



Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

Time and Date

11.00 am on Thursday, 10th November 2016

Place

Committee Room 2 - Council House

Public Business**1. Apologies****2. Declarations of Interest****3. Minutes** (Pages 3 - 4)

The minutes of the former Cabinet Member for Education meeting held on 20th April 2016 are attached for information.

4. Education Travel Assistance Policy Changes - Public Consultation
(Pages 5 - 44)

Report of the Executive Director of People

5. Outstanding Issues

There are no outstanding issues.

6. Any Other Items of Public Business

Any other items of public business which the Cabinet Member decides to take as matters of urgency because of the special circumstances involved.

Private Business

Nil

Chris West, Executive Director, Resources, Council House, Coventry

Wednesday, 2 November 2016

Note: The person to contact about the agenda and documents for this meeting is Michelle Salmon, Governance Services, Tel: 024 7683 3065, E-mail: michelle.salmon@coventry.gov.uk

Membership: Councillor K Maton (Cabinet Member)

By invitation: Councillor P Male (Shadow Cabinet Member)

Please note: a hearing loop is available in the committee rooms

If you require a British Sign Language interpreter for this meeting
OR if you would like this information in another format or
language please contact us.

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Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet Member for Education held at 2.30 pm on
Wednesday, 20 April 2016

Present:

Members: Councillor D Kershaw (Cabinet Member)
 Councillor J Blundell (Shadow Cabinet Member)
 Councillor S Thomas (Deputy Cabinet Member)

Employees (by Directorate):

People H Blevins, M Halpin, K Nelson

Resources M Salmon

Public Business

25. Declarations of Interest

There were no disclosable interests made.

26. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 12th February 2016 were agreed and signed as a true record. There were no matters arising.

27. Determination of School Terms and Holidays 2017 - 2018

The Cabinet Member for Education considered a report on the outcome of the public consultation on the School Terms and Holidays dates for 2017/2018 and requested agreement of the Calendar for 2017/2018.

Currently the Local Authority was required to set term and holiday dates for community schools, community special schools, voluntary controlled schools, pupil referral units and maintained nursery schools. All schools in England were free to decide when their school day should start and end.

Governing bodies were required to set term and holiday dates in foundation and voluntary aided schools. The academy trust was responsible for the duration of the school year and term and holiday dates for academies and free schools.

The public consultation on the Coventry school terms and holidays dates 2017/2018 took place from 10 March to 24 March 2016 and there were 515 valid replies to the consultation. The most popular of the three options available was Option 1 with pupils beginning their Christmas holidays on Thursday 21 December 2017. This was also the preferred option of other West Midlands Authorities.

Details of the three options for school terms and holidays dates 2017/2018 were set out in the Consultation Document, attached as Appendix 1 to the report.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Member for Education:

- (1) Following consideration of the outcome of the public consultation on School Terms and Holidays adopts Option 1 as the School Terms and Holidays Programme 2017/2018 for Community, Voluntary Controlled and Community Special Schools and Maintained Nursery Schools.**
- (2) Invites the Catholic and Church of England Diocesan Authorities and the Governors of Trust Schools and Academies to recommend the same calendar for their schools.**

28. Adult Education Service Fees Strategy - Academic Years 2016-2017

The Cabinet Member for Education considered a report of the Executive Director of People that sought approval for the Adult Education Service Fee Strategy for the academic year 2016-2017, based on the requirements of Skills Funding Agency funding and following the changes approved on 10 March 2015 in relation to Adult Education Service fees for 2015-2016 academic year.

The proposed amendments/changes to the fee structure related to:

- Accredited courses funded through the Skills Funding Agency's Adult Skills Budget: workplace based courses; and classroom based courses (non-loans). The discrete courses for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities were not being offered for 2016-2017.
- Non-accredited Community Learning courses: full fees; Passport to Leisure and Learning fees; 60 plus fees; courses incurring additional tutor resource costs; and introductory courses offering progression on to vocational courses.
- Other fees and charges: crèche; and transport

The Cabinet Member acknowledged the work carried out by Adult Education Service officers, led by Head of Service, Heather Blevins. He referred to the 'Good' Ofsted rating that had been achieved for the Coventry Adult Education Service in November 2013 and more recently the 'Good' Ofsted rating for the Adult Education Service in Warwickshire, for which Heather was also responsible. To obtain this recognition for both services was a considerable achievement. The Cabinet Member thanked the Head of the Adult Education Service and her Teams for all their hard work and asked that this be passed on to the officers concerned and also placed on record.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Member for Education approves the Adult Education Service Fee Strategy for the academic year 2016-2017.

29. Outstanding Issues

There were no outstanding issues.

30. Any Other Items of Public Business

There were no other items of public business.

(Meeting closed at 3.45 pm)



Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

10 November 2016

Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member for Education and Skills - Councillor K Maton

Director Approving Submission of the report:

People

Ward(s) affected:

All

Title:

Education Travel Assistance Policy Changes – Public Consultation

Is this a key decision?

No – although this matter affects all wards, the proposals are for approval of a period of consultation and therefore not a key decision.

Executive Summary:

Coventry City Council has statutory responsibilities for travel assistance for eligible children and young people. However, it currently over-provides traditional forms of transport for children and young people compared to statutory duties and the provision made by other local authorities.

There are two key consequences of this. Firstly, some children and young people are missing out on the opportunity to develop independent travel skills. Independent travel skills gained in adolescence can be taken forward into adult life. Secondly, there is significant forecast overspend on the Council's Home to School Transport budget (2016/17 quarter 1 forecast £3.5m spend against a £3.1m budget). Current policies and practice are not aligned with national statutory duties.

