

Agenda Item 9



Author/Lead Officer of Report:
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Report of: Jayne Ludlam
Report to: Cabinet
Date of Decision: 19.4.17
Subject: Proposed changes to the Post 16 travel and transport policy

Is this a Key Decision? If Yes, reason Key Decision:-	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
- Expenditure and/or savings over £500,000		<input type="checkbox"/>		
- Affects 2 or more Wards		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Which Cabinet Member Portfolio does this relate to? <i>(Insert title of Portfolio)</i>				
Which Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee does this relate to? <i>(Insert name of Committee)</i>				
Has an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) been undertaken?	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
If YES, what EIA reference number has it been given? 1197 <i>(Insert reference number)</i>				
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If YES, give details as to whether the exemption applies to the full report / part of the report and/or appendices and complete below:-				
"The (report/appendix) is not for publication because it contains exempt information under Paragraph (insert relevant paragraph number) of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended)."				

Purpose of Report:

Proposed changes to the Post 16 travel and transport policy:

- To report back on the proposals following a thorough consultation with all affected users, alongside schools and colleges, between 30 January and 24 March 2017.
- To highlight a number of recommended changes to the Post 16 travel and transport policy from the findings of the consultation to Cabinet, for their endorsement.

The report also includes the questionnaires that went out to affected families, a detailed analysis of the consultation, and the findings from the consultation.

Recommendations:

Following the consultation we are asking Cabinet to approve the following:

1. That the Council should cease to provide the discretionary zero fare bus pass for post 16 students with effect from 1/9/2017 and instead request that families who are eligible apply for and use the 16- 19 Bursary fund to pay for transport. The council will continue to work alongside schools and colleges to offer the necessary support to any families or young people who need help with the application process in order that they are able to access the bursary.
2. To cease to provide completely free post 16 Special Educational Needs transport. Whilst not asking families to pay the full cost of Special Educational Needs transport, it is proposed to ask all families for a contribution of £540 per year regardless of the location of their education provision (The weekly cost over the year would be £10.38). A variety of payment options to meet family's needs will be available. Families who are eligible for either the vulnerable or discretionary bursary will be expected to apply and use this fund towards the cost of transport.
3. To continue to support Independent Travel Training and to ensure that it remains a central part of the post 16 travel and transport policy. To ensure that as many students who are able, travel independently to and from their place of education and training in order to maximise their independence, lifelong learning and employment prospects.
4. To create and administer a hardship fund in order to mitigate the impact on those families with students in post 16 education who may be significantly affected by these proposals. Those who could access the fund may include:
 - Families with siblings attending post 16 education at the same time, who are both on Special Educational Needs transport
 - Low wage working families who have children on Special Educational Needs post 16 transport
 - Young people who are mid-way through their course at 1 September 2017, for whom the changes will have a negative impact on their studies.
5. To implement the policy changes from 1st of September 2017. To delegate authority to the Executive Director of Children Young People and Families to implement these recommendations

Finally, we would like to thank all those families, schools, colleges and voluntary sector organisations who took the time to give us their views and suggestions which in turn have helped to shape our proposals.

Background Papers: N/A

Lead Officer to complete:-	
I have consulted the relevant departments in respect of any relevant implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist, and comments have been incorporated / additional forms completed / EIA completed, where required.	Finance: <i>Liz Gough</i>
	Legal: <i>Deborah Eaton</i>
	Equalities: <i>Bashir Khan</i>
Legal, financial/commercial and equalities implications must be included within the report and the name of the officer consulted must be included above.	
EMT member who approved submission:	Jayne Ludlam
Cabinet Member consulted:	Councillor Jackie Drayton
I confirm that all necessary approval has been obtained in respect of the implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist and that the report has been approved for submission to the Decision Maker by the EMT member indicated at 2. In addition, any additional forms have been completed and signed off as required at 1.	
Lead Officer Name: Kate Dymond	Job Title: Project and Programme Coordinator
Date: 7/04/2017	

