It is proposed that the Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) be set at minus one percent – in 2018/19 it was set at zero percent
  - It is proposed to request Schools Forum to agree the transfer of 0.5 percent of the schools block into the high needs block to meet the demand for spend – 0.5 percent was transferred in 2018/19
  - It is proposed that the Prior Attainment factor is applied at 50 percent of the national funding formula (NFF) rate to smooth the transition to the full NNF

**Appendix 1 shows the implications of these changes and the effect this will have on all mainstream schools - this is the model we are consulting on.**

29. For comparison purposes, further financial modelling is provided in Appendix 2 to show the impact if:
- the MFG was applied at zero percent
  - the transfer to the high needs block was not applied and
  - the Prior Attainment factor was applied at 100 percent, rather than 50 percent

30. All of the modelling is based on the October 2017 pupil count. These are indicative figures only and are for comparison purposes to be able to assist your response to this consultation. **They do not represent a final budget figure.**

### **Looked After Children (LAC)**

31. A single unit value may be applied for any child who has been looked after for one day or more as recorded on the LA SSSDA903 return at 31 March 2018.
32. This data is mapped to schools using the January school census, enabling identification of the number of looked-after children in each school or academy.
33. The Department do not use a LAC factor in the NFF. Instead, the pupil premium plus rate has been increased from 2018 to 2019 from £1,900 to £2,300.
34. In 2018/19 the LA aligned this factor to the national funding formula and proposes to continue this approach in 2019/20.

**Question: How far do you agree or disagree that the LAC factor continues to be aligned with the national funding formula, as in 2018/19?**

**(Please answer Q6 on the consultation response form if applicable).**

### **Prior Attainment**

35. The prior attainment factor acts as a proxy indicator for low level, high incidence special educational needs. In 2018/19 the LA **did not** direct funding through this optional factor.
36. The local authority can apply this factor for :
- Primary pupils identified as not achieving the expected level of development in the early years foundation stage profile (EYFSP)
  - Secondary pupils not reaching the expected standard in KS2 at either reading or writing or maths
37. However, the EYFSP changed in 2013, so from 2019/20 there will be no need for a primary weighting as all primary year groups will represent results under the new framework.
38. The NFF funds low prior attainment at £1,022 for Primary pupils and £1,550 Secondary pupils.
39. The local authority is keen to move towards the NFF and introduce this factor for 2019/20. However, modelling showed considerable fluctuation in year on year funding for some schools as the AWPU needed to be reduced to afford this additional factor. Therefore, we are proposing to introduce this factor at 50% of the NFF rate (£511 for Primary and £775 for Secondary pupils) to smooth the transition.

**Question: How far do you agree or disagree with the proposal to introduce this factor for 2019/20 and do you agree with the transitional rate set at 50% of the NFF.?**

**(Please answer Q7 and 8 on the consultation response form if applicable).**

### **English as an Additional Language (EAL)**

40. Pupils that have been identified on the October census with a first language other than English may attract funding for up to three years after they enter the statutory school system. Local authorities can choose to use indicators based on one, two or three years and there can be separate unit values for primary and secondary. In 2018/19 the LA did not direct funding through this optional factor.
41. Although this factor has been included in the NFF (based on three years), the local authority does not propose to introduce this factor for 2019/20. Modelling showed a further reduction to the AWPU value would have been required to fund the introduction of this factor. This will be kept under review.

**Question: How far do you agree or disagree with the proposal to continue to exclude English as an Additional Language (EAL) as a factor in the funding formula for 2019/20?**

**(Please answer Q9 on the consultation response form if applicable).**

### **Pupil Mobility**

42. This measure counts pupils who entered a school during the last three academic years, but did not start in August or September (or January for reception pupils). There is a 10% threshold and funding is allocated based on the proportion above the threshold; so if a school has 12% mobility, then 2% of pupils would attract funding.
43. This is an optional factor and has not previously been included in the local funding formula. There are no changes proposed for 2019/20.

**Question: How far do you agree or disagree with the proposal to continue excluding pupil mobility as a factor from the funding formula for 2019/20?**

**(Please answer Q10 on the consultation response form if applicable).**

**Note - Local authorities must allocate at least 80% of the delegated schools block funding through pupil-led factors**

### **Lump sum**

44. Local authorities can set a flat lump sum for all phases, or differentiate the sums for primary and secondary (and give middle schools a weighted average based on the number of year groups in each phase). The maximum lump sum is £175,000.
45. In line with the NFF, the local authority allocated CBC schools a lump sum of £110,000 in 2018/19. There are no changes proposed for 2019/20.

**Question: How far do you agree or disagree that the lump sum factor continues to be aligned with the national funding formula, as in 2018/19?  
(Please answer Q11 on the consultation response form if applicable).**

### **Split sites**

46. The purpose of this factor is to support schools that have unavoidable extra costs because the school buildings are on separate sites. Allocations must be based on objective criteria for the definition of a split site and for how much is paid.
47. The local authority currently funds schools through a split site factor of £120,000.
48. The definition of a split site for 2019/20 is 'a single school, based on two or more sites that do not share a common boundary, where use of a public highway is necessary to travel between each site and where staff teach more than one curriculum subject area on a daily basis in order to support the principle of a whole school policy.'
49. The national funding formula currently includes the split site factor based on historical spend although this is under review.
50. The local authority proposal is to continue with funding split sites as in 2018/19.

**Question: How far do you agree or disagree with the continuation of funding schools through a split site factor?  
(Please answer Q12 on the consultation response form if applicable).**

### **Rates**

51. This is an optional factor but used by all councils. It is funded on the authority's estimate of actual costs. Any adjustment can be made in the following financial year.
52. There are no changes proposed for 2019/20.

**Question: How far do you agree or disagree with the continuation of funding rates on an actual basis?**

**(Please answer Q13 on the consultation response form if applicable).**

### **Sparsity**

53. Schools that are eligible for sparsity funding must meet two criteria: first, they are located in areas where pupils would have to travel a significant distance to an alternative should the school close, and second, they are small schools
54. This is an optional factor and not currently in use for CBC Schools.

55. Although the national funding formula includes sparsity, the Department is considering improvements to the measurement.
56. There are no changes proposed for 2019/20.

**Question: How far do you agree or disagree with the proposal to continue not to include a sparsity factor for 2019/20?  
(Please answer Q14 on the consultation response form if applicable).**

### **Exceptional premises factors**

57. Local authorities can apply to the ESFA to use exceptional factors relating to school premises for example, rents or joint use sports facilities. The exceptional factors must relate to premises costs. Applications should only be submitted where the value of the factor is more than 1% of a school's budget and applies to fewer than 5% of the schools in the authority's area.
58. Local authorities can use exceptional factors used in 2018/19 (for pre-existing, and newly-qualifying schools) in 2019/20, if the qualification criteria are still met.
59. The local authority currently funds joint use and rent and proposes no changes for 2019/20.

**Question: How far do you agree or disagree with the proposal to continue funding the joint use arrangement?**

**(Please answer Q15 on the consultation response form if applicable).**

**Question: How far do you agree or disagree with continuing a rent factor for schools that meet the criteria?**

**(Please answer Q16 on the consultation response form if applicable).**

### **Minimum Funding Guarantee and capping and scaling**

60. The minimum funding guarantee (MFG) is a mechanism directed by government to protect schools from excessive year on year changes, so that no school loses a significant amount of funding due to pupil-led changes which are beyond its control. If an MFG of minus one percent was set it would mean that the pupil-led funding, per pupil, would not reduce by more than one percent compared to the previous year. It is applied to pupil-led funding only and does not include lump sum or premises funding. The MFG allows changes in pupil characteristics (for example reducing levels of deprivation in a school) to flow through. Greater flexibility for the MFG was introduced in 2018 /19; local authorities will continue to be able to set an MFG between plus 0.5% and minus 1.5% per pupil. Local authorities are required to consult on the level of the MFG, as with the rest of the formula.
61. The MFG applies to pupils in reception to year 11. Early years pupils and ESFA funded post-16 pupils are excluded from the calculation. The following formula



factors are automatically excluded from the MFG calculation as not doing so would result in excessive protection or be inconsistent with other policies:

- The 2019/20 lump sum. This is excluded from both the baseline and 2019/20 funding so that schools are protected against significant change in the lump sum between years
- Rates. These are excluded from both the baseline and 2019/20 funding at their respective values for each year

62. The MFG calculation for mainstream schools applies only to the schools block funding. Funding from the early years block, high needs block or from ESFA for post-16 pupils are excluded from the calculation.

63. It is likely that protection will still be required for some schools as a result of changes to formulae. The Department is allowing overall gains for individual schools to be capped as well as scaled back to ensure that the formula is affordable. It no longer has to be applied only to the extent that it offsets the cost of the MFG.

64. The local authority proposes to set the Minimum Funding Guarantee at minus 1% for 2019/20.

**Question: How far do you agree or disagree with the proposal to fund the Minimum Funding Guarantee at minus 1.0%?**

**(Please answer Q17 on the consultation response form if applicable).**

**Question: How far do you agree or disagree with the proposal to continue to cap those schools that gain in order to fund the Minimum Funding Guarantee?**

**(Please answer Q18 on the consultation response form if applicable).**

## **Movement between blocks**

65. Local authorities may transfer up to 0.5% of their school block funding into another block, with the approval of the school forum.

66. Local authorities wishing to make a transfer should consult with all local maintained schools and academies, and the school forum should take into account the view of the schools responding before giving their approval.

67. Local authorities must submit a disapplication request to the Secretary of State in cases where the local authority wishes to move more than 0.5% or the schools forum has turned down a proposal from the authority to move funding out of the school block, but the authority wishes to proceed with the transfer.

68. It is expected that most proposals to move funding from the school block is as a result of pressures of the high needs block. Any proposal to transfer funding should be presented along with a range of evidence to back up the proposal, both to schools as part of the local consultation and to the school forum in seeking their approval.

69. There is an increasing pressure on the high needs block in Central Bedfordshire, as there is across the country. In 2018/19 0.5% of the schools block was transferred to the high needs block to fund a range of Early Intervention projects in schools, with a view to beginning to manage the demand for Education, Health and Care Plans. These projects will not have such an immediate impact that the high needs block will cease to be under pressure in 2019/20. For the two previous financial years and during the current year the overspend in the high needs block is significant and has been met by removing money from the early years block on occasions and the growth fund underspend. It is therefore proposed to request a transfer of 0.5% from the schools block into the high needs block in 2019/20 in order to meet the demand for spend.

**Question: How far do you agree or disagree with the proposal to transfer 0.5% from the School Block to the High Needs Block?**

**(Please answer Q19 on the consultation response form if applicable).**

## Financial Model

70. Below is a summary of the proposed changes and the basis of the modelling attached. **It should be noted that the modelling is based on October 2017 pupil numbers and characteristics and will be updated.**

Factor		2018/19	2019/20
A basic per pupil entitlement	Primary AWPU	£3,066	£2,960
	Key Stage 3 AWPU	£4,328	£4,222
	Key Stage 4 AWPU	£5,037	£4,931
Deprivation	Primary and Secondary FSM	£440	£440
	Primary FSM6	£540	£540
	Secondary FSM6	£785	£785
	Primary IDACI band A	£575	£575
	Primary IDACI band B	£420	£420
	Primary IDACI band C	£390	£390
	Primary IDACI band D	£360	£360
	Primary IDACI band E	£240	£240
	Primary IDACI band F	£200	£200
	Secondary IDACI band A	£810	£810
	Secondary IDACI band B	£600	£600
	Secondary IDACI band C	£560	£560
	Secondary IDACI band D	£515	£515
	Secondary IDACI band E	£390	£390
	Secondary IDACI band F	£290	£290
Looked After Children		£0	£0
Prior Attainment	Primary	£0	£511
	Secondary	£0	£775
EAL		£0	£0
Lump Sum		£110,000	£110,000
Split Site		£120,000	£120,000

Rates		Based on actual	Based on actual
PFI		£0	£0
Pupil Mobility		£0	£0
Exceptional Premises factors	Joint Use	£98,330	£98,330
	Rent	£37,760	£37,760
Sparsity		£0	£0
MFG		0%	-1.0%
Capping		2.27%	4.41%

71. Winners have been capped by 4.41% (this is calculated in line with the MFG on a per pupil guarantee). The cap is necessary to fund the required protection calculated for MFG.

72. **The figures are illustrative and must not be taken as final allocations.**

**Do you have any other comments about the proposals for school funding in 2019/20?**

**(Please answer Q20 of the consultation form).**

## The Consultation Process

73. The local authority is consulting schools in Central Bedfordshire to ensure that you have every opportunity to have your say on the final funding scheme.

74. The consultation is open between Wednesday 19th September 2018 and Friday 19<sup>th</sup> October 2018. You can respond to the consultation through our [online response form](#).

75. The feedback from the consultation will be presented to the Council's Executive on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2018 where a final decision will be made.

### Appendix 1

The consultation model.

### Appendix 2

Additional financial modelling, for information.



## A great place to live and work

### **Contact us...**

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Write to: Central Bedfordshire Council, Priory House, Monks Walk, Chicksands,  
Shefford, Bedfordshire SG17 5TQ

				Implement full National Funding Formula Prior Attainment Factor.				Implement 50% National Funding Formula Prior Attainment				Implement full National Funding Formula Prior Attainment Factor.				Implement 50% National Funding Formula Prior Attainment			
				No transfer to High Needs Block				Factor. No transfer to High Needs Block				0.5% transfer to High Needs Block				Factor. 0.5% transfer to High Needs Block			
DfE No	School Name	A	18/19 ISB Oct 17 Pupils	Model 2.1		Variance 18/19	Variance 18/19	Model 3.1		Variance 18/19	Variance 18/19	Model 2		Variance 18/19	Variance 18/19	Model 3		Variance 18/19	Variance 18/19
MFG gains ceiling			2.27%	5.36%	6.33%			4.55%	5.66%			3.81%	5.22%			3.43%	4.41%		
MFG			0.0%	0.0%	-1.0%	0% MFG	-1.0% MFG	0.0%	-1.0%	0% MFG	-1.0% MFG	0.0%	-1.0%	0% MFG	-1.0% MFG	0.0%	-1.0%	0% MFG	-1.0% MFG
8233306	Clifton All Saints Academy	a	570,016	594,556	594,745	24,540	24,728	586,470	586,470	16,453	16,453	587,460	591,555	17,443	21,538	583,425	583,425	13,408	13,408
8232192	Ardley Hill Academy	a	1,481,193	1,523,066	1,523,066	41,873	41,873	1,508,589	1,508,589	27,396	27,396	1,514,156	1,514,156	32,963	32,963	1,500,084	1,500,084	18,891	18,891
8235202	Ashton St Peter's VA C of E School		817,164	817,164	810,152	0	(7,012)	817,164	810,152	0	(7,012)	817,164	810,152	0	(7,012)	817,164	810,152	0	(7,012)
8232002	Aspley Guise Lower School		555,068	555,068	550,756	0	(4,313)	555,068	552,344	0	(2,724)	555,068	550,756	0	(4,313)	555,068	550,756	0	(4,313)
8232067	Beaudesert Lower School		896,477	896,477	888,867	0	(7,609)	896,477	888,867	0	(7,609)	896,477	888,867	0	(7,609)	896,477	888,867	0	(7,609)
8232040	Beecroft Academy	a	1,552,307	1,574,222	1,574,222	21,916	21,916	1,571,625	1,571,625	19,318	19,318	1,565,444	1,565,444	13,138	13,138	1,563,246	1,563,246	10,939	10,939
8232007	Caldecote Church of England Academy	a	318,830	328,458	328,458	9,628	9,628	325,450	325,450	6,620	6,620	325,740	327,050	7,910	8,220	324,106	324,106	5,276	5,276
8232033	Campton Lower School		522,393	522,393	518,338	0	(4,055)	522,393	518,338	0	(4,055)	522,393	518,338	0	(4,055)	522,393	518,338	0	(4,055)
8232136	Chalton Lower School		298,630	299,145	299,145	515	515	299,237	299,237	607	607	298,630	297,935	0	(695)	298,630	298,082	0	(548)
8232110	Church End Lower School		1,502,841	1,529,326	1,529,326	26,485	26,485	1,531,701	1,531,701	28,860	28,860	1,521,054	1,521,054	18,213	18,213	1,523,805	1,523,805	20,964	20,964
8232201	Clipstone Brook Lower School		860,277	873,678	873,678	13,401	13,401	875,510	875,510	15,232	15,232	868,926	868,926	8,649	8,649	870,974	870,974	10,696	10,696
8233005	Cranfield Church of England Academy	a	1,364,413	1,379,957	1,379,957	15,544	15,544	1,382,908	1,382,908	18,495	18,495	1,372,081	1,372,081	7,668	7,668	1,375,390	1,375,390	10,977	10,977
8232056	Derwent Lower School		529,750	540,092	540,092	10,342	10,342	537,522	537,522	7,771	7,771	537,210	537,210	7,460	7,460	534,771	534,771	5,020	5,020
8232189	Doverly Down Lower School		610,925	610,925	606,049	0	(4,876)	610,925	607,732	0	(3,193)	610,925	606,049	0	(4,876)	610,925	606,049	0	(4,876)
8232285	St. Augustine's Academy	a	844,092	844,092	836,767	0	(7,325)	844,092	836,767	0	(7,325)	844,092	836,767	0	(7,325)	844,092	836,767	0	(7,325)
8233006	Dunton CofE VC Lower School		339,093	342,819	342,819	3,726	3,726	339,093	339,016	0	(77)	341,301	341,301	2,208	2,208	339,093	337,567	0	(1,526)
8232042	Eaton Bray Academy	a	673,285	701,527	701,527	28,243	28,243	697,694	697,694	24,410	24,410	694,589	697,743	21,305	24,459	692,465	694,082	19,180	20,798
8232046	Eversholt Lower School	a	303,428	304,113	304,113	685	685	309,995	309,995	6,567	6,567	303,428	302,749	0	(679)	308,693	308,693	5,265	5,265
8232047	Everton Heath Primary School		275,278	275,278	273,674	0	(1,605)	275,278	273,674	0	(1,605)	275,278	273,674	0	(1,605)	275,278	273,674	0	(1,605)
8233351	Fairfield Park Lower School		1,238,699	1,248,239	1,248,239	9,540	9,540	1,257,136	1,257,136	18,437	18,437	1,240,627	1,240,627	1,928	1,928	1,249,870	1,249,870	11,171	11,171
8232049	Flitwick Lower School		979,698	988,818	988,818	9,120	9,120	991,472	991,472	11,774	11,774	983,032	983,032	3,334	3,334	985,949	985,949	6,251	6,251
8232000	Gothic Mede Academy	a	1,054,629	1,094,251	1,094,251	39,622	39,622	1,086,172	1,086,172	31,542	31,542	1,087,717	1,087,717	33,088	33,088	1,079,935	1,079,935	25,305	25,305
8232051	Gravenhurst Academy	a	300,093	300,093	298,175	0	(1,919)	300,093	298,175	0	(1,919)	300,093	298,175	0	(1,919)	300,093	298,175	0	(1,919)
8233007	Greenfield CofE VC Lower School	a	509,480	509,849	509,849	369	369	511,424	511,424	1,945	1,945	509,480	507,099	0	(2,381)	509,480	508,799	0	(680)
8232289	Greenleas School		2,198,023	2,218,495	2,218,495	20,472	20,472	2,221,404	2,221,404	23,381	23,381	2,205,823	2,205,823	7,800	7,800	2,209,308	2,209,308	11,285	11,285
8232168	Hadrian Academy	a	1,336,950	1,336,950	1,330,200	0	(6,750)	1,336,950	1,331,845	0	(5,105)	1,336,950	1,324,714	0	(12,235)	1,336,950	1,324,714	0	(12,235)
8232180	Harlington Lower School	a	581,729	581,729	577,038	0	(4,690)	581,729	577,038	0	(4,690)	581,729	577,038	0	(4,690)	581,729	577,038	0	(4,690)
8232209	Hawthorn Park Community Primary		1,478,867	1,535,555	1,535,555	56,688	56,688	1,507,627	1,507,627	28,760	28,760	1,527,415	1,527,415	48,548	48,548	1,499,857	1,499,857	20,990	20,990
8232055	Haynes Lower School		517,437	521,195	521,195	3,759	3,759	524,076	524,076	6,640	6,640	518,533	518,533	1,097	1,097	521,535	521,535	4,099	4,099
8232184	Heathwood Lower School		647,509	647,509	643,228	0	(4,281)	647,509	642,346	0	(5,163)	647,509	642,346	0	(5,163)	647,509	642,346	0	(5,163)
8232218	Hockliffe Lower School		287,311	288,782	288,782	1,471	1,471	288,226	288,226	915	915	287,616	287,616	305	305	287,311	287,311	0	(198)
8232057	Houghton Conquest Lower School		413,080	413,080	412,206	0	(874)	416,277	416,277	3,197	3,197	413,080	410,182	0	(2,898)	414,345	414,345	1,265	1,265
8232058	Houghton Regis Primary School		1,058,705	1,108,076	1,117,011	49,371	58,306	1,100,615	1,106,417	41,910	47,712	1,093,799	1,106,787	35,094	48,081	1,090,299	1,099,326	31,594	40,621
8232059	Husborne Crawley Lower School		296,029	296,029	294,213	0	(1,817)	296,029	294,911	0	(1,118)	296,029	294,213	0	(1,817)	296,029	294,213	0	(1,817)
8232038	Hunstable Icknield Lower School		1,114,958	1,143,793	1,143,793	28,835	28,835	1,140,988	1,140,988	26,031	26,031	1,137,325	1,137,325	22,367	22,367	1,134,814	1,134,814	19,857	19,857
8233302	John Donne Church of England Primary School		312,127	312,127	310,127	0	(2,000)	312,127	310,130	0	(1,997)	312,127	310,127	0	(2,000)	312,127	310,127	0	(2,000)
8232008	Kensworth Church of England Academy	a	376,727	390,770	393,311	14,042	16,584	388,648	388,878	11,920	12,151	386,709	390,403	9,982	13,676	385,713	387,198	8,986	10,471
8232174	Kingsmoor Lower School		698,002	703,178	703,178	5,176	5,176	705,069	705,069	7,066	7,066	699,416	699,416	1,414	1,414	701,478	701,478	3,475	3,475
8232119	Laburnum Lower School		627,868	631,891	631,891	4,023	4,023	635,765	635,765	7,897	7,897	628,613	628,613	745	745	632,636	632,636	4,768	4,768
8232005	Lancot School	a	1,350,689	1,355,369	1,355,369	4,681	4,681	1,359,796	1,359,796	9,108	9,108	1,350,689	1,347,361	0	(3,327)	1,352,152	1,352,152	1,464	1,464
8232004	Langford Village Academy	a	599,219	620,183	620,183	20,964	20,964	614,950	614,950	15,731	15,731	616,795	616,795	17,576	17,576	611,716	611,716	12,497	12,497
8232217	Lark Rise Academy	a	1,112,310	1,112,310	1,102,320	0	(9,990)	1,116,858	1,116,858	4,549	4,549	1,112,310	1,102,320	0	(9,990)	1,112,310	1,110,306	0	(2,003)
8232153	Lawnside Lower School		1,076,028	1,104,428	1,104,428	28,400	28,400	1,101,446	1,101,446	25,418	25,418	1,098,180	1,098,180	22,152	22,152	1,095,482	1,095,482	19,454	19,454
8232177	Leedon Lower School		1,261,988	1,321,445	1,321,204	59,456	70,216	1,312,460	1,314,679	50,471	52,691	1,304,251	1,319,892	42,263	57,903	1,300,036	1,307,560	38,048	45,572
8232188	Linslade Lower School		767,291	778,527	778,527	11,237	11,237	780,888	780,888	13,597	13,597	774,083	774,083	6,793	6,793	776,646	776,646	9,355	9,355
8232001	Maple Tree Lower School		721,976	721,976	716,175	0	(5,801)	721,976	718,838	0	(3,138)	721,976	716,175	0	(5,801)	721,976	716,175	0	(5,801)
8232176	The Mary Bassett Lower School		1,112,191	1,164,991	1,174,547	52,801	62,356	1,157,012	1,162,739	44,821	50,548	1,149,723	1,163,612	37,532	51,421	1,145,979	1,155,633	33,788	43,442
8232112	Maulden Lower School		576,729	583,031	583,031	6,301	6,301	582,645	582,645	5,915	5,915	579,885	579,885	3,155	3,155	579,642	579,642	2,912	2,912
8233320	Meppershall Church of England Academy	a	404,983	405,239	405,239	255	255	408,004	408,004	3,020	3,020	404,983	403,215	0	(1,769)	406,072	406,072	1,088	1,088
8235204	Moggerhanger Lower School		338,153	338,153	337,724	0	(428)	339,614	339,614	1,461	1,461	338,153	336,206	0	(1,946)	338,165	338,165	12	12
8233323	Northill CofE VA Lower School		308,146	310,610	310,610	2,464	2,464	309,727	309,727	1,581	1,581	309,290	309,290	1,144	1,144	308,467	308,467	321	321
8232117	Potton Lower School		899,842	906,219	906,219	6,377	6,377	912,629	912,629	12,787	12,787	900,873	900,873	1,031	1,031	907,526	907,526	7,684	7,684
8233313	Pulford CofE VA Lower School		813,754	837,294	837,294	23,539	23,539	835,911	835,911										

			Implement full National Funding Formula Prior Attainment Factor. No transfer to High Needs Block				Implement 50% National Funding Formula Prior Attainment Factor. No transfer to High Needs Block				Implement full National Funding Formula Prior Attainment Factor. 0.5% transfer to High Needs Block				Implement 50% National Funding Formula Prior Attainment Factor. 0.5% transfer to High Needs Block				
DfE No	School Name	A	18/19 ISB Oct 17 Pupils		Variance 18/19 at	Variance 18/19 at	Model 3.1		Variance 18/19 at	Variance 18/19 at	Model 2		Variance 18/19 at	Variance 18/19 at	Model 3		Variance 18/19 at	Variance 18/19 at	
MFG gains ceiling			2.27%		5.36% 6.33%		4.55% 5.66%		0% MFG -1.0% MFG		3.81% 5.22%		0% MFG -1.0% MFG		3.43% 4.41%		0% MFG -1.0% MFG		
MFG			0.0%		0% MFG -1.0% MFG		0.0% -1.0%		0% MFG -1.0% MFG		0.0% -1.0%		0% MFG -1.0% MFG		0.0% -1.0%		0% MFG -1.0% MFG		
8233015	Studham CofE Village School		325,675	325,675	323,566	0	(2,109)	325,675	323,566	0	(2,109)	325,675	323,566	0	(2,109)	325,675	323,566	0	(2,109)
8235203	Sundon Lower School	a	338,450	338,450	336,177	0	(2,274)	338,450	336,177	0	(2,274)	338,450	336,177	0	(2,274)	338,450	336,177	0	(2,274)
8233331	Sutton CofE VA Lower School		344,677	344,677	342,341	0	(2,336)	344,677	342,341	0	(2,336)	344,677	342,341	0	(2,336)	344,677	342,341	0	(2,336)
8232003	Swallowfield Lower School		1,030,586	1,078,858	1,087,593	48,271	57,007	1,069,388	1,069,388	38,802	38,802	1,064,899	1,077,597	34,312	47,010	1,061,476	1,063,403	30,890	32,817
8232213	Templefield Lower School		920,321	926,710	926,710	6,389	6,389	932,172	932,172	11,851	11,851	921,210	921,210	889	889	926,922	926,922	6,601	6,601
8232195	The Firs Lower School	a	992,939	998,347	998,347	5,408	5,408	1,006,664	1,006,664	13,724	13,724	992,939	992,209	0	(730)	1,000,805	1,000,805	7,865	7,865
8232070	Thomas Johnson Lower School		335,046	335,046	332,912	0	(2,134)	335,046	332,912	0	(2,134)	335,046	332,912	0	(2,134)	335,046	332,912	0	(2,134)
8232006	Thomas Whitehead CofE Academy		1,044,990	1,064,123	1,064,123	19,133	19,133	1,053,183	1,053,183	8,193	8,193	1,058,425	1,058,425	13,435	13,435	1,047,744	1,047,744	2,754	2,754
8232166	Thornhill Primary School		830,417	863,947	863,947	33,530	33,530	853,782	853,782	23,365	23,365	857,429	859,723	27,012	29,306	849,750	849,750	19,333	19,333
8232279	Tithe Farm Primary School		1,091,046	1,107,457	1,107,457	16,411	16,411	1,091,046	1,089,986	0	(1,060)	1,101,891	1,101,891	10,845	10,845	1,091,046	1,084,673	0	(6,373)
8233016	Toddington St George Church of England School	a	1,039,271	1,088,823	1,092,614	49,553	53,343	1,077,318	1,077,318	38,048	38,048	1,074,494	1,086,278	35,223	47,007	1,070,981	1,071,270	31,710	32,000
8232137	Totterhoe Lower School	a	423,836	423,836	420,811	0	(3,025)	423,836	420,811	0	(3,025)	423,836	420,811	0	(3,025)	423,836	420,811	0	(3,025)
8232152	Watling Lower School		701,750	701,750	699,295	0	(2,456)	702,653	702,653	903	903	701,750	695,964	0	(5,786)	701,750	699,104	0	(2,646)
8235201	Westoning Lower School		455,117	455,117	451,690	0	(3,427)	455,117	453,861	0	(1,255)	455,117	451,690	0	(3,427)	455,117	451,690	0	(3,427)
8232143	Woburn Lower School		323,585	323,585	321,464	0	(2,120)	323,585	321,464	0	(2,120)	323,585	321,464	0	(2,120)	323,585	321,464	0	(2,120)
8233017	Wrestlingworth CofE VC Lower School		309,401	314,662	314,662	5,261	5,261	312,255	312,255	2,854	2,854	313,342	313,342	3,941	3,941	310,995	310,995	1,594	1,594
			<b>72,641,536</b>	<b>73,753,605</b>	<b>73,682,489</b>	<b>1,112,070</b>	<b>1,040,953</b>	<b>73,691,231</b>	<b>73,614,180</b>	<b>1,049,696</b>	<b>972,643</b>	<b>73,420,219</b>	<b>73,330,204</b>	<b>778,684</b>	<b>688,666</b>	<b>73,371,091</b>	<b>73,278,713</b>	<b>729,555</b>	<b>637,177</b>
8234099	Alameda Middle School	a	2,874,179	2,874,179	2,873,628	0	(551)	2,902,423	2,902,423	28,243	28,243	2,874,179	2,857,744	0	(16,435)	2,887,261	2,887,261	13,081	13,081
8234040	Arnold Academy	a	2,481,612	2,481,612	2,466,796	0	(14,816)	2,498,694	2,498,694	17,082	17,082	2,481,612	2,458,044	0	(23,569)	2,485,674	2,485,674	4,062	4,062
8234038	Brooklands Middle School	a	2,098,340	2,204,522	2,207,538	106,182	109,198	2,180,406	2,180,406	82,066	82,066	2,173,816	2,196,384	75,476	98,044	2,166,289	2,169,759	67,949	71,419
8234092	Potton Middle School		1,098,931	1,107,786	1,107,786	8,855	8,855	1,113,352	1,113,352	14,421	14,421	1,102,220	1,102,220	3,289	3,289	1,108,039	1,108,039	9,108	9,108
8234502	Edward Peake CofE VC Middle School		1,942,072	2,039,731	2,057,405	97,659	115,332	2,024,973	2,045,197	82,901	103,125	2,011,490	2,037,181	69,418	95,108	2,004,567	2,022,422	62,494	80,350
8234004	Etonbury Academy	a	3,686,055	3,877,337	3,911,953	191,282	225,899	3,848,430	3,888,043	162,376	201,988	3,822,022	3,872,341	135,967	186,286	3,808,461	3,843,434	122,406	157,380
8233353	Caddington Village School		1,357,656	1,357,656	1,346,484	0	(11,172)	1,357,656	1,348,718	0	(8,938)	1,357,656	1,345,532	0	(12,124)	1,357,656	1,345,532	0	(12,124)
8234043	Fulbrook Middle School	a	1,630,650	1,646,559	1,646,559	15,909	15,909	1,654,602	1,654,602	23,952	23,952	1,637,649	1,637,649	6,999	6,999	1,646,097	1,646,097	15,447	15,447
8234073	Gilbert Inglefield Academy	a	1,925,936	1,994,732	1,994,732	68,796	68,796	1,977,793	1,977,793	51,857	51,857	1,985,008	1,985,008	59,072	59,072	1,968,511	1,968,511	42,575	42,575
8234503	Henlow Church of England Academy	a	2,329,647	2,399,080	2,399,080	69,433	69,433	2,387,116	2,387,116	57,469	57,469	2,386,100	2,386,100	56,453	56,453	2,374,726	2,374,726	45,079	45,079
8234006	Biggleswade Academy	a	3,293,946	3,347,448	3,347,448	53,502	53,502	3,370,977	3,370,977	77,031	77,031	3,328,616	3,328,616	34,670	34,670	3,353,001	3,353,001	59,055	59,055
8235408	Holywell School	a	2,552,679	2,595,706	2,595,706	43,027	43,027	2,607,073	2,607,073	54,395	54,395	2,581,692	2,581,692	29,013	29,013	2,593,696	2,593,696	41,018	41,018
8234001	Houghton Regis Academy	a	1,572,627	1,650,638	1,664,755	78,011	92,129	1,638,849	1,655,004	66,222	82,378	1,628,079	1,648,600	55,452	75,974	1,622,548	1,636,811	49,921	64,185
8234120	Leighton Middle School		2,241,562	2,251,256	2,251,256	9,694	9,694	2,267,384	2,267,384	25,822	25,822	2,241,562	2,239,574	0	(1,988)	2,256,233	2,256,233	14,671	14,671
8234077	Linslade Academy Trust	a	2,484,375	2,534,349	2,534,349	49,974	49,974	2,533,615	2,533,615	49,240	49,240	2,520,841	2,520,841	36,466	36,466	2,520,721	2,520,721	36,346	36,346
8234056	The Vale Academy	a	1,364,431	1,364,431	1,351,990	0	(12,441)	1,364,431	1,351,990	0	(12,441)	1,364,431	1,351,990	0	(12,441)	1,364,431	1,351,990	0	(12,441)
8234054	Parkfields Middle School		1,910,597	1,948,649	1,948,649	38,052	38,052	1,951,368	1,951,368	40,771	40,771	1,938,551	1,938,551	27,954	27,954	1,941,729	1,941,729	31,132	31,132
8234007	Prory Academy	a	3,025,984	3,108,500	3,108,500	82,516	82,516	3,140,468	3,140,468	114,484	114,484	3,093,298	3,093,298	67,314	67,314	3,125,682	3,125,957	99,698	99,973
8234034	Robert Bloomfield Academy	a	3,763,036	3,819,675	3,819,675	56,638	56,638	3,848,998	3,848,998	85,962	85,962	3,798,753	3,798,753	35,716	35,716	3,829,027	3,829,027	65,991	65,991
8234033	Sandy Place Academy	a	1,985,860	2,085,648	2,103,707	99,788	117,847	2,070,569	2,086,356	84,708	100,496	2,056,792	2,083,042	70,931	97,182	2,049,717	2,067,962	63,857	82,102
8234117	Woodland Middle School Academy	a	2,502,184	2,538,020	2,538,020	35,836	35,836	2,544,237	2,544,237	42,053	42,053	2,524,578	2,524,578	22,394	22,394	2,531,406	2,531,406	29,222	29,222
			<b>48,122,361</b>	<b>49,227,516</b>	<b>49,276,017</b>	<b>1,105,154</b>	<b>1,153,656</b>	<b>49,283,414</b>	<b>49,353,814</b>	<b>1,161,055</b>	<b>1,231,454</b>	<b>48,908,946</b>	<b>48,987,738</b>	<b>786,584</b>	<b>865,377</b>	<b>48,995,472</b>	<b>49,059,989</b>	<b>873,112</b>	<b>937,631</b>
8234011	Cedars Upper School	a	4,427,996	4,492,906	4,492,906	64,909	64,909	4,497,059	4,497,059	69,063	69,063	4,474,536	4,474,536	46,539	46,539	4,479,524	4,479,524	51,528	51,528
8234083	Harlinton Upper School	a	4,600,944	4,631,514	4,631,514	30,571	30,571	4,651,424	4,651,424	50,480	50,480	4,611,912	4,611,912	10,969	10,969	4,632,713	4,632,713	31,769	31,769
8234010	Manshead CofE Academy	a	4,440,830	4,590,239	4,590,239	149,409	149,409	4,549,386	4,549,386	108,556	108,556	4,571,385	4,571,385	130,555	130,555	4,531,389	4,531,389	90,559	90,559
8236905	All Saints Academy Dunstable	a	3,226,283	3,391,350	3,420,037	165,068	193,754	3,366,405	3,372,332	140,123	146,049	3,343,616	3,387,039	117,333	160,756	3,331,914	3,359,879	105,631	133,596
8234002	Queensbury Academy	a	4,693,331	4,777,541	4,777,541	84,211	84,211	4,771,895	4,771,895	78,564	78,564	4,757,235	4,757,235	63,905	63,905	4,752,512	4,752,512	59,181	59,181
8234003	Redborne Upper School and Community College	a	5,980,010	6,050,376	6,050,376	70,366	70,366	6,061,922	6,061,922	81,911	81,911	6,024,350	6,024,350	44,340	44,340	6,037,079	6,037,079		