This report recommends a public consultation on a revised travel assistance policy (for school aged children and young people aged 5-16 years old) and an amendment to the existing post 16 travel assistance policy that includes the levying of a travel assistance charge for post-16 travel with exemption for low-income families.

Recommendations:

The Cabinet Member for Education and Skills is recommended to approve a public consultation from 21st November 2016 to 13th January 2017, leading to a report back to the Cabinet on 7th March 2017, on the following:

- a) A revised Travel Assistance Policy (Statutory School Age Children) which aligns the statutory walking distance eligibility criteria to national levels and has a stronger focus on the Council's

travel assistance on public transport and innovative travel options aimed at reducing dependence on minibus and taxi options as appropriate.

- b) A new Travel Assistance Policy for post 16 and post 19 students that fully reflects current statutory requirements. This policy includes a contributory charge towards the cost of travel assistance for all post-16 students whose families do not meet the criteria for low income household concessions.

List of Appendices included:

Appendix 1: New Travel Assistance Policy (for children aged 5-16 years old of school age)

Appendix 2: New Post 16 and Post 19 Travel Assistance Policy for students accessing Further Education

Appendix 3: Equality Community Analysis

Background papers:

None

Other useful documents:

- Department for Education: Home to school travel and transport guidance – Statutory guidance for local authorities July 2014
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/445407/Home_to_School_Travel_and_Transport_Guidance.pdf
- Department for Education: Post-16 transport to education and training – Statutory guidance for local authorities (February 2014).
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/277016/Post-16_Transport_Guidance.pdf

Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?

No

Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?

No

Will this report go to Council?

No

Report title: Education Travel Assistance Policy Changes – Public Consultation

1. Context (or background)

1.1 Coventry City Council has a statutory responsibility to assist eligible children and young people of statutory school age to travel to school. In certain limited circumstances, this duty may extend to young people age 16 to 18 and 19 to up to 25, attending Further Education institutions. It is evident that the Council currently makes provision for children and young people who do not meet the statutory eligibility criteria and that the mode of travel assistance is commonly in the form of door to door minibus or taxi.

1.2 Current policies and practice do not align with current national statutory duties and guidance. The Council does not currently have a post 19 Travel Assistance policy, this is a new statutory requirement.

1.3 There are two key consequences of current practice. Firstly, children and young people who have the potential to travel independently are not given the opportunity to do so and thereby are not equipped with the necessary skills to independently access their community and the workplace in adulthood. Secondly, over-provision has resulted in a significant projected overspend on the Council's Home to School Transport budget (2016/17 quarter 1 forecast spend of £3.5m on a £3.1m budget). The average spend per child, is currently £4,260 per annum. This expenditure is set in the context of significant financial cuts to the Council's budget.

1.4 Children and young people of statutory school age (5-16 years old)

1.5 Statutory guidance and duties

1.5.1 The Council has a statutory duty to make such travel arrangements as it considers necessary for eligible children and young people to facilitate their attendance at a qualifying school free of charge. These are set out in the Education Act 1996 and in the Department for Education's *Home to School Travel and Transport Guidance – Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities July 2014*.

1.5.2 The guidance states that in order to comply with their home to school transport duties local authorities must promote the use of sustainable travel and transport and make transport arrangements for all eligible children. There are four factors that the Council needs to take into consideration when assessing eligibility: statutory walking distance, SEN, disability or mobility, unsafe routes and extended rights.

1.5.3 Statutory walking distance

A child will be an eligible child where the distance from the child's home to the nearest qualifying school with available places that provides an education suitable to the child's age, ability and aptitude and any special educational needs, exceeds statutory walking distances.. Statutory walking distance is measured by the shortest route along which a child, accompanied as necessary, may walk safely. Local authorities must offer travel assistance according to the statutory walking distance criteria if:

- a) The child lives 2 miles or more away from their nearest suitable school measured by statutory walking distance and they are under 8 years of age (and of compulsory school age); or
- b) The child or young person lives 3 miles or more away from their nearest suitable school measured by statutory walking distance and they are 8 years of age or over (and of compulsory school age).

1.5.4 **SEN, disability or mobility**

Local authorities must provide travel assistance for all children who cannot reasonably be expected to walk to school because of their mobility problems or because of associated health and safety issues related to their special educational needs (SEN) or disability. Eligibility for such children should be assessed on an individual basis to identify their particular travel assistance requirements.

1.5.5 **Unsafe routes**

Local authorities must make travel assistance arrangements for all children who cannot reasonably be expected to walk to their nearest suitable school because the nature of the route is deemed unsafe to walk.

1.5.6 **Extended rights (low family income)**

This refers to eligibility related to family income levels. Local authorities must offer free travel assistance where pupils are entitled to free school meals or if their parents are in receipt of maximum Working Tax Credit if there is compliance with any of the following:

- a) The nearest suitable schools is beyond 2 miles from the home address (for children over the age of 8 and under 11);
- b) The school is between 2 and 6 miles from the home address (if aged 11-16 and there are not three or more suitable nearer schools);
- c) The school is between 2 and 15 miles from the home address and is the nearest school preferred on grounds of religion or belief (aged 11-16).

1.6 **Current delivery and approach**

1.6.1 The Council currently provides travel assistance to 711 children and young people aged 5-16 years with special education needs and disabilities which is forecast to cost £2.86m in 2016/17 including escort costs. Of this, £0.68m is spent on taxis, £1.96m on minibuses, £0.22m on personal travel budgets. Work has been undertaken over the past 3 months to improve non-policy processes and monitoring to reduce costs.