1 PROPOSAL

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 Sheffield City Council is one of the few remaining local authorities that provides post 16 transport for students with Special Educational Needs or a Disability (SEND) for free. It is also the only identified local authority which still provides a discretionary zero fare bus pass to students who are eligible for the 16-19 student bursary. Many local authorities do not make this provision because the 16-19 Bursary Fund (which replaced the Education Maintenance Allowance and Discretionary Learner Support Fund) is intended for this purpose.
- 1.1.2 Sheffield City Council is ambitious for the outcomes of all its young people and wants to support them in their continuing education or training and the development of lifelong skills. The Council's transport policy for post 16 learners reflects this by putting independent travel training at its centre. We want to do all we can to help and support all children and young people with SEND on their journey towards independence. We provide free independent travel training for all students who want to try to travel independently and / or who will benefit from this where appropriate. We recognise that for some young people travel training will not be an option so we will continue to support them in their travel needs.
- 1.1.3 Sheffield City Council also fulfils its duties to facilitate the attendance of students in post 16 provision by giving significant funds to the South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive (SYPTTE) to ensure that young people in post 16 education get a reduced rate for their travel (currently 80p per journey).

1.2 Financial Background

In the light of successive budget cuts the Council is having to look at those services which are discretionary or which we currently provide for free. Special Educational Needs post 16 transport currently costs the council £300,000, although this does not include the cost of travel training and some other duties relating to the administration of post 16 travel support, and this cost is increasing.

Providing the post 16 discretionary zero fare bus passes to students on a low income who travel over 3 miles to their place of education costs the Local Authority £84,000 within the academic year. Due to changes in numbers of students who are deemed eligible for the discretionary pass, this cost fluctuates from year to year.

1.3 Statutory duties

The Council's duty with regards to those young people in post 16 education differs from its duty to provide transport for "eligible children" of compulsory school age. The key difference is that the Council has "*to facilitate the attendance of...*" children of sixth form age receiving education or training (those young people aged 16-18 and those continuing learners who started their programme of learning before their 19th birthday) rather than to actually provide transport.

- I. Statutory duty: s509AA Education Act 1996.
The duty is to publish an annual transport policy statement which must specify "the arrangements for the provision of transport or otherwise that the authority considers it necessary to make **to facilitate the attendance** of all persons of sixth form age receiving education or training".
- II. The Department for Education's Post 16 Transport Guidance to which the Council must have regard states that the overall intention of the 16-18 transport duty is to:
 - ensure that learners of sixth form age are **able to access** the education and training of their choice
 - ensure that, if support for access is required, this will be **assessed and provided** where necessary.

1.4 Discretionary Powers Post 16 transport to education and training

Statutory guidance makes it clear that local authorities are free to take a local approach to enable local circumstances to be taken into account.

- i. The legislation gives local authorities the discretion to determine what transport and financial support are necessary to facilitate young people's participation in education and learning.
- ii. Local authorities may ask learners and their parents for a **contribution** to transport costs.
- iii. Local authorities may take receipt of **16-19 bursary funding** into account in assessing an individual's need for financial help with transport.

1.5 Post 16 home to school transport policy annual arrangements

There is a duty on local authorities to publish annual Post 16 Transport Policy Statement. The deadline for this is the 31 May each year. The statement must set out the arrangements for the provision of transport and for the financial assistance towards transports costs that it considers necessary to facilitate attendance of students of 6th form age. Therefore it is necessary that any changes which will be implemented as a result of the

Cabinet decision are in the 2017-18 Post-16 Transport and Travel Policy to be published in May 2017.

1.6 The 16-19 Bursary Fund- background.

In 2011 in England the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) was scrapped and the government instead introduced a new 16-19 Bursary. The EMA had been given to students directly. The funding for discretionary bursaries is given to schools and colleges for them to distribute - these are not council funds. Those institutions set their own eligibility criteria for discretionary bursaries, although they must comply with the basic eligibility conditions of the scheme (see Appendix 1).

The 16-19 Bursary Fund supports eligible learners in post 16 education. It is an award made to students by schools and colleges to help overcome the individual barriers to participation a student faces. It is to help with the cost of transport, meals when a student is at their place of education, books and special equipment. There are two types of bursary, the vulnerable bursary and the discretionary bursary. The vulnerable student bursary is money taken directly from government, and is set at up to £1,200 per year.