DfE No	School Name	A	18/19 ISB		Variance	
			Oct 17 Pupils		18/19	
<b>MFG gains ceiling</b>			2.27%	<b>4.41%</b>		
<b>MFG</b>			0.0%	<b>-1.0%</b>	<b>at</b>	<b>-1.0% MFG</b>
8233306	Clifton All Saints Academy	a	570,016	583,425	13,408	2.35%
8232192	Ardley Hill Academy	a	1,481,193	1,500,084	18,891	1.28%
8235202	Ashton St Peter's VA C of E School		817,164	810,152	(7,012)	-0.86%
8232002	Aspley Guise Lower School		555,068	550,756	(4,313)	-0.78%
8232067	Beaudesert Lower School		896,477	888,867	(7,609)	-0.85%
8232040	Beecroft Academy	a	1,552,307	1,563,246	10,939	0.70%
8232007	Caldecote Church of England Academy	a	318,830	324,106	5,276	1.65%
8232033	Campton Lower School		522,393	518,338	(4,055)	-0.78%
8232136	Chalton Lower School		298,630	298,082	(548)	-0.18%
8232110	Church End Lower School		1,502,841	1,523,805	20,964	1.39%
8232201	Clipstone Brook Lower School		860,277	870,974	10,696	1.24%
8233005	Cranfield Church of England Academy	a	1,364,413	1,375,390	10,977	0.80%
8232056	Derwent Lower School		529,750	534,771	5,020	0.95%
8232189	Doverly Down Lower School		610,925	606,049	(4,876)	-0.80%
8232285	St. Augustine's Academy	a	844,092	836,767	(7,325)	-0.87%
8233006	Dunton CoFE VC Lower School		339,093	337,567	(1,526)	-0.45%
8232042	Eaton Bray Academy	a	673,285	694,082	20,798	3.09%
8232046	Eversholt Lower School	a	303,428	308,693	5,265	1.74%
8232047	Everton Heath Primary School		275,278	273,674	(1,605)	-0.58%
8233351	Fairfield Park Lower School		1,238,699	1,249,870	11,171	0.90%
8232049	Flitwick Lower School		979,698	985,949	6,251	0.64%
8232000	Gothic Mede Academy	a	1,054,629	1,079,935	25,305	2.40%
8232051	Gravenhurst Academy	a	300,093	298,175	(1,919)	-0.64%
8233007	Greenfield CoFE VC Lower School	a	509,480	508,799	(680)	-0.13%
8232289	Greenleas School		2,198,023	2,209,308	11,285	0.51%
8232168	Hadrian Academy	a	1,336,950	1,324,714	(12,235)	-0.92%
8232180	Harlington Lower School	a	581,729	577,038	(4,690)	-0.81%
8232209	Hawthorn Park Community Primary		1,478,867	1,499,857	20,990	1.42%
8232055	Haynes Lower School		517,437	521,535	4,099	0.79%
8232184	Heathwood Lower School		647,509	642,346	(5,163)	-0.80%
8232218	Hockliffe Lower School		287,311	287,113	(198)	-0.07%
8232057	Houghton Conquest Lower School		413,080	414,345	1,265	0.31%
8232058	Houghton Regis Primary School		1,058,705	1,099,326	40,621	3.84%
8232059	Husborne Crawley Lower School		296,029	294,213	(1,817)	-0.61%
8232038	Dunstable Icknield Lower School		1,114,958	1,134,814	19,857	1.78%
8233302	John Donne Church of England Primary School		312,127	310,127	(2,000)	-0.64%
8232008	Kensworth Church of England Academy	a	376,727	387,198	10,471	2.78%
8232174	Kingsmoor Lower School		698,002	701,478	3,475	0.50%
8232119	Laburnum Lower School		627,868	632,636	4,768	0.76%
8232005	Lancot School	a	1,350,689	1,352,152	1,464	0.11%
8232004	Langford Village Academy	a	599,219	611,716	12,497	2.09%
8232217	Lark Rise Academy	a	1,112,310	1,110,306	(2,003)	-0.18%
8232153	Lawnside Lower School		1,076,028	1,095,482	19,454	1.81%
8232177	Leedon Lower School		1,261,988	1,307,560	45,572	3.61%
8232188	Linslade Lower School		767,291	776,646	9,355	1.22%
8232001	Maple Tree Lower School		721,976	716,175	(5,801)	-0.80%
8232176	The Mary Bassett Lower School		1,112,191	1,155,633	43,442	3.91%
8232112	Maulden Lower School		576,729	579,642	2,912	0.50%
8233320	Meppershall Church of England Academy	a	404,983	406,072	1,088	0.27%
8235204	Moggerhanger Lower School		338,153	338,165	12	0.00%
8233323	Northill CoFE VA Lower School		308,146	308,467	321	0.10%
8232117	Potton Lower School		899,842	907,526	7,684	0.85%
8233313	Pulford CoFE VA Lower School		813,754	831,270	17,516	2.15%
8232154	Pulloxhill Lower School	a	336,294	334,039	(2,255)	-0.67%
8232282	Ramsey Manor Lower School		1,047,869	1,063,983	16,114	1.54%
8233008	Raynsford Church of England Academy	a	581,218	580,463	(755)	-0.13%
8232118	Ridgmont Lower School		278,556	276,920	(1,636)	-0.59%
8232202	Robert Peel Primary School		1,090,013	1,132,202	42,189	3.87%
8232129	Roecroft Lower School		1,492,980	1,499,205	6,225	0.42%
8232146	Russell Lower School		1,258,878	1,265,668	6,790	0.54%
8232121	Shefford Lower School		1,574,541	1,605,932	31,391	1.99%
8232111	Shelton Lower School		279,153	277,812	(1,341)	-0.48%
8232122	Shillington Lower School		501,338	512,687	11,349	2.26%
8233013	Silsoe CoFE VC Lower School		836,243	839,362	3,119	0.37%
8232032	Slip End Village School		656,640	651,264	(5,376)	-0.82%
8232203	Southcott Lower School		988,765	1,006,912	18,148	1.84%
8232124	Southill Lower School		311,530	310,671	(859)	-0.28%
8233001	St Andrew's CoFE VC Lower School		2,635,151	2,688,121	52,971	2.01%
8232149	St Christophers Academy	a	893,060	905,374	12,314	1.38%
8232069	St George's Lower School		488,930	485,217	(3,713)	-0.76%
8233310	St Leonards, Heath and Reach, VA Lower School		458,104	454,664	(3,441)	-0.75%
8233307	St Mary's VA CoFE Lower School		451,782	453,692	1,909	0.42%
8233014	St Mary's CoFE Academy Stotfold	a	933,057	937,433	4,376	0.47%
8233346	St Mary's Catholic Primary School	a	848,287	840,933	(7,354)	-0.87%
8233012	St Swithun's Church of England VC Primary School		674,764	681,413	6,649	0.99%
8233348	St Vincent's Catholic Primary School	a	818,009	810,967	(7,042)	-0.86%
8232125	Stanbridge Lower School		434,339	448,274	13,935	3.21%
8232072	Stondon Lower School		578,249	577,465	(784)	-0.14%

DfE No	School Name	A	18/19 ISB Oct 17 Pupils		Variance 18/19 at	
MFG gains ceiling			2.27%		4.41%	
MFG			0.0%		-1.0%	-1.0% MFG
8233015	Studham CofE Village School		325,675	323,566	(2,109)	-0.65%
8235203	Sundon Lower School	a	338,450	336,177	(2,274)	-0.67%
8233331	Sutton CofE VA Lower School		344,677	342,341	(2,336)	-0.68%
8232003	Swallowfield Lower School		1,030,586	1,063,403	32,817	3.18%
8232213	Templefield Lower School		920,321	926,922	6,601	0.72%
8232195	The Firs Lower School	a	992,939	1,000,805	7,865	0.79%
8232070	Thomas Johnson Lower School		335,046	332,912	(2,134)	-0.64%
8232006	Thomas Whitehead CofE Academy		1,044,990	1,047,744	2,754	0.26%
8232166	Thornhill Primary School		830,417	849,750	19,333	2.33%
8232279	Tithe Farm Primary School		1,091,046	1,084,673	(6,373)	-0.58%
8233016	Toddington St George Church of England School	a	1,039,271	1,071,270	32,000	3.08%
8232137	Totternhoe Lower School	a	423,836	420,811	(3,025)	-0.71%
8232152	Watling Lower School		701,750	699,104	(2,646)	-0.38%
8235201	Westoning Lower School		455,117	451,690	(3,427)	-0.75%
8232143	Woburn Lower School		323,585	321,464	(2,120)	-0.66%
8233017	Wrestlingworth CofE VC Lower School		309,401	310,995	1,594	0.52%
			<b>72,641,536</b>	<b>73,278,713</b>	<b>637,177</b>	<b>0.88%</b>
8234099	Alameda Middle School	a	2,874,179	2,887,261	13,081	0.46%
8234040	Arnold Academy	a	2,481,612	2,485,674	4,062	0.16%
8234038	Brooklands Middle School	a	2,098,340	2,169,759	71,419	3.40%
8234092	Potton Middle School		1,098,931	1,108,039	9,108	0.83%
8234502	Edward Peake CofE VC Middle School		1,942,072	2,022,422	80,350	4.14%
8234004	Etonbury Academy	a	3,686,055	3,843,434	157,380	4.27%
8233353	Caddington Village School		1,357,656	1,345,532	(12,124)	-0.89%
8234043	Fulbrook Middle School	a	1,630,650	1,646,097	15,447	0.95%
8234073	Gilbert Inglefield Academy	a	1,925,936	1,968,511	42,575	2.21%
8234503	Henlow Church of England Academy	a	2,329,647	2,374,726	45,079	1.94%
8234006	Biggleswade Academy	a	3,293,946	3,353,001	59,055	1.79%
8235408	Holywell School	a	2,552,679	2,593,696	41,018	1.61%
8234001	Houghton Regis Academy	a	1,572,627	1,636,811	64,185	4.08%
8234120	Leighton Middle School		2,241,562	2,256,233	14,671	0.65%
8234077	Linslade Academy Trust	a	2,484,375	2,520,721	36,346	1.46%
8234056	The Vale Academy	a	1,364,431	1,351,990	(12,441)	-0.91%
8234054	Parkfields Middle School		1,910,597	1,941,729	31,132	1.63%
8234007	Priory Academy	a	3,025,984	3,125,957	99,973	3.30%
8234034	Robert Bloomfield Academy	a	3,763,036	3,829,027	65,991	1.75%
8234033	Sandy Place Academy	a	1,985,860	2,067,962	82,102	4.13%
8234117	Woodland Middle School Academy	a	2,502,184	2,531,406	29,222	1.17%
			<b>48,122,361</b>	<b>49,059,989</b>	<b>937,629</b>	<b>1.95%</b>
8234011	Cedars Upper School	a	4,427,996	4,479,524	51,528	1.16%
8234083	Harlington Upper School	a	4,600,944	4,632,713	31,769	0.69%
8234010	Manshead CofE Academy	a	4,440,830	4,531,389	90,559	2.04%
8236905	All Saints Academy Dunstable	a	3,226,283	3,359,879	133,596	4.14%
8234002	Queensbury Academy	a	4,693,331	4,752,512	59,181	1.26%
8234003	Redborne Upper School and Community College	a	5,980,010	6,037,079	57,068	0.95%
8234079	Samuel Whitbread Academy	a	6,257,779	6,280,594	22,815	0.36%
8234078	Sandy Upper School		2,422,131	2,476,037	53,906	2.23%
8234005	Stratton Upper School	a	3,917,264	4,025,057	107,794	2.75%
8234096	Vandyke Upper School and Community College	a	3,566,215	3,622,097	55,882	1.57%
			<b>43,532,783</b>	<b>44,196,881</b>	<b>664,098</b>	<b>1.53%</b>
			<b>164,296,680</b>	<b>166,535,584</b>	<b>2,238,904</b>	<b>1.36%</b>

AWPU +/- (£114)

Low Prior Attainment	0	6,629,967
Low Prior Attainment as % of total	0.0%	4.0%



## Central Bedfordshire Council

20<sup>th</sup> November 2018

### Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee

### Home to Education Travel Assistance Policies

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**Report of:** Cllr Steve Dixon ,  
([steve.dixon@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:steve.dixon@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk))

**Responsible Director(s):** Sue Harrison Director Children's Services ,  
([sue.harrison@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:sue.harrison@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk))

**This report relates to a decision that is Key**

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#### **Purpose of this report**

1. The Travel Assistance Policies for Central Bedfordshire have been reviewed following a public consultation and a new policy for young people aged 19 to 25 has been developed. The purpose of this report is to update the committee on the work undertaken following the consultation and to seek recommendations to Executive on adopting the revised Travel Assistance Policies

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Committee is asked to:

1. **Note the work undertaken following the public consultation**
2. **Make recommendations to Executive regarding the adoption of the reviewed policies and consultation on the post 19 policy**

## Issues

2. Central Bedfordshire Council provides transport assistance to entitled pupils of school age and those post 16 attending education.
3. The Council is required to have policies in place setting out how the statutory service will be delivered. The current Home to School Transport Policy was adopted by Executive in February 2014, a review was undertaken in April 2015 by the Director of Children's Services in consultation with the Executive Member. The Post 16 policy was adopted by Executive in 2010.
4. On the 20<sup>th</sup> June 2017 Executive gave permission for a public consultation to be undertaken in relation to suggested changes to the policy and how Central Bedfordshire Council would provide assistance with home to school transport. The responses to this consultation are set out at Appendix C
5. Central Bedfordshire Council Transports over 5,000 entitled children/students from home to school each year.
6. In 2017/18 the cost to the revenue budget was £9,608,223
7. Currently, pupils are entitled to transport assistance for the following reasons:

All children who are in reception year to the end of year 11 qualify for free school transport if they go to their nearest suitable or catchment school and live at least:

- 2 miles from the school if they are under 8
- 3 miles from the school if they are 8 or older. The statutory walking distances are measured by the shortest available walking route

If there is no available walking route, children may be offered transport.

If the family is in receipt of the maximum Working Tax Credit or their children are entitled to free school meals, they will get free school transport if they are:

- I. aged 8 to 11 and the nearest suitable school is at least 2 miles away
- II. aged 11 to 16 and attend 1 of the 3 nearest schools between 2 to 6 miles from the home address
- III. aged 11 to 16 and attend the nearest school of their chosen religion or belief and it is between 2 to 15 miles from the home address

There is no automatic entitlement for pupils with an Education Health Care Plan or Statement of Special Educational Needs. However, transport can be provided if they live further than the statutory walking distances mentioned in above and:

- attend their nearest or catchment mainstream school.
- attend the nearest suitable special school, which has been agreed by us as being able to meet their needs

If a child lives under the statutory walking distance but their needs would mean it was unsafe for them to walk even when accompanied by an appropriate adult, then transport may also be provided.

If a child has attends the nearest or catchment school and they have a medical condition which means they are unable to walk to school or access mainstream or public transport, then transport may be provided.

If a child is between 16 and 18 and in further education or sixth form, we may be able to help with transport. Transport is provided to pupils who attend the catchment or nearest school or the nearest establishment which offers the chosen course.

The distance from home to school or college needs to be between 3 and 20 miles (measured by walking distance up to 3 miles and motorised route after 3 miles) and:

- be from a low income family or;
- have a medical need or;
- be in the care of the authority

Transport can be provided for pupils who have a Statement of Special Educational Needs or Education Health Care Plan up until the age of 25.

8. The Council's policies have been reviewed to ensure that they meet the statutory requirements whilst making the most efficient use of resources.
9. The changes to the policy being considered are:
  - Transport will not be provided for children who are not of statutory school age (under 5) except in certain circumstances

### **Reason/s for decision**

10. To ensure that the Council meets its statutory obligations.
11. To ensure that the Council adopts a fair, equitable and transparent policies to support all pupils and their families.
12. The Council does not have a policy to show how we exercise our judgement judiciously and in good faith when considering the necessity of transport provision for young people with an Education, Health and Care Plan, aged between 19 and 25 attending education.
13. To ensure that the Council adopts policies that can be implemented within the available resources.
14. In 2017 a public consultation was undertaken in relation to the home to school transport policies there were nine questions asked, the areas covered, and responses provided were:
  - Provide transport from home to nearest available school, rather than to the nearest catchment.  
58% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the proposal to provide transport to the nearest available school, rather than to the nearest catchment school. With less than 28% supporting the proposal.
  - Provide transport for children who are aged five and above  
The majority (59%) of respondents agreed with the proposal to only provide transport for children who are aged five and above, with only 26.4%

disagreeing.

- Students over 16 years old with a special education need (SEN) will be required to make a contribution towards the cost of their transport, unless they are from a low-income family  
47% disagreed with the proposal to require post 16-year olds with SEN to contribute towards the cost of their transport, unless from a low-income family. Another 37% agreed with the proposal with a further 15% responding neither, indicating a wider split in opinions.
- Offer a travel pass for a public bus or train for Middle and Upper school pupils (ages 9-16), rather than supplying private buses or taxis in the first instance.  
A significant majority (70%) disagreed with the proposal to offer a travel pass for a public bus or train to students (aged 9-16) rather than supply private buses or taxis in the first instance. Only 24% of respondents agreed with the proposal showing an overwhelming objection to the policy.
- When a vehicle has been provided to the family by the national Motability Scheme, the council will provide parent/carers with a payment to cover the cost of mileage rather than provide additional transport  
39% of respondents agreed with the proposal to provide parents/carers with a payment to cover the cost of mileage of transporting their child to school with their Motability vehicle. 35% disagreed with the proposal whilst 26% responded neither, indicating no opinion which suggests the proposal may not affect them enough to comment either way.
- Proposal to charge concessionary bus passes at a variable rate that better reflects the cost of the journey rather than a universal fixed rate?  
Just under half of respondents (47%) disagreed with the proposal to charge concessionary bus passes at a variable rate rather than a universal fixed rate, with only 33% agreeing with the proposal.
- Provide a contribution to schools to run their own mini buses instead of commissioning private bus operators, in instances where this is more cost effective?  
The majority (54%) supported the proposal to provide a contribution to schools to run their own mini buses instead of commissioning private bus operators, with only 30% in disagreement
- Rather than providing transport, the council will reimburse travel expenses to parent/carers whose children attend a boarding school  
47.3% responded 'Neither' indicating no opinion, likely because of the very specific nature of the proposal. 28% disagreed with the proposal to reimburse travel expenses to parent/carers rather than provide transport in the first instance with 15% agreeing.
- Proposal to no longer provide travel assistance to parents/carers attending a Statement / EHC review whose children attend an out of council area boarding school  
Again, a similar proportion of respondents (46.5%) responded 'Neither'. 27% disagreed with the proposal to no longer provide travel assistance to

parents/carers attending a Statement/EHC review at an out of area boarding school. With a slightly smaller percentage (26.5%) disagreeing with the proposal.

15. Based on the responses received the following decisions were taken:

- Until the School Admissions Policy changes to nearest school a change will not be made to the school transport policies as this will cause confusion for parents and carers
- The change to transporting children 5 to 16 is reflected in the new policy. Where an application is received for a child under 5 consideration will be given on a case by case basis of the individual needs of the child.
- Given the significant costs to the local authority Post 16 SEN students will be required to contribute to the cost of their transport and this cost will be the same as the concessionary pass cost. A pilot independent travel training program has been undertaken over summer in 2018 and has achieved savings in excess of £50,000 for 6 students. We will look at how this can be further developed to allow this life skill to be provided to more of our students.
- Much of the disagreement here related to the age of the children, with many responders stating that the lower age range was too low. We will still look at providing bus passes to travel on public transport, where there is a suitable route for those aged 11 to 16
- Mileage payments will be offered to all parents, from September 2018 we have also introduced Personal Travel Budgets for parents and carers of children with SEN and looked after children
- The concessionary pass rate will remain as a fixed rate for all regardless of distance travelled. An in year change to the charge has been agreed so that it reflects the cost of an average mainstream route operated by Central Bedfordshire Council. From January 2019 the pass will cost £267/term which represents a daily cost of £4.20. The current cost is £162/term
- Central Bedfordshire Council will reimburse travel expenses for parents to attend one EHCP review where their child is in boarding school outside of Central Bedfordshire

## **Council Priorities**

16. Enhancing Central Bedfordshire, by reducing the number of contracted vehicles and making better use of public transport routes this will reduce the number of vehicles on the roads, leading to a reduction in congestion and air pollution and will help support the commercial public transport routes within Central Bedfordshire
17. Improving education and skills, by ensuring that those children who are entitled are provided with travel assistance from home to school safely and efficiently the pupils are more likely to be in their place of education
18. Protecting the vulnerable; improving wellbeing, by ensuring that some of our most vulnerable residents are able to access education
19. A more efficient and responsive council, changes to how travel assistance is provided will allow the Council to make the best use of its resources

## Corporate Implications

### Legal Implications

20. The current Home to School Transport policies, agreed by the Executive on 9 March 2010 and 4<sup>th</sup> February 2014 ensured the Council is compliant with the relevant legislation.
21. The policy details the way in which the Council will exercise its powers and duties to provide home to school transport in accordance with Section 509 of the Education Act 1996 and the Education and Inspections Act 2006. Adopting the proposed policy will ensure that the Council is meeting its legal responsibilities.
22. The duty placed on the Council is to make such travel arrangements as they consider necessary to enable the attendance of “eligible children” within their area, at the relevant ‘qualifying school’.
23. The duty applies to ‘eligible children’ in the Council’s area who are attending their nearest ‘qualifying school’, where:
  - the school is beyond the statutory walking distances of two miles for children below the age of eight and three miles for those aged eight and over; or
  - the child is from a ‘low income family’ and is over age eight, but under 11 years of age, and they are living more than two miles from the nearest school; or
  - the child is from a ‘low income family’ and is of secondary age (aged 11- 16) and attending a qualifying school that is between two and six miles from the child’s home (as long as there are not three or more nearer suitable qualifying schools); or
  - the child is from a ‘low income family’ and is of secondary age (aged 11-16) and attending their nearest school preferred on the grounds of religion or belief, between two and 15 miles from home.
24. The Council must also make travel arrangements for those pupils who are unable to walk to school or college because of their special educational need (SEN), disability or mobility problems and children who cannot reasonably be expected to walk because the nature of the route is such that they cannot walk in reasonable safety.

### Financial and Risk Implications

25. In 2017/18 the educational transport budgets were overspent by £2.8 million. This was due to an increase in the cost of mainstream transport £527,424 an increase of £1,892,831 for SEN Transport, an increase of £232,197 for SEN colleges and an increased cost to the council of £209,624 for extended rights to travel and for SEN £777k. The cost to the Council for home to school transport in 2016/17 was £8million
26. The MTFP Contains savings associated with changes to these policies. These savings were agreed as part of the budget agreed by Council in February 2017

Year	Budget 16/17	Budget 17/18	Spend 16/17	Spend 17/18	Variance 16/17	Variance 17/18
Mainstream	£3,486,460	£3,392,460	£3,695,192	£3,919,884	£208,732	£527,424
Mainstream Colleges	£79,810	£81,810	£68,697	£70,747	-£11,113	- £2,178
SEN	£3,475,940	£3,026,949	£4,349,314	£4,829,771	£873,374	£1,892,831
SEN Colleges	£350,000	£346,000	£326,000	£578,197	-£24,000	£232,197
*Extended Rights	£167,500	£122,070	£552,500	£209,624	£358,000	£209,624
Totals	£7,226,710	£6,969,289	£8,665,203	£9,608,223	£1,428,993	£2,859,789

\* Extended rights to transport applies to families on low income

#### MTFP Efficiencies and Pressures

	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	Total
<b>Existing Efficiencies</b>					
Walking Routes	-100	0	0	0	-100
SEN Procurement	-180	0	0	0	-180
Transport to nearest school	0	-25	-50	0	-75
Voluntary mileage payments	0	-75	-125	0	-200
<b>Existing Pressures</b>					
Growth Mainstream	146	58	0	0	204
Growth SEN	91	38	0	0	129
Base Pressure	1200	0	0	0	1200
Base pressure unwind	-500	-350	-350	0	-1200

Accelerated saving					
Sub Total	937	-154	-250	0	533
<b>Existing MTFP Total</b>	657	-254	-425	0	-22
<b>New Efficiencies</b>					
Personal Travel Plans	-80	0	0	0	-80
SEN Procurement (additional)	-290	0	0	0	-290
Policy Changes post 16+ SEN	-60	0	0	0	-60
Changed geography of provision	0	0	-240	-240	-480
Sub-total	-430	0	-240	-240	-910
<b>New Pressure</b>					
Reversal of pressure unwind (as efficiencies now detailed)	146	58	0	0	204
Revised impact of growth: Mainstream	91	38	0	0	129
Revised impact of growth: SEN	1200	0	0	0	1200
Sub-total	-500	-350	-350	0	-1200
<b>Total new Efficiencies &amp; Pressures</b>	219	573	440	60	1292



NEW MTFP	876	319	15	60	1270

27. Other processes have been put in place to mitigate these costs the move from a framework for letting the routes to a dynamic purchasing system.
28. Introduction of Personal Transport Budgets for parents/carers of children with SEN or looked after children
29. Introduction of Independent Travel Training.
30. Increase in concessionary pass rate to the equivalent of the average cost of a mainstream route.
31. Full review of the local offer as it relates to transport
32. Full review of information provided to parents /carers in relation to travel assistance.
33. Better engagement with the CCG regarding payment for transport on grounds of medical need.
34. The cost of transport is not sustainable with the resources we have so we must ensure that we are using the resource as efficiently as possible
35. The post 19 policy will set out how Central Bedfordshire Council will decide if a young person aged 19 to 25 with an EHCP needs transport to access further education. The assessment will establish if there is a need for transport and if the transport should be provided by the council.

### **Equalities Implications**

36. The Council has a statutory duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and foster good relations in respect of nine protected characteristics; age disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
37. When the Home to School Transport policy was developed in 2010 a full equality impact assessment was undertaken in consultation with the Equality Forum. As part of the policy review and consultation process undertaken in 2013 the equality impact assessment was refreshed. A further refresh of the Equalities Impact Assessment has take place as part of this review.

### **38. Conclusion and next Steps**

39. The Executive are asked to agree that the draft policies
40. The new policies will be implemented from September 2019

### **Appendices**

**Appendix A:** School Travel Assistance Policy

**Appendix B:** Travel Assistance Policy for Post 16 Students.

**Appendix C.** Consultation responses

**Appendix D.** Equalities Impact Assessment

**Background Papers**

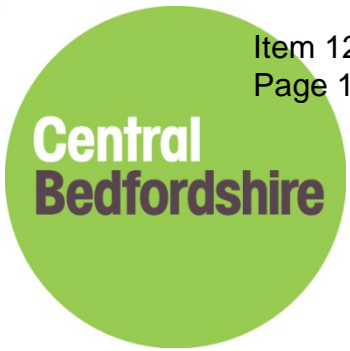
**Executive 20<sup>th</sup> June 2017 – Request to go out to consultation**

**<https://centralbeds.moderngov.co.uk/documents/g5369/Public%20reports%20pack%20Tuesday%2020-Jun-2017%2009.30%20EXECUTIVE.pdf?T=10>**

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Appendix A

Children's Services

# Policy for Travel Assistance for Children & Young people attending School

**2019/2020**

November 2018

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<b>Date agreed:</b>	

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## **1. Introduction**

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- 1.1** This policy sets out who and in what way Central Bedfordshire Council (the Council) will help its residents with the transport of children of compulsory school age between home and school. It specifically relates to transport between home and school at the start and end of the school day and outlines the responsibilities that parents/carers and the Council have in this process.
- 1.2** It also explains the way in which the Council may help with the transport needs of those children who qualify for assistance as a result of specific special educational needs, disability or other mobility difficulties.
- 1.3** Details of travel assistance available under the Council's Post 16 Transport Policy are available on the Council's website (<http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/schooltransport>)

## **2. General Statement of Policy**

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**2.1** This statement of policy sets out the way in which the Council will exercise its powers and duties to provide home to school travel assistance in accordance with Section 508B, 508C and Schedule 35B of the Education Act 1996 (the Act), as inserted by Part 6 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (the EIA 2006). It links to the Council's Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy for schools and colleges.

**2.2** Generally the Council will provide travel assistance for pupils of compulsory school age (term after the 5th birthday to 16 years of age) who are registered pupils at their nearest suitable (qualifying) school and live more than the recognised (statutory) walking distance from it, i.e. 2 miles for children aged under 8 and 3 miles for children aged between 8 and 16. For most children this travel assistance is free, but there are charges for those who make use of the Council's school transport services but are not themselves entitled under the terms of this policy. The Council makes no general transport provision for children under or over the age of compulsory education, or for children of any age who attend private schools or colleges. Please see Section 10, for details on post 16 transport.

**2.3** The Education and Skills Act 2008 has now increased the age at which young people are required to participate in education or training to 18 years of age. However, this is not a change in the statutory school age (reception to the end of year 11), which this policy is aligned with, so it does not extend the entitlement for the provision of free travel assistance beyond year 11.

**2.3** The nearest suitable school includes the nearest qualifying school that is deemed by the Council as suitable to a particular child's age and needs. To be eligible for travel assistance the distance to the school must exceed the statutory walking distance, as mentioned in the paragraph above.

**2.4** In all other circumstances the Council will not usually provide travel assistance or contribute towards the cost of transport

**2.5** The above general statements are intended as a general guide and are without prejudice to the full policy set out below. A parent or carer may appeal against a transport decision through the Council's formal Appeals Process (Section 13).



### **3. Roles & Responsibilities of the Parents and Carers**

The law states that it is the parent's responsibility to ensure that a child gets to school, including accompanying them, if necessary. This includes the parent determining how their child will get to school and may include making appropriate arrangements such as with a friend or a childminder to ensure that the child is accompanied, as appropriate.

#### **3.1 It is the responsibility of a child's parent or carer to:**

- i. ensure that a child of statutory school age receives appropriate full-time education;
- ii. make necessary arrangements for attendance at an appropriate school or other setting, including submitting applications as necessary for admission to a school and for home to school travel assistance to the Council;
- iii. ensure the reasonable safety of themselves and their child(ren) between home and the designated pick up point, and from the designated drop-off point and home;
- iv. be aware of the provisions of the home to school transport policy;
- v. pay for any wilful damage caused by their child;
- vi. to make arrangements as necessary when not available themselves, for their child to be accompanied by a responsible person as necessary when walking to and from school or to and from a pick up point who will wait with the child until the vehicle arrives;
- vii. ensure that the pupil is ready with a valid travel pass at the agreed time of pick-up when the vehicle arrives at home or at the pick-up point (transport staff are instructed not to wait over 5 minutes).
- viii. ensure the child knows what to do should they lose their travel pass and thus be refused travel, or if for any reason the vehicle does not arrive: for example, this could be returning home, going to a neighbour or telephoning the parent/carer for assistance;
- ix. ensure that the child understands the need for safety and that the wearing of a seat belt or harness is essential;
- x. inform the Transport Team of any change of wheelchair, or equipment so that the risk-assessment may be reviewed;
- xi. ensure that only wheelchairs certified as being successfully crash-tested will be permitted to have a passenger travel in their wheelchair on a vehicle. A full risk assessment will have to be undertaken by Council officers before transport can commence. The Council will produce a 'wheelchair passport' if applicable for transport.
- xii. inform the Transport Team of any change of travelling requirements, or any change in medical needs

- xiii. notify the Transport Team of any change of address or telephone number in good time.

The Council will not be responsible for any interruption of service provided to a child or any other consequential difficulty from not having an up-to-date postal or email address or operational telephone number;

- xiv. to understand that passenger assistants will not administer medication. They can transport it to school as long as it is in the original packaging and clearly labelled with the pupil's name;
- xv. provide evidence of personal circumstances in support of any application or appeal for transport;

**3.2** All parents/carers whose child/children are in receipt of travel assistance from the Council are agreeing to have read and understood the current Code of Conduct for parents/carers and pupils. (Reference document 1)

#### **4. Principles, Roles & Responsibilities of the Council**

**4.1** Central Bedfordshire Council is committed to providing home to school travel assistance in order to meet its statutory obligations (Section 2, paragraph 1 and 2). In so doing the Council will:

- i. provide equitable, safe, efficient and cost effective transport assistance for pupils entitled to transport assistance in accordance with the Council's duties and powers as provided for in legislation (Section 2 of this policy);
- ii. ensure information is made accessible for parents and carers so that they are aware of their entitlement;
- iii. regularly review eligibility for transport assistance to ensure that those who are receiving transport assistance are still eligible;
- iv. monitor the take-up of services to ensure that access is fair and equitable and that hard to reach groups and those who are most vulnerable are aware of their entitlement;
- v. support sustainable modes of travel to school: as well as helping to boost children's fitness and concentration levels, walking and cycling helps to reduce the congestion caused by the journey to school, together with the potential for associated accidents, pollution and carbon emissions.

**4.2** The Transport Team is responsible for:

- a. administering this and any other Council policies, which govern eligibility for travel assistance;
- b. determining eligibility and identifying the transport needs of individual pupils;
- c. commissioning all home to school transport
- d. providing the overall budget for home to school transport, and budget management.

- e. planning and securing the most appropriate and cost effective home to school transport;
- f. day to day management of all home to school transport provision;
- g. establishment of operating standards
- h. contract management and compliance with operating standards and policy objectives

**Admission choices should not be made on the assumption that the same transport eligibility rules will apply throughout a child's education.**

## **5. Equality Statement**

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**5.1** Central Bedfordshire Council has a statutory duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and foster good relations in respect of the 9 protected characteristics, which are; age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

**5.2** This policy is subject to an Equality Impact Assessment. This assessment will be integral to all future policy and guidance reviews. A copy of this assessment is available upon request.

## **6. Safeguarding Statement**

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**6.1** The Council and its partners recognise that safeguarding is everybody's responsibility. Whether their interest is in all young people 'staying safe' in all aspects of our services, or whether they are working in specific areas of vulnerability, all staff, including drivers and passenger assistants will undergo appropriate training and induction so that they understand their roles and responsibilities and are confident in carrying them out. Schools, settings, children, young people and their parents or carers, and any member of the community should feel confident that they can raise any issues or concerns about the safety or welfare of children and know that they will be listened to and taken seriously.

**6.2** This will be achieved by maintaining an ethos of commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. It is supported by: a clear child protection policy; appropriate induction and training as well as briefings and refreshed learning to ensure compliance with current legislation and guidelines.

**6.3** The Council acts as a Corporate Parent for Children in Care. This means that the Council has a legal and moral duty to provide the kind of support that any good parent/carer would provide to his or her own child. This policy has been written to comply with these principles.

## **7. Status of This Policy**

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**7.1** In accepting any offer of assistance made by the Council under this Policy, a parent/carer will be accepting all the provisions of this Policy.

## **8. Implementation and Monitoring of the Policy**

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**8.1** The Transport Team will be responsible for the implementation of this policy through the development of their internal processes that will ensure the ability to monitor take up of service and regular reviews for those in receipt of the service.

## 9. Eligibility & Entitlement

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### **General Policy for ALL Children**

**9.1** A child of statutory school age who meets one of the following criteria will be provided with travel assistance to school as follows.

- i. A child of compulsory school age (term after the 5th birthday to 16 years of age) who are registered pupils at their nearest suitable (qualifying) school and live more than the recognised (statutory) walking distance from it, i.e. 2 miles for children aged under 8 and 3 miles for children aged between 8 and 16, unless parents voluntarily make suitable alternative arrangements.
- ii. A child who is from a low income family (as defined in section 9.3) aged over 8 and less than 11 years of age who attends their nearest qualifying school and lives more than 2 miles from the school, by the shortest available walking route. Travel assistance is not provided to children from low income families under the age of 8 as those who live over 2 miles from nearest qualifying school will have transport provided due to statutory walking distance (see point i above)
- iii. A child who is from a low income family aged between 11 and 16 who attends his or her nearest qualifying schools and lives more than 2 miles but less than 6 miles from the school. The distances stated above are calculated by the shortest walking route if up to 3 miles or the shortest motorised route if over 3 miles.
- iv. A child who is from a low income family aged between 11 and 16 years who attends his or her nearest suitable school preferred by his or her parents on grounds of religion or belief and lives more than 2 miles but not more than 15 miles from the school. The Distances stated above are calculated by the shortest available walking route if up to 3 miles or the shortest motorised route if over 3 miles.

**9.2** A child aged 8 years of age who is entitled to transport under the above distance criteria will continue to receive free travel assistance until the end of the academic year in which he/she reaches the age of 8.

### **Low Income**

**9.3** Children from low-income groups or families are defined in legislation as those entitled to free school meals, or whose families receive the maximum level of Working Tax Credit (the maximum level is defined by no reduction in the amount the family receives due to household income). Annual confirmation of low-income status is required. Assistance will usually be withdrawn if a family ceases to hold low-income status. To qualify for free school meals their parent/carer will receive 1 of these benefits:

- Income Support
- Income Based Job Seekers Allowance
- Employment Support Allowance (income related)
- Child Tax Credit with income less than £16,190.00 (unless you claim Working Tax Credit) - form TC602(A)

- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Guaranteed Element of State Pension Credit

## **Home Address**

**9.4** Mainstream children who live at more than one address, who fulfil the other criteria for transport assistance, will be provided with travel assistance from the primary home address registered with their school and the Council. The Council will not provide travel assistance to or from any other address.

**9.5** For children who have a statement of special educational needs or an education health care plan (EHCP), permanent arrangements involving transport to an alternative address, other than the home address, may be considered if there is no additional cost to the Council, the alternative address is in Central Bedfordshire and there is no detrimental effect on children who may share the same transport route (e.g. extended journey time).

## **Walking Route - Distance Measurement**

**9.6** The walking distances between home and school, referred to in section 9.1, are measured by the shortest route along which a child, accompanied as necessary, may walk with reasonable safety (see Section 12 paragraph 10 to 14 for further details). As such, the route measured may include footpaths, bridleways, and other pathways, as well as recognised roads.

## **Qualifying School**

**If parents choose to send their child to a school which is not the nearest qualifying school transport will not be provided by the Council unless the circumstances meet the discretionary transport criteria Parents will be responsible for arrangements and costs**

**9.7** A qualifying school is defined as a:

- Community, foundation or voluntary school;
- mainstream academy;
- selective school
- free school;
- community or foundation special school;

- special academy and free school;
- University Technical College or University Training School;
- Studio School;
- non-maintained special school;
- pupil referral unit;
- city technology college (CTC), city college for the technology of the arts (CCTA) or an Academy;
- an independent school if it named as the local authority's preferred placement in the pupil's statement of special educational need or Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP).

**9.8** In relation to a child with Special Educational Needs (SEN), an independent school (other than a CTC, CCTA or Academy) will be a qualifying school if it is the only school named in the child's statement or EHCP, or it is the nearest of 2 or more schools named in the statement. In the case of special education, it will be the nearest suitable special school with places available that can provide an education appropriate to the age, ability and aptitude of the child and any special educational needs that the child has as specified in his or her statement of special educational need or EHCP.

**9.10** In individual exceptional circumstances, where an alternative form of education has been agreed, the term 'qualifying school' will be taken to include such agreed sources of alternative provision.