1.6.2 The Council currently makes provision in excess of its statutory duties. Current policy and practice for children and young people with SEN, disability and mobility eligibility apply a one mile walking distance eligibility for travel assistance to a special school and a two mile walking distance for eligibility to primary schools age 8 to 11. An analysis of transport provision identifies an over-use of door to door taxis and minibuses when public transport options or pick-up points may be suitable.

1.7 **Proposals**

The proposal is that the Council revises its Travel Assistance Policies for children of statutory school age, post 16 and post 19 student. The proposed policy for statutory school age:

- a) Aligns the statutory walking distance eligibility criteria to statutory duty levels;
- b) Makes provision for exceptional circumstances;
- c) Sets out the decision making process for the type of travel assistance offered;
- d) Ensures that choice is tempered with the need to ensure the efficient and effective use of public resources;
- e) Promotes independent travel, the use of public transport and other innovative travel options
- f) Reviews the current personal travel budget to equalise entitlement to 45p per mile within City and 25p per mile out of City

- 1.7.1 An analysis of the impact of applying the proposed national statutory walking distance criteria to current users, identifies that 343 children from a cohort of 711 children and young people would no longer qualify for travel assistance on the grounds of distance. However, it is estimated that 225 of the 343 children would satisfy other eligibility criteria as a consequence of the severity of their SEN or mobility. It is estimated that 118 children and young people would no longer qualify for travel assistance. **This would mean that if changes were implemented, an estimated 118 (16%) of current users would not qualify for travel assistance as a result of these proposals.**
- 1.7.2 These estimates are based on the assumption that children in the following categories are likely to remain **eligible** for travel assistance: profound and multiple learning difficulties; severe learning disability; complex communication disorder that has a severe impact on cognition; sensory impaired (registered blind or profoundly deaf); severe social, emotional and mental health difficulties requiring supervision to secure personal safety, physical disability that significantly impedes mobility e.g. wheelchair users.
- 1.7.3 Children with assessed needs in the following categories, are likely to be **ineligible for** travel assistance as a consequence of their SEN: moderate learning difficulties; speech and language difficulties; moderate social communication difficulties; moderate social emotional mental health difficulties moderate visual Impairment; moderate hearing loss. However, current users may still meet eligibility criteria in other areas, specifically distance, low income/extended rights, unsafe route or exceptional circumstances.
- 1.7.4 Where children are ineligible, parents/carers would take responsibility for ensuring their child's attendance at school.
- 1.7.5 The application of the policy would require families to formally apply for travel assistance on an annual basis. The Council would assess the most appropriate way of delivering travel assistance on an individual level applying the criteria set out in the policy. It is envisaged that this process would provide an opportunity for families independently or together to identify innovative modes of alternative travel and that Council arranged provision would prioritise the development of independent travel skills and the use of public transport.
- 1.7.6 It is proposed that the new policies would be implemented from 1 April 2017 onwards for new applicants and that the policy would be fully implemented for existing users with effect 1st September 2017.

1.8 **Travel Assistance for 16-18**

1.8.1 **Statutory guidance**

1.8.2 The Council's statutory duties are set out in the Education Act 1996 and the DfE publication: *Post-16 transport to education and training – Statutory guidance for local authorities (February 2014)*. This guidance 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; and
- ensure that, if support for access is required, this will be assessed and provided where necessary.

1.8.3 Key factors set out are: the needs of those who could not access education or training provision if no arrangements were made; the need to ensure that young people have reasonable opportunities to choose between different establishments at which education and training is provided; the distance from the learner's home to establishments of

education and training; the journey time to access different establishments; the cost of transport to the establishments in question; alternative means of facilitating attendance at establishments; non-transport solutions to facilitate learner access; and preferences based on religion.

1.8.4 The statutory guidance states that local authorities may ask learners and their parents for a contribution to transport costs. The guidance goes on to say that when exercising this discretion local authorities should:

- ensure that any contribution is affordable for learners and their parents
- ensure that there are arrangements in place to support those families on low income
- take into account the likely duration of learning and ensure that transport policies do not adversely impact particular groups.

1.8.5 The guidance also states local authorities may take receipt of 16-19 bursary funding into account when assessing an individual's need for financial help with transport.

1.8.6 **Current delivery and approach**

1.8.7 The Council currently provides travel assistance to 110 young people aged 16 years and over at a forecast cost for 2016/17 of £0.60m. Of this, £0.52m is forecast spend on minibuses, £0.05m on taxis and £0.03m on Personal Travel Budgets.

1.8.8 Where young people have high needs, travel options are considered on an individual basis. Young people with high, needs but able to travel more independently, receive a bus pass. More vulnerable young people with physical/cognitive issues are offered assisted transport. Where young people are transported to out of area settings, they travel together in the same taxis where possible and drop off and collection times are harmonised to minimise journeys and costs.

1.8.9 The Council's approach is aligned to the statutory guidance, however, Coventry City Council does not currently ask for a parental contribution towards travel assistance.

1.8.10 The forecast average cost per young person of post-16 transport in Coventry for 2016/17 is £5,450.

1.9 **Proposals**

1.9.1 The proposed change would require learners and their parents, who can afford to pay, to contribute to the transport costs.

1.9.2 The proposed contribution is £600 per year, which can be paid in half-termly instalments of £100. The proposed contribution is based on West Midlands Local Authorities average charge. It is proposed that families on low income are exempt from this charge.