The defined vulnerable groups are students who are:

- in care
- care leavers
- getting [Income Support](#) (IS), or [Universal Credit](#) (UC) in place of Income Support, in their own right
- getting [Employment and Support Allowance](#) (ESA) or Universal Credit (UC) **and** Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or [Personal Independence Payments](#) in their own right

Please note that where students are getting ESA and DLA/PIP, their family will not be able to continue to claim Child Benefit for the young person.

For the discretionary bursary, individual schools and colleges manage the amount allocated to them, and the amount given to individual students. As noted above these are not council funds. Government guidance states

Each local authority must set out in an annually published transport statement the arrangements they will make to facilitate the participation in education or training students of sixth-form age. The institution's bursary fund policy should take account of this. (Guidance 16 to 19 Bursary Fund guide: 2016 to 2017)

2 **HOW DOES THIS DECISION CONTRIBUTE ?**

- 2.1 Sheffield City Council is determined to make the best use of public money to have the greatest impact for Sheffield. Our current provision of our Post

16 Travel and Transport Policy goes beyond our statutory duties. Due to the successive and ongoing budget cuts that Sheffield City Council is facing, these changes to the current policy will help us find our savings in an area where we have until now been able to continue to make provision beyond our statutory duties. In order to reduce inequalities, it is proposed a hardship fund is created from within the resource that currently pays for post 16 transport to mitigate against the impact on some service users.

- 2.2** Sheffield City Council recognises the life changing and life enhancing impact of all levels of independent travel and will continue to provide a free travel training programme for all of those who are deemed suitable. Because we want to support children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities to live happy, healthy and fulfilling lives, our travel training offer extends not just to those who can reach full independence but also to facilitate the maximum level of independence each child and young person can accomplish.

3 HAS THERE BEEN ANY CONSULTATION?

3.1 Consultation Proposal: Discretionary zero fare bus pass for post 16 students

- 1) To no longer provide a free bus pass. Instead we would expect young people to use the 16-19 Bursary to meet their travel costs.**

3.2 Consultation Proposals: Special Educational Needs post 16 transport

- 1) To ask families whose child is educated within South Yorkshire and receives post-16 SEND transport by minibus or taxi to make a contribution of £540 (£10.38 per week) per year towards the cost of travel on the minibus or taxi. (This contribution has been worked out based on the cost of a 16-18 termly bus pass issued by Travel South Yorkshire).**
- 2) For those whose child is educated outside of South Yorkshire, the contribution that we would be asking families to pay is £700 (£13.46 per week). This reflects the increased equivalent public transport cost.**
- 3) Families could choose not to continue using transport but take their child to and from school or college and receive a discretionary travel allowance based on the distance travelled. This travel allowance will be discretionary and families will have to meet certain criteria to receive it.**

3.3 Consultation scope

Sheffield City Council went out to public consultation on the proposed changes between 30 January and 24 March 2017

Home to School Travel and Transport Guidance (statutory guidance for local authorities, July 2014) states that local authorities should consult on school transport arrangements. The consultation should last at least 28 working days. Sheffield City Council extended this period and consulted for 35 working days.

We consulted with all affected families in post 16 education as well as families who currently have a student in Year 11 who either receive a zero fare bus pass, or are currently accessing Special Educational Needs transport. This also ensured that the consultation was used as an opportunity to forewarn families that this proposal may be implemented. - therefore enabling students in Y11 to consider the cost of travel as a factor in selecting their post 16 provision.

Officers also consulted extensively with schools, colleges, and other voluntary sector organisations working with hard to reach communities, including the Sheffield Parent Carer Forum.

3.4 Consultation Process

Letters including consultation documents were sent to all affected stakeholders with free-post stamped addressed envelopes in order that people could easily return them. For students who access Sheffield City Council's Special Educational Needs transport, consultation documents were delivered via the fleet and handed to their families on the day that the consultation opened. The consultation was available online throughout the consultation period.

The consultation was split into two separate consultation documents as it was felt that this would be easiest for families as they would only need to answer questions relating to the changes that would affect them. All consultation documents had a translated sheet within the pack in the 8 key languages identified in the EIA, asking for families to contact the local authority if they needed any additional support.