**9.11** A school designated by the Council as the appropriate school for a particular pupil (e.g. a permanently excluded pupil, a pupil with a statement of special educational needs or EHCP, a child in the care of the Council and placed at a particular school or a child placed at a particular school under the Hard to Place Pupil Protocol, where normal admissions procedures have failed) will normally be deemed to be the nearest suitable school for the purposes of this policy.

### **Statutory Notices for Closures of Central Bedfordshire Schools**

**9.12** Statutory proposals to close a Council maintained school must be published with transitional arrangements for displaced pupils, as required by Department of Education guidance for decision makers. Arrangements for children already attending or expecting to be allocated a place at the school that is the subject of closure will, where necessary establish the arrangements for transfer and transport of these pupils to an alternative designated catchment area school. These proposals will determine the dates from which transferring children may become eligible for transport assistance to the alternative school.

**9.14** In addition, and reflecting the need to be sensitive to the concerns of parents and carers of pupils who were due to join their nearest school at the school's point of entry, transport assistance may be provided to the alternative designated catchment area school in the event that the Council approves a statutory proposal to close the nearest school.

**9.15** The Council may exercise its discretion to provide transport assistance for parents and carers of pupils who expressed a preference in the previous school admission round

for the next nearest school prior to the Council's approval of a statutory proposal to close the nearest school.

**9.16** Transport to an alternative school will not be provided to pupils who are already registered at a school that the Council approves for closure, unless it is intended by the Council in its statutory proposals to be provided to implement the closure, as the move will be classified as parental preference.

### **Non Availability of a Walking Route**

**9.17** When determining whether the child's home is within the statutory distance, there must be an available walking route to the qualifying school that is 'reasonable'. If the nature of the route is such that the child cannot be expected to walk to school, even when it is reasonable to expect an adult to accompany the child, then the Council will deem it 'unsuitable for walking' and therefore not available. In determining what is 'reasonable', the Council will take into consideration national guidance on this issue from road safety professionals and apply national Road Safety GB standards in making such assessments (See section 12, paragraph 10 to 14).

*The Courts have defined an 'available route' as one "along which a child accompanied as necessary can walk with reasonable safety to school. It does not fail to qualify as 'available' because of dangers which would arise if the child is unaccompanied." It is the parents' responsibility to ensure that a child gets to school, including ensuring that they are accompanied if appropriate; and to ensure that a child has suitable clothing and equipment for the journey (for example: boots, wet weather clothing, reflective bands, torch).*

### **Individual circumstances as determined by the Council's Transport Eligibility Panel at appeal**

**9.18** Assistance with transport will be offered if, following an appeal by the parent/carer, the Authority's Transport Eligibility Panel decides that this should be provided in recognition of individual circumstances under the terms of this policy (Section 13)



### **Children at Boarding or Residential School**

**9.19** Where the Council arranges for a child to board at a school, travel assistance will be provided in accordance with the boarding arrangements where the usual distance criteria are also met.

**9.20** Boarding arrangements for residential schools can be one of the following:

- a. Termly boarding – travel assistance will only be provided at the beginning and end of each term and at the beginning and end of the mid-term holiday.
- b. 12 day boarding – travel assistance will be provided on alternate weekends and at the beginning and end of each term.
- c. Weekly boarding - travel assistance will be provided to school on Monday and from school on Friday each week.
- d. 52 week placement – travel assistance will be provided up to a maximum of three return journeys each academic year.

**9.21** For all boarding arrangements, any additional journey to those laid out above will remain the responsibility of the parent/carer.

**9.22** In the interests of the efficient use of resources the Council will, in all cases, encourage the parent/carer to make their own travel arrangements for which appropriate reimbursement will be made (Section 11, paragraph 26). Where a Motability vehicle has been provided for the child travel assistance will be by way of a mileage payment to the parent/carer.

**9.24** One parent/carer may be transported with the child to act as a passenger assistant to out of Council area schools where it results in the most efficient use of the council's resources.

**9.25** All additional transport requirements to those detailed above will remain the responsibility of the parent/carer.

### **Children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN) or Education Health Care Plan (EHCP)**

**9.26** This section applies to children who are the subject of a Statement of Special Educational Need made under s.324 of the Education Act 1996 or an EHCP under Section 37 of the Children and Families Act 2014.

**9.27** There is no automatic entitlement to travel assistance for a child who is the subject of a statement or EHCP. Assistance will be given, if the child meets the general criteria in Section 2 or when a specific need can be identified for it. This will usually be founded upon the individual special needs of the pupil, see below.

## **Assessment of Specific Need**

**9.28** A child undergoing formal assessment for Special Educational Needs or EHCP will have their transport needs considered as part of that process. A copy of the *Special Educational Needs Transport Application Form* is available for information on the Council website [www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/schooltransport](http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/schooltransport). A decision will be based on written evidence from a range of sources, for example, the Educational Psychologist, the parent/carer and the school Special Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO). An eligible child will show one or more of the following factors that impact on their ability to travel to school in the same way as other children of their age:

- Long term<sup>1</sup> severely restricted independent mobility.
- Lack of awareness of common dangers and lack of age appropriate independence skills so the child could be at significant risk when travelling to school. This could be caused by factors such as:

**9.29** Just as an aim of special education provision is to increase the independence of the pupil, the way that a child travels to school should change over time, to reflect their increasing progress and maturity. For this reason, the transport needs of the child will be reviewed on a regular basis.

**9.30** Transport will usually be arranged on a localised pick-up point basis, if assessed as appropriate through the transport needs assessment process. For all other children the pick-up and drop-off point will be as close as possible to the address at which they usually live.

**9.31** If the child has a disability which affects their mobility, then the primary mobility aid (e.g. wheelchair or walking frame) will normally be transported, subject to risk assessment.

**9.32** Pupils who attend special schools often take part in integration programmes with mainstream schools. Pupils are expected to attend their nearest qualifying school to enable the parent/carer to make their own arrangements to take or collect the child.

**9.33** If a parent/carer moves home within Central Bedfordshire during the Academic Year, this will represent a change in circumstances and eligibility for travel assistance will be reviewed. The child should be transferred to the nearest appropriate school to the new address from no later than the beginning of the next academic year. However, if the parent/carer wishes their child to remain at the current school then transport will become their responsibility.

**9.36** Where the transport need has not been assessed at the annual review or as part of the statutory assessment process, it will be necessary for an *SEN Transport Needs Assessment form* to be completed by the child's parent/carer. This will apply to children with Special Educational Needs who are not subject to assessment or do not have Statements of Special Educational Needs/ EHC Plans and also to children who do not have special educational needs but do have disability or mobility problems. Information is required on the mobility of the child, any special medical or behavioural conditions and any special equipment required to inform the individual assessment of transport need. The form should be passed to the Special Needs Co-ordinator at the school for endorsement.

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<sup>1</sup> Long term describes something that is likely to last for at least a year or for the rest of the life of the person affected. This can include intermittent or sporadic conditions such as epilepsy or multiple sclerosis

The view of the Special Needs Co-ordinator at the school will be taken into consideration when assessing the need for transport.

### **Parental Preference**

**9.37** It should be noted that the Council will consider transport to the nearest suitable school. If by parental preference a more distant school is named in the child's statement or EHCP but in the Authority's view the child's needs could be suitably met at a nearer school, transport will be the responsibility of the parent/carer.

### **Review of Transport Need and Assistance**

**9.38** Eligibility for travel assistance and the type of provision required will be reviewed on a continuing basis and at least once per academic year. Wherever possible the review will be undertaken following the child's statutory annual SEN Statement review. Any changes will be implemented from the beginning of the next school term, or sooner by mutual agreement.

### **Pupils with Temporary Medical Problems**

**9.39** Travel assistance may be considered where a child lives within the defined walking distance to school relevant to his or her age and is attending the designated or nearest school available but is unable to walk to school because of a medical condition. This may be provided for a fixed period dependent upon the medical need identified by an appropriate medical practitioner, for example no more than 6 calendar weeks while the child is unable to walk the route due to a broken leg. The period may be extended on request by the parent/carer if the fixed term is likely to be inadequate because the medical condition persists.

**9.40** It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to produce evidence of the medical condition in all cases, detailing:

- a. full medical details of the condition, including timescales for recovery;
- b. written medical confirmation regarding the child's fitness to return to school;
- c. the likely period for which revised travel assistance arrangements may be needed;
- d. the type of vehicle needed, where appropriate, for example, where the child is in a full body cast;
- e. any manual handling risks.

**9.41** This should be endorsed by the General Practitioner (GP) or in certain circumstances by a medical consultant. The Council reserves the right to require the parent/carer to provide further medical evidence as deemed necessary. Any charges incurred by the parent/carer in providing this evidence will not be paid by the Council.

**9.42** Similarly, if the travel arrangements made for a child, by the Council, are considered not appropriate as a result of an accident, planned surgery or an illness, then a request for revisions to the travel assistance arrangements must be made in writing, giving a minimum of 5 days notice.

**9.43** All requests should be made to the Transport Team (Section 13, paragraph 17).

**9.44** All decisions will be based on the facts provided, taking into account the needs of the child, the availability of appropriate travel assistance and any significant increase in costs.

**9.45** Appeals against decisions not to provide additional assistance in these circumstances should be made in writing to be considered by the Transport Eligibility Panel (Section 13).

### **Pupils with a Disability**

**9.46** Where a pupil has a disability, under the Equality Act 2010 (Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and 2005) this policy illustrates that the Council will make reasonable adjustments as appropriate to the pupil's specific needs.

### **Parents with a Disability**

**9.47** The Council is committed to promoting equality of opportunity for disabled people and to eliminate discrimination.

**9.48** The Council may exercise its discretion to provide travel assistance to a child who is of a primary school age (reception year to the end of year 6), lives within the walking distance to their school and is attending the designated or nearest school available but where his or her parents are unable to accompany him or her on the walk to school because of a medical condition or disability.

**9.49** The Council will consider the availability of help from immediate and extended family members and from neighbours. The availability of help through a School Travel Plan will be considered as will the use of any disability benefits to help secure attendance. It is expected that the parent/carer will have made every effort to secure other help. The Council may seek confirmation of this from the parent/carer, school or other agencies.

**9.50** It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to produce evidence of the medical condition. This is normally endorsed by the GP or medical consultant. The Council may ask the parent/carer to provide explicit further medical evidence. If provided, the requirement for transport will be reviewed no less than on a termly basis.

**9.51** All requests should be made to the Transport Team (Section 13, paragraph 17). Decisions will be based on the facts provided, taking into account the needs of the child, the availability of appropriate travel assistance and any significant increase in costs.

**9.52** An appeal against a decision not to provide additional assistance in these circumstances should be made, in writing, to be considered by the Transport Eligibility Panel (Section 13).

### **Cared For Children, Refugees and Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children**

**9.53** The Council will exercise its discretion to provide a child with travel assistance to continue to attend their school, for a period of up to 12 calendar weeks where the child

- is temporarily living at a foster placement
- is within the Council area

**9.54** Where a request for travel assistance does not meet the above criteria, arrangements for transport will fall to the Social Worker responsible, representing the Council as the corporate parent.

**9.55** In general, where subsequent temporary placements occur after the initial 12 week period, no further transport assistance will be provided, however applications may be considered on the grounds of “individual or extenuating circumstances” (Section 9, paragraph 72).

### **Pupils Excluded from School**

**9.56** A pupil permanently excluded from a school will be provided with assistance to their new school provided it is both the nearest suitable school and is outside statutory walking distance from home (Section 2). Exceptional arrangements may be made if a permanently excluded pupil attends alternative provision and this may include assistance with part-time attendance at other educational establishments as required by their particular needs.

**9.57** The transport needs of pupils who attend alternative provision because of a fixed term exclusion from a school or academy will be a matter for the school and the parent/carer.

### **Children Admitted to School under the Fair Access Protocol**

**9.58** When considering the admission of pupils under the Council’s Fair Access Protocol, which operates outside normal admission procedures, the nearest schools to the pupil’s home address will be identified to determine which school should be offered. In administering this protocol the Council will consider a group of schools and identify with the pupil, their parent/carer and other relevant agencies the school to be approached. Account will be taken of the travelling distance to each school. Pupils who are placed under the Fair Access Protocol will be considered for transport as if the named school was their nearest suitable (qualifying) school.

### **Education Other Than at School**

**9.59** Where the Council arranges for a child to receive education other than in school then the location where education is provided will be considered as if it were a school when determining eligibility for transport assistance. In determining reasonableness, the Council will take into account the cost to the Council of the proposed transport and the availability of alternative arrangements.

**9.60** Where a parent/carer has decided to educate the child other than at school, no assistance for transport will be available from the Council.

**9.61** Where transport assistance is provided, there is an expectation that all children will travel by public transport unless either no public transport is available, or the child’s needs are such that this would not be appropriate (Section 9, paragraph 26 to 36), as decided by

a relevant Officer. The parent/carer may be required to provide medical or other supporting evidence where there is a request for provision other than by public transport.

**9.62** Where it is not appropriate to use public transport or where none is available then provision will be made by the Transport Team. Where it is more cost effective for the Council, a personal transport cost allowance will be offered to a parent/carer able to make their own travel arrangements (Section 11, paragraphs 26 and 27). Only where there is no reasonable alternative available will taxis/or minibuses be used for the entire journey.

**9.63** Where a child remains on roll at a mainstream setting and that setting out-sources all or part of the education provision, the setting will be responsible for all transport arrangements for the child's off-site education provision.

**9.64** The Council will only consider the provision of travel assistance where a child:

- a. is of statutory school age and lives within the Central Bedfordshire Council area; and lives further from the setting than the walking distance for the child's age or meets entitlement criteria; and
- b. has been placed in the school/setting by the Council and either
  - . has been permanently excluded or is at risk of permanent exclusion, or
  - . is unable to attend the designated setting due to exceptional circumstances, with appropriate supporting evidence having been provided; or
  - . is dual registered and meets standard eligibility criteria.

### **Children in Temporary Residential Circumstances**

**9.65** Where a family is forced to re-locate temporarily to alternative accommodation owing to circumstances outside their control:

- a) The Council is prepared under this policy to consider on its merits an application in respect of a child accommodated under a temporary/emergency arrangement otherwise than where responsibility is accepted by the Council in (b) below, having regard to the usual distance criteria (Section 2, paragraph 2), although this requirement may be waived in the case of a child accommodated in a refuge, whose safety would otherwise be at risk. Any such temporary arrangements made to provide travel assistance will be subject to review as necessary and at least on a termly basis.
- b) Where school transport becomes necessary on social grounds as a result of the intervention by the Council's Children's Services, transport will be provided

**9.66** Regular work commitments or domestic difficulties of the parent/carer will not normally be considered. The parent/carer is expected to take their responsibility in enabling their child's attendance at school.

### **Children below Compulsory School Age**

**9.67** Arrangements may be made for a child below statutory school age with SEN to attend a special school nursery or a similar setting offering special needs provision. When making such arrangements the normal eligibility criteria for children of primary school age, including walking distance, will apply.

### **Emergencies and Requests at Short Notice**

**9.68** In exceptional circumstances the Council will attempt to make arrangements at short notice when requested. However, this cannot be guaranteed, and a parent/carer of a child who relies upon assistance may need to make their own arrangements at their own expense in the case of an emergency. The Council will not accept responsibility for any arrangements so made by a parent/carer.

**9.69** No travel assistance will be provided, other than at the beginning and end of the normal school day. In cases of exclusion, illness, if a child has to go home during the course of the school day, or during examination periods, the school or parent/carer is responsible for transport. Reasonable adjustments may be made for pupils attending specialist or alternative provisions.

**9.71** Transport during exam periods will be provided to the school in time to accommodate attendance for the first exam and will collect the child(ren) after the last exam. One journey inbound and one journey outbound per vehicle will be provided. This will be based on the earliest start time and latest finish time for all children on board the vehicle for that day.

### **Individual or Extenuating Circumstances**

**9.72** Individual consideration will be given to a child or children from vulnerable groups who do not meet the criteria set out above. The parent/carer must submit their application in writing, together with the details of any special exceptional circumstances they wish to be considered to the Transport Team.

**9.73** Please note that individual family work commitments, childcare arrangements or inconvenience to a parent/carer are not normally taken into account when considering eligibility for travel assistance.

***The Council will not consider an unaccompanied child. The law states that it is the parents' responsibility to ensure that a child gets to school, including accompanying them, if appropriate. This includes the parent determining how their child will get to school and may include making appropriate arrangements such as with a friend or a childminder to ensure that the child is accompanied.***

***The Council does not consider work commitments as an exceptional circumstance. The law states that it is the parents' responsibility to ensure that their child gets to school, and this may include making appropriate arrangements. This could include use of a childminder, friend, before school and after school club.***

***Parental Preference - If a parent has chosen a school which is not the nearest school to the home address, this is parental preference. The Council expects parents to have considered how to get their child to school. This could include use of a childminder, friend, before school and after school club.***



## **10. Circumstances Where Transport Assistance is Not Provided**

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### **Parental Preference**

**10.1** A child will be ineligible for travel assistance where he or she attends a school which is not designated for the home address or which is not the nearest available to the home address, where this is a result of parental preference.

**10.2** When expressing a preference for a school other than the nearest school (qualifying school), parents and carers are strongly advised to consider their commitment to providing transport for the whole duration of a child's attendance at that school and to consider whether their ability to provide or pay for that transport is likely to continue over that period of time.

**10.3** Particular care should be taken when using a concessionary seat on school transport (Section 11, paragraph 31). These seats are subject to removal with a minimum of two weeks' notice if required for new passengers who have eligibility for a seat. The withdrawal of a concessionary seat alone will not be considered as grounds for an appeal for assistance from the Council. Parents/carers should consider whether they are likely to be able to make their own arrangements should this occur before taking up a school place or moving house.

**10.4** Where a child is withdrawn by a parent/carer from one school and placed in another school, travel assistance will not be provided unless the child is eligible, under the terms of this Policy, from the home address to the new school. Such a transfer of school will be regarded as an expression of parental preference.

**Admission choices should not be made on the assumption that the same transport eligibility rules will apply throughout a child's education.**

### **Children Attending a School on the Grounds of Religion or Belief**

**10.5** Travel assistance will not be provided by the Council to a parent/carer of a child attending school on the grounds of religion or belief ('denominational grounds'). The exception from this is where a child is from a low-income family, as detailed in Section 9, paragraph 1 v.

### **Outside the Normal Start and End of the School Day**

**10.6** No travel assistance will be provided at lunchtimes or at any time other than the normal start and end of the school day. Travel between these times will remain a parental

responsibility. Reasonable adjustments may be made for pupils attending specialist or alternative provisions. Please see section 9 paragraph 70 for more information.

### **Sibling, Brother, Sister**

**10.7** Assistance given for one child in a family will not create a precedent for any of his or her brothers or sisters or other children living at that address. Each child's case will be considered individually, and separate applications for assistance must be made for each child. If the Policy for Travel Assistance for Children and Young People Attending School has changed since the older sibling received assistance, the younger sibling will be subject to the new Travel Assistance for Children and Young People Attending School.

### **Change of Address**

**10.8** When there is a change of address, a child's transport entitlement will be reviewed under the policy in existence at that time. Travel assistance will not generally be given to maintain a pupil's place at a school if the family moves house to a more distant address from the pupil's school. However, if no place is available at the nearest qualifying school within the statutory walking distance from the new address then assistance would normally be given to the next nearest suitable (qualifying) school. Residents moving house are reminded that if they move to an address in another authority, their child or student will then become subject to the policies of the authority into which they have moved.

**10.9** Where a child who is attending a school in Central Bedfordshire in years 10 and 11 has to move in exceptional circumstances to a new address in Central Bedfordshire this will represent a change in circumstances and their eligibility for transport assistance will be reviewed. They must have completed at least one term in year 10 at their current school.

**10.10** Please contact the Transport Team on 0300 300 8339 or at [school.transport@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:school.transport@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk) for further information on what would be defined as 'exceptional circumstances'. Parents/carers of a pupil with special educational needs, currently receiving transport who move house within Central Bedfordshire should provide as much notice as possible to the Transport Team and to allow their eligibility to be reassessed. If the pupil is entitled to transport from the new address, it may take up to 15 working days for transport to be provided.

**10.11** The Council may offer to move the child to a nearer suitable school bearing in mind any special circumstances, for example, examinations or students in their final year. Should this offer be refused the current school may be deemed as a "parental choice" and not meet the criteria in Section 9, paragraph 28 to 36 of this policy.

### **Single Sex Schools**

**10.13** Travel assistance to single sex schools will not be supported unless the school concerned is the Council recognised nearest qualifying school, where the usual transport criteria will apply.

**10.14** Similarly, if the Council recognised closest qualifying school is a single sex establishment, transport will not be provided to enable the child to attend a mixed school.

### **Part Time Attendance, Detention, After School Clubs, etc.**

**10.15** Travel assistance will not be provided at a time other than standard school times e.g. home during the day or late after school, including payback, detention, sporting or other after school clubs and societies. Pupils are expected to complete a full school day and fit into the normal timing of transport.

**10.16** Where a child's day starts or finishes earlier or later the parent/carer would generally be required to make other transport arrangements outside of the Council provision. This can include pupils who have a phased induction period when first attending a school. For pupils attending a special school setting, reasonable adjustments may be made in order to facilitate their attendance during the normal school day.

### **Other Circumstances**

**10.17** Travel assistance will not generally be provided:

- if the school attended is not the one which the Council deems to be the nearest suitable school;
- to/from any address other than the primary home address (Section 9 paragraph 4);
- to enable the child to attend extra curricular activities or between institutions within the school day. (For journeys of this nature the organising school or institution will be responsible for transport arrangements);
- to attend dental or hospital appointments, or other non-educational appointments;
- in the event of sickness, where the child has to be collected from school (or returned to residential school midweek);
- for parents/carers attending review meetings;
- to attend work experience;
- to attend an induction day at another establishment;
- to accompany a friend home;
- following misbehaviour occurring on transport, which threatens the health and safety of staff and/or other pupils (Section 11, paragraph 35 and 36).
- when the pupil has repeatedly failed to take up the provision of home to school transport for which he/she is entitled, without prior notice or explanation given to Transport Team

### **Participation in Education or Training Post 16**

**10.18** The Education and Skills Act 2008 has now increased the age at which young people are required to participate in education or training to 18 years of age. However, this is not a change in the statutory school age (reception to the end of year 11), which this policy is aligned with, so it does not extend the entitlement for the provision of free travel assistance beyond year 11.

**10.19** Details of travel assistance available under the Council's Post 16 Transport Policy are available on the Council's website

<http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/schooltransport>.

## **11. Travel Assistance Provided**

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### **Mode of Transport**

**11.1** The Council will endeavour to follow established best practice in the provision of the most cost effective and appropriate home to school travel assistance for each entitled child, taking into account their own individual needs. It will make arrangements that enable an eligible child to reach school without such stress, strain, or difficulty that would prevent them from benefiting from the education provided.

**11.2** Travel assistance arrangements will be designed to allow the child to travel in reasonable safety and in reasonable comfort. Priority will be given to travel assistance solutions that help to develop travel independence skills, so as the child grows older, they are better equipped to lead independent lives. Types of assistance that may be considered include:

- Travel pass for use on public transport
- Personal transport cost allowance payment to parents/carers (mileage)
- Personal Travel Budget
- Independent travel training (ITT)
- Cycle allowance, where available
- Travel pass to travel on Council contracted services
- A wheelchair accessible vehicle, if so required, or,
- in exceptional cases a taxi.

**11.3** Travel assistance will be provided at an appropriate specified place and time. It is the parents/carers responsibility to ensure that the child is taken to the agreed pick-up point at the agreed time. No alternative transport will be made on the day and the parent/carer will be responsible for ensuring the child's attendance at school.

### **Pick-Up/Set Down Points and Timing**

**11.4** Children will be picked-up and set-down either from home, where their needs require this, or a convenient pick-up/set-down point. The Transport Team will notify these arrangements to the parent/carer.

**11.5** Arrangements will not require a child to walk an unreasonably long distance to catch a public service bus, or a bus journey that ends at an unreasonably long distance from the school. A child may be required to walk up to one mile from home to the pick-up point and one mile from the set-down point to home. The actual distances will depend on a range of circumstances, including the age of the child, their individual needs and the nature of the route they are expected to walk to the designated pick-up/ set-down point.

**11.6** It is the parent/carer's responsibility to take and collect their child to and from the vehicle or pickup/set down point. In the case of pupils with specific needs, alternative arrangements can be agreed with the Council with prior notice.

**11.7** A parent/Carer may not vary the agreed pick up / drop off arrangements and neither passenger assistants nor drivers are authorised to agree route variations.

### **Route Planning and Route Reviews**

**11.8** The Transport Team regularly reviews transport provision and individual transport routes. A review may result in a change of arrangements to be provided. Notice will always be given to parents/carers ahead of any proposed changes to transport provision.

**11.9** Consultation with the parent/carer will not normally take place as part of a route review. This is to enable route reviews to be carried out in a timely and efficient manner and to avoid raising parental expectations that a preference for a particular form of provision will override the cost-effectiveness or efficiency of the service provided. However, where a child's special educational needs indicate that he/she is particularly sensitive to change; the impact of any proposed change will be considered. This may involve discussion with the school or the parent/carer and school prior to any change to the travel assistance provided.

**11.10** A parent/carer may receive notification at any time that the type of transport provision for their child's school transport is to be changed as a result of a review. Changes may involve:

- a. a new pick-up and set-down point (Section 11, paragraph 4 to 7);
- b. a change to journey times;
- c. a change to the contractor employed;
- d. the withdrawal of a passenger assistant.

**11.11** Notice will be given of changes wherever possible, but some may need to be made at very short notice, for example as a result of sickness, road closures or the termination of a contract with a vehicle operator.

**11.12** Children who are not entitled to transport assistance are not included in the planning of transport networks. No additional expenditure will be incurred in order to accommodate non-entitled passengers. This may mean that, for example, a smaller vehicle may be used on a route. The size of vehicle will be sufficient to carry entitled passengers but may not include space for existing concessionary passengers (Section 11 paragraph 31).

### **Maximum Journey Time**

**11.13** Best practice suggests that the maximum each way length of journey for a child of primary school age is considered to be 45 minutes; whilst a child of secondary school age could be expected to travel up to 75 minutes each way. However, a child's special educational needs and/or disability might be such that it implies a shorter maximum journey time.

**11.14** Journey times may exceed these limits for exceptions such as:

- exceptional traffic or weather conditions;
- attendance at a special school;
- attendance at a remote boarding school;
- attendance at a remote school or institution in order to avoid exclusion;
- attendance at a remote school following a move in order to maintain educational continuity;
- attendance at an alternative school following an exclusion or managed move.
- where more than one establishment is served by one vehicle.

### **Provision of Passenger Assistants (PA)**

#### **11.15 *Mainstream Transport***

PAs are not provided on mainstream transport. The need for exceptional provision, on either a temporary or permanent basis, will be approved by the Transport Team on the basis of a risk assessment being undertaken. When a vehicle transports more than 16 pupils of lower school age a PA will generally be provided.

#### **11.16 *Transport for Pupils with Special Educational Needs***

A PA is provided if, during the Transport Needs Assessment process, or at a later date, it is considered that the health and safety of the child, driver or anyone else travelling in the vehicle would be at risk if not provided. The need for such provision will be reviewed as part of the annual review.

**11.17** PAs are generally only provided where the child has:

- a severe physical condition;
- a medical condition requiring immediate treatment;
- severe behavioural difficulties.

#### **11.18 *Passenger Assistants' Role and Responsibility***

Passenger assistants are given a range of training, including emergency first aid and moving and handling of equipment or mobility aids. If a child has specific needs which requires specialist training, the Council will consider the request and the training which is required. On occasion the driver will also fulfil the passenger assistant role.

**11.19** Passenger assistants will have had a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check for people working with children before taking up duty. They will display their School Transport ID badge at all times when on duty.

**11.20** Passenger assistants monitor the well-being and conduct of pupils and ensure their safety while the journey is in progress. They familiarise themselves with the children and ensure good behaviour during the journey. However, passenger assistants are not assigned for the specific purpose of managing behaviour, an acceptable standard of behaviour is expected as detailed in the *Code of Conduct for Pupils on School Transport* (Ref Doc 1).

**11.21** In the event of a medical emergency, the passenger assistants will administer emergency first aid to the level to which they have been trained; this will normally be to make the passenger safe and then request assistance from the emergency services, where necessary. The passenger assistant/driver will not administer medication.

**11.22** Passenger assistants have a responsibility to report any accidents, incidents, near misses or illnesses that occur in transit, to the school and to the Transport Team. They will take notes on the pupil's well-being, care for them on site and report back to the Transport Team, who will notify parents and schools, as appropriate.

### **Independence Training**

**11.23** For some children with SEN increased independence may be demonstrated by a child gradually developing the skills and confidence to travel by public transport, rather than on dedicated transport, or by being able to walk to school. For others it could be that they need less support and supervision.

**11.24** Plans to encourage independent travel should be put in place by the school and parents/carers, working in partnership to mutually agreed targets. Progress will be evidenced at each subsequent Annual Review. This step is regarded as a positive achievement towards the child's progress in becoming a more independent traveller.

**11.25** A secondary aged child with a Statement of Special Educational Needs who is eligible for travel assistance because of their special needs may also receive support for independence and mobility training as part of their school curriculum, if this is identified as a need. The way that the child travels to and from school should be used to help develop and consolidate new skills.

### **Personal Transport Cost Allowance (PTCA)**

**11.26** Where it offers the most cost effective solution or where a Motability Vehicle has been provided to transport the child, the Council will offer a PTCA payment, currently referred to as a "parental mileage" PTCA payments are designed to provide a broader range of transport options providing there is no alternative, cost effective travel assistance available. The current scheme is based on the distance between home and school for which a mileage allowance is paid and covers two return journeys to the school from the home address. Details of the scheme are available in Ref Doc 2

### **Personal Transport Budgets**

**11.27** Personal Transport Budgets, are available to parents or carers of children with SEN and looked after children, Details of the scheme can be found at Ref Doc 5

### **Sustainable Travel**

**11.28** The Council has legal duties, under the Education and Inspections Act 2006, to promote sustainable travel for children. These duties include:

- assessment of travel and transport needs



- audit of sustainable travel and transport infrastructure that may be used when travelling to or from school
- strategy to develop sustainable travel and transport infrastructure
- promotion of sustainable travel

### **Appeals against Suitability of Transport**

**11.29** If a parent/carer is dissatisfied by a decision taken in respect of the type of transport provided, they may appeal for the decision to be reviewed by the Transport Eligibility Panel (Section 13).

### **Monitoring of Transport Provision**

**11.30** The Transport Team will undertake regular checks to ensure compliance with service standards, including:

- spot checks on vehicles and licences;
- checks to ensure all drivers and passenger assistants are authorised and carry identification;
- checks to ensure that drivers and passenger assistants undertake duties in accordance with service standards and requirements;
- checks to ensure that contracts are operated in accordance with the agreed timetable.

### **Concessionary Travel Scheme**

**11.31** The Council is committed to supporting children to access school. Where a child is not entitled to travel assistance under this Policy, parents/carers may be able to buy a pass for a spare seat on a school contract vehicle once those entitled have been allocated a place. Passes can be bought for one term at a time and are allocated on a first come first served basis. Details of the scheme are available in Ref Doc 3.

Parents/carers should be aware that the seat can be withdrawn at any time, with a minimum of two weeks notice.

### **Requirement to Carry a Pass**

**11.32** All children are required to carry a pass, if issued to them, which demonstrates that they may travel on the vehicle. A pass may be issued where a child has a statutory entitlement, is carried on a discretionary basis or has purchased a concessionary seat on the vehicle.

**11.33** A child who is unable to present a pass, when requested by the vehicle driver, passenger assistant or officer of the Council, may be refused entry to the vehicle. Pupils

may not be refused travel in the journey to school unless prior agreement has been given by the Transport Team.

**11.34** A child who has been issued with a pass and persistently travels without it will be deemed not to be abiding by the *Code of Conduct for Pupils on School Transport* (Ref Doc 1), a potential consequence of which is having their transport withdrawn.

### **Pupil Behaviour**

**11.35** The Council will withdraw its provision of travel assistance or employ other sanctions, as it considers appropriate, in the case of any child whose behaviour during the journey to or from school is not of an acceptable standard. In addition, schools may choose a number of sanctions ranging from detention to exclusion in order to deal with persistent misbehaviour on school transport.

**11.36** Transport operators will advise the Transport Team where the behaviour of a child breaches the *Code of Conduct for Pupils on School Transport*, (Ref Doc 1) and in turn the parent/carer and school will be notified. Where a criminal act is suspected the police will be notified.

### **When School Transport Does Not Operate**

**11.37** There will be occasions when a vehicle does not operate; this may be because of bad weather including flooding or icy conditions where it is not possible for the vehicle to travel safely. In these circumstances a parent/carer may decide to make alternative arrangements to transport their child to school. This will be entirely at the parent's discretion and own cost. The parent/carer will also be responsible for the return journey should conditions not have improved sufficiently for school transport to be provided safely.

**11.38** In all circumstances where a child has been taken to school by school transport, arrangements will be made to return the child home or to a place of safety.

## 12. Applying for Travel Assistance, Determining Eligibility & Setting Up Travel Arrangements

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### Children without a Statement of Special Educational Needs or Education Health Care Plan

**12.1** Transport assistance is only provided on the basis of a formal application submitted by or on behalf of the parent/carer and the criteria set out in this policy are met.

**12.2** Details of how to apply are available on the Council's web-site (<http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/schooltransport>) or by contacting the Transport Team on 0300 300 8339 or via [school.transport@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:school.transport@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk), (Section 13 paragraph 17)

**12.3** For 'in year admissions' the Council will aim to process your application within 15 working days of receipt of a complete application. If arrangements take longer than 15 days, it may be possible to claim a refund from the 16th day and until such time as transport is provided. All refunds will be based on the cheapest fare available at the time of travel and tickets should be retained as proof of purchase.

**12.4** Applications for transport which is due to commence at the start of a new academic year will display a 'return by' date. **Applications received after this date will still be processed; however transport will not be in place until the October half term after the start of the new academic year. Where parent/carers have to fund alternative methods of transport as a result of a late application, no refund will be given.**

### Children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs or EHCP

**12.5** Transport assistance is only provided on the basis of a formal application submitted by or on behalf of the parent/carer or when the need for travel assistance is specifically identified as part of the annual review or statement process.

**12.6** The type of assistance provided will be based on the assessment of individual needs; the Council will always seek to provide the most appropriate, cost effective provision within 15 working days of receiving a completed application. Where a Motability Vehicle has been provided to transport the child parental mileage will offered.

**12.7** Applications for transport which is due to commence at the start of a new academic year will display a 'return by' date. **Applications received after this date will still be processed; however transport will not be in place until the October half term after the start of the new academic year. Where parent/carers have to fund alternative methods of transport as a result of a late application, no refund will be given.**

**12.8** Details of how to apply are available on the Council's web-site (<http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/schooltransport>) or by contacting the Transport Team (Section 13, paragraph 17)

### **Measurement of the Walking Route**

**12.9** The distance between home and school is measured, using the Council's electronic geographical information system, from the pupil's home gate or drive nearest to the school to the nearest pedestrian gate to the school grounds, by way of the shortest available walking route.

### **Assessment of the "Available" Walking Route**

**12.10** The Council recognises that some routes to school may be "unavailable". A route is considered by the Council to be unavailable when a child could not be expected to walk to school, accompanied as necessary by an appropriate adult, in reasonable safety. Queries regarding unavailable routes should be directed to the Transport Team (Section 13, paragraph 17).

**12.11** Where a child attends the designated or nearest available qualifying school and the walking route is unavailable and cannot be sufficiently improved, travel assistance will be provided unless there is an alternative available walking route under the walking distance defined in Section 2 paragraph 2. It should be noted that measurement and assessment of a route does not require the authority to assess the most direct or convenient route – any route that is available within the maximum distance means travel assistance will not be provided.

**12.12** In assessing the comparative safety of a route, the Council will conduct an assessment of the risks a child might encounter along the prescribed route taking into consideration the latest national guidelines published by Road Safety GB and Department for Education guidance available at the time of assessment. The Council will undertake a rolling 5 year reassessment programme where each route which has previously been assessed as unavailable will be reassessed to determine if this is still the case.

**12.13** Such assessments will feed into the Council's duty relating to sustainable school travel and may inform the Council's plans to upgrade the highway infrastructure, support sustainable school travel or feed into school travel plans.

**12.14** The Council will work with schools, road safety professionals, highways engineers and transport planners to reduce the number of unavailable routes. Where a route is no longer unavailable as a result of new building developments and roads, and/or remedial safety works, any transport provision previously provided but no longer required will be withdrawn. Transport provision will not be withdrawn with less than **6** weeks' notice.

### **Change in Circumstance**

**12.15** If there is a significant change in circumstances, such as a change in school or home address, a change in the parent's/carer's circumstances, or a change in the child's needs an immediate review of transport entitlement / provision may be required. It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to promptly notify the Transport Team (Section 13,

paragraph 17) of any change in circumstances that may affect the provision of travel assistance.

**12.16** Where travel assistance is provided for temporary medical needs, a review date, based on medical evidence, will be set when the travel assistance is agreed. Where this is not possible, all arrangements will be reviewed in relation to the specific circumstances.

### **Correcting Errors / Withdrawal of Transport**

**12.17** If travel assistance has been provided as a consequence of an error of the Council, provision will not be withdrawn with less than **6** weeks' notice.

**12.18** Where an improvement in the accuracy of methods for assessing eligibility identifies that assistance has been provided for a non-eligible child, provision will not be withdrawn with less than **6** weeks' notice. This may occur where the distance from home to school is re-measured and found to be under the relevant walking distance, or a suitable, available walking route has now been identified. In this case, the child will have benefited from free transport and would be expected to be able to walk to school and not be obliged to transfer to another school.

**12.19** Where an improvement to a route is made and results in the route becoming available for a child to walk, accompanied as necessary by an adult, provision will not be withdrawn with less than **6** weeks' notice.

**12.20** If travel assistance has been provided as a consequence of information provided by the parent, which was false or misleading and where correct and accurate information would have resulted in a refusal of a request for travel assistance, provision may be withdrawn immediately and will normally be withdrawn with no more than four calendar weeks' notice. Should the Council believe that information provided was deliberately false or misleading; the costs of providing the transport may be sought from the parent/carer.