1.9.3 Subject to approval, it is proposed that the contributory charge would apply from 1 September 2017 for all post-16 students applying for travel assistance.

2. **Options considered and recommended proposal**

2.1 The option of no change in respect of travel assistance for statutory school age has been considered. However, this would mean a continuance of over-provision resulting in a growing over-spend against budget. All other West Midlands Local Authorities have successfully applied statutory eligibility criteria, evidencing that a change in policy is both justified and will meet need. A continuance of current provision will impede the development of independent travel skills. This option is not therefore recommended.

2.2 The option of no change in respect of post 16 travel assistance has been considered. However, non-SEN students have to take responsibility for securing attendance at post 16 provisions within school or college at their own expense. The Equality Act demands equality of access for disabled people, it does not require services to provide an advantage. Students with a disability receive mobility allowances to secure their access to the community, it is therefore difficult to justify delivering a free service. This option is not therefore recommended. The proposed contribution of £600 per annum is deemed to be affordable and represents an average of other local authorities contribution levels.

3. Results of consultation undertaken

3.1 No formal consultation has taken place. However, stakeholder workshops have been held to seek the views of young people, parents and schools in developing the proposals.

3.2 Cabinet Member is asked to approve a public consultation on these proposals. The results of the consultation undertaken will be reported to Cabinet on 14th February 2017.

4. Timetable for implementing this decision

Date	Action
21 st November 2016	Consultation launched
21 st November 2016– 13 th January 2017	Opportunities for children, young people and parents to respond to the consultation through a range of accessible events
13 th January 2017	Consultation ends (consultation guidance is that consultations should last at least 28 working days during term time and that the consultation should be extended to take into account of any school holidays that may occur during the period of consultation).
21 st November 2016- February 2017	On-going analysis of consultation feedback leading to cabinet report
7 th March 2017	Cabinet decision
1 st April 2017 onwards	Phased implementation
1 September 2017	New policy applies for pupils starting at a new school
1 September 2017	New policy applies for post-16 students

5. Comments from Executive Director of Resources

5.1 Financial implications

Spend on SEN Transport provision in 2015/16 amounted to £3.8m against a budget of £3.3m resulting in a £0.5m overspend. Spend has reduced in 16/17 as a result of work to review processes and find efficiencies within the existing policy and the forecast spend was £3.5m at quarter 1. However the forecast overspend for 16/17 is still £0.4m which is due to planned budgetary savings being applied.

Based on the proposed changes to the travel assistance policy it is forecast that of the 821 children and young people currently receiving travel assistance 118 school age children and 10 post 16 children will no longer receive assistance. The table below details the forecast reductions in spend:

Proposal	Forecast
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	Reduction (£m)
Change to distance criteria in line with statutory guidance	0.43
Revision of door to door transport to the provision of bus passes for secondary age young people attending special school provision, able to access public transport	0.06
Revised mileage rate for Personal Transport Budgets	0.08
Proposed charging policy for Post 16 (Sixth form age)	0.03
Total Forecast Reduction in Spend	0.60

The forecast reduction in spend for 2017/18 is forecast to be in the region of £0.40m as a result of the proposed September 2017 implementation. The full forecast reductions will be realised from 2018/19 ongoing.

The methodology used to forecast savings is based on estimated reductions in the numbers of children and young people transported as a result of the proposed changes to eligibility criteria. This will result in reductions to routes and also vehicles. The actual savings delivered will be affected by the cohort of young people being transported and the ability to reduce routes and vehicles in line with estimates.

Once the policy changes are implemented the SEN Transport budgets will be monitored through the budgetary control process to evaluate the actual level of savings achieved. In addition to the proposed policy changes work continues to promote existing alternative transport options such as personal transport budgets (PTB) and independent travel training which will help to promote independence for pupils and assist in reducing spend.

5.2 Legal implications

The Education Act 1996 sets out the Council's statutory duties to promote sustainable modes of travel to meet the school travel needs in its area (s508A). S 508B sets out the councils statutory duties in respect of compulsory school age children who fall to be considered as eligible children and in respect of whom the council has the duty to make such travel arrangements to and from the child or young person's qualifying school as the Council considers necessary free of charge. The Council must publish its general arrangements and policies in respect of transport for children of compulsory school age setting out those arrangements which relate to its statutory duties and those which are provided on a discretionary basis. Where changes to school travel arrangements are proposed the Council is required to consult widely on proposed changes with all interested parties for at least 28 working days during term time, and this period should be extended to take account of any school holiday periods that fall within the 28 day period. The Council is also required by s 509AA of the Education Act 1996 to prepare and publish a transport policy statement setting out the transport arrangements for persons of 6th form age by the 31 May each year. The Council has a duty to consult with stakeholders in the development of that policy statement.

The Council must also set out in a transport policy statement the arrangements that it considers necessary to make in respect of relevant young adults (those with statements, Education Health and Care plans or subject to a learning difficulty assessment aged 19-25).

6. Other implications

6.1 How will this contribute to achievement of the Council's key objectives / corporate priorities (corporate plan/scorecard) / organisational blueprint / Local Area Agreement (or Coventry Sustainable Community Strategy)?

6.2 How is risk being managed?

Risks are being managed through project management processes.

6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?

The impact on the organisation is minimal.

6.4 Equalities / EIA

The Equality and Communities Analysis (ECA) outlined in Appendix 3 sets out the known equality impacts prior to the start of the consultation. These will be updated throughout the consultation and a revised will be included in the cabinet report of 14th February 2017.