A phone line was opened for support throughout the consultation process, and all queries regarding the consultation were answered. Several families who needed additional support in completing the consultation documents were assisted by officers filling out the consultation over the phone.

Two bookable one to one confidential information sessions were held in the Town Hall, one in the daytime and one in the evening. At these sessions families were informed that they would be able to talk about their specific circumstances with Council Officers in a confidential manner.

Notification of the consultation was also sent to:

- All secondary schools within Sheffield via school point
- All head teachers of secondary provision via email
- The Sheffield college
- Longley Park College
- Ruskin Mill Trust (Freeman College and Brantwood Special School)
- The Sheffield Parent Carer forum
- Voluntary sector organisations working with hard to reach communities

Schools and colleges were offered a visit from an officer to discuss the proposals. The following schools and colleges all received a visit from an individual officer to discuss the proposals and their concerns in more details:

- Bents Green
- Longley 6th Form College
- Sheaf Training
- The Sheffield College
- Seven Hills
- Talbot Special School
- Freeman College.

Staff from Integrated Resource Units at King Egbert's and Silverdale also had a telephone discussion regarding the consultation and fed back into the consultation that way.

3.5 Overall Consultation responses

The Special Educational Needs home to school transport consultation received **108** responses, including one response which was defaced. The discretionary post 16 discretionary zero fare bus pass consultation received **135** responses. As the consultation was split into two separate consultation documents, the following section is split into two sections.

3.6 Home to School Travel Support for Young People in Post-16 Education discretionary zero fare bus pass consultation responses (Appendix 2).

The percentage of families who responded to the consultation who disagreed with the proposal to cease to provide the discretionary bus pass for post 16 students was:

7 (5.3%) Very satisfied
9 (6.8%) Fairly satisfied
10 (7.5%) Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
18 (13.5%) Fairly dissatisfied
89 (66.9%) Very dissatisfied

There were two key reoccurring responses.

Firstly, a significant number of respondents stated that they believed that transport should be provided for free for post 16 students on principle, and as such, bus passes should be provided. Secondly that the bursary that students currently received was not sufficient to cover books/food. It was also highlighted by one family that the bursary was currently being used to support household bills.

“children(sic) use the 16-19 Bursary on stationery and school clothes / eating during the breaks and its not enough for children of this age”

“We are expected to contribute more and more to our daughters education with books, equipment and trip costs which at one time were provided. The withdrawal of the free bus pass will further impact on our family financially at a time when we as are many families struggling to make ends meet.”

One family felt that if the discretionary zero fare bus pass was removed then it would prevent their child from attending education:

“My son would not be able to attend school/college as the money wouldn't be available for travel.”

Another respondent stated:

“I understand the council is stretched for resources. Funding the fares will stretch our family but it is affordable if we make adjustments elsewhere. I would want a card of some kind so my children can purchase child fares given they are in full time education.”

Longley Park College communicated that the bursary funding was not equal in differing education providers and as such students studying at their college did not get awarded as much discretionary bursary.

3.7 Questionnaire 2: Home to School Travel Support for Young People with a Special Educational Need or Disability (SEND) who are in Post-16 Education: Responses (see Appendix 3).

- 1) To ask families whose child is educated within South Yorkshire and receives post-16 SEND transport by minibus or taxi to make a contribution of £540 (£10.38 per week) per year towards the cost of travel on the minibus or taxi. (This contribution has been worked out based on the cost of a 16-18 termly bus pass issued by Travel South Yorkshire).**

30% of respondents felt that the amount proposed to charge families was fair. Various reasons for this were given including:

“Our daughter has received the vulnerable student bursary. This could also help towards the cost of her transport.”

“The contribution is a fair price for the service received. The drivers and escorts are friendly professionals who make a difference on the journey, setting the tone for the day.”

Regarding the amount of contribution from parents towards the total cost “seems reasonable with regards to estimated actual cost per year quoted in covering letter.”

For those families who opposed the idea a reoccurring theme was that transport should be provided for free:

“I fully object to the cuts being made to any of the budgets which affect disabled children/adults and their families.”