## 13. Review of Decisions, Appeals Process & Complaints

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### Decisions, Review of Decisions and Appeals Process

**13.1** Decisions regarding the eligibility for travel assistance, the mode of assistance, and other practical matters of travel assistance will be only taken by authorised Council staff. If a parent/carer is unhappy with a decision that has been made, that parent/carer should first take it up informally with the officer or Department that made the original decision. If it is necessary to put the query in writing, then the Council will offer assistance with this in the case of a parent/carer with a disability.

**13.2** If the matter is not resolved informally in this way, then the parent/carer will be required to complete a *Transport Appeal Form* (TAF1) which can be downloaded from the Council website. Alternatively, a copy of the form can be requested from the Transport Commissioning and Entitlement Team (Section 13, paragraph 17). The TAF1 form must be submitted within 20 working days of receipt of the original transport decision being made by the Council.

**13.3** The completed TAF1 form should then be returned to the Transport Commissioning and Entitlement Team. The Transport Commissioning and Entitlement Team Manager together with another Children's Services officer will review the initial decision and further information submitted. This will be completed within 20 working days of receipt of the TAF1 form.

**13.4** It is anticipated that the majority of appeals will be resolved at this stage. If the appeal is unsuccessful the parent/carer will receive a copy of the appeal form with the reasons given for the decision.

**13.5** If the matter remains unresolved the parent/carer can make a further appeal to the Transport Eligibility Panel. Appeals must be submitted, using the TAF2 form available on the website, directly to the Appeals Clerk, within 20 working days of the receipt of the decision of the first appeal considered by the Transport Commissioning and Entitlement Team and a Children's Services Officer. When submitting the completed TAF2 form, parents/carers must also submit the decision letter you received as the result of the initial. The Transport Eligibility Panel consists of 3 people who are independent and who have volunteered for the role. They are not paid and are not associated with the Council or a school connected with the appeal except as an independent panel member. They are trained in all aspects of this Policy and will make decisions within its remit. A Clerk will be present to minute the hearing and will write to parents with the decision made by the Transport Eligibility Panel.

**13.6** Parents/carers must submit all evidence to the Appeals Clerk 10 working days before your appeal is due to be held. Information on how and where to submit this evidence is on the TAF2 form. Evidence received after this will only be considered with the agreement of the Panel and late evidence may result in the appeal being moved to a later date.

**13.7** Parents/carers are invited to verbally represent their case to the Panel. A maximum of 2 adults are able to attend a hearing. These can be both parents/carers or 1 parent and 1 supporter. An interpreter or signer may be provided if requested on the TAF2 form. No children may attend.

**13.8** A member of the Transport Team will also be present to explain the reasons why transport, or the particular provision requested, had been refused and where appropriate a member of the SEN team will attend to deal with the suitability of the education establishment.

**13.9** The Panel will consider the information provided on the TAF2 form and any additional evidence provided by the parent/carer, as well representation from the Transport Commissioning and Entitlement Team. Appeals panels will be arranged as soon as is possible within 40 working days. The necessary documents will be provided to parents and the panel at least 5 working days before the appeal date, unless a shorter period is agreed beforehand. The outcome of the appeal will be advised to the parent/carer in writing within 5 working days of the appeal hearing. Where parents/carers have a disability which may impact on their ability to attend a hearing, or if they require assistance with language interpretation or reading, appropriate assistance will be provided by the Council if it is identified on the TAF2 form.

**13.10** The Appeals Process detailed above does not prevent the parent/carer raising a school transport related issue with a local Councillor or any other person.

**13.11** Where a parent/carer feels that an appeal has not been conducted in a fair manner, he or she may pursue a complaint using the Council's complaints procedure. (See 13.15 below).

### **Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal on Transport Provision**

**13.12** Where the pupil in question holds a statement of special educational needs or EHCP, it may be that a disagreement about travel is part of a wider question of school provision and placement. In such an instance, it may be necessary for the matter to be considered by a Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal. Although this body does not hear appeals specifically about transport, it may consider it as part of a wider appeal.

### **Complaints/Queries**

**13.13** If a parent/carer has a query or is dissatisfied by any aspect with regard to the determination of eligibility/entitlement for travel assistance, this should initially be brought to the attention of the Transport Team.

**13.14** Queries/complaints relating to journey planning, standard/condition of vehicles, drivers, passenger assistants and any other issues relating to the journey to/from school should initially be brought to the attention of the Transport Team.

**13.15** If the complaint is not resolved to your satisfaction it may be escalated via the Council's Corporate Complaints Procedure [www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/local-government-in-central-bedfordshire/customer-feedback/default.aspx](http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/local-government-in-central-bedfordshire/customer-feedback/default.aspx)

**13.16** There is a right to complain to the Local Government Ombudsman if complainants consider that there was a failure to comply with the procedural rules or if there were any other irregularities in the way the appeal was handled. If the complainant considers the decision of the independent panel was flawed on public law grounds, the complainant may also apply for judicial review.

## **Contact Details**

**13.17** If you wish to discuss:

- entitlement to transport;
- an application for transport;
- amend or cancel transport;
- notify the Council of a change in medical needs, behavioral needs or additional support;
- change in existing timetable (part time or post 16 only)
- or if you wish to discuss the method of transport offered

Then please contact a Transport Officer at:

Tel: 0300 300 8339

Email: [school.transport@centralbedfordshire.go.uk](mailto:school.transport@centralbedfordshire.go.uk)

Address: Transport Commissioning and Entitlement Team, Watling House, High Street North, Dunstable, LU6 1LF

**13.18** If your child attends a mainstream school or college and you have a questions about one of the following:

- the condition of the vehicle
- vehicle arriving early or late
- behavior of the driver or passenger assistant
- location of pick up or drop off points
- an incident of bad behavior
- or any other concerns in relation to the service that is allocated

Then please contact Transport Coordinator at:

Tel: 0300 300 8339

Email: [school.transport@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:school.transport@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

Client Transport Team, Priory House, Monks Walk, Chicksands, Shefford, Bedfordshire, SG17 5TQ

**13.19** If your child attends a special school or accesses alternative transport provisions due to their special educational needs and you have a question about one of the following operational issues including:

- condition of the vehicle
- the vehicle arriving early or late
- pick up points or times
- behavior of the driver or passenger assistant
- a new wheelchair or change in an existing wheelchair



- transporting equipment

Then please contact the Transport Coordinator at:

Tel: 0300 300 8339

Email: [school.transport@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:school.transport@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

Transport Team, Priory House, Monks Walk, Chicksands, Shefford, Bedfordshire,  
SG17 5TQ

### **13.20** Other useful contacts details:

School Admissions Team

Watling House, High Street North, Dunstable, LU6 1LF

0300 300 8037

[admissions@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:admissions@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

### **13.21** Customer relations

Priory House, Monks Walk, Chicksands, Shefford, SG17 5TQ

0300 300 6077 or 0300 300 4995

[customer.relations@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:customer.relations@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

## Appendix 1: Definition of Terms

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### **Academic Year, School Year**

The academic year is deemed to start on 1st September in any given year and to end on 31st August in the following calendar year. In the exceptional case of a school whose academic year begins in August, the Council will consider whether it should take the date when that school's academic year starts as being the start of the academic year for a child or student attending that school.

**Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Support Team** Most children with special educational needs will get all the help that they need through their SEND Support Plan, as schools have an allowance in their budgets to meet their needs. However, for a very small number of children, a statutory assessment may be required. A statutory assessment is when the Local Authority looks carefully at a child's learning difficulties. Once the Local Authority has received all the information and looked at it, a Referrals Panel will decide whether to assess the child to see if he/she needs a Statement or Education Health Care Plan (EHCP). In Central Bedfordshire this process is managed by the Assessment and Monitoring Team.

### **Address, Home Address**

For the purposes of home to school transport the home address will be deemed to be where the child predominantly resides, normally with someone who holds parental responsibility. Proof of residence may be requested to confirm that a child and the child's family are resident at a specified address. The following are examples of items that may suffice as proof:

- Child Tax Credits
- Working Tax Credits
- registration on the electoral roll
- utility bills
- bank statements
- driving licence
- mortgage or tenancy account details

The list of documents above is not exhaustive and the Council may ask for permission to gain access to other local authority information, for example Council Tax or Housing Benefit records. If doubt exists, the Council may also require a parent/carer to complete a formal statement to certify the home address. This would be discussed at the appropriate time.

### **Alternative provision**

For some children, an education outside of school can be the most appropriate option. When this is arranged by LAs, schools or a group of schools, it is called alternative provision. It can range from pupil referral units (PRUs) and further education colleges to voluntary or private-sector projects.

### **Boarding/Residential Schools**

Boarding/Residential schools are those that provide overnight accommodation arranged or provided by the school, at the school or elsewhere.

### **Cared for Children (Looked After Children)**

A 'cared for child' is a child who is in the care of a local authority or provided with accommodation by that local authority (as defined in section 22 of the Children Act 1989).

### **Children who were previously Cared for**

Children previously in the care of the local authority as defined above, but subsequently became subject to an adoption, residence, or special guardianship order. An adoption order is an order under section 46 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002. A child arrangement order or 'residence order' is as an order settling the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live under section 8 of the Children Act 1989. Section 14A of the Children Act 1989 defines a 'special guardianship order' as an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian (or special guardians).

### **Child, Children**

A young person of compulsory school age (from 5 years to 16 years old).

### **Compulsory (Statutory) School Age**

Children reach compulsory school age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. In compliance with legal requirements, children may start school in the reception class in the September following their 4th birthday. Parents/carers can request that the date their child is admitted to the primary school is deferred until later in the school year or until the child reaches statutory school age in that school year. To help younger children adjust to school, schools may phase full-time admission, admitting these children on a part-time basis. Arrangements are decided at school level.

Statutory school age ceases on the last Friday in June in the school year when the young person reaches the age of 16. No account is taken of the National Curriculum Year in which a pupil is being educated when determining the year in which compulsory school ages ceases.

The Education and Skills Act 2008 has now risen the age at which young people are required to participate in education or training to 18 years of age. This does not necessarily mean they will have to stay on at school after Year 11 as they will have a choice about how they want to participate post-16, which could be through full-time education, such as school or college; work-based learning, such as an Apprenticeship; or part-time education or training if they are employed, self employed or volunteering for 20 hours or more a week.

### **Council (Authority, Local Authority)**

This is Central Bedfordshire Council. Decisions of the Authority are carried out in the name of the Authority by its officers.

### **Disability**

From 1 October 2010, the Equality Act replaced most of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995 and 2005. However, the Disability Equality Duty in the DDA continues to apply. The Equality Act 2010 aims to protect disabled people and prevent disability discrimination by ensuring that reasonable adjustments are made to accommodate the needs of all individuals. Under the Act, a person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment and the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to perform normal day-to-day activities.

## **Harassment**

Harassment occurs when an individual engages in unwanted conduct which is related to age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnerships, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation and which the purpose or the effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliation or offensive environment.

Unwanted conduct can include spoken or written words or abuse, imagery, graffiti, physical gestures, facial expressions, mimicry, jokes, pranks, acts affecting a person's surroundings or other physical behaviour.

The word 'unwanted' means the same as 'unwelcome' or 'uninvited'. 'Unwanted' does not mean that express objection must be made to the conduct before it is deemed to be unwanted. A serious one-off incident can also amount to harassment.

## **Dual Registration**

The law provides for pupils to be registered at two separate schools in cases where a child has no fixed abode for the reason that a parent is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require travel from place to place.

## **Client Transport Team**

The Client Transport Team are the Council department responsible for sourcing the most cost effective appropriate transport for entitled children. The Client Transport Team develop and maintain relationships with all transport providers and ensure that vehicles and drivers comply with all necessary statutory regulations.

## **Mainstream School**

A school that is not a special school for pupils with special educational needs.

## **Out-of-Council Area**

In reference to a school, this means a school which is neither maintained by Central Bedfordshire Council nor is an academy, free school, UTC or Studio School within the Council's boundary. In reference to a place it means a place located outside the administrative boundary of Central Bedfordshire Council.

## **Parent/Carer or Guardian**

In this Policy, the parent/carers will be taken to be the person with whom the child or student predominantly resides. This can include a person who is not a parent but who has parental responsibility or care of the child or student. If the person is not the birth parent or adoptive parent, then evidence may be sought to ascertain that the legal basis of the relationship. In this policy the terms parent or carer are taken to include guardian or guardians.

## **Publicly Funded Schools**

Maintained schools are funded by central government via the local authority and do not charge fees to students. The categories of maintained school are: community, community special, foundation (including trust), foundation special (including trust), voluntary aided and voluntary controlled. There are also maintained nursery schools and pupil referral units.

Academies and free schools are publicly funded independent schools. Some academies, generally those set-up to replace underperforming schools, will have a sponsor. Sponsors come from a wide range of backgrounds including successful schools, businesses, universities, charities and faith bodies. Academies receive their funding directly from the Education Funding Agency (EFA) rather than from local authorities.

The Funding Agreement between the establishment and the Secretary of State provides the framework within which Academies, Free Schools, UTCs and Studio Schools operate.

### **Private Schools**

Private schools may be either non-maintained or independent, according to their foundation and legal status and receive their funding either direct from parents, from charitable trusts or from places purchased by local authorities. Generally, although not exclusively, an independent school is usually one run privately for profit whereas a 'non-maintained' school is run 'not for profit' usually by a charitable body.

### **Special Educational Needs**

A Statement of Special Educational Need is a statement made by the local authority under Section 324 of the Education Act 1996 that specifies the special educational provision required for that child. Assessments after 1<sup>st</sup> September 2014 will be carried out under the Children and Families Act 2014 for an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). Schools must admit a child with a Statement of Special Educational Needs or EHCP that names their school.

### **Special School**

Schools that provide education for children and young people with complex or specific needs which generally cannot be fully met in a mainstream setting.

### **Studio Schools**

Studio Schools cater for 14 to 19-year-olds, delivering project-based, practical learning alongside mainstream academic study. They are small schools - typically with around 300 pupils - delivering mainstream qualifications through project based learning. Students work with local employers and a personal coach, and follow a curriculum designed to give them the skills and qualifications they need in work or to continue in education.

### **University Technical Colleges (UTCs)**

UTCs are Technical Academies for 14-19-year-olds. They offer technical courses and work-related learning, combined with academic studies. Each UTC is sponsored by a university and industry partner and responds to local skills needs. They provide young people with the knowledge and skills they need to progress at 19 into higher or further education, an apprenticeship or employment.

## Ref Doc 1: Code of Conduct for Pupils on School Transport

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In order to ensure safe travel to school, pupils should always:

- Wait sensibly off the road, in a safe area for the vehicle at the designated pick up point;
- Be ready at the designated pick up point at least 5 minutes prior to the scheduled collection time;
- If issued ensure that you have your travel pass ready to show the driver before getting on to the vehicle;
- Be polite, courteous and respectful to the driver, passenger assistants and all other passengers on the vehicle;
- Remain in their seat whilst on board the vehicle and in allocated seat if specified by the operator or establishment;
- Wear provided seatbelt or any other specialist equipment at all times throughout the journey;
- Put belongings safely and securely out of the way and keep the gangway clear;
- No food or drink to be consumed on the vehicle unless prior agreement has been obtained from the Council;
- Leave the bus clean and tidy taking all belongings with you when leaving the vehicle;
- Adhere to any instructions given by the driver or passenger assistant at all times;
- If there is an accident pupils should stay on the bus until advised otherwise by the driver/passenger assistant of the appropriate action;
- If pupils leave the vehicle without the drivers permission this will be reported to the school, the Council and where possible to the parent/carer;
- Adhere to the Highway Code at all times.

Pupils should never:

- Allow another pupil to use their travel pass;
- Distract the driver;
- Operate the doors or emergency exits unless there is an actual emergency;
- Deliberately damage or vandalise the vehicle;

- Throw items around inside or out of the windows of the vehicle;
- Smoke including electronic products or use cigarette lighters whilst on the vehicle;
- Intimidate, bully, harass or be verbally or physically abusive towards other passengers, the driver, passenger assistants, school or council staff or members of the public

The individual needs of the pupil will be taken into consideration before issuing a temporary or permanent ban from transport.

**Parents are responsible for any damage caused to the vehicle and will have to reimburse the operator accordingly.**

**If you break these rules you may lose your entitlement to transport and your parents will have to make alternative arrangements to get you to school.**

## Ref Doc 2: Personal Transport Cost Allowance (PTCA)

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The Council may request that a parent/carer make their own arrangements to convey their child to and from school:

- Where a Motability Vehicle has been provided to transport the named pupil.
  - where an entitlement to transport exists and there are difficulties in negotiating a suitable transport contract;
  - where an entitlement to travel assistance exists and there is no current transport provision available;
  - where an entitlement to transport exists and to make a mileage allowance payment is financially advantageous to the Council;
  - in other circumstances to be determined by the Transport Team.
- Where this is agreed by the Council, the parent/carer will be paid a personal transport cost allowance. The current scheme is based on the distance between home and school for which a mileage allowance is paid and covers two return journeys from the home address to the educational establishment. This scheme will be reviewed on a regular basis.
- The parent/carer will be required to complete a PTCA form, supplied by the Client Transport Team, this needs to be authorised by the school and submitted to the Client Transport Team monthly/termly, as agreed.
- The Council is currently paying a rate of 36p per mile, which is reviewed on an annual basis; the daily mileage payable will be agreed by the Client Transport Team.
- Where agreed, the allowance may be paid for boarders on the following basis:
  - a. Termly boarding –at the beginning and end of each term and at the beginning and end of the mid-term holiday.
  - b. 12 day boarding – on alternate weekends and at the beginning and end of each term.
  - c. Weekly boarding - to school on Monday and from school on Friday each week.
  - d. 52 week placement – up to a maximum of three return journeys a year.
  - e. Attending one statement review per year at an out-county school.
  - f. Other exceptional circumstances agreed by the Transport Commissioning and Entitlement Team.
  - g. Parking, subsistence and other expenses will not be paid.
- The Council will review, on a regular basis, the payment of all PTCA payments and these may be withdrawn, with no less than 12 weeks' notice, if:
  - entitlement to home to school transport support is withdrawn;



- in other circumstances determined by the Transport Commissioning and Entitlement Team.
- In the event that the PTCA is withdrawn as a result of concerns being raised about the unauthorised absence/punctuality of the child, the 12 week notice period will not apply.
- In the event that a more cost effective form of transport provision becomes available, the 12 week notice period will not apply.
- The feasibility of the parent/carer of making their own travel arrangements and applying for a PTCA will be discussed by the Council when evidencing eligibility for travel assistance and at subsequent reviews.
- A parent/carer who is agreeable should be advised that the allowance is not likely to be offered where a place in shared transport or more cost effective travel assistance can be offered
- The Transport Transport Team will discuss the possibility of a personal transport cost allowance payment as an alternative to taxis for existing entitled pupils.

### Ref Doc 3: Concessionary Travel Scheme

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The Council is committed to supporting access to school where pupils do not qualify for transport assistance. A charge may be made for "spare seats" on the school bus provided the pupil is a Central Bedfordshire Council resident, the route is operated on a contracted basis, they can be accommodated at no extra cost to the Council and there is an existing provision in place. Concessionary spaces are:

- a. Charged on a termly basis.
- b. Free for children entitled to free school meals, or whose parents are in receipt of the maximum level of Working Tax Credit.
- c. Issued on a first come first served basis where demand for places exceeds availability.
- d. Fixed at the termly rate. No pro-rata reductions are available for part week travel or single daily journeys or where for operational reasons, delays may occur in the issue of passes.

Concessionary places are not available on routes registered as public service routes, where the child pays the fare direct to the driver.

Prices for concessionary seats are revised each financial year with new charges coming into effect at the start of each Summer term.

It should be noted that the provision of a free concessionary pass will be based on the same benefit criteria as for families entitled to free transport on low income grounds. This will mean that certain families in receipt of working tax credit, but not at the maximum rate, who may have previously received passes free of charges, will in future, be required to pay.

The parent/carer should be aware that the concessionary place can be withdrawn at any time, with a minimum of two weeks notice. The place will be withdrawn if the seat is required for an entitled pupil, the service is withdrawn or the passenger carrying capacity of the vehicle is reduced.

Where a concessionary seat is withdrawn, this will be on a last-in, first-out basis.

When a concessionary place is abandoned by a parent or post-16 student, no refund for previously unused journeys will be given. If the Pass issued is returned a pro-rata refund will be given from the date received. Refunds may be subject to an administration charge.

The Council reserves the right to decline any application or withdraw a concessionary pass where the pupil's behaviour is deemed to have put themselves or others at risk. By accepting a concessionary pass, parents/carers and pupils are agreeing to the Policy's Code of Conduct (Ref Doc 1)

Concessionary passes are sold at the discretion of the Council and applications may be refused if the sale is in direct conflict with prior agreements with schools.

## Ref Doc 4: Notes for Schools

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1. Central Bedfordshire Council will help with the travel arrangements of children who qualify under distance or special needs criteria as set out in the Home to School Transport Policy for Pupils of Compulsory School Age.
2. When arrangements have been made, parents will be informed in writing. The letter will explain the pick-up arrangements, the responsibility of the parents to ensure their children are ready on time, that a responsible adult will be there to receive them and that their children will behave in a responsible way.
3. The safety of the child is fundamental to the policy. Where seat belts are fitted and should be worn by all passengers.
4. Where Passenger Assistants travel with children they will:
  - Inform the school of any incidents, bad behaviour or accidents involving the children;
  - take medication between parents and schools, but only when it is in a sealed container which has been clearly labelled with the pupil's name;
  - report any notified absences or irregular incidents.
5. When a Passenger Assistant or driver has a problem with a child's behaviour the schools head teacher or member of staff with specific responsibility for transport will be contacted. The Client Transport Team may withdraw transport if unreasonable behaviour causes an increased risk to passengers, other road users and/or the driver.
6. The school is responsible for the child from the time of getting off the vehicle until the time the child is returned to the vehicle. School staff should be available to help with the assisting of children to and from the transport. The school is responsible for ensuring that pupils are ready at the designated collection point on time. Drivers are instructed to leave the schools punctually. Pupils who are to be kept back for any reason will be the school's or parents/carers responsibility to arrange for transport to the pupils' home.

Any traffic management systems or problems relating to transport of pupils should be directed to the Client Transport Team (see section 13.18 and 13.19).
7. Schools should:
  - promote compliance with the *Code of Conduct for Pupils on School Transport*;
  - have in place a system that checks the arrival and departure of school buses and provide information to the Client Transport Team on the quality of transport services provided;
  - Establish a traffic management system to ensure that home to school transport suppliers can manoeuvre and park safely and that passengers can board and alight safely.

- advise the Transport Commissioning and Entitlement Team of changes of address of pupils or other changed circumstances which may affect the transport requirements;
  - assist the Client Transport Team in dealing with cases of difficulty on transport, for example misbehaviour by pupils;
  - receive reports from passenger assistants on any signs of ill treatment of pupils and process these as considered necessary, in accordance with Child Protection guidance;
  - assist the Client Transport Team and Transport Commissioning and Entitlement Team in contacting parents in the event of breakdowns or accidents to transport, significant changes in transport times / arrangements in emergencies, absconding of pupils from transport etc;
  - advise the Client Transport Team of dates of school terms, inset days and holidays and other closures, including weather related closures.
  - advise the Client Transport Team with at least one term's notice of any planned closure days outside the Council published term dates. If notice is less than one term, any incurred transport costs will be the responsibility of the school
  - have a member of staff designated for dealing with all matters relating to school transport issues.
8. Plans to encourage independent travel must be put in place by the school and parents/carers working in partnership to mutually agreed targets and evidence of progress will be required at each subsequent annual review. Schools and parents/carers should encourage pupils to walk, cycle or to take up public/community transport options at the earliest opportunity. This step will be regarded as a positive achievement towards the pupil's progress in becoming an independent traveller.

## Ref Doc 5. Personal Transport Budgets

What is a Personal Transport Budget?

A Personal Transport Budget (PTB) is a payment designed to help you make arrangements which will enable you to facilitate your child accessing school.

You can use the budget in any way you wish, to ensure your child attends school every day, on time and in a fit state to learn. For example, it can help towards covering the costs of running a family car or arranging with another member of the family or friends to assist with childcare, enabling you to make the journey.

The payment can also be put to use by arranging childcare for a younger sibling whilst the older sibling is taken to school in the family car.

The payment is a fixed amount based on proximity and bears no relationship to the cost of a taxi or hired vehicle.

It is expensive for the Local Authority to collect children daily using hired vehicles and it has been found by parents who already receive a PTB, that their children are more relaxed going to and from school when they are transported by someone close to the child. It also provides parents with a direct link to the school and more frequent opportunities to discuss a child's progress with the teachers that they may not have previously had.

Who can be considered for a PTB?

A PTB is available to children with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and who have been assessed as eligible to receive home to school transport. The PTB is granted at the discretion of the Local Authority and is not automatically given upon request.

Parent/carers seeking to access the PTB must be found to be eligible for transport assistance before being considered for a PTB. Information on how to apply for Home to School Transport is available at [www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/schooltransport](http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/schooltransport)

Before granting a PTB, the Local Authority will investigate whether there is any transport currently in place that your child could be placed onto at less cost than providing you with a PTB.

If it is not cost effective for the Local Authority to provide you with a PTB, but your child is eligible to receive transport assistance, you will not be granted a PTB and your child will be allocated a seat on the most appropriate mode of transport.

How do I apply?

You can apply for a PTB at

[www.centralbedfordshirecouncil.gov.uk/personaltransportbudget](http://www.centralbedfordshirecouncil.gov.uk/personaltransportbudget)

Alternatively, you can indicate your preference for a PTB by ticking the relevant box on your T1 school transport application, which can be found at

[www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/schooltransport](http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/schooltransport)

Please be aware that PTB applications require additional information about journey costs from transport providers and so can take longer to assess than standard transport applications. If your child is not already traveling to school in a Central Bedfordshire Council provided vehicle, you will be responsible for organising alternative transport arrangements while your assessment is completed.

How much would I expect to receive?

The amount of money that is awarded is based on the distance between your home and the school your child attends. Many available maps and internet based measuring tools will give you an indication of the distance from your home to your child's school, but this is only an indication. The distance measured is based on a straight line distance (as the crow

flies) and the Council's own measuring software is used to determine this. For fairness and consistency, the same software is used for all applications.

There are four distance bands in which you would expect to receive a payment.

Band Home to school distance Annual budget  
1 Less than 5 miles £2,000  
2 Between 5 – 9 miles £3,000  
3 10 -19 miles £5,000  
over 20 miles £8,000

PTB payments are made on the basis of your child attending school for 190 days per year.

If your child attends school less than 190 school days per school year, Central Bedfordshire Council will make your PTB payment on a pro rata basis. This means you will receive less than the total amount outlined above.

Should your child be absent from school, even if this is through no fault of their own, your following month's payment will be reduced to account for the reduction in required travel. Free school transport is also not available for work experience or additional journeys that the school requires your child to take. You will be notified of the reduction that will be made in the following month's payment before that month's payment is due to be paid.

Would I receive the PTB until my child finishes at the school they attend?

The PTB is not guaranteed to be provided until a child leaves their current school. Central Bedfordshire Council will review your child's PTB at least once a year. The review will evaluate whether it remains cost effective for the PTB to be provided and new transport options may mean this is no longer the case. The review will also check your child's attendance records to ensure your child is being taken to school.

If your child's attendance at school is not sufficient to continue paying you a PTB or where there is more cost effective transport in place, the PTB may be withdrawn. If this should happen, you will be given 28 days notice.

What should I do if my circumstances change?

If your child moves home or changes school, you must ensure that you let Central Bedfordshire Council know as soon as possible, but no later than 4 weeks before the change is due to take place. Your child's eligibility to receive a PTB would then be reassessed. Whilst you may have received the PTB previously, it does not mean that you will automatically continue to receive the budget from another address to the same school or from the same address to another school. Any transport arrangements that are required after the change but before your child has been reassessed will be the parent's responsibility to arrange.

Where payments are made and it is later established that the Local Authority had not been informed of a change in circumstance, payments will be recovered by the Local Authority's Debt Recovery Team.

Would I receive a PTB for my child to attend two schools?

No. Transport assistance is only provided to one educational establishment. If you apply for a PTB, this will only be assessed to the main school that the child is on roll at.

How and when would I be paid my PTB?

The payments are paid over an 11 month period with no payments paid in August due to school closure over the holiday period. Payments are paid directly into your bank account on the 15th of each month or the previous working day where the 15th falls on a weekend or public holiday.

Payments are not back dated and no refunds are provided if your application for a PTB is processed within 6 weeks of receipt of the application.

My PTB request has been refused, can I appeal?

No. As PTBs are only available to children that are eligible for free school transport, there is no appeal as eligibility is not in dispute, but you can have the decision reviewed. If you have been refused a PTB because the cost of the PTB is more than the cost to the Local Authority of transporting your child, you can in the first instance ask for a review of the decision by a different officer in School Transport, providing any additional information or evidence that supports your request.

If you are still not satisfied by the response you receive, you can seek a final review from the Ad Public Protection & Transport, who will make the final decision on how Central Bedfordshire Council will assist with transport. If you have been refused any assistance with transport because your child does not meet the necessary criteria, normal transport appeal arrangements will apply.

In exceptional circumstances where a PTB is cost prohibitive, it may be possible to award a mileage payment instead. This will be at the discretion of the council and will normally only be appropriate where it is agreed that the child must be transported by the parents/guardians.

#### Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Will the payments be taxed? A. The budget is a payment made in relation to the child not the parent and so should not affect your tax situation. It is used to enable your child to get to and from school each day in a safe and legal way and should not be used for any other purpose. If you have concerns that it may impact on your tax situation, you will need to seek your own advice from a tax expert in relation to your personal circumstances.

Q. If I have two/or more children with statements, all of whom are eligible for transport assistance, can I claim a PTB for each child? A. You can claim for each child, but whilst the first child would receive 100% of the PTB, the second child would only be entitled to 50% of the PTB. Any additional children would not qualify for a PTB.

Q. My child travels in a taxi with other children. What would happen to that vehicle if one of the parents is granted a PTB? A. The Local Authority would continue to provide you with the appropriate transport assistance but would review the arrangements to see if you or the other parents would prefer a PTB. The vehicle would only be withdrawn if all the children occupying the vehicle were granted a PTB and where the total cost of PTBs collectively was less than the cost of procuring the existing transport arrangements.

Q. Both myself and my child are happy with the current contractor and driver that transport my child to and from school. If I applied for the PTB, could my child continue to travel on the same vehicle?

A. No. If you applied for the PTB, you will be responsible for making your own arrangements for transporting your child to and from school. Even if you decide to refuse the PTB and stay with your current contractor, there is no guarantee that any contractor/driver or passenger assistant would remain the same whilst your child attends their school. If you decide to accept the PTB and then return to transport provided by the Local Authority, there is no guarantee that your child will be able to be placed back on to their previous transport.

Whilst you could use your PTB to make your own personal arrangements with the taxi contractor to take your child to and from school, your child would not be able to travel on the vehicle that the Local Authority has arranged.

You can use the PTB in any way you wish, for example:

- You or someone in your family can drive your child to and from school

- You can arrange with a friend or relative to walk your child to school.
- You can car share with other parents where their children are going to the same school as your child.
- You could provide a relative or friend with a bus pass in order to take your child to and from school.
- You could pay for childcare for a younger child in order for you to take your child to school.

Q. Do I need to collect any receipts for petrol etc? A. No. Once the payments are made to you, you can use them any way you wish to in order for your child to get to and from school every day in a safe and legal way.

Q. What happens if my child is ill? A. Your child's attendance record will be reviewed and the payments for any days that they are absent will be deducted from the following month's PTB payment.

If your child's attendance drops below an acceptable level without reason, you will be at risk of having your PTB withdrawn.

Q. My child is a boarder. Would this affect the size of my PTB? A. Your child will be assessed in the same way as all other children and your PTB will initially be based on one of the three payment bands, however, the final payment will be offered on a pro rata basis to account for the actual number of journeys you are required to undertake.

Q. My child attends College, can I apply for a PTB? A. If your child's needs mean that they are unable to access public transport, they can be considered for a PTB at the Local Authority's discretion.

Q. I have one child that receives transport because of their EHCP and another that is currently going through the assessment process. Would I receive a PTB for each child? A. No. You can apply for a PTB for the child who already has an EHCP, but you would have to wait until your second child had received their EHCP before you could apply for that child.

If you apply for a PTB for your second child, please be aware, that you would only receive 50% of the PTB if both children attended the same school.

Q. I am a foster carer for a child that receives transport, can I apply for a PTB? A. If your foster child is in the care of Central Bedfordshire Council and meets the criteria to receive free home to school transport, then you can apply for a PTB.

If you are in receipt of an attendance allowance for the child you would not be eligible to receive a PTB.

If your foster child is in the care of another Local Authority i.e. outside of Central Bedfordshire Council, you will not be eligible to receive a PTB.

The corporate parent for the child may assist and should be contacted directly.

Q. My child has previously travelled in a taxi funded by the Local Authority. If I am granted a PTB, can I place my child on the same taxi now and again and pay the taxi company separately? A. No. Once you have been granted a PTB, your child's seat on the vehicle will either be cancelled or given to another child.

You can ask the same taxi company to provide you with a vehicle and pay for them to take your child to and from school, however, this would be through a private arrangement between yourself and the taxi company.

Q. If I apply and am granted a PTB but find that at a later date it doesn't work with my child or my circumstances change, can I change back to the previous transport arrangement?



A. Yes. You must give us 28 days notice to stop the payments into your bank account and to rearrange transport for your child.

Please be aware, that this may not necessarily be the same taxi company or driver that your child may previously have had as no guarantee can be given that the arrangements would stay the same.

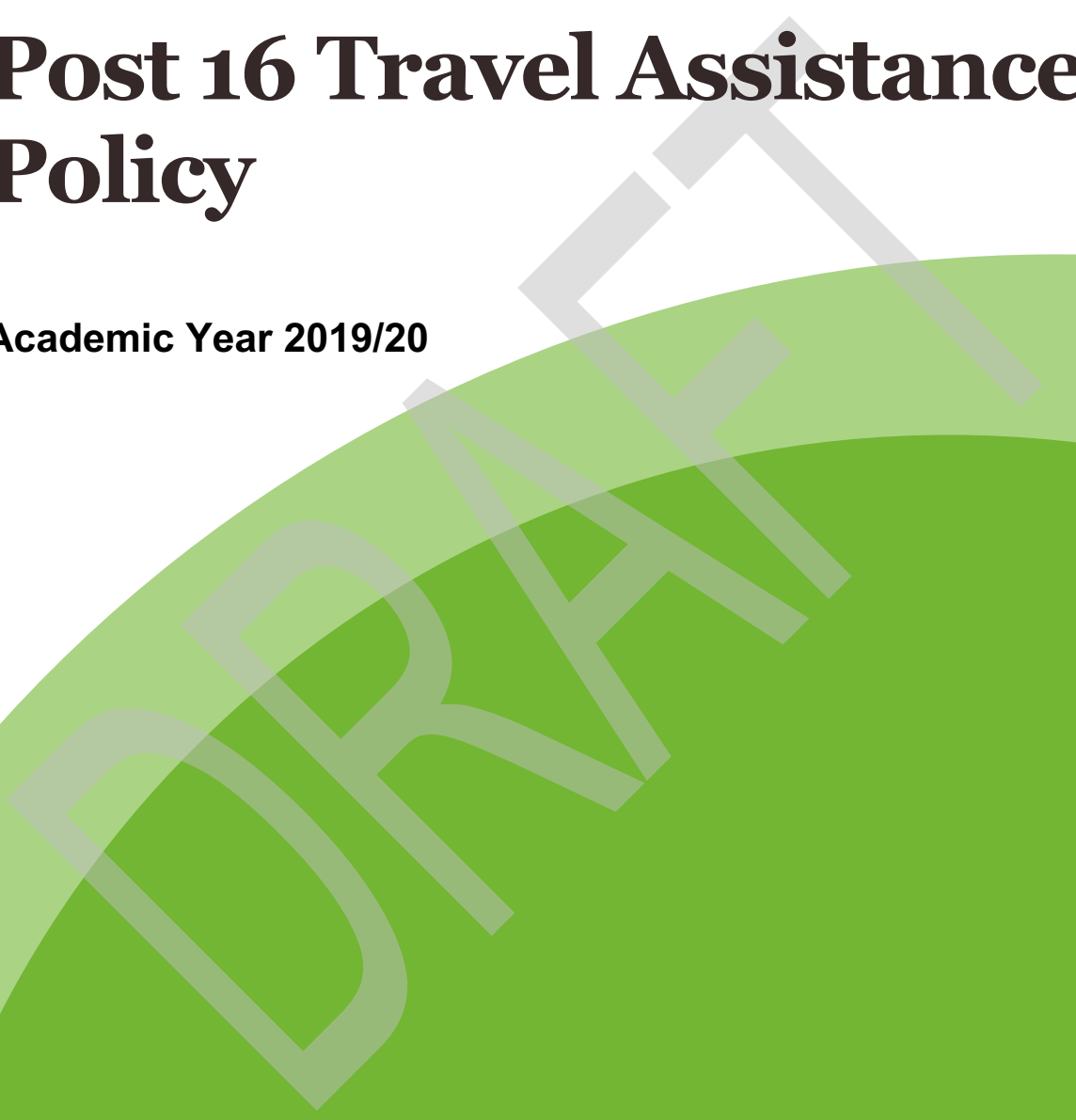
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**Appendix B**

**Children's Services**

# **Post 16 Travel Assistance Policy**

**Academic Year 2019/20**



## Post 16 Travel Assistance Policy

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## Introduction

The responsibility of a local authority to prepare and publish an annual Transport Policy Statement is included in the Education Act 1996. The Policy must set out the arrangements for the provision of transport, or otherwise, that the authority considers necessary, to enable young people age 16 – 18 to attend education or training, for the purpose of this Policy, 16-18 means young people aged 16-18 who are starting a programme at school, college or work based learning provider before their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday

For young people aged between 19 and 25, and with an EHC Plan, where the Council has secured the provision of education or training, they should refer to The Travel Assistance Policy for 19 to 25 year olds. This applies to:

- adults (ie those who are aged 19 or over) for the purpose of facilitating their attendance at local authority maintained or assisted further or higher education institutions or institutions within the further education sector; and
- adults aged under 25 with an EHC plan for the purpose of facilitating their attendance at institutions where they are receiving education or training outside the further and higher education sectors. For those young adults, the Council's duty only applies where the Council has secured the provision of education or training at that institution and the provision of boarding accommodation in connection with that education or training.