6.5 Implications for (or impact on) the environment

The impact on the environment/climate change is minimal. The proposals could lead to fewer vehicle journeys.

6.6 Implications for partner organisations?

There are no specific implications for partner organisations.

Report author(s):

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Contributor/approver name	Title	Directorate or organisation	Date doc sent out	Date response received or approved
Contributors:				
Michelle Salmon	Governance Services Officer	Resources	13/10/16	14/10/16
Jeannette Essex	Head of SEND Services	People	10/10/16	13/10/16
Rob Orton	Accountant	Resources	10/10/16	12/10/16
Sharon Cassidy	SEN Management	People	10/10/16	13/10/16
Richard Adams	Lead Accountant	Resources	10/10/16	12/10/16
Names of approvers for submission: (officers and Members)				
Rachael Sugars	Finance Manager	Resources	12/10/16	17/10/16
Elaine Atkins	Solicitor, Legal Services	Resources	10/10/16	14/10/16
Kirston Nelson	Director of Education	People	12/10/16	17/10/16
Councillor K Maton	Cabinet Member for Education and Skills	-	28/10/16	29/10/16

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Appendices

Appendix 1: New Travel Assistance Policy (for children aged 5-16 years old of school age)

Appendix 2: Post-16 (sixth Form age) Travel Policy

Appendix 3: Equality Community Analysis

APPENDIX 1

Coventry Travel Assistance Policy Statutory School Age (5-16 years old)

Version: For Public Consultation, November 2016

Proposed policy for public consultation

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Coventry City Council (the “Council”) is committed to enabling all children to lead independent healthy lives, feel safe and secure and achieve their full potential. For children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities, this includes enabling them to develop the skills to live an ordinary life in adulthood, and fulfil their entitlement to independent living and employment.
- 1.2 This Policy sets out the entitlement for children and young people of statutory school age (5 to 16), who have special educational needs or a disability to home to school travel assistance. This policy reflects the Department for Education’s *Home to school travel and transport guidance – Statutory guidance for local authorities July 2014*¹.
- 1.3 In determining travel assistance for eligible children and young people, the Council is committed to reducing traffic congestion, improving road safety and reducing the environmental impact of vehicle journeys by promoting the use of alternative forms of travel - such as walking, cycling and use of integrated public transport. In this regard, the Council has adopted the principles contained in the 2016 Local Plan and policy LP98 adopted Supplementary Planning Document – ‘Delivering a more sustainable city’² and works closely with schools to develop School Travel Plans that help to achieve this aim. Wherever possible, in the provision of travel assistance the Council will consider travel options that minimise the number and length of vehicle journeys.

2 Who this policy applies to

- 2.1 This policy applies to all eligible children and young people of statutory school age (5 to 16) who are resident in Coventry and have special educational needs or a disability.
- 2.1 A child’s home is defined as the place where the child is habitually and normally resident in Coventry. Where a child lives at more than one address, the principal home address is the address at which the child spends at least 50% of their time, which would ordinarily be the address the child is registered at whilst attending school, and, where applicable, the address of the parent who is in receipt of Child Benefit or Child Tax Credits for the child.
- 2.2 The Council does not provide travel assistance for children of pre-school age (0-4 year olds) except in exceptional circumstances.
- 2.3 The eligibility criteria for young people age 16 to 25 in further education, is the subject of a separate policy.
- 2.4 This policy covers the provision of home to school travel assistance at the beginning and end of a school day only.

¹https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/445407/Home_to_School_Travel_and_Transport_Guidance.pdf

² http://www.coventry.gov.uk/info/111/planning_policy/2310/local_plan/2

3 Schools covered by this policy

- 3.1 This policy refers to “suitable” and “qualifying” schools. “Suitable” means that the school is suited to the pupil’s age, ability and aptitude and any special educational needs the pupil may have.
- 3.2 Qualifying schools are: community, foundation or voluntary schools; community or foundation special schools, non-maintained special schools, pupils referral units, maintained nursery schools; or city technology colleges (CTC), city colleges for the technology of the arts (CCTA) or academies, including free schools and University Technical Colleges (UTC).
- 3.3 For children with special educational needs, an independent school can also be a qualifying school where this is named on the child’s Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or statement, or it is the nearest of two or more schools named.

4 Eligibility criteria

- 4.1 The Council will take into account the following criteria and considerations (as set out in statutory guidance) to determine whether a child or young person is eligible to receive travel assistance from the Council:

- Statutory walking distance eligibility;
- Extended rights eligibility;
- Special educational needs, a disability or mobility problems eligibility;
- Unsafe route eligibility; and
- Exceptional circumstances.

4.2 Statutory walking distance

- 4.2.1 Statutory walking distance refers to the distance between the child’s home address and their nearest suitable school. The nearest suitable school is taken to mean the nearest qualifying school with places available that provides education appropriate to the age, ability and aptitude of the child and any special educational needs that the child may have. Statutory walking distance is measured by the shortest route along which a child, accompanied as necessary, may walk safely.

- 4.2.2 Children will be **eligible** for travel assistance based on distance if they meet the following criteria:

- a) The child lives at least 2 miles away from their nearest suitable school (as defined at 4.2.1 above) measured by the shortest safe walking distance and they are under 8 years of age); or
- b) The child **or young person** lives at least 3 miles away from their nearest suitable school (as defined at 4.2.1 above) measured by statutory walking distance and they are 8 years of age or over (and of compulsory school age).