“Please always let minibuses be free whatever age of people with disabilities, it is not about the money it just should be free life is very very hard indeed.”

Parents and schools raised concerns about families who had more than one child accessing post 16 Special Education Needs transport at the same time, and the impact that the contribution could have on those families:

“I have two children on the Autistic Spectrum who are both in post16 (sic) Education but in different school/settings. Therefore the cost of a contribution would be double. Also if I was to transport them myself, I would not be able to get them both to their places of education on time as they are on opposite sides of the town.”

The consultation asked if families would like the cost of Special Educational Needs transport to be deducted at source and then any remainder funds to be given to families, and the response to this was overwhelmingly positive at **87%**

In addition, when visited, all schools spoken to raised concerns about the threshold for the bursary being very low and that the impact of the cost of transport on families who fell just outside of the bursary threshold would be very high.

- 2) For those whose child is educated outside of South Yorkshire, the contribution that we would be asking families to pay is £700 (£13.46 per week). This reflects the increased equivalent public transport cost.**

The proposal to charge families £700 for those travelling outside of South Yorkshire was questioned in terms of equity by schools and parents who felt that it was disadvantaging students where the council was unable to make provision within the city.

- 3) Families could choose not to continue using transport but take their child to and from school or college and receive a discretionary travel allowance based on the distance travelled. This travel allowance will be discretionary and families will have to meet certain criteria to receive it.**

The consultation also sought views on a parental travel allowance which would mean that families would not have to contribute towards the cost of transport but instead take their child to and from their place of education and receive an allowance for this. The response to this was negative with **82%** of parents/carers stating that this is not something that they would consider.

3.8 Other points raised during the consultation: Using the 16-19 Bursary for Post 16 SEND transport

In discussions with special schools, the proposed use of the bursary towards the cost of transport was understood. The discretionary bursary is intended to be used for transport, although Sheffield City Council has not historically asked families to use it in this way.

It was recognised by schools and colleges that asking families to make a contribution towards the cost of transport may increase the numbers of students applying for the discretionary bursary, which then may impact the amount available for each student. The discretionary bursary fund is money which is given to schools, and although good practice suggests that schools work alongside the Local Authority, Sheffield City Council has no say over how these funds are administered.

3.9 Independent Travel Training

During every meeting /conversation that was had between schools and colleges, staff stressed the importance of Independent Travel Training (ITT) for their students.

One member of staff at Silverdale School stated *“I have nothing but praise for the travel training team, they are dealing with profoundly deaf children, supporting them to overcome barriers.”*

The staff member felt that the benefit extended beyond that, and that through the travel training scheme some students had improved attendance.

“SEND bus travel trained children (sic) attend more because they have been provided with other options so if they miss their bus, they can still come in”.

Whilst the consultation was not around travel training, all families received information on this with the consultation documents. It is proposed that travel training remains a central part of any post 16 travel and transport policy, and that as many students who are able travel independently to and from their place of education and training in order to maximise their independence, lifelong learning and employment prospects

4 RISK ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

4.1 Equality of Opportunity Implications

Decisions need to take into account the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty contained in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. This is the duty to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it

The Equality Act 2010 identifies the following groups as a protected characteristic:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out and highlights a tapering negative impact on poverty and social inclusion for working low income families and/or carers who have an income above the discretionary bursary threshold of £16,190 but beneath £21,000 as they will have pay for provision. A hardship fund is being proposed to mitigate against negative impact.

The full EIA of the proposals is attached as Appendix 4

4.2 Financial and Commercial Implications

The proposal to cease provision of the discretionary zero fare bus pass will reduce the cost to the Local Authority by £84,000. Whilst this change can be introduced in full from September 2017, it has been noted that it may be necessary for some students currently in post 16 education to access the hardship fund in order to guarantee that they are able to continue to attend their education provision (see Section 6.4).

In addition, if all families who have students on post 16 Special Educational Needs transport contribute the full amount of £540 towards the cost of transport (around 200 students) this would generate income of approx. £100,000 p.a. In reality the amount of income is likely to be lower as charging may result in some families finding other travel arrangements; or the use of the hardship fund for some lower income families will result in lower contributions.