The overall aim of this policy is to ensure that, if support for access to education is **necessary**, this will be assessed and provided.

## 1. Legislation and Guidance

Through the Education Act 1996 and the Apprenticeship, Skills, Children and Learning Act (2009) a local authority has a statutory responsibility to consider how it will assist learners to access the appropriate post 16 provision.

Through the Education and Skills Act 2008, from 2014 the age of participation has been raised so that young people will be required to stay in education or training until their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.

A Post 16 Transport Policy Statement must be in place by 31<sup>st</sup> May each year. The Department for Education issues Post 16 Transport Guidance to support the preparation of a policy statement.

The policy links to the Council's Sustainable Transport Strategy and is similar in its principles to the Home to School Travel Assistance Policy.

## 2. Eligibility for Transport

This Policy sets out the eligibility criteria for travel assistance for students aged 16 to 18 to ensure that those most in need of support receive it and those who are able to pay the cost of their transport do so.

The Executive of the Council sets its fees and charging policy rates annually and where students are eligible for subsidised transport, charges are made as set and published within the Fees and Charging Policy.

Transport may be provided for mainstream students who are entitled under the eligibility criteria of this Policy and the Home-to-School Travel Assistance Policy 2019 -20, who are enrolled on a full-time course of education or training. In this case a full-time course is defined as: 15 hours per week for at least 30 weeks in the academic year.

Transport may be provided for students with special educational needs, who are entitled under the eligibility criteria of this Policy and the Home-to-School Travel Assistance Policy 2019-20 who are enrolled on a course of education or training which has been acknowledged by Central Bedfordshire Council as meeting the specific individual needs of the student as set out in their Statement of Special Educational Needs Education Health Care Plan (EHCP)

The eligibility criteria enabling young people to be provided with transport assistance relate to the specific areas of:

- ◆ low income;
- ◆ medical grounds;
- ◆ children for whom Central Bedfordshire Council is a Corporate Parent;
- ◆ special educational needs.

### **Families with a low income**

Central Bedfordshire Council is committed to working to assist low income families:

For a student to be eligible for transport assistance on low income grounds their family must be in receipt of one of the qualifying benefits set out in Appendix A and will live more than 3 miles, but no more than 20 miles and attend the nearest establishment which offers a qualification at the same level and in the same subject area(s) as the course applied for and accepted on to. These distances stated are calculated by the shortest available walking route if up to 3 miles or the shortest motorised route if over 3 miles.

### **Transport on grounds of medical needs**

Where a student attends the nearest school or college offering the qualification and subject they are studying for, transport assistance can be considered on medical grounds when the distance between home and establishment is no more than 20 miles. This will be calculated by the shortest available walking route if up to 3 miles or the shortest motorised route if over 3 miles. Each application is considered on an individual basis.

It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to produce evidence of the medical condition in all cases, detailing:

- a. full medical details of the condition, including timescales for recovery;
- b. written medical confirmation regarding the child's fitness to return to school;
- c. the likely period for which revised travel assistance arrangements may be needed;

- d. the type of vehicle needed, where appropriate, for example, where the child is in a full body cast;
- e. any manual handling risks.

This should be endorsed by the family doctor or in certain circumstances by a medical consultant. The Council reserves the right to require the parent/carer to provide further medical evidence as deemed necessary. Any charges incurred by the parent/carer in providing this evidence will not be paid by the Council.

Transport assistance will be arranged in the most cost-effective way and be provided for a maximum of one term at a time.

Where agreed transport assistance will be provided for families with a low income or at the subsidised rate as set out in the Council's Fees and Charges Policy. The charge will be determined at a pro rata rate for the number of weeks for which transport is agreed.

### **Transport for children for whom Central Bedfordshire Council is a Corporate Parent**

Whilst representing only a very small number of the total 16 – 18 age population, Looked After Children (including Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children) can be some of the most vulnerable students in need of support. The most suitable establishment to meet these particular students' needs will not always be the nearest school or college to their home address.

As Corporate Parents to these children, Central Bedfordshire Council will ensure that transport assistance will be provided for students to attend the most suitable establishment outside of the statutory walking distance, 3 miles, to meet their individual needs.

### **Transport for students with Special Educational Needs**

Transport Assistance needs for students with special educational needs will be assessed as part of the statutory assessment process, Education Health Care Plan EHCP.

Where students have been assessed as requiring transport and are eligible, a subsidised rate will be charged, as set out in the Fees and Charges Policy of the Council and reviewed annually. There will be no cost for travel assistance for families on low income.

A small number of students, typically with severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties, who remain in continuing special school provision who do not reach a point of transition at 16 will therefore continue to receive their existing transport arrangements for as long as they remain in that provision.

Subsidised transport will be provided for a student to the establishment identified through the assessment, where the distance between home and the establishment is more than 3 miles.

Where the distance is less than 3 miles the assessment will include consideration of whether a student could reasonably be expected to walk or cycle to school or college. Where this is not possible subsidised transport will be provided.

The most appropriate mode of travel will be agreed as part of the assessment process.

The assessment will consider transport assistance to the nearest suitable school or college. If by parental or student preference a more distant establishment is named, transport will be the responsibility of the parent.

Where a student with Special Education Needs remains in further education, transport could be provided up to the age of 25, if specifically required through the or Education Health Care Plan EHCP, transport provision for this group of young people is set out in the Travel Assistance Policy for 19 to 25 year olds

The Council will endeavour to offer transport assistance to students taking into account the shortest possible time and will investigate all possible alternatives if the travel time, one way, exceeds one hour and fifteen minutes. Where possible, adjustments will be made to transport assistance to reduce travel time to less than one hour and fifteen minutes provided this can be achieved efficiently.

The timescale for arranging transport will be a maximum of 15 working days from receipt of the application. Unless there is a return date stipulated on the application form. If the application form is not returned by the return date transport assistance will not be in place until after the October half term following the start of the new academic year in September.

### Residential placements

Where a student attends a residential school or college, transport assistance will be provided in accordance with the accommodation arrangements:

- a) Termly boarding
- b) 12 day boarding
- c) Weekly boarding
- d) 52 week placement

**termly boarding** –transport assistance will be provided at the beginning and end of each term and at the beginning and end of the mid term holiday.

**12 day boarding** –transport assistance will be provided on alternate weekends and at the beginning and end of each term.

**weekly boarding** – in most cases transport assistance will be provided on Monday and Friday each week.

**52 week placement** –transport assistance will be provided for three return journeys per year.

Any additional journeys will be the responsibility of the parent/carer.

In the interests of the efficient use of resources the council will, in all cases, encourage parents/carers to transport students for which mileage reimbursement may be made.

Any additional transport requirements to those set out above will remain the responsibility of the parent/carer.

### 3. Additional considerations

Students who live in a joint home arrangement, who fulfil the other criteria for transport assistance, will be provided with transport assistance from the primary home address registered with the school or college.

Students may be required to walk up to one mile from home to the pickup point and where allocated a place on a public service route, they may be required to walk up to one mile from the setting-down point to the school.



In determining entitlement to transport assessment, the route used in assessing the distance will be the shortest available walking route up to 3 miles. After 3 miles the shortest motorised route up to 20 miles will be used to assess entitlement. Measurement will commence at the gate of the student's home to the nearest gate on the school or college site.

Where students receive transport assistance as a result of errors in measurement, the transport will be withdrawn with no less than 6 weeks notice. The student and their family will be notified of any changes as soon as possible after the error has been identified.

## 4. Assistance Provided

### 16 -19 Bursary Fund

Young people who need some financial support to help them stay in education and training after age 16 can apply to their school, college or training provider for the 16-19 Bursary fund.

The 16-19 bursary fund has two elements:

**Guaranteed bursary:** those most in need will be eligible for a bursary of £1200 a year. To qualify students must meet at least one of the following criteria:

- care or a care leaver
- claiming Income Support or Universal Credit
- disabled and getting Employment and Support Allowance and Disability Living Allowance
- eligible for Personal Independence Payment (PIP) and either ESA or Universal Credit

**Discretionary bursary:** Providers may use their discretion to distribute any remaining funds to young people in ways that best fit the needs and circumstances of their students. Bursary funds should be targeted to young people facing financial barriers to participation, such as the costs of transport, book and equipment.

Providers have discretion to set policy, administer and allocate funds which best suit the needs of its learners. All organisations should have a 16-19 Bursary Fund policy which is available upon request. Applications should be made directly to the school, college or training provider.

### Care to Learn Scheme

The Care to Learn scheme will continue to be available for parents in England who are under 20 when they start a course in 2016/17. The Care to Learn scheme will pay up to £175 per child per week to help with the cost of:

- childcare while the young person is learning, on work placements linked to the course or programme of study or undertaking private study;
- any registration fees (up to £80) or deposit (up to £250) charged by the childcare provider;
- a childcare 'taster' (up to five days) aimed at helping the learner's child settle in before their learning starts;
- fees the learner needs to pay during summer holidays to keep the childcare place open;

- additional travel costs the learner has to pay so they can take their child from home to the childcare provider.

The childcare provider will receive payments direct from Care to Learn. Funding to help with travel costs will be paid to the young person's learning or training provider regularly and the provider will reimburse the learner or arrange travel for them.

For information on care to learn visit: <https://www.gov.uk/care-to-learn>

### Independent Travel Training

The Care Act states that "*local authorities must consider the benefits of approaches which delay or prevent the development of needs in individuals*". As such the Council will look at providing support which builds the individual's confidence and independence. The Council will seek to offer people for whom it would be suitable the opportunity to undertake Independent Travel Training in order to build their confidence and ability to lead an ordinary life. Where Independent Travel Training is not an appropriate offer and the person cannot travel safely on their own then this support may be offered by providing a travel buddy in order to help support them whilst they travel.

### Carer Support

The Care Act requires the Council to consider how an individual can be supported by their family or other carers when determining if a person's needs are being met.

People who have eligible needs and do not have the capability to travel independently can be supported by their family; or by another person who is able to support them. For example the person can be supported by a carer who can walk, drive or travel with them by public transport to their activities as appropriate. Support provided by the family or another carer will be explored before other means of support are considered.

### Travel Concessions

A Disabled Person's bus pass is available from Central Bedfordshire, the eligibility criteria and documentary evidence required to support an application can be found here <http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/transport/bus-pass/disabled.aspx>

### Appropriate Travel Assistance

Once a person is eligible for travel assistance they will be helped to choose the most appropriate assistance suitable to meet their identified needs, including travel training where the person will benefit from it. This will take into consideration their mobility, their intellectual capacity and the resources available to them.

In most circumstances, once a young person reaches sixth form age, the local authority expects that they will be able to make their own arrangements to travel to and from school or college independently. In some circumstances, the local authority will provide support in order to help the young person to travel independently or if necessary, provide a transport service to ensure that the young person is able to attend their educational establishment.

## Concessionary Places on School Contract Vehicles

Where students are not entitled to transport assistance it may be possible to purchase a concessionary pass for routes already operating for entitled pupils on a school contract vehicle.

Concessionary Passes are allocated on a first come, first served basis if there are any spare seats once all the entitled pupils have been allocated their spaces and the route is not publically registered

Concessionary passes are not available on routes that are public registered services, where it is possible to pay a bus operator direct. Information on public transport routes is available through <http://www.travelineeastanglia.co.uk>

## Rail/Bus passes, Personal Transport Budgets and mileage reimbursements

Passes for public service routes are issued to students, based on the most cost-effective provision of transport.

Where there is no public transport or where it is not practical to re-route an existing contracted vehicle, parents/carers or students may be able to claim personal mileage allowances or a Personal Transport Budget for transport to and from school or college. However, this is at the Council's discretion and is based upon the most cost-effective provision of transport.

## Replacement Bus Passes

Students are required to carry a travel pass on all occasions that they travel. Where a travel pass is lost a replacement must be obtained by contacting the School Transport Team. [school.transport@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:school.transport@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

A handling charge will be made for a new pass to be issued as set out in the Council's Fees and Charges Policy. In addition, the cost of a new pass provided by a bus/rail company will be passed on to a student. Information on the cost of replacement bus passes can be provided by contacting School Transport Team.

## Parental responsibilities

In all cases where transport assistance is provided, parents/carers must make their own arrangements for the student to arrive at and be collected from the vehicle where provided.

Parents/carers will be asked to allow the Council to use any specialist seating which the student requires. If this is not possible the Council will arrange for suitable seating to be provided.

If parents/carers choose to transport the student themselves when a place is available on existing transport arranged by the Council, then no mileage reimbursement or Personal Transport Budget will be payable.

## 5. Appeals

Decisions regarding the eligibility for travel assistance, the mode of assistance, and other practical matters of travel assistance will only be taken by authorised Council staff. If a parent/carer is unhappy with a decision that has been made, that parent/carer should first take it up informally with the officer or Department that made the original decision. If it is necessary to put the query in writing, then the Council will offer assistance with this in the case of a parent/carer with a disability.

If the matter is not resolved informally in this way, then the parent/carer will be required to complete a *Transport Appeal Form* (TAF1) which can be downloaded from the Council website. Alternatively a copy of the form can be requested from the School Transport Team (See appendix B). The TAF1 form must be submitted within 20 working days of receipt of the original transport decision being made by the Council.

The completed form should then be returned to the School Transport Team. The Team Leader together with another Children's Services officer will review the initial decision and further information submitted. This will be completed within 20 working days of receipt of the TAF1 form.

It is anticipated that the majority of appeals will be resolved at this stage. If the appeal is unsuccessful the parent will receive a copy of the appeal form with the reasons given for the decision.

If the matter remains unresolved the parent/carer can make a further appeal to the Transport Eligibility Panel. Appeals must be submitted, using the TAF2 form available on the website, directly to the Appeals Clerk, within 20 working days of the receipt of the decision of the first appeal considered by School Transport and a Children's Services Officer. When submitting the completed TAF2 form, parents/carers must also submit the decision letter received as the result of the initial appeal. The Transport Eligibility Panel consists of 3 people who are independent and who have volunteered for the role. They are not paid and are not associated with the Council or a school connected with the appeal except as an independent panel member. They are trained in all aspects of this Policy and will make decisions within its remit. A Clerk will be present to minute the hearing and will write to parents with the decision made by the Transport Eligibility Panel.

Parents/carers must submit all evidence to the Appeals Clerk 10 working days before your appeal is due to be held. Information on how and where to submit this evidence is on the TAF2. Evidence received after this will only be considered with the agreement of the Panel and late evidence may result in the appeal being moved to a later date.

Parents/carers are invited to verbally represent their case to the Panel. A maximum of 2 adults are able to attend a hearing. These can be both parents/carers or 1 parent and 1 supporter. An interpreter or signer may be provided if requested on the TAF2 form. No children may attend.

A member of the School Transport Team will also be present to explain the reasons why transport, or the particular provision requested, had been refused.

The Panel will consider the information provided on the TAF2 form and any additional evidence provided by the parent/carer, as well representation from TC&ET. Appeals panels will be arranged as soon as is possible within 40 working days. The necessary documents will be provided to parents and the panel at least 5 working days before the appeal date, unless a shorter period is agreed beforehand. The outcome of the appeal will be advised to the parent/carer in writing within 5 working days of the appeal hearing. Where parents/carers have a disability, which may impact on their ability to attend a hearing, or if they require assistance with language interpretation or reading, appropriate assistance will be provided by the Council if it is identified on the TAF2 form.

Where parents have a disability, which may impact on their ability to attend a hearing or if they require assistance with language interpretation or reading, appropriate assistance will be provided by the Council.

Where the pupil in question holds a statement of special educational needs or EHCP, it may be that a disagreement about travel is part of a wider question of school provision

and placement. In such an instance, it may be necessary for the matter to be considered by a Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal. Although this body does not hear appeals specifically about transport, it may consider it as part of a wider appeal.

The Appeals Process detailed above does not prevent the parent/carer raising a school transport related issue with a local Councillor or any other person.

Where a parent/carer feels that an appeal has not been conducted in a fair manner, he or she may pursue a complaint using the Council's complaints procedure.

**It should be noted that appeals will not be considered where the parent/carer does not agree with the school named in the EHC plan and they are appealing for transport refused due to parental preference. Where the education establishment is not agreed then the parent/carer should make an appeal to the SEND Tribunal**

## 6. Complaints/Queries

If a parent/carer has a query or is dissatisfied by any aspect with regard to the determination of eligibility/entitlement for travel assistance, this should initially be brought to the attention of the School Transport Team.

Queries/complaints relating to journey planning, standard/condition of vehicles, drivers, passenger assistants and any other issues relating to the journey to/from school should initially be brought to the attention of the School Transport Team (see appendix B).

If the complaint is not resolved to your satisfaction it may be escalated via the Council's Corporate Complaints Procedure [www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/local-government-in-central-bedfordshire/customer-feedback/default.aspx](http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/local-government-in-central-bedfordshire/customer-feedback/default.aspx)

## 7. Principles

Central Bedfordshire Council aims to provide safe, efficient and cost effective transport for students entitled to transport assistance, in accordance with its duties and powers as described in legislation.

In meeting its statutory responsibility Central Bedfordshire Council will provide transport assistance in accordance with agreed eligibility criteria which it will review annually.

The Council is committed to equality of opportunity and access to services and facilities and as such has undertaken an Equalities Impact Assessment of this Policy.

Information will be made available for parents, carers and students so that they are aware of the eligibility criteria and process for applying for transport assistance.

Parents, carers and students are required to agree to a Code of Conduct when students are travelling on transport provided by the Council.

Eligibility for transport assistance will be reviewed termly (before the start of each new term) to ensure that those students who are receiving transport remain eligible.

Take-up of transport assistance will be monitored to ensure that access is fair and equitable and that hard to reach groups and those who are most vulnerable are aware of their entitlement.

Information relating to applications for transport assistance will be held on a database for monitoring purposes and numerical information may be shared as requested with Central Government. Fair processing notices will be given to all applicants to ensure that they are aware of the purpose of the storage of their personal details.

Central Bedfordshire Council is committed to supporting sustainable modes of travel to school and college. Walking and cycling helps to reduce the congestion caused by the journey to school, together with the associated accidents and pollution and carbon emissions. If walking or cycling is not an option, school contract buses, public transport and car-sharing are more sustainable alternatives to individual car journeys.

The eligibility criteria set out in the Policy will be used for students starting a new course in the academic year 2019/20. Students entering the second or third year of a course will be assessed using the same eligibility criteria against which their original application was assessed.

The timescale for arranging transport assistance, if approved, will be a maximum of 15 working days from receipt of the application if the application is returned the return by date stipulated on the application form.

A travel training programme to support those students who are physically able to walk, to travel more independently and to support transition to adult life will be introduced.

The Council will seek to introduce escorts on a temporary or permanent basis if a need for one is identified at point of application.

## **8. Implementation and Monitoring of the policy**

The Director of Children's Services will be responsible for the implementation of this policy through the development of internal processes that will ensure the ability to monitor take up of service and regular reviews for those in receipt of the service.

This policy and the eligibility criteria will be kept under review and will be formally reviewed one year after implementation and thereafter every year.

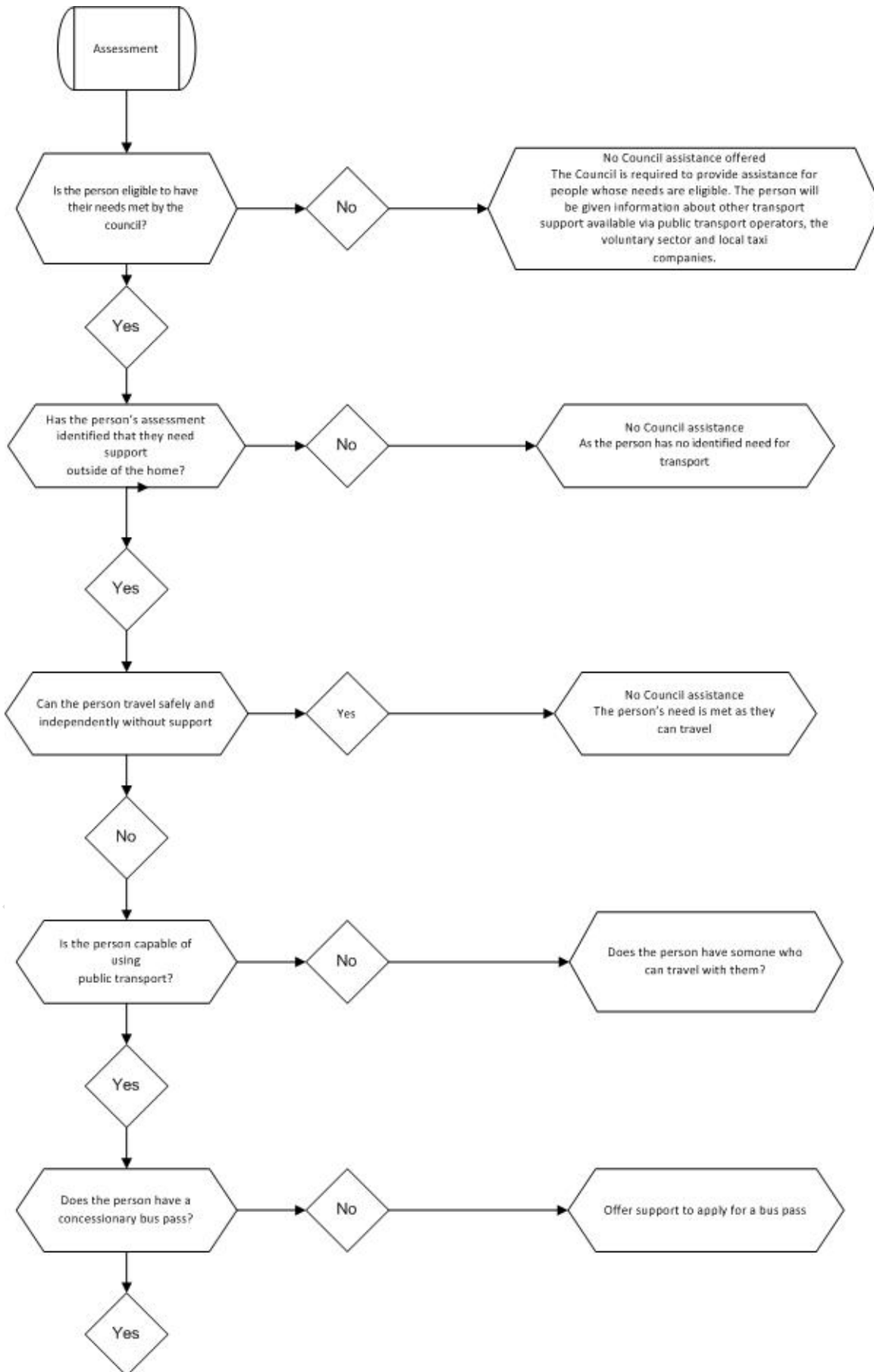
## Appendix A: Transport Assistance for families with a low income

1. Children from low income groups are defined in the Education and Inspections Act (2006) as those whose families are in receipt of the maximum level of Working Tax Credit (WTC)

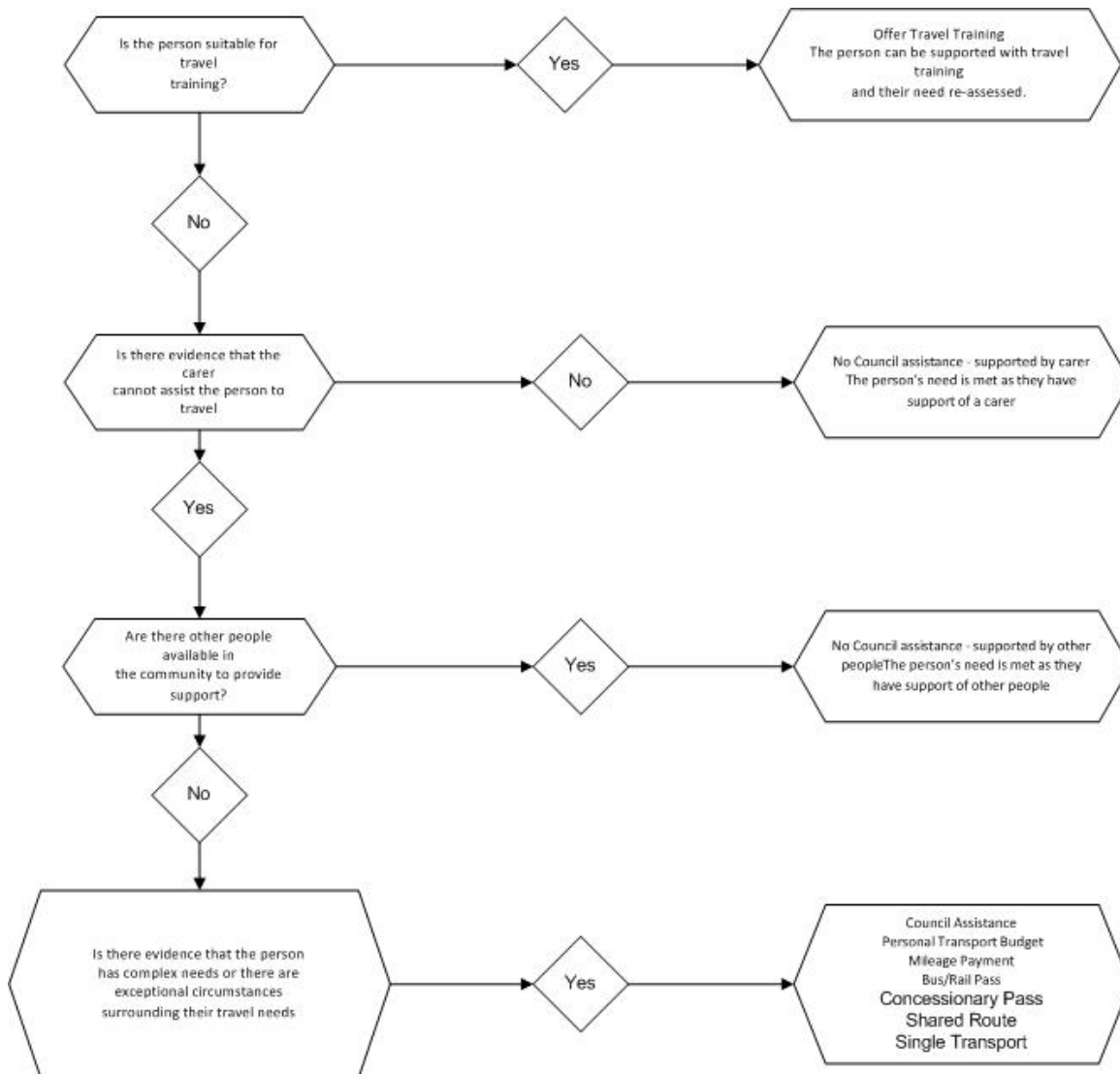
### Maximum Working Tax Credit (WTC)

2. When a customer is first awarded tax credits, or following a change in their household circumstances, HM Revenue and Customs issue a “tax credits award notice” detailing the breakdown and amount of the award. Part two of the award notice gives details of “How we work out your tax credits” including details of the full WTC elements. This is the maximum amount a customer can receive in WTC in any year. It then lists “any reduction due to your income” and shows the net amount payable. It is therefore readily apparent from the award notice whether a person is receiving maximum WTC or a reduced sum due to income. Where there is a reduction due to your income in this section then you would not qualify for travel assistance.
3. Please see below the list of qualifying benefits and the documentation required to assess entitlement to transport:

Benefit	Documentation required
Income Support (IS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Letter confirming receipt of benefit</li> </ul>
Income Based Jobseekers Allowance (IBJSA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Letter confirming receipt of benefit</li> </ul>
Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 (from the National Asylum Support Service)	Letter of confirmation from the National Asylum Support Service (NASS)
Guaranteed element of State Pension Credit	Pension Credit M1000 Award Notice
Child Tax Credit, provided a parent /carer is not entitled to Working Tax Credit and has an annual income (as assessed by HM Revenue and Customs) that does not exceed £16,190	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TC602 Tax Award Credit Notice – issued by HM Revenue and Customs</li> <li>• Letter from the local Revenues and Customs Office confirming tax credit details</li> </ul>
Employment Support Allowance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Letter confirming receipt of benefit</li> </ul>







## Appendix C: Contact details

Please contact School Transport at:

Tel: 0300 300 8339

Email: [school.transport@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:school.transport@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

Address: School Transport Team, Priory House, Monks Walk, Chicksands, Shefford, Bedfordshire, SG17 5TQ

### **If you wish to make any other enquiries or to make a complaint**

The please contact Customer relations:

Priory House, Monks Walk, Chicksands, Shefford, SG17 5TQ

Tel: 0300 300 6077 or 0300 300 4995

Email: [customer.relations@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:customer.relations@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

Appendix C

**Home-to-School/College Travel Assistance Consultation Report**

**1. Purpose of consultation**

The Council currently transports over 5,000 children/students from home to school each year. In 2016/17 this cost the council over £8.4 million, a rise of over £1.1m from the previous year. Having reviewed the legal requirements, the council has identified that it is currently offering services over and above the recognised statutory minimum.

The Home to School/College Travel Assistance Policies for Central Bedfordshire are therefore being reviewed. The consultation sought to understand the public's views on proposed changes to its Home to School/College Travel Assistance Policies. Responses to the consultation are helping to inform the review. Any revisions to the policies would then be applied (subject to approval) to new applications for the academic year 2018/19 and future new applications.

**2. The proposals**

The consultation sought feedback on a variety of proposals, looking at changes to; qualifying schools and where travel will be provided to, age range criteria, transport to boarding schools for Special Education Needs (SEN) provision and the type of travel assistance offered to those aged between 9-16 years old.

Elements of the proposals relate to provision for under-5s through to those attending post-16 education as well as having implications for SEN and mainstream students.

**3. The Consultation Process**

The consultation document was made available both as an online survey and a paper questionnaire and was launched on 29<sup>th</sup> June 2017 and concluded on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2017 following an extension after feedback from parents requesting additional time.

The consultation was supported by a comprehensive communications campaign which directly targeted parents/carers and those in the wider community.

Activities included:

- A news release was issued to all local newspaper groups at the start of the consultation. Biggleswade Comet and Dunstable Gazette both published

articles (9<sup>th</sup> July). Bedfordshire on Sunday and Biggleswade Comet again published articles during the consultation period.

- Regular updates were posted on CBC social media channels;
  - Twitter:
    - Number of tweets: 22
    - Total engagements (comments, likes, retweets): 133
    - Total impressions (people that saw the tweets): 21,444
  - Facebook
    - 2 posts
    - 391 engagements
    - 21,282 impressions
- Email bulletins were issued encouraging people signed up for Central Bedfordshire news to take part in the consultation.
- Updates were published in various council newsletters (Staff Central, Members' Information Bulletin) to promote the consultation and to encourage those in a position of influence such as councillors to promote it further.
- Targeted promotion with emails sent to database of 3000 parents/carers on the school transport database
- Emails and alerts were sent to all schools and colleges asking to help make parents aware.
- Notices were put up on the school admissions web pages, linking to the consultation page as these users could be directly affected by proposals.

Paper copies of the questionnaires were made available through all Central Bedfordshire libraries and on the *Just Ask* 'Rave bus' that travelled Central Bedfordshire talking to residents.

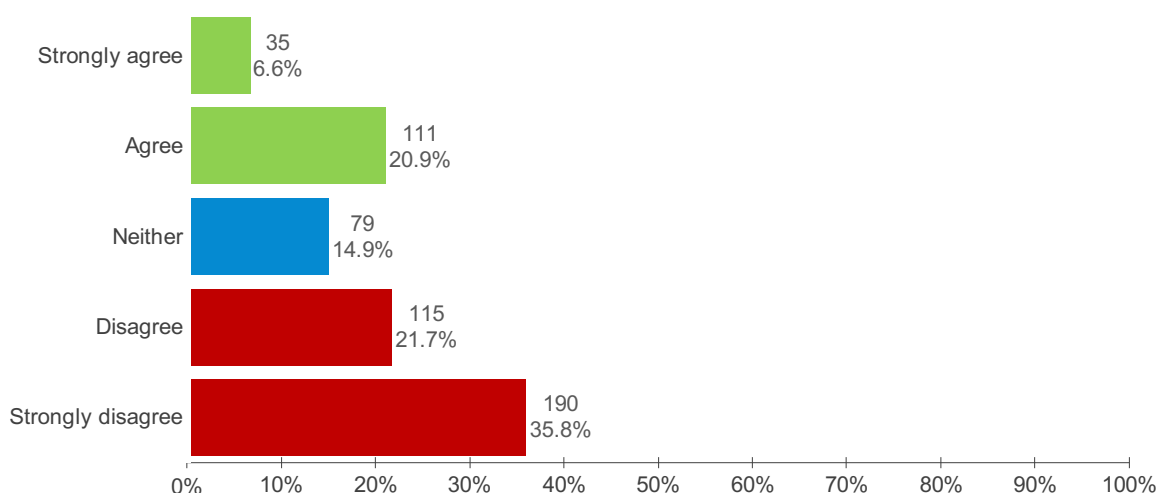
The Home-to-School consultation webpages had a total of 16,357 page views between 29<sup>th</sup> June 2017 and 18<sup>th</sup> September 2017, demonstrating a high level of interest and reach of the campaign. The top method used to find information was via Facebook with just under 3,625 hits. Others included; 3,602 hits from google searches, 1,754 from Gov Delivery bulletins, 429 from Bing search engine and 160 hits from Twitter. 5,247 hits came directly meaning from untraceable sources but mostly likely from links in emails that were sent to parent/carers.

#### 4. Feedback on the proposals

In total 538 residents participated in the consultation by completing the survey. 83% (449) said they were parents/carers of which 60% (271) said they were intending to apply for a 2018 school place. These groups were key stakeholders and it was important to engage with all of them throughout the consultation. The second biggest group were those who said they were residents of Central Bedfordshire 12% (67).

##### a. Changes to qualifying schools

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to provide transport from home to nearest available school, rather than to the nearest catchment?



58% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the proposal to provide transport to the nearest available school, rather than to the nearest catchment school. With less than 28% supporting the proposal.

##### Comments on the proposal:

229 respondents provided additional comments regarding the first question. An analysis of the comments reaffirms the views of the first question, with the most frequent themes being:

- Council should provide transport to catchment schools (50 respondents)
- Policy restricts parental choice (40 respondents)
- School places and transport should be connected (40 responses)
- Policy would have adverse effect on children (31 respondents)
- Policy disregards catchment system (25 respondents)

*“Q1 has big implications on Admissions as this will affect where parents choose to send their child to school. It is not the fault of the parent that the catchment school is not necessarily*

*their nearest school. It seems unfair to penalise parents and children by denying them transport to what the council has determined is the catchment school.”*

*“this takes away parent choice for a school best to your child's needs”*

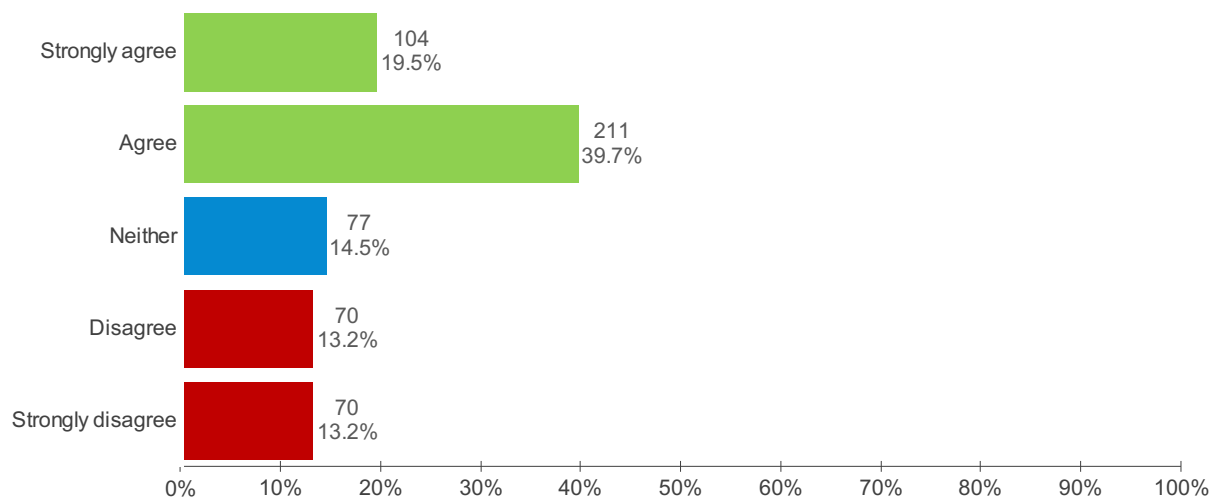
*“While this policy may make more financial sense, if the admissions policy of the schools are not in line with the transport policy, then there may be hardship on the child and family concerned.”*

## Summary

There was a lack of support for this policy from respondents. Many of the main themes to come from the comments revolved around the disparity between the CBC school transport policies and BC school admissions criteria. It was pointed out that many schools still used catchment areas as criteria, with families choosing where to live based upon these catchment areas. To remove catchments from the school transport policies would mean some children would not be able to attend their preferred school of choice. This created a large amount of concern and confusion around why these two policies were not aligned together.

### b. Changes to age range criteria

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to only provide transport for children who are aged five and above?



The majority (59%) of respondents agreed with the proposal to only provide transport for children who are aged five and above, with only 26.4% disagreeing.