4.3 Extended rights eligibility (low income levels)

4.3.1 Extended right eligibility refers to eligibility related to family income levels. The Council will provide travel assistance where pupils are entitled to free school meals or if their parents are in receipt of maximum Working Tax Credit in the following cases:

- a) The nearest suitable schools is beyond 2 miles (for children over the age of 8 and under 11);
- b) The nearest suitable school is between 2 and 6 miles (if aged 11-16 and there are not three or more suitable nearer schools);
- c) The nearest suitable school is between 2 and 15 miles and the nearest school preferred on grounds of religion or belief (aged 11-16).

4.4 Special educational needs, disability or mobility

4.4.1 If a child cannot reasonably be expected to walk to school accompanied by an adult, because of a disability affecting their mobility or associated health and safety issues relating to their special educational needs (SEN), they may be eligible for travel assistance. This is regardless of the distance between home and school. Eligibility will be assessed on an individual basis.

4.4.2 In determining whether a child can reasonably be expected to walk to school, accompanied by an adult, the Council will take into account the maturity of the child and whether it is reasonable to expect a parent to accompany a child of that age.

4.5 Unsafe route eligibility

4.5.1 A child will be eligible for travel assistance if it is agreed that all walking routes inside the distance criteria are judged to be unsafe.

4.6 Exceptional circumstances

4.6.1 Where a child or young person does not meet the eligibility criteria, parents may apply for travel assistance under the exceptional circumstances criteria. Applications will be determined on personal circumstances and consider whether on the evidence provided, a child would not be able to travel to and from school without support and that it would be unreasonable to expect a parent to meet the responsibility of securing attendance.

4.6.2 The following are examples of what would **not** be considered exceptional circumstances:

- Parents/carers work or care commitments
- Parents/carers experiencing difficulties in getting their child to a pick-up point

5 Types of travel assistance

5.1 In determining the form travel assistance will take the Council will consider the following factors:

- The special educational needs, disability or mobility needs of the child;
- The development of independent travel skills;
- The length of journey in distance and travel time;
- The efficient and effective use of public resources.

5.3 The travel assistance offer will include:

- i) **Independent Travel training:** the provision of independent travel training will enable young people to travel independently between home and school utilizing public transport when appropriate.
- ii) **Public Transport:** the provision of a bus pass for the child or if appropriate the child and accompanying adult.
- iii) **Innovative travel arrangements:** these may include a walking bus or cycling allowance.
- iv) **Personal Travel Budget:** A personal travel budget may be agreed with parents to enable them to make arrangements to secure their child's school attendance. This will be calculated at a rate of 45p per mile for journeys within the City and 25p per mile for out of City journeys
- v) **Minibuses and taxis:** Where assessed as essential due to the particular needs of the child or young person, the Council may provide a minibus, taxi or adapted vehicle. Generally, the number of children in each vehicle will be maximised. Route planning may require children to be collected from agreed pick-up points. In these instances pick-up points will be secured at safe and convenient locations, within a reasonable distance from the child's home.

5.4 The Council will ensure that the travel assistance offer is reasonable and meets the need of the child. If a parent chooses not to accept that offer, the Council will not be obliged to offer an alternative option.

6 Escorts

6.1 The Council may determine an escort is necessary to ensure the safety and well-being of children, the safe operation of vehicles and/or the care needs of individual children or young people. This will be determined during the eligibility assessment process.

7 Parental responsibility and preferences

7.1 Parents/carers are responsible in law, for ensuring that their children attend school regularly. If a parent/carer exercises their right to choose a school other than the nearest suitable school, the Council does not have a duty to provide travel assistance. In these circumstances parents/carers will be required to make their own travel arrangements.

7.3 If a family move home and elect to keep their child at a particular school, eligibility for travel assistance will be reviewed, If the school is not the nearest suitable school or the family have moved closer to the school and it is deemed within reasonable walking distance, the child may not meet the eligibility criteria for travel assistance.

8 The Application and Assessment Process

8.1 The application process is designed to be as simple as possible whilst ensuring that full consideration is given to the specific needs of the child or young person. Parents should allow up to three weeks from the date of application to the start of any assistance provided.

8.2 Stage 1: Application

8.2.1 The parent/carer must make a formal application for travel assistance. The application form is available on-line on the Coventry City Council website. Hard copies are available on request.

8.3 Stage 2: Assessment

8.3.1 The application will be assessed against the Council's eligibility criteria. If the criteria is met the Council will then determine the most appropriate type of travel assistance to offer taking into account the factors set out in paragraph 4 of this policy.

8.4 Stage 3: Decision

8.4.1 Following the assessment process, the parent/carer will be informed in writing of the outcome of the application and will be sent details of the travel assistance offer and any contact details they may require.

9 Appeals

9.1 An appeal must be submitted in writing within **28 calendar days** of the letter refusing travel assistance or proposing changes to existing arrangements. Appeals must be sent to the SEN Team, Coventry City Council, Floor 3, Civic Centre 2, Earl Street, Coventry CV1 5RS or by e-mail to SEN@coventry.gcsx.gov.uk within 28 calendar days of receiving the decision not to provide travel assistance. The letter of appeal must provide the reasons for challenging Coventry's refusal of assistance or changes to proposed arrangements and include any fresh documentary evidence.

9.2 Stage 1 – Initial Appeal

9.2.1 The appeal will be considered by a Senior Officer within the SEN Service. The appeal will be reviewed and all evidence submitted will be considered. The original decision may be upheld, overturned or alternative solutions may be identified. If the application is not approved the appellant will be notified of the decision in writing and will be informed of the next and final stage of the appeal process.