In summary, the maximum gross would be £184k p.a. (bus pass saving plus income from family contributions).

The actual level of net saving will be lower depending on the extent to which families are able to access the 16-19 Bursary or apply for reduced contributions through the hardship fund. The number of identified families with more than one child at post 16 provision is fewer than 5% of those accessing Special Educational Needs transport. Until this proposal is introduced it is not possible to know fully how many families will need to access the hardship fund, and thus what actual amount the proposed changes will bring in.

As a prudent estimate, if 50% of the saving is achieved, this would be £92k p.a. (if introduced from September 2017, the saving would be pro rata for the first year).

It is anticipated that administration and collection of the contributions towards transport costs would be dealt with by existing resources.

4.3 Legal Implications

The Council's duties and powers have been set out in detail above.

Sheffield City Council has met its duty to consult on any proposed changes and has ensured that the consultation ran for longer than the statutory required length of time. The proposed changes will bring us into line with the practice of surrounding Local Authorities, and ensure we meet our statutory duty to facilitate the attendance of students in post 16 education.

In exercising its discretionary power to determine what transport and financial support are necessary the Council must do so reasonably and take into account all relevant matters and ensure that the policy does not

differentiate between post 16 providers or institutions in its arrangements. As long as the Council does so it will be acting lawfully.

Sheffield City Council must publish its Post 16 travel and transport policy annually on or by 31 May.

4.4 Other Implications

There are no other implications identified.

5 **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

5.1 Sheffield City Council has maintained discretionary provision regarding its post 16 travel policy for longer than neighbouring authorities. One option was to continue with this provision, however in light of continuing and extensive budget cuts this option was no longer considered sustainable.

5.2 For those whose child is educated outside of South Yorkshire, the contribution that we would be asking families to pay is £700 (£13.46 per week). This reflects the increased equivalent public transport cost

The council considered all the initial proposals which were sent out to families, but in order to decrease inequalities and ensure that no young people were detrimentally disadvantaged the proposal to charge families £700 for travelling outside of South Yorkshire was rejected.

6 **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

6.1 That the Council should cease to provide the discretionary zero fare bus pass for post 16 students with effect from 1/9/2017 and instead request that families who are eligible to apply for and use the 16- 19 Bursary fund to pay for transport. The council will continue to work alongside schools and colleges to offer the necessary support to any families or young people who need help with the application process in order that they are able to access the bursary.

The 16-19 Bursary Fund is to help with education-related costs for students aged 16 to 19 and travel is a key element of this education-related costs. Government guidance states that:

Local authorities may take receipt of 16-19 bursary funding into account in assessing an individual's need for financial help with transport (see statutory duties 1.3).

Whilst it is recognised that the bursary has been used by students in a variety of ways, it remains an appropriate fund for the Council to take into consideration when providing travel assistance (see statutory duties (1.3).

As noted in 1.1.1, all other identified authorities are using their right to take bursary funding into consideration and as such do not automatically provide zero fare bus passes to students in receipt of the bursary.

In addition, as a Local Authority, Sheffield City Council ensures that post 16 students are able to travel at a reduced rate on public transport (currently 80p per journey on buses within Sheffield) with its reduced bus fare scheme via the funding the council contributes to the South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive.

Taking all the consultation responses into account, the Council believe that we should come into alignment with other authorities and cease to provide a discretionary zero fare bus pass for post 16 students. However, the consultation has raised potential issues which we have sought to mitigate (see section 6.5).

The Council will work with schools and colleges throughout the summer term 2017 to ensure that students who are eligible have all the information and support that they need to apply for the bursary. Following any policy change, the council, across all relevant services, will continue to offer the necessary support to any families or young people who need help with the application process in order that they are able to access the bursary.

Other responses from parents included concerns that students in post 16 education should not be given money and should instead be given a bus pass. We recognise parents' concerns and there is an option for families to purchase bus passes from South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive if this best their family's needs.