### Comments on the proposal:

- Proposals risk hindering development of children and young people (23 respondents)
- Under 5's should be escorted (5 respondents)

*“Although children do not have to attend school full time until the term after which they turn five, the vast majority of children start school in the September (and attend full time) following their fourth birthday. This is strongly encouraged by schools and academies to ensure the best start for both the children and staff at the school. Parents can defer their child’s place until the term after their fifth birthday, however for summer born children we will only hold the place for the child until the start of the summer term. If parents of summer born children have not started by this time, the place is withdrawn and parents are then required to reapply for a Year 1 place, at which there is no guarantee of a place at their preferred schools. Although the Council is not obliged to offer transport to children below statutory school age it seems at odds that they would not offer transport to four year old children in Reception Year when they are legally entitled to full time education at school.”*

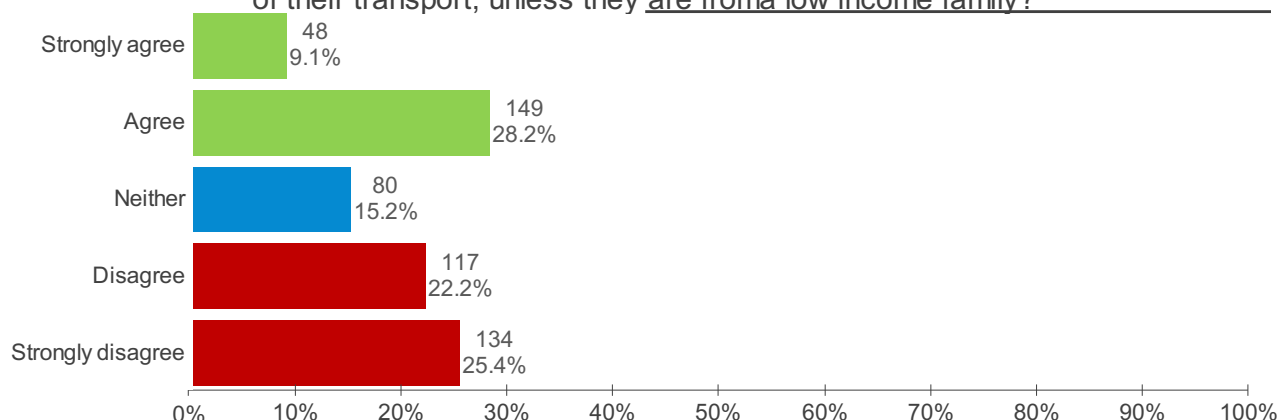
*“If transport is withdrawn for 4 year olds this would have a hugely detrimental impact on the early years education of Traveller children which could result in children missing the entire Reception year as parents would choose to keep their children at home until they could access the transport.”*

## Summary

Whilst the majority supported this proposal there was some concern from those opposed with regards to four-year olds who have been granted a school place. There was again some concern and confusion around why school transport should not be provided to a pupil when a school place has been allocated. There was also some concern that this would impact most upon more vulnerable groups who could not facilitate the transport to school themselves and would have to defer starting school until the age of five, potentially putting them at a disadvantage to their peers who would be able to attend from the age of four.

### c. Post-16 (SEN) contributions

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal that students over 16 years old with a special education need (SEN) will be required to make a contribution towards the cost of their transport, unless they are from a low income family?



47% disagreed with the proposal to require post 16-year olds with SEN to contribute towards the cost of their transport, unless from a low-income family. Another 37% agreed with the proposal with a further 15% responding neither, indicating a wider split in opinions.

### Comments on the proposal:

- Transport for SEN should be provided (42 respondents)
- Paying for transport will cost families (36 respondents)
- Post 16 must stay in school (27 responses)
- SEN students have to travel for appropriate schooling (26 respondents)

*“This is unreasonable and in my opinion shows discrimination. It is not the fault of the family that a child has SEND and therefore has to travel further afield to attend school, e.g., Leighton Buzzard to Houghton Regis. Some over 16 have a very low academic age so it is important they remain at school where they feel safe and comfortable. Families with SEN children have enough pressure and their lives have to fit around the child as it is. There is no special school in Leighton Buzzard which again is not the fault of the families so this cost of transport should be fully covered.”*

*“As schooling is now compulsory up to age 18, it would be discriminatory to request that those over 16 with a SEN should have to pay for their transport. If there are only certain schools that can fully support a child with a SEN, then it would be disgraceful to deny them access to that school on the grounds of transport cost. Forcing a child with a SEN to be placed somewhere where they cannot reach their full potential not only impacts negatively on that child themselves, but can also cause disruption to the rest of their class and prevent those students from achieving what they should.”*

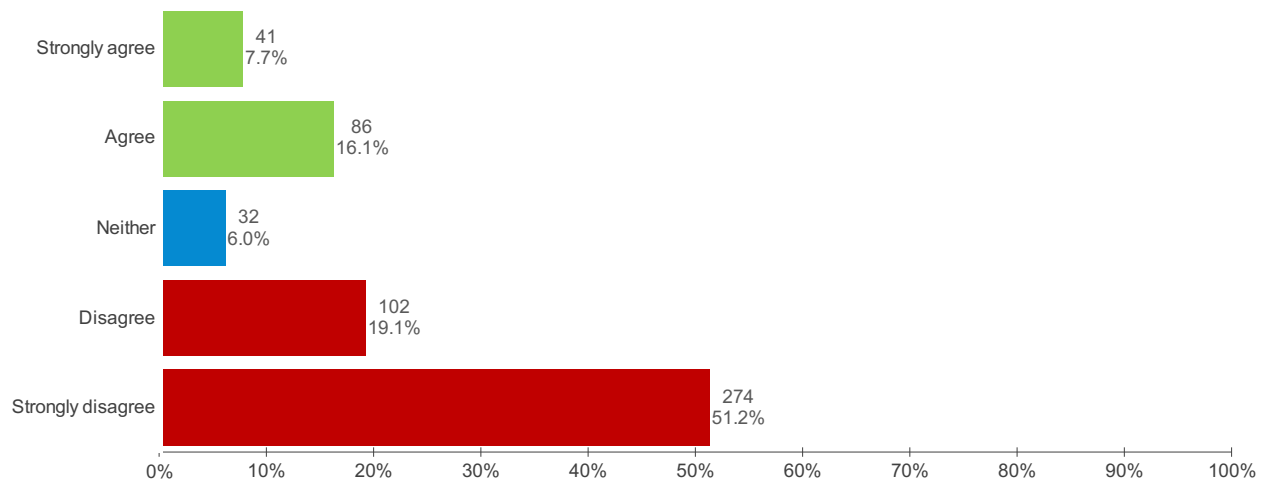
### Summary

There was less of a consensus on this proposal but a larger proportion disagreed with it. Responses have indicated that it is unreasonable for SEN students to be asked to contribute towards transport as the locations of appropriate schools are often not local to where they live, meaning they may travel further than mainstream students would have to. Another frequent theme suggested that having to contribute to travel would cost families money, and would adversely impact those families just be above the ‘low-income’ threshold. Once again, there were comments regarding the inconsistent approach to policies, with many highlighting that it was now mandatory for students to remain in some form of further education after the age of 16. There were concerns that removing paid transport could affect attendance figures negatively, hence hampering the education of some students.



#### d. Changes to what travel assistance is offered

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to offer a travel pass for a public bus or train for Middle and Upper school pupils (aged 9-16), rather than supplying private buses or taxis in the first instance?



A significant majority (70%) disagreed with the proposal to offer a travel pass for a public bus or train to students (aged 9-16) rather than supply private buses or taxis in the first instance. Only 24% of respondents agreed with the proposal showing an overwhelming objection to the policy.

#### Comments on the proposal:

- Concerns over current public transport provision (119 respondents)
- Concerns with younger children travelling alone on public transport (116 respondents)
- Public transport not suitable for many SEN children (6 respondents)

*"I have concerns regarding child protection using public transport, children would potentially be exposed to situations they should be protected from. The current public bus service would be inadequate to manage the number of children at the same time causing children to arrive late at school which would effect their education. This is a very bad idea."*

*"Public buses may be unreliable - what happens if they are late? or full? I have concerns about pupil safety. I would be very concerned about by young daughter travelling on a public bus unaccompanied - I cannot accompany her as I work full time. A school bus gives me peace of mind."*

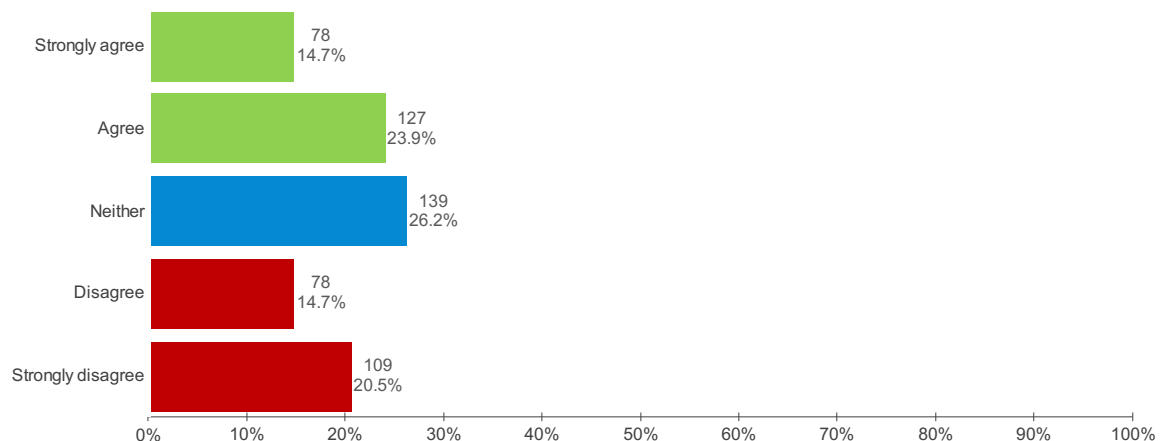
*"No SEN child would be able to get on a bus on there own , and if that child was to have a meltdown, they would be putting themselves and the public in danger"*

## Summary

Comments have highlighted two extremely common themes regarding this proposal. Firstly, there is concern regarding the current provision of public transport in Central Bedfordshire, many claiming it is too scarce and unreliable to be used as school transport. Respondents have suggested that transport links to villages are a particular issue and no routes would be suitable for their child to get directly to school. Secondly there were concerns over the safety of children on public transport, particularly those as young as nine with many parents worried about placing that amount of responsibility on young children. Safeguarding was also a frequent theme with respondents extremely concerned about young children being in close proximity to the general public unsupervised. There was some recognition that this proposal could work, but only if the age range was changed.

### e. Motability Vehicle Proposal

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal that when a vehicle has been provided to the family by the national Motability Scheme, the council will provide parent/carers with a payment to cover the cost of mileage rather than provide additional transport?



39% of respondents agreed with the proposal to provide parents/carers with a payment to cover the cost of mileage of transporting their child to school with their Motability vehicle. 35% disagreed with the proposal whilst 26% responded neither, indicating no opinion which suggests the proposal may not affect them enough to comment either way.

### Comments on the proposal:

- Motability proposal would penalise working parents (27 respondents)
- Agree with Motability vehicle proposal (4 respondents)

*“Disabled children are likely to be travelling very much longer distances to school, and those schools are less likely to provide any sort of wraparound care. Without school transport it would become difficult if not impossible for many parents to work. For single parents this could be catastrophic.”*

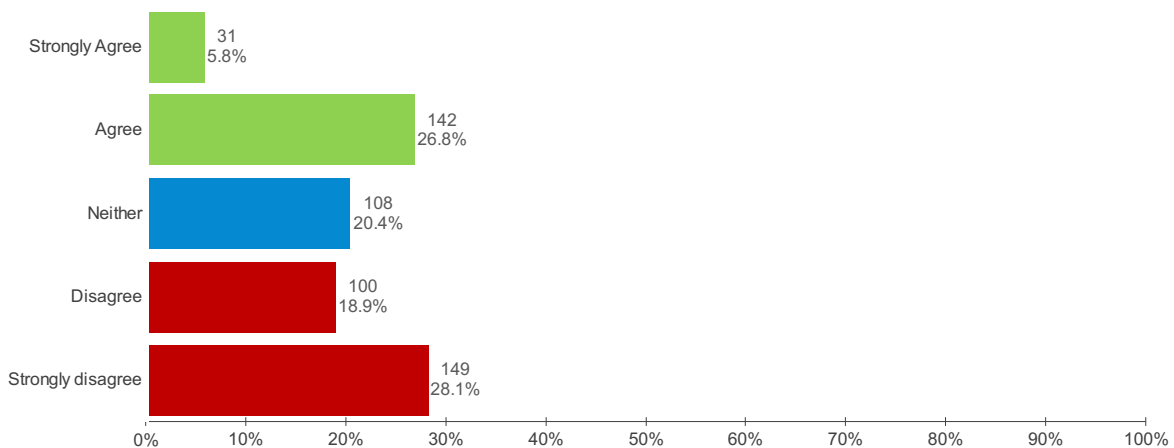
*“it is ridiculous for children who have mobility cars to be transported to their schools by their parents/ carers when their parents/carers have to go to work, or have other commitments ie other children. This would not work in our situation as I would have to give up work and claim benefits from the council if I were to drive my child to and from school every day in their motability car. I strongly object to this proposal. In addition, is the council trying to promote more cars and traffic onto our already congested roads? I thought we were meant to be looking at our carbon footprint and thinking of ways to reduce car journeys?”*

## Summary

Responses have shown more of a split regarding this proposal with no clear majority either way. With the single biggest response coming from ‘neither’ suggesting no opinion from a large proportion of respondents. The additional comments should be noted for the details they provide regarding the potential impact on some families. Comments have clearly indicated concern with many respondents explaining how this proposal would negatively impact upon working parents of SEN students. They explain that the amount of travel that would be required to undertake would mean many would have to give up their job to do this. As with a previous proposal, the distance that SEN students are required to travel to school, was highlighted, and the responses have once again noted that is unfair to penalise these students and families because of it.

### f. Concessionary buss passes

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to charge concessionary bus passes at a variable rate that better reflects the cost of the journey rather than a universal fixed rate?



Just under half of respondents (47%) disagreed with the proposal to charge concessionary bus passes at a variable rate rather than a universal fixed rate, with only 33% agreeing with the proposal.

### Comments on the proposal:

- Concessionary pass should not be charged on distance (23 respondents)
- Parents should be means tested (6 respondents)
- Agree with concessionary bus passes (4 respondents)

*“I think if you start to have a variable charge for a pass it will have a huge impact on the demographic attending particular schools where the journey may incur a greater/lesser cost for whatever reason...”*

*“It seems unfair that some pupils will be charged more for their journey than others because they live further away. It may mean that they cannot afford to travel to a chosen place of education if too expensive.”*

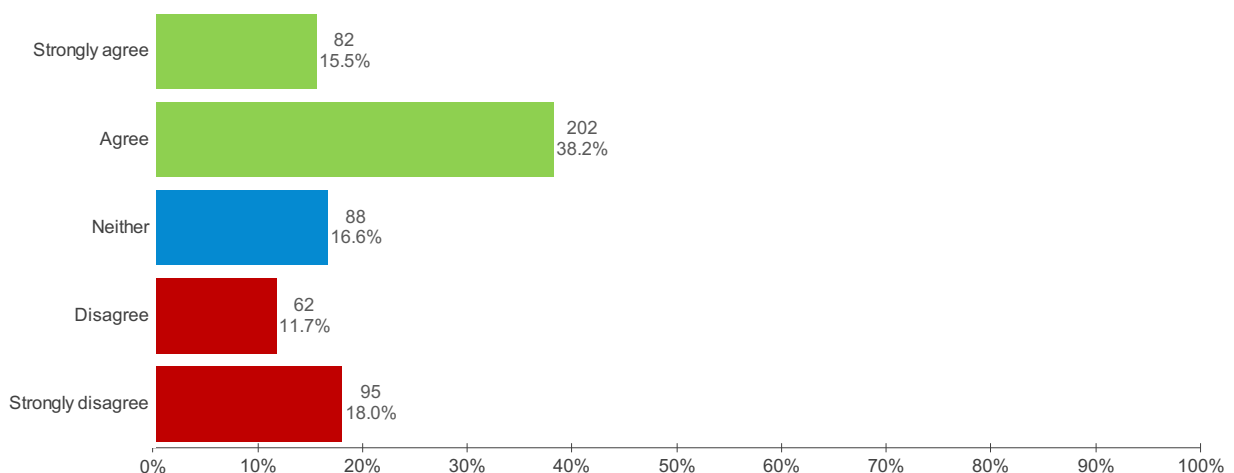
*“If the cost of transport was increased this would possibly make it unviable for us. We would then have to drive to the school which would increase transport at school which the council says it wants to avoid.”*

## Summary

Once again there was no outright majority in agreement or disagreement with the proposal. The largest majority was 47% in disagreement. Comments suggest this is because respondents disagree with the proposal to charge on distance rather than a fixed rate. Cost also became a factor with some suggesting the price could lead to some students not being able to access certain schools or curriculum because of cost.

### g. School mini buses

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to provide a contribution to schools to run their own mini buses instead of commissioning private bus operators, in instances where this is more cost effective?



The majority (54%) supported the proposal to provide a contribution to schools to run their own mini buses instead of commissioning private bus operators, with only 30% in disagreement.

### Comments on the proposal:

- Transport is the responsibility of the council (42 respondents)
- Schools cannot run own mini bus (31 respondents)
- Agree with concessionary bus passes (4 respondents)

*“Contribution to schools is a cop out of the councils responsibility...The council has responsibility to ensure students can get to their place of education just the same as parents have responsibility for them to attend but this change WILL mean students not being able to get to their education facility”*

*Not a very practical idea as school minibuses are for all pupils to use and having to use them at the beginning an end of school day for possibly one or two pupils would completely upset the use of having a minibus to take pupils to Visits and sports fixtures during the morning and after-school. The school would have to supply and pay for a driver to run the mini buses as it is usually only a few members of teaching staff that are trained to drive the minibuses. Schools cannot afford any more expenses...”*

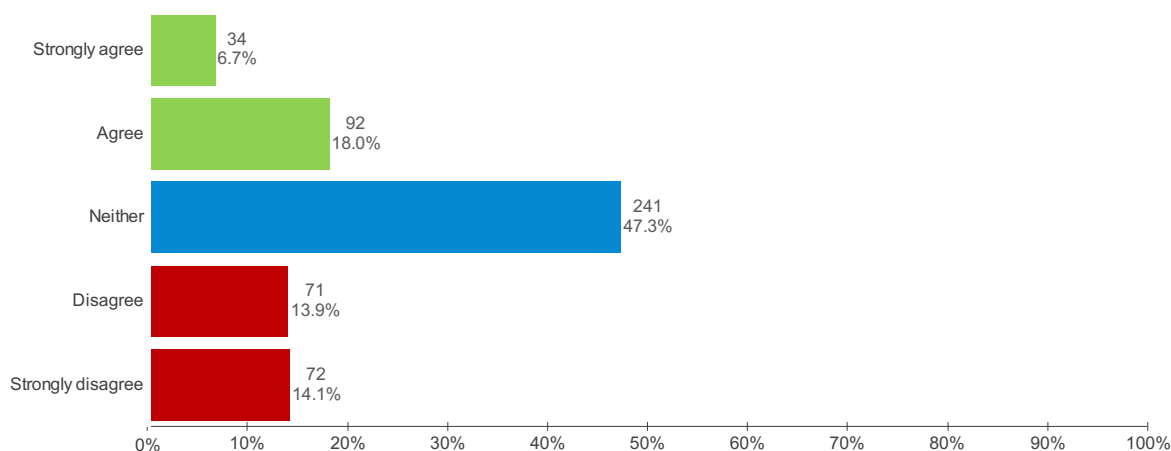
*“...if this is generally cost effective then yes but not at the cost of schools having to find more money from their already diminishing budgets to fund it.”*

## Summary

Whilst the majority of respondents were supportive of this proposal, there were some concerns about how well this would work in practice. Some felt it was not the role of the school to transport children and this should lie with the council. In particular they did not want to see further strain put upon school budgets by having to use money to facilitate the use of the mini bus. There were also concerns regarding the knock-on effect this proposal would have for extracurricular activities for the school i.e. field trips, sports events. Careful consideration would need to be given to these issues before any implementation.

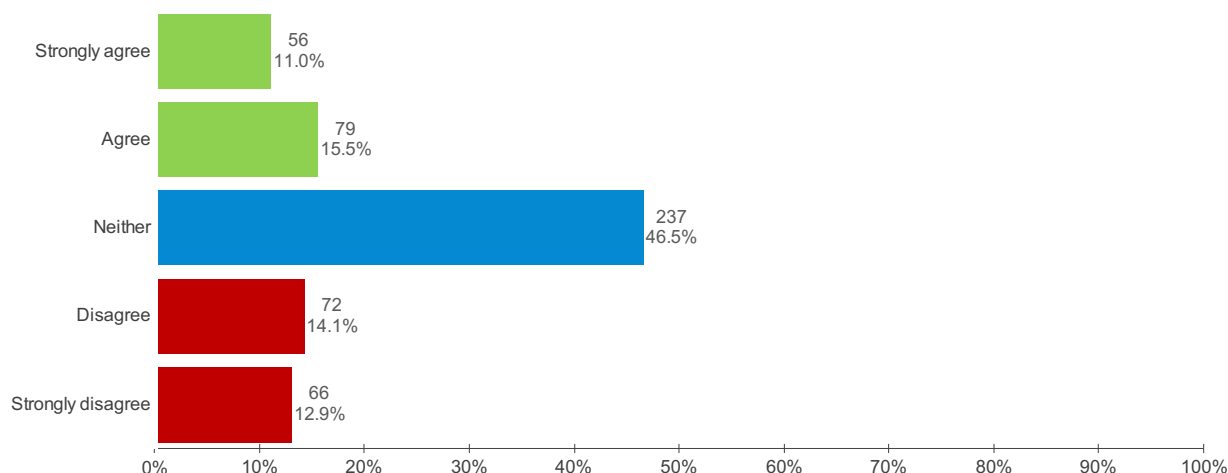
### **h. Boarding Schools – where a boarding school has been identified as the nearest available school to meet the child’s needs.**

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal that rather than providing transport, the council will reimburse travel expenses to parent/carers whose children attend a boarding school?



47.3% responded 'Neither' indicating no opinion, likely because of the very specific nature of the proposal. 28% disagreed with the proposal to reimburse travel expenses to parent/carers rather than provide transport in the first instance with 15% agreeing.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to no longer provide travel assistance to parents/carers attending a Statement/EHC review whose children attend an out of council area boarding school?



Again, a similar proportion of respondents (46.5%) responded 'Neither'. 27% disagreed with the proposal to no longer provide travel assistance to parents/carers attending a Statement/EHC review at an out of area boarding school. With a slightly smaller percentage (26.5%) disagreeing with the proposal.

### Comments on the boarding school proposals:

- Families with SEN children should be supported (14 respondents)
- Misunderstanding of proposals (14 respondents)
- It is not the families fault they have to travel out of area (13 respondents)
- If school is deemed necessary, transport should be funded (9 respondents)

*"If the school that is best for that child is out of area...why should the family have to pay? Any family with a child that has needs should be fully supported and to make life no more difficult than it already is. No one chooses to have a child with extra needs and to live the life, 24/7 is tough...it should not be made any more difficult."*

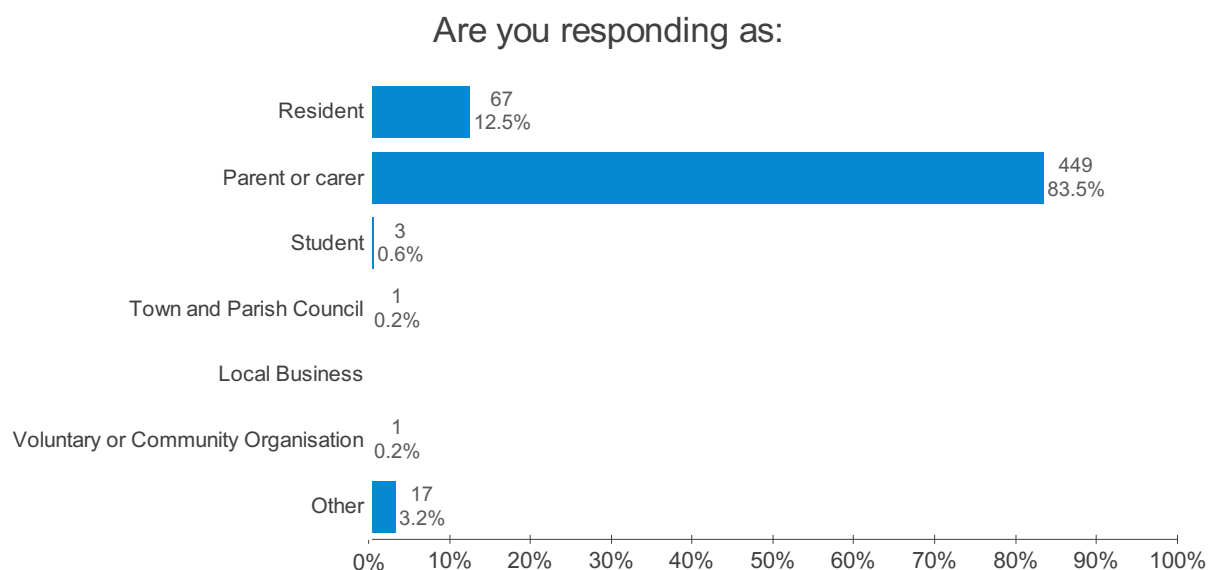
*"Being able/not able to pay for travel should NOT affect whether a parent can attend a Statement/ EHC meeting - or do you really believe these are of no importance?"*

### Summary

A section of comments suggested a misunderstanding of the boarding school proposals with some assuming the proposals related to private boarding schools rather than residential schools for pupils with special educational needs. It is important to highlight this misunderstanding as this could have affected how people responded to the proposals, particularly the first proposal which offered to reimburse travel expenses to parents instead of providing transport. Some parents questioned

why the council was supposedly funding transport to private boarding schools. Overall more respondents disagreed with both proposals than those who agreed. An analysis of the comments shows that respondents are not keen to see SEN families impacted upon, with concerns that SEN families should be supported given the difficult circumstances they face and that they should not be punished for having to travel out of area for their child's education. The later point is a reoccurring theme throughout the consultation regarding services for SEN children/parents.

**i. Profile of respondents**



- 84% of respondents indicated that they were parents or carers. 13% of respondents were residents of Central Bedfordshire, and 3% responding as other. This is a good indication that the consultation reached key stakeholder groups.

**Please specify which Town and Parish Council:**

Biggleswade Town Council

**Please specify the name of your organisation:**

Bedford Area Bus Users' Society

**If other, please state:**

Head Teacher	Teacher
Work in a secondary school with SEN children	Governor
Teacher	Local authority employee
User of local buses and a member of the bus user group BABUS	Senior teacher at Stanbridge School
Professional	Lower school
School Admissions Team (CBC)	

- 54% of respondents said they would be applying for a 2018 school place within Central Bedfordshire.
- 80% of respondents were female and 20% male.
- Although the majority of respondents (95%) did not have a disability, 5% of respondents considered themselves to be disabled.
- The respondent profile was similar to the average for Central Bedfordshire as a whole, with 94% of respondents identifying as White British, 1% Black/Black British, 1% Asian/Asian British, 2% identifying as mixed ethnicity and 2% as 'Other ethnic group'.
- The majority of respondents were aged between 30-44 years (50%) and 45-59 (40%). 60+ represented 6% of total respondents, with Under 30s representing 4%.
- Postcodes show there has been a varied response from across the Central Bedfordshire, and particularly from rural areas where there is a greater reliance on school transport, with less responses coming from the towns.

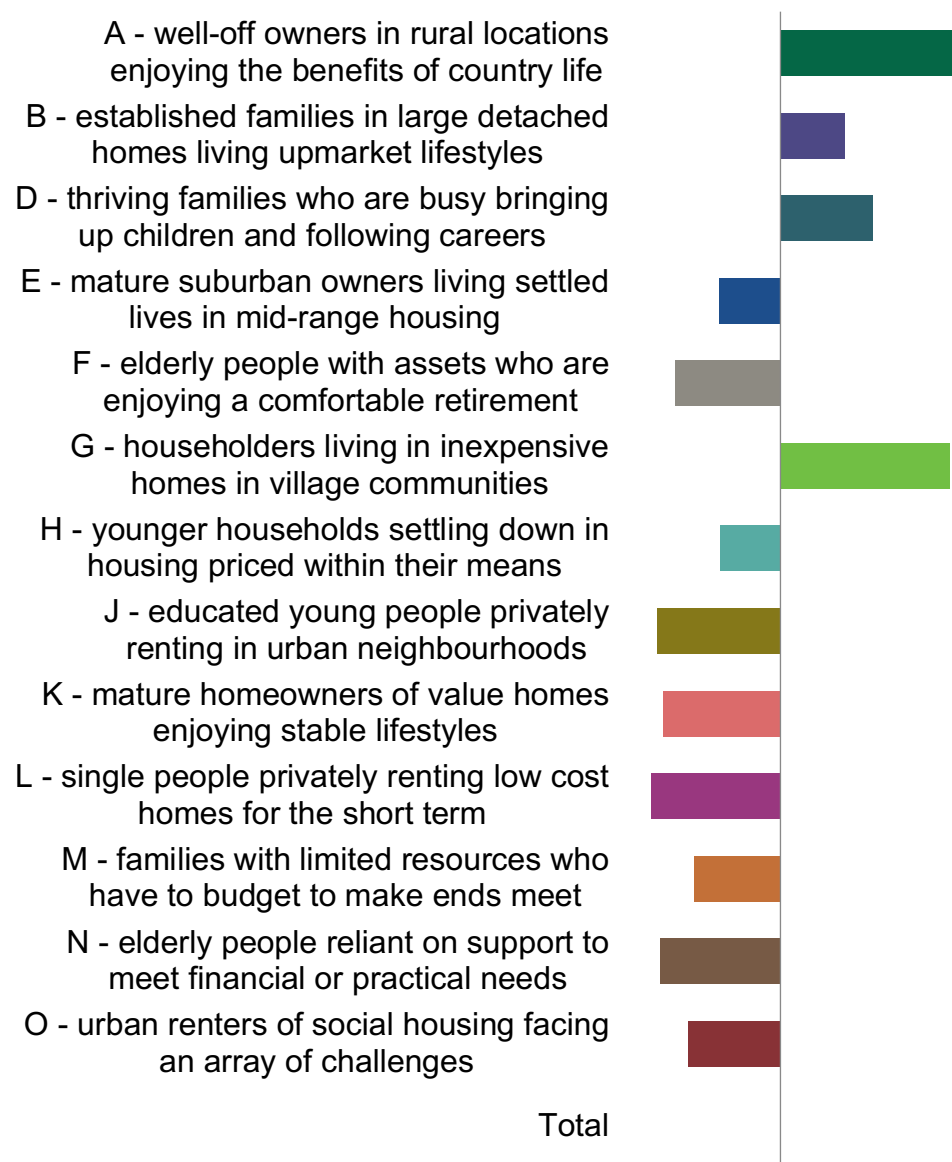
Postcode location (by Parish)	No. of Respondents	Postcode location (out of area)	No. of Respondents
Amphill	15	Aylesbury Vale	2
Arlesey	16	Bedford	5
Aspley and Woburn	16	Cambridge	1
Barton-le-Clay	19	Milton Keynes	7
Biggleswade North	2		
Biggleswade South	6		
Caddington	12		
Cranfield and Marston Moretaine	82		
Dunstable-Central	1		
Dunstable-Icknield	2		
Dunstable-Manshead	2		
Dunstable-Northfields	5		
Dunstable-Watling	4		
Eaton Bray	2		
Flitwick	9		
Heath and Reach	30		
Houghton Conquest and Haynes	14		
Leighton Buzzard North	6		
Leighton Buzzard South	6		
Linslade	7		
Northill	20		
Parkside	4		
Potton	11		
Sandy	13		
Shefford	13		
Silsoe and Shillington	22		
Stotfold and Langford	20		
Tithe Farm	2		
Toddington	43		
Westoning, Flitton and Greenfield	33	<b>Central Bedfordshire Total</b>	<b>437</b>



Further analysis of the postcodes has allowed us to profile respondents. The analysis below uses Experian Mosaic data. This is a segmentation tool that looks at a wide range of data for every household in the country and then groups similar households together, including information on their preferences. This helps us to understand more about the characteristics of the respondents to the survey. It is only possible to use where we have the full, accurate postcode within Central Bedfordshire.

79% of consultation respondents gave a postcode that was valid to use in this analysis.

### Compared to CBC residents



This data allows us to identify groups that may have been over or under represented in the consultation. Bars to the left indicate which groups have been under-represented and bars to the right represent groups which have been over-represented. The data shows that lower income groups have not been as active in taking part in the consultation in comparison with more affluent groups.

## j. Additional analysis

Crosstab analysis was conducted on several demographic areas to identify any differing opinions between groups. Groups included; parent/carers, those applying for a 2018 school place, those aged 60 and above, and those who identified as having a disability.

Following analysis it was found that none of these groups gave vastly different answers to that of the overall results. It is important to conduct this cross-referencing task to mitigate against one particular group of people not being heard over the wider community.

## 5. Conclusion

The results of the consultation have broadly speaking uncovered considerable concern regarding the proposed policy changes. Whilst there were some elements of the proposals that have failed to attract support, others faced less opposition with the proposals allowing schools to run their own mini buses and to only provide transport for over-5s being supported. However, all of the proposals have highlighted issues that would require further thought, as summarised below.

### Inconsistencies in approach

Firstly there was concern about the approach taken with the proposed changes. Respondents highlighted perceived inconsistencies and contradictions that the new policies created such as only providing transport to the nearest school. This proposal is not seen as being in line with council's wider approach to school admissions, with many school's still using catchment systems. Parents were concerned about applying for and accepting a place at a catchment school and then not being able to access school transport because it was not their nearest school. There was confusion about why the council is still using catchments if transport was no longer going to be provided to them.

Similarly, the proposal to only provide transport to children over the statutory school age of five was met with concern as parents claimed schools actively encourage pupils starting school following their fourth birthday with the school admissions team making provisions to allow this. Again, this highlighted to parents an inconsistent approach to children and schooling with accusations of a lack of joined up thinking within the council.

### Impact on children and young people with disabilities or special educational needs

Secondly, respondents indicated that some of the proposals were unfair and targeted groups that were not able to adapt to these proposed changes. The Motability vehicle proposal drew criticism from service users i.e. parents with Motability vehicles. They explained that the proposal would severely impact their ability to maintain work as often appropriate schooling for their SEN children was much further afield than local mainstream schools, making the 'school-run' and reaching work on time unlikely to be viable. They felt this proposal unfairly penalised

them and their families for having to attend specialist schooling outside of the local area.

These sentiments were echoed in the proposal to require a contribution towards the cost of transport from post-16 SEN students, with respondents saying the need to attend a specialist school/college outside of the local area is not the fault of the students and they should not be penalised for having to access schooling outside of a local mainstream school/college.

#### Safety and Sustainability

A final theme from the consultation findings was the notion of safety and sustainability. The proposal to provide travel passes for public transport to pupils aged 9-16 years old was met with strong opposition with regards to the lower limit being nine years old. Safeguarding was a massive issue for parents who were concerned about the idea of their young children mixing with the public and having to navigate their way to school unaccompanied.

Some also highlighted concerns about whether the current public transport provision could sustain an influx of school children or whether it was currently suitable for transporting children at school times. There was a concern this had not been factored into the proposals with many parents citing current poor provision in rural areas as a barrier to getting to school.

There were similar thoughts with the proposal to provide a contribution to schools to allow them to run their own min buses, but again concerns were raised about whether this was sustainable for schools given current budget pressures. Some saw this proposal as passing the burden on to schools and they did not want to see education budgets spent on transport, which was seen solely as a council responsibility.

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## The Public Sector Equality Duty

The Equality Duty requires public bodies to have **due regard** to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it

### Protected Characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Marriage and Civil Partnership (elimination of discrimination only)
- Race
- Religion or Belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

**Due Regard** means consciously thinking about the three aims of the Duty as part of the process of decision-making. For example:

- How they act as employers
- How they develop, evaluate and review policy
- How they design, deliver and evaluate services
- How they commission and procure from others

**Advancing equality of opportunity** involves considering the need to:

- Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people because of their protected characteristics
- Meet the needs of people with protected characteristics
- Encourage people with protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is low

**Fostering good relations** involves tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people who share a protected characteristic and others.

**Complying with the Equality Duty may involve treating some people better** than others, as far as this is allowed in discrimination law. This could mean making use of an exception or positive action provisions in order to provide a service in a way that is appropriate for people who share a protected characteristic.

### Officers should:

**Keep an adequate record showing** that the equality duties and relevant questions have been actively considered.

**Be rigorous in both inquiring and** reporting to members the outcome of the assessment and the legal duties.

**Final approval of a proposal, can only happen after the completion of an equality impact assessment. It is unlawful to adopt a proposal contingent on an equality impact assessment**

<b>Title of the Assessment:</b>	<b>Review of Home to School Travel Assistance</b>	<b>Date of Assessment:</b>	11/08/2017
<b>Responsible Officer Name:</b>	Su Childerhouse	<b>Extension Number:</b>	74394
<b>Title:</b>	Head of Public Protection & Transport		
<b>Email:</b>	<a href="mailto:susan.childerhouse@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk">susan.childerhouse@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk</a>		

**Stage 1 - Setting out the nature of the proposal and potential outcomes.**

<b>Stage 1 – Aims and Objectives</b>
<p><b>1.1 What are the objectives of the proposal under consideration?</b>                  The Home to School/College Travel Assistance Policies for Central Bedfordshire are being reviewed in order to ensure that they meet the statutory requirements, whilst making the most efficient use of resources.</p> <p>The Council currently provides more transport than is required by legislation. Currently, we transport over 5,000 children/students from home to school each year. In 2016/17 this cost the council over £8.4 million, a rise of over £1.1m from the previous year. Having reviewed the legislation, the council is currently offering services over and above the recognised statutory minimum</p>
<p><b>1.2 Why is this being done?</b>                  Central Bedfordshire Council has experienced reduced levels of government funding in recent years. Grant from national government for this year is half the amount of money received last year, and by 2019/20 this funding will disappear altogether. Meanwhile, there are increasing demands on services as a result of changes to the population.</p> <p>Because of this, the council agreed a budget plan which is designed to maximise cost-effectiveness so that it can deliver the best possible services within available resources. The review of our home to school/college travel assistance policy contributes to our wider budget strategy.</p> <p>The law states that it is the parent/carer’s responsibility to ensure that a child gets to school, including accompanying them if necessary. This includes how their child will get to school and may include making arrangements with a friend or a childminder to ensure that the child is accompanied, or submitting applications as necessary for home to school travel assistance to the Council. It is also the parent/carer’s responsibility to ensure the reasonable safety of themselves and their child between home and the designated pick up points.</p>
<p><b>1.3 What will be the impact on staff or customers?</b></p> <p>The Council is proposing to change the following elements of the Home to School Transport Policies adopted by Executive in 2014:</p> <p><u>Changes to qualifying schools</u></p> <p>1. Travel will be provided from home to nearest available school with a place for that child, rather than to the nearest or catchment school. Where there are ‘pyramids’ of schools then that will be to the next school in the pyramid, rather than to the nearest school. For children with a SEN, it will usually be the school named in their Education Health Care Plan (EHCP).</p> <p><u>Changes to age range criteria</u></p> <p>2. Transport will only be provided for children who are of statutory school age. The Council will no longer provide transport for children under 5 years old.</p>

3. Students over 16 years old with an EHCP or a statement of special educational need (SEN) will be required to make a contribution towards the cost of their travel, unless they are from a low income family.