9.3 Stage 2 – Final Appeal

9.3.1 The appeal will be considered by an independent appeal panel. Final appeals must be submitted in writing within 28 days of the date of the stage 1 decision. This letter of appeal must provide the reasons for challenging the stage 1 decision and may include new documentary evidence. Appellants will be informed of the final decision in writing.

9.3.2 During the appeals process no new travel assistance will be provided or in the case of existing arrangements, no change will be implemented. A young person will be responsible for ensuring that they attend the educational establishment until the outcome of the appeal is determined. There is no right of appeal if a decision is made to vary the form of travel assistance. There is only a right of appeal if an application for travel assistance is refused or if existing travel assistance is ceased.

10 Removal of support

- 10.1 The Council may remove travel assistance with immediate effect where it is proven that assistance was obtained on the basis of fraudulent or misleading information, or where the young person's individual circumstances have changed, which results in young person no longer being eligible for support or has been assessed as not requiring such support.
- 10.2 The Council expects young people to behave appropriately on transport and must ensure health and safety of all passengers and staff is maintained. Any behavioral issues whilst on transport will be dealt with by the Council in conjunction with young person's educational establishment. Transport may be suspended whilst an investigation is undertaken. In such circumstances, it will remain the responsibility of the parent/carer to ensure that the young person attends the educational establishment in the interim period.

Proposed policy for public consultation

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APPENDIX 2

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Coventry City Council – Post 16 Travel Policy Statement

Version: November 2016 for public consultation

Proposed policy for public consultation

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1 Context

Coventry is a vibrant, compact and accessible city with excellent public transport links which enables the majority of young people studying in Post 16 education excellent access to their chosen provider through efficient and cost effective travel options.

The Council recognises that the future prosperity and well-being of the city depends in part on the achievement of young people in their education to maintain the future vitality and economic development of the city. To that end, this post 16 travel assistance policy is seen as crucial in ensuring that further education is accessible to all students irrespective of their economic or social background.

The Council has a clear aspiration to:

“improve accessibility for the whole community, with particular regards for the needs of disabled people, by promoting new or improved means of public transport, walking and cycling and by reducing reliance on the private car.”

The Council Post 16 Travel Assistance Policy actively promotes:

- Reductions in car usage
- Increased use of walking, cycling and public transport
- Reduced traffic speeds and improved safety particularly for pedestrians and cyclists.

Public Transport is a key element in this strategy.

2 Introduction

- 2.1 Coventry City Council (CCC) is committed to ensuring that young people aged 16-18 are encouraged and supported to continue with their education and training where this is appropriate and suitable to their needs. This will enable young people to acquire the knowledge, skills and experience necessary for their personal development and progression into future employment or Higher Education.
- 2.2 This assistance is available to all young people aged 16-18 entering further education and to continuing learners aged 19 who started the course before becoming 19 years old. It also applies to learners aged 19 –25 with an Education Health and Care Plan who satisfy the eligibility criteria.
- 2.3 This document is the Council's Travel Assistance Statement. The Council is required by the Education Act 1996 to publish a transport policy statement each year, setting out what travel assistance is available from the Council and other bodies, to help young people aged 16-18 (and learners aged 19 to 25 with LDD who satisfy the eligibility criteria) to access post 16 education.
- 2.4 The policy statement supersedes all previous transport arrangements and entitlements. Funding for travel assistance is subject to annual budgets and financial affordability. The Transport Policy Statement will be reviewed annually. This version covers the academic year from 1 September 2017 to 31 August 2018.

3 Eligibility Criteria

- 3.1 You may be eligible for travel assistance to facilitate attendance for the purposes of education and training at: a school; a further education institution; an institution providing further or higher education maintained or assisted by the Council; an establishment funded directly by the Education Funding Agency (e.g. independent specialist providers for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities; a learning provider funded by the Council to deliver accredited programmes of learning which lead to a positive outcome, if **all** of the following statements apply to you.
- a) You are a **resident of Coventry City**.
Learners not resident in Coventry, or who are looked after by another Council but live in Coventry, should refer to their home Transport Policy
 - b) You must be under 19 years (or have begun a particular course of education at the Post 16 educational provider and continued to attend that course (31st August).
*If you have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) which identifies the need for specific travel assistance in exceptional circumstances you may receive travel assistance **up to the age of 25 years**.*
 - c) You **live more than three miles**, by the shortest route, away from your learning provider;
*If you have an Education, Health and Care Plan which identifies the need for specific travel assistance you may receive travel assistance if **you live less than three miles** away from your learning provider.*
 - d) You have a **low household income**.
Travel assistance will be provided only to students whose families or carers in receipt of one of the support payments listed in Appendix A.
 - e) Your chosen **study programme takes place at a publicly funded provider**.
A list of eligible providers is supplied in Appendix A.
 - f) Your **study programme is at foundation learning level, level 1, 2 or 3** (see appendix A for further information).
Your study programme should normally be at a higher level than your previous achievements.
 - g) Your **study programme is full-time** – equivalent to a minimum of 18 hours a week;
Your study programme does not have to last a full academic year.
 - h) Your learning provider is **the nearest provider** that can meet the majority of your needs.
Transport will not be provided on the basis of one subject being unavailable at your nearest learning provider.
- 3.2 Before the Council will consider any application for travel assistance you must demonstrate you have explored and exhausted all available sources of support as set out in section 4.
- 3.3 You will **not** be eligible for travel assistance if any of the following statements applies.
- a) Your study programme is at Level 4 or higher, including a foundation degree.
 - b) You are employed and starting or continuing an apprenticeship.
 - c) Your chosen study programme takes place at a privately -funded organisation.