- 6.2** To cease to provide completely free post 16 Special Educational Needs transport. Whilst not asking families to pay the full cost of Special Educational Needs transport, it is proposed to ask all families for a contribution of £540 per year regardless of the location of their education provision (The weekly cost over the year would be £10.38). A variety of payment options to meet family's needs will be available. Families who are eligible for either the vulnerable or discretionary bursary will be expected to apply and use this fund towards the cost of transport.

Sheffield City Council is committed to providing Special Educational Needs transport for eligible post 16 students in order to facilitate their attendance at school/college. Whilst recommending that families pay a contribution of £540 per year, we acknowledge the need for these payments to be able to be made in a variety of ways, monthly, termly or annually, and will ensure that a range of payment options are available for families.

It is proposed that students who are eligible use the 16-19 Bursary Fund to pay the contribution of £540 for Special Education Needs post 16 transport. **87%** of respondents stated that it would be a good idea for this contribution to be deducted at source. It is therefore proposed that the Council works with schools so that if possible students who access the discretionary

bursary via the Council's administrative function have the cost of transport removed before any remainder funds are given to families.

As noted in 6.1, the Council will work with schools and colleges throughout the summer term 2017 to ensure that students who are eligible have all the information and support that they need to apply for the bursary. Upon implementation of any policy change, the council, across all relevant services, will continue to offer the necessary support to any families or young people who need help with the application process in order that they are able to access the bursary.

6.3 To continue to support Independent Travel Training and to ensure that it remains a central part of the post 16 travel and transport policy. To ensure that as many students who are able, travel independently to and from their place of education and training in order to maximise their independence, lifelong learning and employment prospects.

Sheffield City Council recognises the life changing and life enhancing impact of all levels of independent travel and will continue to provide a free travel training programme for all of those who are deemed suitable. In order to support children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities to live happy, healthy and fulfilling lives, our travel training offer extends not just to those who can reach full independence but also to facilitate the maximum level of independence each child and young person can accomplish.

6.4 To create and administer a hardship fund in order to mitigate the impact on those families with students in post 16 education who may be significantly affected by these proposals. Those who could access the fund may include:

- Families with siblings attending post 16 education at the same time, who are both on Special Educational Needs transport
- Low wage working families who have children on Special Educational Needs post 16 transport
- Young people who are mid-way through their course on 1st September 2017, for whom the changes will have a negative impact on their studies.

As noted throughout this Cabinet report, the Council is committed to ensuring that all Sheffield children and young people are able to reach their full potential, and it is determined to ensure that this change in policy enables students to access education. This hardship fund will take into consideration the individual family circumstances, and will be dealt with on a case by case basis.

It is proposed that the hardship fund will also be used to ensure that young people who will be mid-way through their course on 1st September 2017, for whom the changes will have a negative impact on their studies, are able to access this fund if necessary to ensure their continued attendance. This

will be dealt with by officers upon families request on an individual basis. The hardship fund will also be available for students if there is a funding gap between their bursary and the cost of a student's travel.





We do not know how many students may need support from the hardship fund who are currently mid-way through their post 16 education, as we have not historically asked students to fund their fare in this way (see section 4.2).

6.5 To publish the changed policy by the 31 May and to implement the policy changes from 1st of September 2017. To delegate authority to the Executive Director of Children Young People and Families to implement these recommendations

There is a duty on local authorities to publish annual Post 16 Transport Policy Statement (see section 1.5). The deadline for this is the 31 May each year. Sheffield City Council has made the decision to implement these changes later than many other local authorities, including our neighbouring authorities. It is proposed that these changes are introduced in September 2017.

Finally, we would like to thank all those families, schools, colleges and voluntary sector organisations who took the time to give us their views and suggestions which in turn have helped to shape our proposals.

Appendix

Appendix Item Number	Description	Document
1	Bursary information sent to families as part of the consultation	 Bursary guidance leaflet final.pdf
2	Questionnaire one: Home to school travel support discretionary zero fare bus pass consultation- results	 Home to school travel support discretionary ;
3	Questionnaire two : Home to School Travel Support for Young People with a Special Educational Need or Disability (SEND) who are in Post 16 Education	 young people with SEND post 16 transpor
4	EIA	 EIA 2014_15 - Post 16 Home to school tra