Changes to the travel assistance offered

4. The first offer of assistance for middle and upper school pupils (ages 9 -16) will be a travel pass for a public bus or train, rather than supplying contracted buses or taxis. This can help ensure the continuing viability of public bus routes, which can then be used by all members of the public. Buses and trains also help reduce congestion and the number of vehicles on the road, as well as parking issues.
5. Where a vehicle is provided to a family through the national Motability Scheme, we will provide parents/carers with a payment to cover the mileage, in order that they can use their specialised vehicle to transport their child to school or college.
6. Concessionary passes will be charged at a cost that better reflects the actual cost to the council of providing the transport. Concessionary passes are sold where there are spare seats on a council contracted route. The cost for concessions in 2016/17 was £157 per term. Under the revised scheme charges could vary from £100 - £300 based on journey cost.
7. Where a boarding school has been identified as the nearest available school to meet the child's needs, travel assistance will change for new applicants.

In future, parents/carers will be required to make their own travel arrangements, for which appropriate reimbursement will be made. The council will cover the costs when this is less than the costs of providing travel.

Travel assistance will no longer be provided to parents/carers attending one Statement/Education Health and Care Plan review per year at an out of council area school as this is a non-statutory provision.

Where a Motability vehicle has been provided for the child, travel assistance will be by way of a mileage payment to the parent/carer to attend boarding school.

If there are spaces on a bus to the boarding school provided through our travel assistance scheme, these spare spaces will continue to be offered to pupils who are not eligible for travel assistance, but they will be charged at a fee that reflects the cost to the council.

8. Where it is more cost effective, the council could commission the school to run their own bus instead of commissioning a private bus operator. Some schools already run their own minibuses. It therefore makes sense for the school to also use them for pupils to travel to and from school. The schools would receive a payment for this, which in turn would help schools to fund minibuses which are also used for other aspects of school life, such as field trips and sports training/matches.

**1.4 How does this proposal contribute or relate to other Council initiatives?**

The review of our home to school/college travel assistance policy contributes to our wider budget strategy

**1.5 In which ways does the proposal support Central Bedfordshire’s legal duty to:**

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it

The Council will continue to meet the following requirements:

All children who are in reception year to the end of year 11 qualify for free school transport if they go to their **nearest suitable or catchment school** and live at least:

- 2 miles from the school if they are under 8
- 3 miles from the school if they are 8 or older.

If the family is in receipt of the maximum Working Tax Credit or your children are entitled to free school meals, they will get free school transport if they are:

- I. aged 8 to 11 and the nearest suitable school is at least 2 miles away
- II. aged 11 to 16 and attend 1 of the 3 nearest schools between 2 to 6 miles from the home address
- III. aged 11 to 16 and attend the nearest school of their chosen religion or belief and it is between 2 to 15 miles from the home address

The Council must also make travel arrangements for pupils who are unable to walk to school due to their special educational need (SEN), disability or mobility problems; or because their route to school isn’t safe. The needs of parents / carers are also considered.

**1.6 Is it possible that this proposal could damage relations amongst groups of people with different protected characteristics or contribute to inequality by treating some members of the community less favourably such as people of different ages, men or women, people from black and minority ethnic communities, disabled people, carers, people with different religions or beliefs, new and expectant mothers, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities?**

The council is undertaking consultation to ascertain views about the potential impact of the proposals.

**Stage 2 - Consideration of national and local research, data and consultation findings in order to understand the potential impacts of the proposal.**

**Stage 2 - Consideration of Relevant Data and Consultation**

**In completing this section it will be helpful to consider:**

- **Publicity** – Do people know that the service exists?
- **Access** – Who is using the service? / Who should be using the service? Why aren’t they?
- **Appropriateness** – Does the service meet people’s needs and improve outcomes?
- **Service support needs** – Is further training and development required for employees?
- **Partnership working** – Are partners aware of and implementing equality requirements?
- **Contracts & monitoring** – Is equality built into the contract and are outcomes monitored?



<p><b>2.1. Examples of relevant evidence sources are listed below. Please tick which evidence sources are being used in this assessment and provide a summary for each protected characteristic in sections 2.2 and 2.3.</b></p>		
<p><b>Internal desktop research</b></p>		
	Place survey / Customer satisfaction data	Demographic Profiles – Census & ONS
√	Local Needs Analysis	√ Service Monitoring / Performance Information
√	Other local research	
<p><b>Third party guidance and examples</b></p>		
√	National / Regional Research	Analysis of service outcomes for different groups
√	Best Practice / Guidance	√ Benchmarking with other organisations
	Inspection Reports	
<p><b>Public consultation related activities</b></p>		
√	Consultation with Service Users	√ Consultation with Community / Voluntary Sector
√	Consultation with Staff	Customer Feedback / Complaints
	Data about the physical environment e.g. housing market, employment, education and training provision, transport, spatial planning and public spaces	
<p><b>Consulting Members, stakeholders and specialists</b></p>		
√	Elected Members	√ Expert views of stakeholders representing diverse groups
√	Specialist staff / service expertise	
<p><i>Please bear in mind that whilst sections of the community will have common interests and concerns, views and issues vary within groups. E.g. women have differing needs and concerns depending on age, ethnic origin, disability etc</i></p> <p><b>Lack of local knowledge or data is not a justification for assuming there is not a negative impact on some groups of people. Further research may be required.</b></p>		
<p><b>2.2. Summary of Existing Data and Consultation Findings: - Service Delivery Considering the impact on Customers/Residents</b></p>		
<p><b>- Age:</b> e.g. Under 16 yrs / 16-19 yrs / 20-29 yrs / 30-44 yrs / 45-59 yrs / 60-64 yrs / 65-74 yrs / 75+</p> <p>For September 2017 the numbers of entitled pupils for each area are:</p> <p>Mainstream – 4911                  SEN – 641                  SEN P16 – 50                  SEN 18+ 32                  Mainstream P16 – 68 (This figure from last year was around 140-150, so an increase is expected in applications for this group)</p> <p>SEN make up 11% of the students the council transports, post 16 SEN 0.87% and 18+ SEN 0.55%, mainstream 85% Post 16 SEN (max) 2.6%</p>		

**School Transport Matters - March 2016**

For post 16 students, the rising charges and lack of transport support are likely to limit choice, and affect staying on and completion rates particularly for those from less affluent homes and in rural areas.

The Association of Colleges reports one in five is considering dropping out, often due to transport problems. *“There are human and financial costs every time a young person fails to complete a course or does not achieve a recognised grade”*. (LGA). The Local Government Association estimated that underachievement/drop out by this age group already costs the exchequer £814 million a year (2012 figures).

The effect of high bus fares for young people has been of concern to many organisations including the Youth Council, the Association of Colleges, pteg etc. *The iniquity of a national, funded, concessionary fare scheme offering free travel for elderly yet young people on apprenticeships earning as little as £3.30 per hour paying the full fare, is evident.*

Provision and funding is fragmented and young people have borne the brunt of transport cuts across the UK in the past five years, especially in rural England, where access and choice are now increasingly dependent upon private transport. Despite this, the Government wants participation in education and training, including apprenticeships, to rise for 16-18 year olds, and to reduce NEETs

**SNAP PCF review of the consultation regarding proposals to change the ‘The Home to School/College Travel Assistance Policies for Central Bedfordshire’**

**Contribution for 16+**

This is lawful but CBC should avoid indirect discrimination. Will the contribution be set at a similar level to that of a bus pass for non-SEND students? The local authority should also consider that students with SEND may have to travel further to a suitable course.

Post 16 young people with SEN will be required to make a financial contribution. What is that contribution and are the Council looking at the bigger picture here? Will you be measuring your NEET figures as young people are forced to pull out of their courses, therefore risking that from 2018 fewer people take up further education?

**- Disability:** *e.g. Physical impairment / Sensory impairment / Mental health condition / Learning disability or difficulty / Long-standing illness or health condition / Severe disfigurement*

**Guidance Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Code of Practice 2015**

**Transport**

4.48 Transport can be an important factor in the support for children and young people with SEN or disabilities. The Local Offer must include information about arrangements for transport provision, including for those up to age 25 with an EHC plan, and this should include local authorities’ policy statements.

4.49 Local authorities must ensure that suitable travel arrangements are made where necessary to facilitate an eligible child’s attendance at school. Section 508B of the Education Act 1996

requires local authorities to make such school travel arrangements as they consider necessary for children within their area. Such arrangements must be provided free of charge. Section 508C of the Act gives local authorities discretionary powers to make school travel arrangements for other children not covered by section 508B. Such transport does not have to be provided free of charge.

4.50 Local authorities must publish a transport policy statement each year setting out the travel arrangements they will make to support young people aged 16-19 and learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) aged up to 25, to access further education. This should include any arrangements for free or subsidised transport.

4.51 Local authorities must include in their Local Offer information about:

- any specific arrangements for specialised transport (for example, specially fitted buses)
- any support available from the local authority or others with transport costs and should include information about:
- any support that is offered to children and young people to help them use transport, including public transport, and
- any training given to aid independent travel

**Research:**

**Still missing out? Ending poverty and social exclusion: messages to government from families with disabled children – Barnados 2002**

At present, a disproportionate number of families with disabled children are living in poverty, for the numerous reasons, including:

- Work – parents with disabled children are often unable to work because they cannot secure childcare suitable for their child’s needs.
- Extra costs – on average it costs three times as much to raise a child with severe impairment than a non-disabled child.
- Transport – many families have unmet needs, as most public transport is inaccessible and cabs are expensive.

**Contact A Family:**

- 52% of families with a disabled child are at risk of experiencing poverty.
- The income of families with disabled children averages £15,270, 23.5% below the UK average income of £19,968, and 21.8% have incomes that are less than half the UK mean

**Prevalence of childhood disability and the characteristics and circumstances of disabled children in the UK Blackburn Spencer and Read 2010**

Almost half of disabled children (compared with a fifth of non disabled children) live with a parent who is also disabled. In addition, a quarter of disabled children live with one or more siblings who are also disabled

**Contact a Family Guidance**

**Are all children with special educational needs (SEN) or a disability entitled to free transport?**

The law says that local authorities must provide transport to pupils who would be unable to walk to school because of their SEN, disability or mobility problems. It does not matter how short the distance is, or whether a pupil has a statement or EHC plan. Some children with SEN may be able to walk to school. Local authorities must assess a child's transport needs individually.

**What kind of transport is provided?**

Local authorities can provide different kinds of transport, including a dedicated taxi or minibus service with or without an escort, car mileage allowance, bus passes, or travel cards.

**How does the local authority decide which kind of transport is most suitable for my child?**

The local authority should consider your child's individual needs. You should provide clear information about your child's SEN, disability and any health needs when you apply for transport. The local authority should decide if your child requires special arrangements such as an escort, or equipment such as specialised seating. To be suitable, transport must be safe and 'non stressful'. This means that your child arrives at school ready to learn.

**Can the local authority refuse transport for a child who gets higher mobility Disability Living Allowance (DLA)?**

Local authorities cannot have policies that introduce additional criteria for transport, for example refusing transport to children receiving higher mobility DLA, children whose parents have cars, or children without EHC plans. This is unlawful.

**My local authority won't provide transport as I get a motability car and the local authority says I can drive my child to school.**

The local authority must provide transport to the nearest suitable school for children who are eligible for transport. Receiving higher level disability living allowance is not one of the eligibility criteria. The local authority may discuss individual travel arrangements with you, but they can't make this a criterion for transport.

**Further Education**

- Disabled young people are at particularly high risk of being NEET between the ages of 16-19
- 21% of disabled people aged 16 – 24 have no qualifications, compared with 5% of non-disabled people of the same age
- Disabled students account for only about one in 20 undergraduates

**Contact a Family Guidance**

**Will my child get transport to college?**

The local authority must have a transport policy which sets out how they will support young people aged 16 -18 to get to school or college. The policy must also say what help is available for students with SEN and disabilities. Local authorities do not have to provide free help to this age group and may ask families to contribute to the cost of transport.

Local authorities must also set out how they will help disabled adult learners over 18 to get to a place of education and training. Help could mean a taxi or bus, discounted fares, travel cards or travel training. Local authorities should always consider the young person's individual needs before making a decision. Transport needs should be discussed as part of an [EHC needs assessment](#). The college may be able to help with transport. Social services may agree to fund transport in some situations.

**Contact a Family Inquiry into School Transport for Disabled Children 2017**

School transport is an integral part of a child’s education. If a child can’t get to school or has a stressful experience getting to school, they are not able to learn and take part in the school day like other children. School transport sits outside special educational needs (SEN) law in England, but is part of general education law.

- 48% say they agree or strongly agree that travel arrangements for their child to get to school mean that they can’t work, or have to work reduced hours
- 27% agree or strongly agree that their child’s journey is making it harder for their child to learn at school
- 23% say that their child’s journey to school is stressful most of the time

**Impact on children when Transport is refused or removed** Parents reported that it unsettles the child or young person, inhibits learning, increases feelings of isolation, loneliness and impacts on friendships, perpetuates division and feelings of exclusion.

**Impact on families when Transport is refused** Families talk about financial strain when transport is refused, mostly due to reducing working hours. Respondents repeatedly talked about the stress on them and their whole family, and sadly the loss of independence for their disabled children and young people.

**Post 16**

The local council must have a transport policy which sets out how they will support young people aged 16 to 18 to get to school or college, including disabled students. Help could mean a taxi or bus, discounted fares, travel cards, or travel training. Local councils should always consider the young person’s individual needs before making a decision. The introduction of a charging policy may be within the law as far as transport law goes. However, a local council may be failing in their duty under the Equality Act to: ‘advance equality of opportunity for disabled learners’ if the charge in their transport policy has a: ‘significant negative impact on the ability of disabled students to access education’.

Apart from what we already know about the financial impact of raising a disabled child, transport costs may be higher for disabled students.

1 All 16 to 18-year-olds have a duty to participate in some form of education or training. However, many disabled young people will need to be in education or training longer than this in order to achieve the particular skills or qualifications they need to reach their full potential.

2 Disabled students’ nearest suitable course or college may not be the local college. It may be some distance from their home.

3 Young people who cannot access public transport easily due to their disability will not be able to take advantage of the usual subsidised travel schemes that are open to other students – taxis are more expensive.

- 50% strongly agree or agree travel arrangements are too expensive (34% for all ages).
- 48% agree or strongly agree that travel arrangements for their young person to get to school mean that they can’t work, or can only work reduced hours (consistent with all ages)
- 31% agree or strongly agree that their child’s journey is making it harder for them to learn at school (slightly higher compared with all ages)
- 24% say the journey is stressful most of the time (consistent with all ages)

### Suitability of Transport

The majority highlighted issues in terms of safety, training and communication. These can be summarised as:

- no escort or untrained escort
- unsuitable for child's needs (for example, child cannot travel with other children)
- vehicle unsuitable (for example, cannot take wheelchair)
- journey stressful – too long, doesn't coincide with school hours, unsuitable pick up or drop off points
- mileage allowance insufficient or offered inappropriately
- transport inflexible – doesn't allow attendance at after school activities or transport to a place other than child's home (for example, childminder)
- communication issues:
  - between the transport provider, escorts, drivers and families with regards to cancellations, changes to driver or pick-up times
  - language barriers, e.g. not trained in British Sign Language, English as a second language
- outsourcing:
  - changes to charges
  - quality and training of drivers and escorts
  - unsettling to children who require continuity
- safety – concerns included drivers and escorts who do not follow the law, for example speeding, smoking.

HCT group is a **transport social enterprise** operating a range of commercial and community transport services. They have worked with commissioners who have come up with some smart commissioning options to help reduce costs without impacting on quality, for example:

- **blended commissioning** – using the same fleet to deliver services to different client groups, (SEN, school swimming, school dinners), thus utilising vehicles during down time
- **altering school start times** so you can use half the number of vehicles to drop the same number of children, thus reducing the fleet and associated costs
- **allowing parents to pick from a set of drop off/pick up points**, often alongside other mainstream schools. This has helped parents who have other children to get to school combine the journeys, and resulted in shorter journey times for all.

### Conclusions

Families with disabled children often face significant additional challenges in their daily lives, and the difficulty of obtaining suitable transport to school or college is adding to this. Unsuitable transport is affecting children or young people's wellbeing and progress in education, as well as family life. The cost of school transport for some is causing additional financial hardship. Many parents are unable to work due to the need to make school transport arrangements for their child.

Families with disabled children face additional challenges around school transport not experienced by other families including:

- disabled children may go to different schools to siblings – requiring separate journeys and pick up times
- disabled young people may need longer to complete their education – so families are bearing the cost of transport for longer
- lack of local specialist provision for disabled children and young people. This often means they are travelling further to their nearest suitable place of education – families struggle to provide transport as it is more expensive and time consuming

**School Transport Matters - March 2016**

Although the number of pupils affected by planned cuts to special needs transport is likely to be lower – as only about 115,000 pupils in England currently qualify for free transport because of their special needs. About half of pupils with EHCs currently receive transport - and those pupils with EHCs typically have the more severe /higher level of special needs. It is expected that cuts to services for these pupils will have considerable adverse impact on many families

**CEREBRA - Local Authority Home to School On-line Transport Policies: Accessibility and Accuracy University of Leeds – School of Law**

Transport is a crucial service for disabled children and their families. Referrals to the Cerebra in-house advice team concerning difficulties with school transport have been one of the most common problems it has encountered, amounting in 2015 to 17% of all cases, rising to 19% in 2016. Discussions with other charities providing advice for disabled children and their families indicated that they too had identified this issue as a particular problem area.

Cases referred to the LEaP Project have concerned a range of difficulties that families experience in obtaining suitable school transport, including:

- the unsuitability of an individual's transport arrangements (e.g. due to journey length, stress, noise levels, changes in the ratio of escorts to pupils, changes in the mode of transport etc.);
- the refusal to provide transport for children with disabilities or special educational needs who live within the statutory walking distance of their school;
- inadequate driver and escort training;
- late arrival at school as a result of reconfigured routes;
- a failure to provide transport to a school named in an individual's statement of special educational needs or Education, Health and Care plan;
- the withdrawal of transport at short notice by transport providers on the grounds of a child's challenging behaviour;
- delays in making alternative transport arrangements.

The most common problem referred to the LEaP Project has been the refusal to provide transport for children with disabilities or special educational needs (SEN) who live within the relevant statutory walking distance from their nearest suitable school.

Some of the ways in which local authorities have misinterpreted their statutory duties include:

- imposing a 'blanket ban' on the provision of transport for any child who lives within walking distance of their nearest suitable school (regardless of their ability to walk to school - alone or accompanied);
- excluding any reference in their transport policies to children who are eligible for transport under the Education Act 1996 (i.e. because they cannot reasonably be expected to walk to school, due to their special educational needs, disability or mobility issues);
- providing transport on a discretionary basis, rather than as a statutory entitlement;
- providing incorrect information to parents of disabled children as to their rights;
- requiring parents who have access to a vehicle to drive their children to school;
- poor communication issues between LA's and parents;
- expecting families to use disability benefits to cover transport costs.

Examples encountered by the LEaP Project of where it may be unreasonable for a child to be expected to walk unaccompanied or otherwise might include where the child concerned:

- experiences physical pain or has difficulty walking long distances;
- has bladder or bowel problems;
- is vulnerable or unable to understand dangers;
- is unable to negotiate the route to school because of busy/difficult routes;
- has unpredictable behaviour

When considering the ‘reasonableness’ of this expectation, authorities are entitled to consider whether the child could walk to school if accompanied by a parent. The guidance states that a parent is generally expected to accompany their child to school ‘unless there is good reason why it is not reasonable for a parent to do so’.

Circumstances encountered by the LEaP Project of where it **may be unreasonable for a parent to accompany their child to school can include:**

- a parent may be unable to ensure the safety of a child who has unpredictable or challenging behaviour;
- parent may have a disability which prevents him/her from walking a child to school;
- the parent’s journey to and from school could take an unreasonable amount of time;
- the child’s siblings may need to be taken to different schools;
- the child’s siblings may have to be left at home unattended before and after school if a parent has to accompany the child to school.

The Guidance states in addition that an assessment of ‘reasonableness would also consider ‘the age of the child and whether one would ordinarily expect a child of that age to be accompanied’. For example if the child is 15, the question to be asked is ‘**would it be reasonable to expect a parent to accompany their 15 year old child without a disability to school?** If the answer is no, then it would be discriminatory to expect a parent to accompany their 15 year old simply because they had a disability

Other relevant legal considerations include:

- ‘Disability’ as a wide concept, including in addition to physical impairments, mental impairments and illnesses;
- Local authority policies cannot impose additional (or more demanding) requirements beyond those detailed in the legislation;
- It is not a prerequisite for a child to have a Statement of SEN or Education, Health & Care Plan.
- **Parents should not be required to use DLA** (Disability Living Allowance) to pay for the school transport required by the disabled child;
- Evidence from professionals may support a transport application but is not a legal requirement

Under the question ‘does the policy make it clear that children who *cannot reasonably be expected to walk* to school because of their SEN, disability or mobility issues are entitled to transport’ it was found that 39% of policies did not make this right clear - with comments referring to restrictive and or extra criteria including:

- ‘parents are expected to drive children who have a temporary medical condition to school’ ‘;



- such children ‘will be considered’ (rather than being “entitled”);
- ‘mobility issues must be ‘significant, long-term and severe’;
- ‘that pupils with a statement of SEN/EHC plan must make their own arrangements to school’;
- ‘pupils with SEN attending mainstream school are not entitled to transport’;
- ‘an EHCP is required to be entitled to transport’;
- ‘*certain* long term disabilities [will be considered]’;
- ‘firstly, parents should look for help from family members and neighbours’

These findings confirm the concerns identified by the LEaP Project and other bodies that many local authorities are not assessing eligibility based on the law and guidance. Instead, their staff appears to be guided by incorrect information as to individual rights; by policies that exclude references to the SEN, mobility and disability category; by an expectation that parents will drive their children to school; and by the notion that such support is merely ‘discretionary’.

**SNAP PCF review of the consultation regarding proposals to change the ‘The Home to School/College Travel Assistance Policies for Central Bedfordshire’ 2017**

**Motability**

The proposed changes document state:

‘Where a vehicle is provided to a family through the national Motability Scheme, we will provide parents/carers with a payment to cover the mileage, in order that they can use their specialised vehicle to transport their child to school or college.’

SNAP believes a mileage allowance can only be given with parents’ consent. See fig 2, Education Act 1996 s508B (4)

- (4) “Travel arrangements”, in relation to an eligible child, are travel arrangements of any description and include—
- (a) arrangements for the provision of transport, and
  - (b) any of the following arrangements only if they are made **with the consent** of a parent of the child—
    - (i) arrangements for the provision of one or more persons to escort the child (whether alone or together with other children) when travelling to or from the relevant educational establishment in relation to the child;
    - (ii) arrangements for the payment of the whole or any part of a person's reasonable travelling expenses;
    - (iii) arrangements for the payment of allowances in respect of the use of particular modes of travel

There is no exception in legislation applying to Motability cars. Therefore, the wording should be changed to ‘*We will offer a mileage payment with parents’ agreement*’. SNAP would like clarification of what is the amount to be paid and how would families claim this?

The mobility cars are subject to a three-year lease and have a 60,000-mileage limit in those three years, anything over this figure is then charged at five pence a mile. If a parent decides to cancel their mobility car and take the extra payment they will be subject to a £250.00 administration fee. Parents who have a disabled child are already more likely to live in poverty; this policy helps to increase this situation.

SNAP would like to clarify, if a parent carer has a mobility car, is the council suggesting that they will no longer be entitled to their free school transport? If this is the case then parents who work may no longer be able to continue in employment.

There will also be more congestion on the road as, instead of one mini-bus collecting six children, there will now be an extra five cars on the road.

Mobility cars do not have a hoist, therefore a parent carer will not only have to travel to their special school, which for the majority will not be local to them, they may have extra lifting to do twice a day, five days a week.

In addition, the parent may now have a two-hour round trip to get to and from school, twice a day equaling four hours. This may be when the parent carer sleeps if they have been up through the night caring.

The roads around the schools will be more congested. There is a potentially dangerous impact of this, furthermore, what happens when the parent is sick and unable to drive the child to school?

Some of our children have profound needs and while a mainstream parent may be able to ask a neighbour or friend to help, our families rarely have access to this support.

### **Under fives**

How many children under five do you transport currently?

The Council for Disabled Children has written a report on how disabled children fall further behind even at the start of their early years education aged two years of age – they rarely ever catch up. This transport consultation helps to accelerate this. This is potentially discriminatory.

Children without SEND are likely to be in nursery or reception class close to home. Children with severe / complex needs may attend special schools at some distance from their home. LAs must offer full time reception places from the September after a child's fourth birthday, so disabled children will be disadvantaged if they cannot access education until they turn five due to a lack of transport.

There should not be a blanket policy not to provide transport for under fives

With regards charging for transport, we note there will be a reduction of up to £57.00 for some families and an increase of £143.00 for others. How will this be calculated and what is the criteria?

Please clarify what the cost is for travel as at the moment it states, 'a fee that reflects the cost to the council'. This is ambiguous. Parents need accurate information to fully understand the impact to them before completing a consultation.

Offering a travel pass in the first instance is reasonable but for children with SEND it must take account of the needs of the child, not be a blanket policy. Some young people with SEND will not be able to travel by public transport until well into their teenage years and others may never achieve that level of independence.

### **Pyramid of schools?**

Please clarify 'travel will be provided from home to the nearest available school with a place for that child, rather than the nearest or catchment school'. Also, what is a 'pyramid of schools' and how may this affect children and young people with an EHCP? Who decides what is suitable, who decides what criteria will be used? How will it impact on school preference and admissions

for children going through the normal admission system? SNAP notes that the actual draft policy only refers to the nearest qualifying school.

### **Travel Training**

Nine years of age is young to expect children to travel on public transport. What is being done to assess the safeguarding issues around this? Will schools be supporting vulnerable children with 'travel training'? If so who will fund this?

### **Boarding school**

SNAP feels the term 'boarding school', may be misleading. If SEN Residential Provision is included as part of this phrase, it needs to be clearly communicated. In order to participate effectively, families need to properly understand the consultation. How many families use this service, what are the costs?

### **Eligibility**

The actual draft policy sets out clearly the legal eligibility criteria for free travel arrangements applying to all children

- Distance
- Low income families
- Unsafe walking route

The list does not include children unable to walk because of a mobility difficulty, disability or special educational need. This is covered separately and linked to children with an EHCP. The disability criteria should be listed at the top level along with the others.

### **Distance criteria and qualifying schools**

The explanation and the consequence of the change is not clear. The legal requirement is to the nearest suitable school. This is defined by statutory guidance as the nearest qualifying school with places available which provides education appropriate to the age, ability and aptitude of the child and to any special educational needs he may have. The geographically nearest school may not be the nearest suitable school. The policy should reflect this. Will families have to change their child's school as you will now only transport to the 'nearest school with a place for that child'?

The proposed changes document states: 'For children with a SEN, it will usually be the school named in their Education Health Care Plan (EHCP).' This is too vague the following wording may be better. *'For children with an EHCP the nearest qualifying school will be the school named in the EHCP where this is the only school named or the closest of 2 or more schools named.'*

### **EHCPs**

'Suitability' applies to mainstream not just Special schools. In some cases, the nearest mainstream school may not be suitable for an individual child's needs. The policy should make this clear.

The paragraph on EHCPs should be linked to that on medical conditions. The term 'medical condition' should be replaced by 'special educational need, disability or mobility problem' to match the legislation. Otherwise there is a danger that the policy will be interpreted in an unnecessarily restrictive way.

It must be made clear that the needs of this group will be individually assessed and that the distance criteria to not apply.

### **Public transport for mainstream schools**

<p>The loss of contract school buses may place some children with SEND at a disadvantage. There will be a group of children who may be able to travel on a dedicated school bus but would not be able to manage public transport.</p>
<p><b>- Carers:</b> <i>A person of any age who provides unpaid support to family or friends who could not manage without this help due to illness, disability, mental ill-health or a substance misuse problem</i></p> <p><b>Contact A Family:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One in five say that isolation has led to the break up of their family life (Forgotten Families, 2011).</li> <li>• 72% of parents / carers experience mental ill health such as anxiety, depression or breakdown due to isolation (Forgotten Families, 2011).</li> <li>• Between 46% and 62% of carers are not getting adequate services to help them work.</li> </ul> <p>The CBC policy includes provisions for transport to be provided if a parent / carer has a medical condition or has needs which make it unsafe for them to accompany their child.</p>
<p><b>- Gender Reassignment:</b> <i>People who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process (or part of a process) to reassign their sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex</i></p> <p>None identified</p>
<p><b>- Pregnancy and Maternity:</b> <i>e.g. pregnant women / women who have given birth &amp; women who are breastfeeding (26 week time limit then protected by sex discrimination provisions)</i></p> <p>None identified</p>
<p><b>- Race:</b> <i>e.g. Asian or Asian British / Black or Black British / Chinese / Gypsies and Travellers / Mixed Heritage / White British / White Irish / White Other</i></p> <p>The public consultation highlighted that <i>“If transport is withdrawn for 4 year olds this would have a hugely detrimental impact on the early years education of Traveller children which could result in children missing the entire Reception year as parents would choose to keep their children at home until they could access the transport.”</i></p>
<p><b>- Religion or Belief:</b> <i>e.g. Buddhist / Christian / Hindu / Jewish / Muslim / Sikh / No religion / Other</i></p> <p>None identified</p>
<p><b>- Sex:</b> <i>e.g. Women / Girls / Men / Boys</i></p> <p>None identified</p>
<p><b>- Sexual Orientation:</b> <i>e.g. Lesbians / Gay men / Bisexuals / Heterosexuals</i></p> <p>None identified</p>
<p><b>- Other:</b> <i>e.g. Human Rights, Poverty / Social Class / Deprivation, Looked After Children, Offenders, Cohesion, Marriage and Civil Partnership</i></p> <p><b>Social Class:</b></p>

- Babies with professional or managerial parents develop better and faster than those whose parents are in unskilled or semi-skilled manual occupations.
- By age 6, low-achieving children from more advantaged homes will out-perform initially high-achieving children from less advantaged homes

**Ethnicity:**

- Some groups are far less likely to use pre-school education: - Poor White families and Pakistani heritage families.
- Just 77% of 3 & 4 year old ethnic minority children use early years provision, compared to nearly 87% of white children.

**Disability:**

- Early education provision for disabled children is poor. One study of childcare providers found that just 50% of day nurseries & only 40% of playgroups were able to offer facilities for children with impairments.

**Intervention: Home Learning Environment (HLE) & Pre-School Provision:**

- Success at school can be significantly increased according to what families do for under-5s in the home, and experience of pre-school education.
- Children’s later achievement in language, reading and number ability improves if they attend good pre-school provision.
- The most important factors associated with a poor HLE are having:
  - English as an additional language and
  - having three or more siblings
- Contributory factors include having a mother with a low level of education, early developmental problems, and living in an area of high deprivation.

Children with these characteristics are at significantly greater risk of under-achievement before they have even entered school

**The latest statutory guidance - Home to School Travel and Transport Guidance, Department for Education, July 2014 and Post 16 Transport to Education and Training, Department for Education, February 2014;**

Councils are entitled to consider whether it’s reasonable to expect a parent to accompany their child along a walking route, but they cannot insist that parents who have a car should be expected to drive their child to school.

<http://w3.cerebra.org.uk/research/more-school-transport-success-for-the-legal-entitlements-research-project/>

**School Transport Matters – March 2016**

Cuts to school transport services compound the problems for local buses in rural areas - as fewer children travel to school by bus, services will cease to be commercially viable for operators. In addition, the registration of school services for use by the general public can provide vital peak hour bus services for rural areas at minimal additional cost.

**How school transport is provided**

Local authorities can provide school transport to eligible pupils using a variety of modes - most typically they contract with local operators of taxi, private hire, minibus, coach or buses to provide services. All local authorities in Great Britain are under a duty to coordinate social care, education and local bus transport to achieve value for money. If there is a local bus service that can be used, the expectation is that season tickets should be purchased for use on this rather than utilising a duplicate contracted route.

Likewise, if there is a contract provided for school children, it would often be appropriate for this to be registered to become a local bus service and available to the general public.

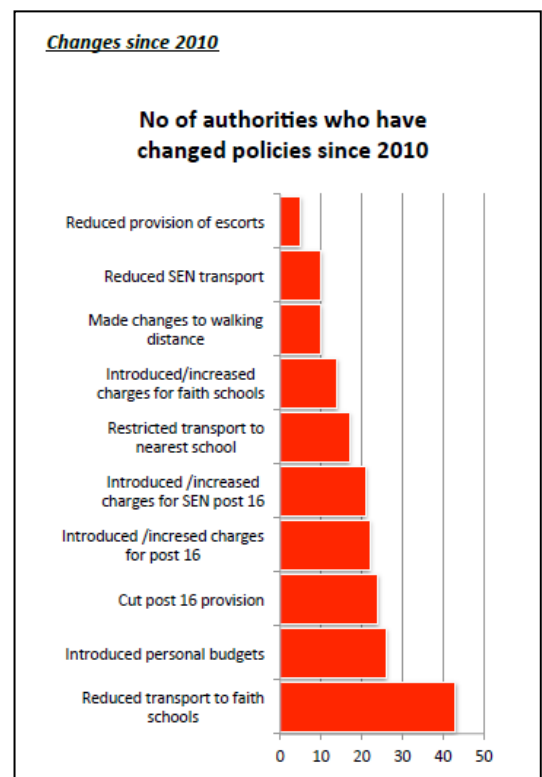
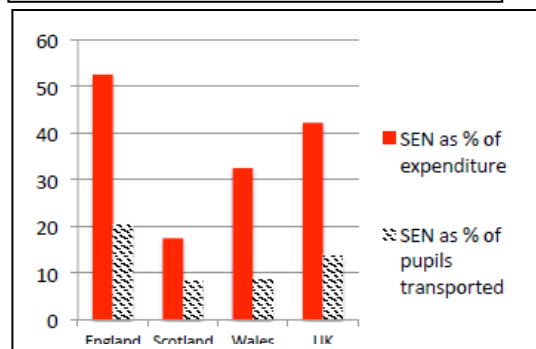
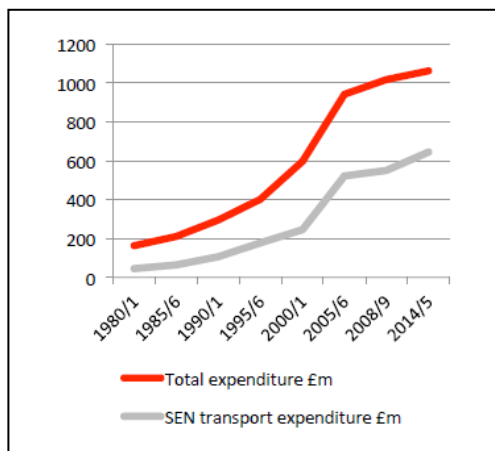
**Unit costs**

Overall expenditure figures suggest average unit costs of transport in England are about £1,800 per pupil and £1,400-1,500 for the UK.

For mainstream pupils the average cost is about £900 per year, equivalent to £2.37 per trip.

For pupils with special needs, the average cost is over £4,000 per year - equivalent to nearly £11 per journey.

The survey responses suggest that special needs transport is now accounting for about 53% of all school transport expenditure in England, and about 42% across the UK, however, it accounts for about a fifth of pupils transported in England and 14% in the UK as a whole.



**Other ways of managing budgets**

**Promoting travel training and independent travel** Many local authorities reported investing in travel training to promote more independent travel by young people with special needs, and also to reduce the costs of door-to-door transport provision.

**Introducing personalised budgets**

Many English local authorities also reported introducing personalised budgets, with twenty-six saying these had already been introduced, and another nine authorities planning their introduction.

**Promoting sustainable travel**

Nearly 90% of local authorities said that their authority was promoting walking and/or cycling to and from school. Twenty-four authorities said that they had invested more in walking and cycling since 2010, but conversely 13 said they had cut their investment in walking and cycling. Half of respondents said there had been no change.

Local authorities report that funding cuts remain the main challenge facing school transport in coming years - with almost 60% of authorities citing budget cuts as their main concern, followed by the pressure on authorities to meet greater levels of pupils' needs, and parental expectations. Local authorities responding appear to be resigned to continuing to cut and/or charge for SEN and post 16 transport. Nine authorities also reported turning their focus to escort provision, and are expecting to reduce the level and costs of this

There remain concerns about the environmental, health, and congestion impact of continuing rises in car use, and the social impact of the loss of rural bus services.

**2.3. Summary of Existing Data and Consultation Findings – Employment  
 Considering the impact on Employees**

**- Age:** e.g. 16-19 / 20-29 / 30-39 / 40-49 / 50-59 / 60+ **Not Applicable**

**- Disability:** e.g. Physical impairment / Sensory impairment / Mental health condition / Learning disability or difficulty / Long-standing illness or health condition / Severe disfigurement **N/A**

**- Carers:** e.g. parent / guardian / foster carer / person caring for an adult who is a spouse, partner, civil partner, relative or person who lives at the same address **N/A**

**- Gender Reassignment:** People who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process (or part of a process) to reassign their sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex **N/A**

**- Pregnancy and Maternity:** e.g. Pregnancy / Compulsory maternity leave / Ordinary maternity leave / Additional maternity leave **N/A**

**- Race:** e.g. Asian or Asian British / Black or Black British / Chinese / Gypsies and Travellers / Mixed Heritage / White British / White Irish / White Other **N/A**

**- Religion or Belief:** e.g. Buddhist / Christian / Hindu / Jewish / Muslim / Sikh / No religion / Other **N/A**

**- Sex:** Women / Men **N/A**

**- Sexual Orientation:** e.g. Lesbians / Gay men / Bisexuals / Heterosexuals **N/A**

**- Other:** e.g. Human Rights, Poverty / Social Class / Deprivation, Looked After Children, Offenders, Cohesion, Marriage and Civil Partnership **N/A**

**2.4. To what extent are vulnerable groups more affected by this proposal compared to the population or workforce as a whole?**

The proposal includes provisions relating to mainstream pupils and also pupils with Special Educational Needs or a disability. Consideration therefore needs to be given to vulnerable groups within mainstream provision and also children with SEN / disability.

**2.5. To what extent do current procedures and working practices address the above issues and help to promote equality of opportunity?**

**Consultation process:**

The consultation document was made available both as an online survey and a paper questionnaire and was launched on 29<sup>th</sup> June 2017 and concluded on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2017 following an extension after feedback from parents requesting additional time.

The consultation was supported by a comprehensive communications campaign which directly targeted parents/carers and those in the wider community.

In total 538 residents participated in the consultation by completing the survey. 83% (449) said they were parents/carers of which 60% (271) said they were intending to apply for a 2018 school place.

The results of the consultation have broadly speaking uncovered considerable concern regarding the proposed policy changes. Whilst there were some elements of the proposals that have failed to attract support, others faced less opposition with the proposals allowing schools to run their own mini buses and to only provide transport for over-5s being supported. However, all of the proposals have highlighted issues that would require further thought, as summarised below.

### **Inconsistencies in approach**

Firstly there was concern about the approach taken with the proposed changes. Respondents highlighted perceived inconsistencies and contradictions that the new policies created such as only providing transport to the nearest school. This proposal is not seen as being in line with council's wider approach to school admissions, with many school's still using catchment systems. Parents were concerned about applying for and accepting a place at a catchment school and then not being able to access school transport because it was not their nearest school. There was confusion about why the council is still using catchments if transport was no longer going to be provided to them.

Similarly, the proposal to only provide transport to children over the statutory school age of five was met with concern as parents claimed schools actively encourage pupils starting school following their fourth birthday with the school admissions team making provisions to allow this. Again, this highlighted to parents an inconsistent approach to children and schooling with accusations of a lack of joined up thinking within the council.

### **Impact on children and young people with disabilities or special educational needs**

Secondly, respondents indicated that some of the proposals were unfair and targeted groups that were not able to adapt to these proposed changes. The Motability vehicle proposal drew criticism from service users i.e. parents with Motability vehicles. They explained that the proposal would severely impact their ability to maintain work as often appropriate schooling for their SEN children was much further afield than local mainstream schools, making the 'school-run' and reaching work on time unlikely to be viable. They felt this proposal unfairly penalised them and their families for having to attend specialist schooling outside of the local area.

These sentiments were echoed in the proposal to require a contribution towards the cost of transport from post-16 SEN students, with respondents saying the need to attend a specialist school/college outside of the local area is not the fault of the students and they should not be penalised for having to access schooling outside of a local mainstream school/college.

SEN families should be supported given the difficult circumstances they face and they should not be punished for having to travel out of area for their child's education.

### **Safety and Sustainability**

A final theme from the consultation findings was the notion of safety and sustainability. The



proposal to provide travel passes for public transport to pupils aged 9-16 years old was met with strong opposition with regards to the lower limit being nine years old. Safeguarding was a massive issue for parents who were concerned about the idea of their young children mixing with the public and having to navigate their way to school unaccompanied.

Some also highlighted concerns about whether the current public transport provision could sustain an influx of school children or whether it was currently suitable for transporting children at school times. There was a concern this had not been factored into the proposals with many parents citing current poor provision in rural areas as a barrier to getting to school.

There were similar thoughts with the proposal to provide a contribution to schools to allow them to run their own min buses, but again concerns were raised about whether this was sustainable for schools given current budget pressures. Some saw this proposal as passing the burden on to schools and they did not want to see education budgets spent on transport, which was seen solely as a council responsibility.

Cost also became a factor with some suggesting the price could lead to some students not being able to access certain schools or curriculum because of cost.

### **Special Needs Action Panel Facilitated Meeting with Parents 22 September 2017**

The meeting was also attended by Cllr Hegley and Cllr Dodwell.

The Head of Public Protection & Transport explained the proposals contained in the consultation and also confirmed that parents with motability vehicles (including age 16+) would not be required to transport their children to school. The following issues were raised during the course of the meeting:

- SEN children need a longer period of time to achieve their potential and it is unfair to be penalise them with transport costs post age 16.
- The wording of policies is crucial to ensure that they can be fully understood. The provision of flow charts would help.
- EHC Plans don't always mention transport needs. Some children don't have an EHC plan.
- Mainstream pupils are being transported to schools which are not their first choice of school. If a place subsequently becomes available shouldn't they transfer over to help save on travel costs
- Is the Council rigorous in checking fraudulent applications for assistance?
- Are sufficient steps taken to limit the costs of transporting children who have been expelled for bad behaviour from their original school?
- Council transport provision is not flexible enough to deal quickly with deteriorating conditions. The rules around manual handling and wheelchair passports are very rigid
- Why do further education colleges such as Barnfield challenge transport provisions every year?
- The Post 16 policy proposes to charge SEN children more for transport. It is discriminatory to charge disabled / SEN children more for their travel costs than mainstream children.
- The policy needs to recognise that transport can be shared with ex partners.
- Further consideration should be given to the location of special needs provision because this could help reduce transport costs in the longer term. There needs to be a clearer vision and a mapping of routes and provision
- Could some funding be redirected from transport to enable schools to support pupils in their local area and so avoid substantial travel costs?

- What role can personal budgets play?
- Can more be done to work with housing to ensure that homeless families / those in temporary accommodation are placed locally to help avoid increased transport costs.
- To what extent is the Local Plan considering the needs of SEN / Disability?

**Written submission - Motability;**

The proposals relating to disabled children and motability cars will limit the independence of disabled children, and foster more dependant, resource intensive, adults. It will restrict the ability of parents to work or study and pose risks to children’s safety in school car parks and adjacent streets.

Only a child with severe mobility difficulties is awarded the higher mobility element of the DLA needed to contract hire with motability. The Council is therefore penalising the group with the highest mobility needs. The Council is not considering the variable income of parents or that some parents in receipt of the higher level of DLA may choose to finance a car in another way.

The proposal does not consider the wider family circumstances in terms of other family members, work and study commitments. Special schools are often a distance from the family home. There are not the same options in relation to school clubs, pickups by other parents and childminders.

The impact in terms of traffic congestion and safety has not been considered.

Some parents may no longer be able to afford their Motability car but will have to pay a cancellation fee if they do not continue with the Motability contract.

**2.6. Are there any gaps in data or consultation findings**

None identified

**2.7. What action will be taken to obtain this information?**

Not applicable

**Stage 3 - Providing an overview of impacts and potential discrimination.**

Stage 3 – Assessing Positive & Negative Impacts					
Analysis of Impacts	Impact?		Discrimination?		Summary of impacts and reasons
	(+ve)	(- ve)	YES	NO	
3.1 Age		√	√		<p>The proposal to provide travel passes for public transport to pupils aged 9-16 years old was met with strong opposition with regards to the lower limit being nine years old. Safeguarding was a massive issue for parents.</p> <p>Will the contribution for Post 16 SEND be set at a similar level to that of a bus pass for non-SEND</p>

					students? The local authority should also consider that students with SEND may have to travel further to a suitable course
<b>3.2 Disability</b>		√	√		<p>The proposals relating to disabled children and motability cars will limit the independence of disabled children, and foster more dependant resource intensive adults. The use of a motability car cannot be required. Not all families in receipt of DLA finance a car through motability. This proposal focuses on those with the highest mobility needs.</p> <p>In relation to residential schools SEN families should be supported given the difficult circumstances they face and should not be punished for having to travel out of area for their child's education</p>
<b>3.3 Carers</b>		√	√		The Motability vehicle proposal drew criticism from service users i.e. parents with Motability vehicles. The proposal could severely impact their ability to maintain work as often appropriate schooling for their SEN children is much further afield than local mainstream schools, making the 'school-run' and reaching work on time unlikely to be viable.
<b>3.4 Gender Reassignment</b>	-	-			
<b>3.5 Pregnancy &amp; Maternity</b>	-	-			
<b>3.6 Race</b>		√			<i>"If transport is withdrawn for 4 year olds this would have a hugely detrimental impact on the early years education of Traveller children which could result in children missing the entire Reception year as parents would choose to keep their children at home until they could access the transport."</i>
<b>3.7 Religion / Belief</b>	-	-	-	-	
<b>3.8 Sex</b>	-	-	-	-	
<b>3.9 Sexual Orientation</b>	-	-	-	-	

<p><b>3.10 Other e.g. Human Rights, Poverty / Social Class / Deprivation, Looked After Children, Offenders, Cohesion Marriage and Civil Partnership</b></p>		√	-	-	<p>Success at school can be significantly increased according to what families do for under-5s in the home, and experience of pre-school education.                  Children’s later achievement in language, reading and number ability improves if they attend good pre-school provision.</p> <p>In terms of concessionary passes and charging full cost it was felt that the price could lead to some students not being able to access certain schools or curriculum because of cost.</p>
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**Stage 4 - Identifying mitigating actions that can be taken to address adverse impacts.**

<p><b>Stage 4 – Conclusions, Recommendations and Action Planning</b></p>
<p><b>4.1 What are the main conclusions and recommendations from the assessment?</b></p> <p>Further consideration should be given to the following proposals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Under 5’s</b> – access to early education can be very important for disabled, Gypsy and Traveller and disadvantaged children</li> <li>• <b>Motability</b> – this can only be a request. It should be recognised that parents in receipt of DLA may finance transport in other ways</li> <li>• <b>Post 16 SEND</b> – these young people often have to travel further to access appropriate education and shouldn’t incur higher costs</li> <li>• <b>Residential schools</b> - should not be punished for having to travel out of area for their child’s education</li> <li>• <b>Concessionary passes</b> – increased cost may be an issue for disadvantaged families</li> <li>• <b>Bus passes</b> – consider whether the proposed age range should be increased above age 9</li> </ul>
<p><b>4.2 What changes will be made to address or mitigate any adverse impacts that have been identified?</b></p> <p>Community Services and Children’s Services have agreed to set up a joint Project Board. The remit is to work together to find immediate and longer-term solutions to the ‘home school transport’ budget challenges.</p> <p>The Board will be attended by representatives from Children’s Services, Community Services, Adult Services (Transition), Housing Solutions, Community Intelligence and Kirsty Green from SNAP (Parents Representative for the Special Needs Action Panel). At some future stage other Partnerships may be considered such as Health.</p>

<p>The Board will analyse the findings of the consultation and EIA.</p> <p>In addition, the Project Board will review future options such as Personal Transport Budgets (PTB's) and Independent Travel Training (ITT) as a way of improving independence for young people. A number of authorities have already successfully implemented these in line with the national policy direction of increasing personalisation.</p> <p>The Project Board needs: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a more thorough understanding of how PTB's and ITT can be rolled out here in CBC</li> <li>• a framework for assessing the value of the PTB and ITT budgets and delivery to parents/carers. To consider a pilot</li> <li>• a communication strategy for specific engagement with parents/carers and other stakeholders which clearly explains the benefits</li> <li>• a costed model to demonstrate the potential benefits and any investment needed to enable them to be delivered more widely (such as invest to save)</li> </ul>																							
<p><b>4.3 Are there any budgetary implications?</b></p> <p>Proposed efficiency savings may not be achievable in the current financial year</p>																							
<p><b>4.4 Actions to be taken to mitigate against any adverse impacts:</b></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Action</th> <th>Lead Officer</th> <th>Date</th> <th>Priority</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>To be identified by Project Board</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>				Action	Lead Officer	Date	Priority	To be identified by Project Board															
Action	Lead Officer	Date	Priority																				
To be identified by Project Board																							

**Stage 5 - Checking that all the relevant issues and mitigating actions have been identified**

<p><b>Stage 5 – Quality Assurance &amp; Scrutiny:</b>  <b>Checking that all the relevant issues have been identified</b></p>	
<p><b>5.1 What methods have been used to gain feedback on the main issues raised in the assessment?</b></p>	
<p><b>Step 1:</b></p>	
<p><b>Has the Corporate Policy Advisor (Equality &amp; Diversity) reviewed this assessment and provided feedback? Yes/No</b></p>	
<p><b>Summary of CPA's comments:</b></p> <p>The Council's Equality Lead has been fully involved in the development of the EIA.</p>	
<p><b>Step 2:</b></p>	
<p><b>5.2 Feedback from Central Bedfordshire Equality Forum 8 June 2017</b></p>	

Members of the Forum were provided with an early draft of the consultation documents. The Forum:

**NOTED**

the document entitled ‘Travel Assistance Policies – Comparison of Current and Proposed Approaches’.

**RESOLVED**

- 1 that, in the ‘Proposed Changes’ column opposite the reference to Working Tax Credit under ‘Current Approach’, a reference to Universal Credit be added;
- 2 that the Head of Public Protection and Transport establish and amend the document circulated at the meeting and a revised copy be attached as an appendix to the note of this meeting.

**Stage 6 - Ensuring that the actual impact of proposals are monitored over time.**

<b>Stage 6 – Monitoring Future Impact</b>
<b>6.1 How will implementation of the actions be monitored?</b> To be agreed by the Project Board
<b>6.2 What sort of data will be collected and how often will it be analysed?</b> To be agreed by the Project Board
<b>6.3 How often will the proposal be reviewed?</b> To be agreed by the Project Board
<b>6.4 Who will be responsible for this?</b> To be agreed by the Project Board
<b>6.5 How have the actions from this assessment been incorporated into the proposal?</b> To be agreed by the Project Board

**Stage 7 - Finalising the assessment.**

<b>Stage 7 – Accountability / Signing Off</b>
<b>7.1 Has the lead Assistant Director/Head of Service been notified of the outcome of the assessment</b>  Name: _____ Date: _____
<b>7.2 Has the Corporate Policy Adviser Equality &amp; Diversity provided confirmation that the Assessment is complete?</b>  Date: _____

## Central Bedfordshire Council

### Children's Overview and Scrutiny

20<sup>th</sup> November 2018

#### Childrens Centres Overview

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**Report of:** Cllr Steven Dixon,  
([Steven.Dixon@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:Steven.Dixon@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk))

**Responsible Director(s):** Sue Harrison,  
([Sue.Harrison@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:Sue.Harrison@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk))

**This report relates to a decision that is Non-Key**

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### 1. Purpose of this report

1.1 This report has been prepared to provide context on the current operating arrangements for the Children's Centres across Central Bedfordshire alongside an update on performance management.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Committee is asked to:

1. **Note the content of the report.**

### 2. Context

2.1 Central Bedfordshire Council has nine Childrens Centres which work in partnership to deliver a range of child and family health services including antenatal, postnatal, breast feeding and baby weighing sessions (drop-in) advice on parenting and parenting programmes, childcare, information and advice on early years provision and 2-year-old funded places, as well as working with Job Centre Plus to attend Centres.

### 3. The History of Childrens Centres

3.1 Nationally, Childrens Centres started as Sure Start, a government policy launched in 1998 as an area-based programme to deliver services and support to young children and their families, with £450 million (m) in funding in the first three years. It was initially targeted at the 20% poorest wards in England and then extended more widely and transferred to Local Authority management by 2005.

3.2 In 2004 the programme was rolled out in the 3 phases. Phase 1 (2004–2006) Phase 2 (2006–2008) Phase 3 (2008–2010) with funding according to levels of deprivation against

population figures for the 0-5 living in the most deprived Lower Super Output areas, (LSOA). This became the 'reach area' for each Childrens Centre and was implemented in phases resulting in all families living within Central Bedfordshire being able to access Childrens Centre services by the end of phase 3.

3.3 Phase 1 of the programme targeted the 20% most deprived communities in England and mostly involved converting existing Sure Start Programmes alongside other local provision such as Early Excellence Centres and Neighbourhood Nurseries into Childrens Centres, although there were some new buildings. In 2004, Central Bedfordshire was still part of Bedfordshire County Council and the majority of phase 1 Childrens Centres were located in Bedford Borough because of the levels of deprivation. When Central Bedfordshire Council was formed in 2009, Central Bedfordshire inherited 3 centres; The Lawns Nursery School and Early Excellence Centre (now Biggleswade Childrens Centre) and Tithe Farm Neighbourhood Centre (now Houghton Regis Childrens Centre).

3.4 Phase 2 extended the core offer to remaining areas in the bottom 30% of the deprivation scale with an additional 12 Centres allocated Capital Money to be built within Central Bedfordshire. This programme consisted of a mix of Childrens Centre building and building works to make facilities more accessible, and in some cases just to make a base for staff to operate out of under the previous capital programme for early years provision. Due to the rural nature of Central Bedfordshire, vehicles were purchased to ensure that services were delivered as part of the Childrens Centre outreach programme.

3.5 Under the final phase of this programme a further 8 Childrens Centres were approved for development. However, in 2010 capital money allocated to the Local Authority of £1,334,979 was withdrawn which resulted in some Centres not having a base. In these circumstances, services were then delivered from community venues or existing council buildings

3.6 Historically, Childrens Centres were inspected against an Ofsted Framework. During the period from 2012-2015 all Childrens Centres in Central Bedfordshire were inspected with 7 receiving a Good rating and only 2 receiving a Requires Improvement. However, a national consultation on the future of Childrens Centres had been expected from Central Government in Autumn 2014, and in late 2015 the government suspended inspections by Ofsted with the intention of the pending consultation on the future of Childrens Centres. The consultation has still yet to take place.

3.7 In 2015, a formal consultation resulted in the re-modelling, and re-contracting of the Childrens Centres offer in Central Bedfordshire. Only 4 of the existing providers (all schools), a further 3 schools alongside a national Voluntary Organisation were successful in their bids to manage Children Centre services from the 9 main hubs. The new model had services that were universal from birth to 1 and a more targeted approach for children over the age of 1 years old. The re-modelling and re-contracting were driven by targeting services to meet need and taking into account the introduction of Government funded 2-year-old places for some families in England. This alongside maternity leave being between 9 months – 1 year made the existing engagement targets unrealistic for children who were in day-care due to working parents. The model adopted provided a universal service for 0-1's and targeted services for those children 1-5 years in the centres with the top 40% Lower Super Output Areas (LSOA) and included any child on a Child Protection (CP) or Child in Need (CIN) plan, any Looked After Child (LAC) and any child with an Early Help Assessment (EHA). Although this reduced universal services any child/parent/family



in need of help/support would be able to access services through the Early Help Assessment process.

3.8 Currently, all Childrens Centres provide a range of targeted services such as one-to-one support for families, mellow parenting groups, Freedom, (Domestic Abuse) parenting courses and delivery of programmes linked to CP and CIN along with specific programmes such as speech and language work, group work with early years professionals, Parents as First Teacher (PaFT), healthy eating and improving health outcomes.

3.9 The universal service for children aged 0-1 includes delivery of the Healthy Child Programme covering antenatal and post-natal services, breastfeeding advice, 2 short parenting courses within the first year of parenting, a mixture of play and stay/music sessions. Centres also work closely with external partners in the community to provide opportunities for services to be held within the centre or co-delivered linked to the needs of their community. They are also the link to other universal services in their areas. They also provide parents with the opportunity to form their own support networks.

## **4. Local Management**

4.1 Each of the Childrens Centres has a Strategic Lead, a Centre Manager and a range of front-line staff which varies in size and specialism according to the centres and the demographics in their reach areas. Across all of the centre's the Family Workers are part of the EHA process. Alongside this, the family workers work closely with the family Partners who are part of the Early Help team within the authority. Both Teams work closely with Social Workers and attend CP/CIN meetings. The Family Partners are internal to Central Bedfordshire and also support with co-delivery of other courses, e.g. Freedom Programme along with other parenting courses, and if they have capacity centre staff can provide creche provision alongside specific parenting programmes. Centre managers/staff also attend the locality meetings in their areas. With the development of the Locality Teams within Children's Services across Central Bedfordshire, locality meetings were developed and take place quarterly to provide an opportunity for multi-agency working.

## **5. Performance Management**

5.1 The Childrens Centres have continued to be monitored on the targets outlined in the now defunct OFSTED framework. These focus on the registrations of new parents (taking into account universal access provision alongside the targeted CIN, LAC etc), meaningful engagement of families both within the 0-12 month period and thereafter for the targeted cohort and finally, meaningful engagements through 3 or more contacts. Meaningful engagement within Central Bedfordshire has been defined as one to one contact with families in the centres, in the home or in the community. It also includes phone calls where support, advice and guidance are given to the parent or family at a time of need. A breakdown per centre is available in appendix A. As a result of the approval from Executive for the re-design and re-procurement of the Childrens Centres, the performance framework is being revamped and updated.

5.2 Another indicator is for School readiness based on a good level of development in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile. (EYFSP) (a key priority in the Children and Young Peoples Plan). This is overseen by the Early Years Professionals (EYP's). The EYP's undertake a range of audits quarterly that cover the environment, the interaction of staff

with parents and children, using child observations along with peer on peer observations. The main measures of EYFSP data are a Good Level of Development (GLD) and average point score (APS). A GLD is defined as all children who have achieved expected or exceeded in all prime areas of learning and in literacy and mathematics.

5.3 In 2017 data showed that with a cohort of 3641 children 72% achieved a GLD, of these 1879 children attended a Childrens Centres and 73% of these achieved a GLD which is an increase of 6% since 2016. Of the remaining children who did not attend a Childrens Centres 70% achieved a GLD which remains unchanged from 2016.

5.4 When reviewing the lowest 20% Achieving Pupils, based on Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) The children that live in the 0-10% most deprived LSOAs in CBC benefitted greatly from attending a Childrens Centres. 76% of those children achieved a GLD whereas only 65% of those who did not attend a Childrens Centres achieved a GLD.

5.5 Overall the data showed that across Central Bedfordshire percentages of children achieving a GLD has increased from 69% in 2016 to 72% in 2017.

5.6. Data for 2018 is still in the provisional stage however against our statistical neighbours we are in the upper middle quartile for % of children classed as having a Good Level of Development which for 2018 is 73.2% an increase of 1.2% on 2017.

## **6. Future Development**

6.1 On 9<sup>th</sup> October, the Executive Committee approved the re-procurement of the Childrens Centre Services (alongside other services) on a locality basis as five contracts with an increased age range up to 12 years old. Additionally, the services will be commissioned through a competitive dialogue process on an outcome's basis, this means they will be measured on their impact rather than activity in the future.

6.2 The feedback from the initial stakeholder engagement indicated that there is clearly much that is valued by local communities and partners about the current service delivery:

- The recognition that there is support available
- The high quality of the workforce
- The sense of place and community that comes with fixed base provision
- Access to learning opportunities for children, young people, parents and carers.
- The role in helping to facilitate social networks
- That most services are free or inexpensive to access

6.3 However, a number of longer-term aspirations and opportunities to improve services and outcomes were identified throughout the engagement including the need for greater flexibility of services and greater join up to create more of a 'stop approach'.

6.4 This will change the performance measurement of these services to move away from traditional reach and engagement aligned to the OFSTED framework to focus on the difference made by these services.

6.5 This was broadly supported through the public consultation undertaken as part of the re-design exercise. A full copy of the report and the results of the public consultation are available on the council's website (see background papers section for link.)

## **7. Council Priorities**

7.1 This service aligns to the council priorities in particular great resident services, improving education and skills; protecting the vulnerable and improving wellbeing and creating stronger communities.

7.2 The Childrens Centres in Central Bedfordshire provide a key service for residents with children aged 0-5 to support both the children and their parents with a range of services including breast feeding alongside parenting support and information and advice. These services help to support the vulnerable and universally support parents to become more resilient and ultimately to create stronger communities.

## **8. Corporate Implications**

There are no negative corporate implications arising from this report. The report provides an update for the Committee on the history and the performance of the Childrens Centres and does not require any key decision nor change. The change to the operating model was approved by Executive and a link to the report can be found in section 10, background papers.

## **9. Legal Implications**

There are no direct or immediate legal implications arising from this report.

## **10. Financial and Risk Implications**

There are no financial or risk implications arising from this report as there is no change requested and no key decision.

## **11. Equalities Implications**

Central Bedfordshire Council has a statutory duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and foster good relations in respect of nine protected characteristics; age disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

Children who grow up in poverty are less likely to get qualifications or go on to higher education, and are more likely to become young parents. People with low levels of educational achievement can expect to be less employable, therefore poorer, therefore less healthy and probably less likely to participate in civic activity. The kinds of people who are less likely to be employed are also more likely to be involved in crime, to have shorter life-spans and to have less fulfilling family lives. Whole families can be locked into cycles of deprivation.

There are four life stages crucial to building people's capabilities:

1. Giving children the best start in their early years
2. Improving educational attainment at school;

3. Creating pathways from education to work;
4. Helping people to get on in work

People's families and communities play a crucial role in each of these four life stages, particularly through:

1. creating strong emotional bonds between parents and children
2. helping parents stay closely involved in their children's education
3. providing resources to allow children the opportunities to develop;
4. ensuring children's aspirations to succeed are raised

Children's Centres play an important role in supporting children and families to achieve better outcomes.

## 12. Conclusion and next Steps

The next steps for the procurement are outlined below.

Activity	Timescales
Procurement process	October 2018- May 2018 (issue of final tender beginning March following Dialogue)
Award Contracts	Standstill period completed 27/5/19
Mobilisation	1/9/19

## 13. Appendices

Appendix A: 2018-19 Childrens Centres performance against OFSTED targets

## 14. Background Papers

The following background papers, not previously available to the public, were taken into account and are available on the Council's website:

- (i) <https://centralbeds.moderngov.co.uk/mgChooseDocPack.aspx?ID=5609>

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Sue Tyler Assistant Director, Childrens Services, Support Services

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Jody Nason, Head of Childrens Commissioning,

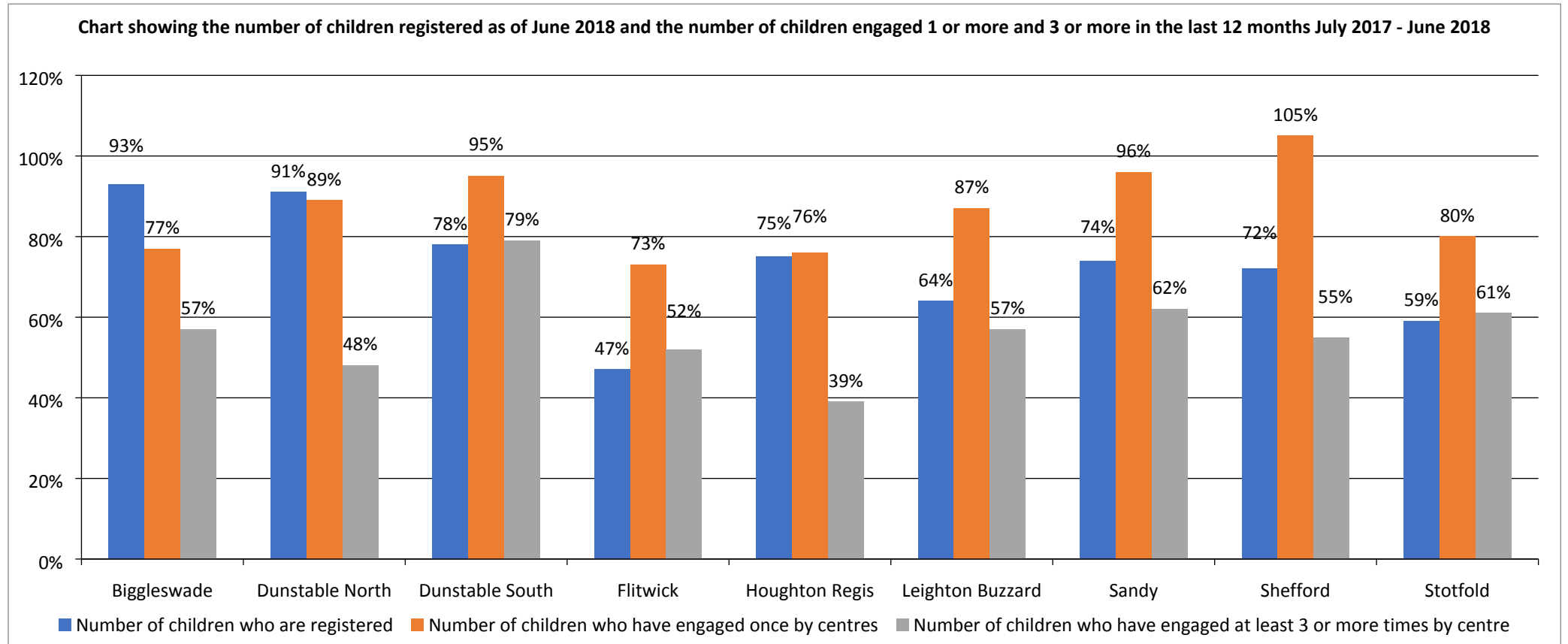
[jody.nason@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:jody.nason@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

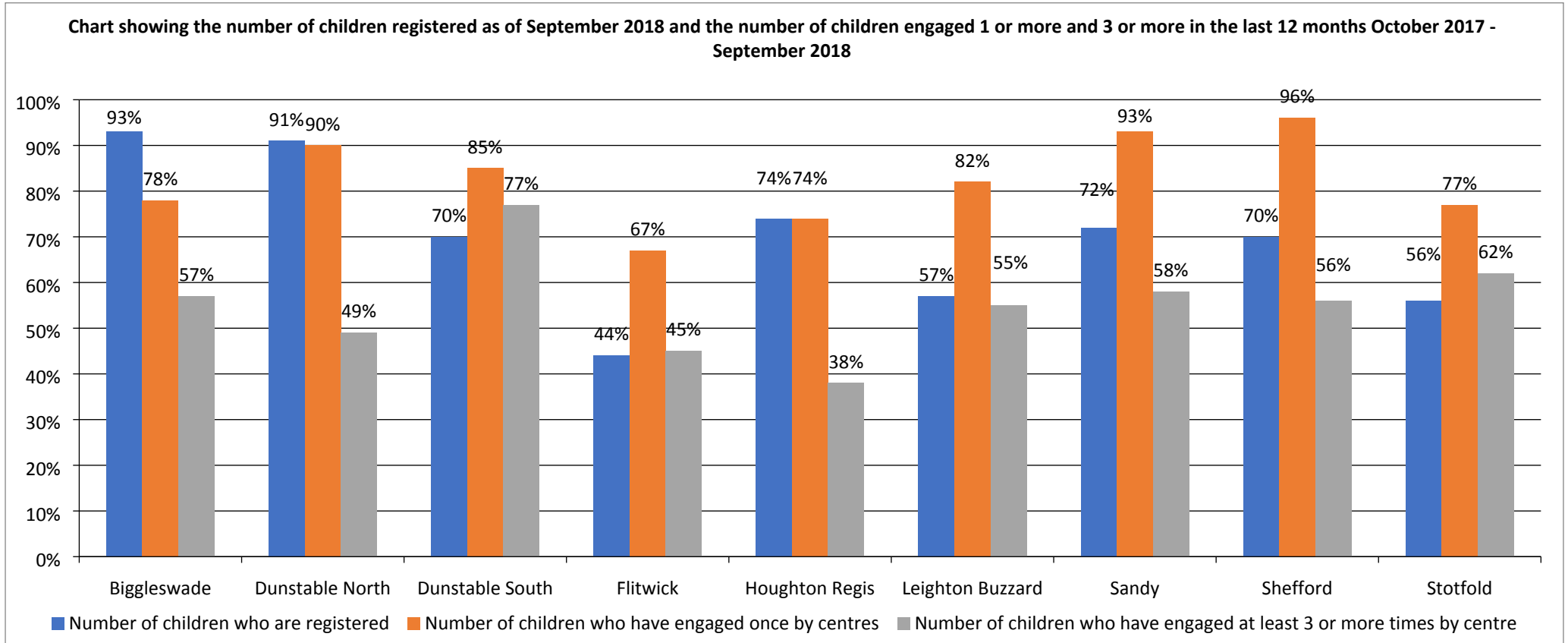


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Appendix A

Quarter 1 2018







**Central Bedfordshire Council**

**CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**20 November 2018**

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**Work Programme & Executive Forward Plan**

Advising Officer: Rebecca Preen, Scrutiny Policy Adviser  
[rebecca.preen@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:rebecca.preen@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

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**Purpose of this report**

The report provides Members with details of the currently drafted Committee work programme and the latest Executive Forward Plan.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Committee is asked to:

1. Consider and approve the work programme attached, subject to any further amendments it may wish to make; and
2. Consider the Executive Forward Plan; and
3. Consider whether it wishes to suggest any further items for the work programme and/or establish any enquiries to assist it in reviewing specific items.

**Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme**

1. During 2016/17 Members have been invited to share their experiences of the overview and scrutiny process and make suggestions to the Overview and Scrutiny Coordination Panel (OSCP) on future ways of working. This feedback was subsequently considered by the OSCP who resolved to encourage the OSCs to apply the following principles for ways of working:-
  - a. activity be led by the OSCs and residents as well as the Executive Forward Plan;
  - b. more policy development activity be undertaken through the exploration of proposals and principles at the earliest opportunity of commencement of strategy development;
  - c. shorter more focused agendas through prioritisation of items that add value and enable outcomes; and
  - d. create more time for Members outside of formal meetings in addition to providing more opportunity to brief Members informally on some topics.
2. In addition, the OSCP agreed that given the current experience with regard quarterly performance and budget reports a trial should be

undertaken whereby these reports will only be received by the Corporate Resources OSC from April onwards. This trial will enable Members to determine whether this approach provides greater focus on these aspects of scrutiny. All Members will be able to request an item to be added to the agenda of any the OSCs on aspects of budget or performance. The Corporate Resources OSC will also be able to refer matters to the relevant OSC for a 'deep-dive' of any topic if there is a particular concern.

3. The Committee is requested to consider the work programme and the indicated outcomes at **appendix 1** and to amend or add to it as necessary.
4. In considering which items should be added to the work programme Members are encouraged to minimise duplication, focus on those items that have been requested by residents and the committee and to focus on those items where Members can add value.
5. The work programme aims to provide a balance of those items on which the Executive would be grateful for a steer in addition to those items that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) wishes to proactively scrutinise.

### **Overview and Scrutiny Task Forces**

6. In addition to consideration of the work programme, Members may also wish to consider how each item will be reviewed, i.e. by the Committee itself (over one or a number of Committee meetings) or by establishing a Member Task Force to review an item in greater depth and report back its findings.

### **Executive Forward Plan**

7. Listed below are those items relating specifically to this Committee's terms of reference contained in the latest version of the Executive Forward Plan. The full Executive Forward Plan can be viewed on the Council's website at the link at the end of this report.

<b>Item</b>	<b>Indicative Exec Meeting date</b>
Recommissioning Support Services for Children and Young People	9 October 2018
Consultation on the Council's Admission Arrangements for the Academic Year 2020/21	4 December 2018
Regional Adoption Agency	4 December 2018
Foster Carers Loans Policy	8 January 2019
Commissioning of New School Places in Leighton Buzzard for September 2020	5 February 2019
Central Bedfordshire Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements	2 April 2019
Commissioning of New School Places in Biggleswade for September 2020	2 April 2019

Non Key Decisions	Indicative Exec Meeting date
None identified at this time	

### **Corporate Implications**

8. The work programme of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will contribute indirectly to all 5 Council priorities. Whilst there are no direct implications arising from this report the implications of proposals will be details in full in each report submitted to the Committee.

### **Conclusion and next Steps**

9. Members are requested to consider and agree the attached work programme, subject to any further amendment/additions they may wish to make and highlight those items within it where they may wish to establish a Task Force to assist the Committee in its work. This will allow officers to plan accordingly but will not preclude further items being added during the course of the year if Members so wish and capacity exists.

### **Appendices**

**Appendix A:** OSC work programme

### **Background Papers**

Executive Forward Plan (can be viewed at any time on the Council's website) at the following link:-

<http://centralbeds.moderngov.co.uk/mgListPlans.aspx?RPId=577&RD=0>

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## Appendix 1

### Children's Services OSC Work Programme (2018/19)

Meeting date	Report Title	Outcomes we are seeking to achieve
Tuesday, 22 January 2019	The Executive Response to the Pupil Attainment Task Force	To receive an update in relation to recommendations actioned following a task force investigation
Tuesday, 22 January 2019	The Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC)	To outline the RSC's approach with regards to supporting Academies
Tuesday, 22 January 2019	The Council's School Admissions consultation	To consider the commencement of the Council's consultation on admission arrangements to ensure the statutory requirement for admissions consultation is met.
Tuesday, 12 March 2019	Domestic abuse update	Text to be agreed
Tuesday, 12 March 2019	Multi Agency Safeguarding Arrangements	To receive details regarding future arrangements for the safeguarding of vulnerable children in light of new government regulations
Tuesday, 12 March 2019	Commissioning of New School Places in Leighton Buzzard for September 2020	To seek approval of additional middle and upper school places in the Ward of Leighton Buzzard North through the expansion of Gilbert Inglefield Academy and Vandyke Upper School (academy) for September 2020.
Tuesday, 12 March 2019	Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) annual report	Members are asked to comment on and note the information within the LSCB annual report 2017/18.
TBC	The Children's Transformation programme	Text to be agreed
TBC	Measuring the progress of the school improvement team	Text to be agreed
TBC	Commissioning performance report	How the Council will monitor those organisations commissioned to carry out work on behalf of the Council
TBC	Schools for the future Plan	The support to schools in relation to future changes in structure

TBC	Progress report on the transformation of short breaks provision for disabled children	Text to be agreed
TBC	SEND Vision Action Plan	Text to be agreed
TBC	Validated Exam results	Text to be agreed