4 Available Sources of Support

4.1 Fares and Concessions

There are no centrally available subsidies for student travel. However, a wide range of specific fare arrangements is available through transport providers, such as travel cards and special fare offers. See appendix C for useful contacts.

4.2 The 16 - 19 Bursary Fund

4.2.1 The 16-19 Bursary Fund, administered by individual education providers, is available to support any student who faces genuine financial barriers to participation, including transport costs. The 16-19 Bursary Fund has two elements.

4.2.2 Those most in need will be eligible for a **guaranteed bursary** of £1,200 a year. To qualify students must meet at least one of the following criteria:

- Be in receipt of income support;
- Are a care leaver;
- Are in care of a local authority (a 'looked after child');
- If a registered disabled student, be in receipt of both Employment Support Allowance and Disability Living Allowance (due to be replaced by Personal Independence Payment).

4.2.3 To receive the maximum bursary the programme of study must last for 30 weeks or more. If the programme is shorter than 30 weeks, the student may receive less.

4.2.4 Education providers may, at their discretion, distribute any remaining funds to young people in ways that best fit the needs and circumstances of their students. The **discretionary bursary** is targeted at young people facing financial barriers to participation, including transport costs.

4.2.5 All education providers must make available a copy of their 16-19 Bursary Fund policy upon request. Applications should be made directly to the school, college or training provider

4.2.6 If a learner feels aggrieved about how their application for the 16-19 Bursary Fund has been handled, we recommend they should follow the school's /college's /provider's standard complaints procedure.

4.2.7 For further information on the 16-19 Bursary Fund visit <https://www.gov.uk/1619-bursary-fund>. Local providers and contact details are listed in Appendix B.

4.3 Residential Support Scheme

4.3.1 For students aged 16-18, if the Level 2 or Level 3 programme of study being followed is not available locally and is more than 15 miles from the home or more than a two hour return journey away, they can apply for help with the cost of term-time accommodation.

4.3.2 How much assistance is offered will depend on household income and where the education provider is based.

4.3.3 For further information on the Residential Support Scheme, including eligibility criteria, visit <https://www.gov.uk/residential-support-scheme/further-information>

4.4 Residential Bursary Fund

- 4.4.1 Students aged 16-18 may be able to get a bursary towards the cost of accommodation from some specialist residential colleges. This is different from the Residential Support Scheme.
- 4.4.2 Most of these colleges are 'Specialist Residential Centres' for subjects like agriculture, art and design or horticulture. Each has its own eligibility criteria, often including parental income. To apply for assistance you should contact the college directly.

4.5 Support for LDD learners 19+ - Discretionary Learner Support (DLS)

- 4.5.1 If you are aged 19 or over and having trouble meeting the costs of participating in further education at your college, you should ask your provider about the Discretionary Learner Support fund (DLS). This is similar to the 16-19 Bursary Fund.
- 4.5.2 Discretionary Learner Support is available in colleges and sixth form colleges to help with learning costs, including transport.
- 4.5.3 You should apply directly to your learning provider (e.g. your college). How much you get depends on your circumstances. Local providers and contact details are listed in Appendix B.

5 Assistance offered by Coventry City Council

5.1 Principles

- 5.1.1 For the majority of students, post-16 transport needs will be met by local travel schemes operated by local transport providers and/or the applications to the 16-19 Bursary Fund.
- 5.1.2 Where these schemes are insufficient to subsidise the transport costs incurred to attend post-16 education we may provide travel assistance. Learners in receipt of a 16-19 Bursary will be expected to use a proportion of the award towards transport costs. The value of any bursary/grant awarded to the learner must be identified on the application for travel assistance.
- 5.1.3 To qualify for travel assistance the student will be required to demonstrate how their chosen study programme meets their needs and offers academic progression towards their career goals. Support will be provided only to the nearest available school or college where a suitable study programme is available. Coventry City Council will not provide travel assistance to students who choose not to attend the nearest school or college offering a suitable programme. Transport will not be provided on the basis of a single subject being unavailable at the nearest learning provider.
- 5.1.4 Where young people meet the eligibility criteria identified in section 2. Coventry City Council will fund 50% of the cost for the most economical mode of transport.
- 5.1.5 Any transport assistance agreed by Coventry City Council will be paid on a termly basis. The continuation of assistance is subject to satisfactory attendance for the previous term (as confirmed by the education provider).

5.1.6 Students who apply for travel assistance before the start of the academic year in which they reach the age of 19 will remain eligible for the full academic year, subject to remaining on the course. The academic year is 1st September 2017 to 31st August 2018.

5.1.7 Travel assistance will cease on the 1st September immediately after a student reaches his/her 19th birthday except where the student began a particular course of education or training before becoming 19 and continues to attend that course, or where a case is made to disregard the age criteria on the basis of LDD.

5.2 Additional information for students aged 16 – 25 years with learning difficulties and/or disabilities

5.2.1 The Council encourages learners aged 16+ to travel independently on public transport to enable young people to develop the skills for a successful transition into adulthood.

5.2.2 The Council operates an Independent Travel Training Scheme for young people attending special schools and in many cases young people will already have developed these skills during their secondary education. We expect that the parents and carers of young people will continue to practice independent travel throughout the summer holiday prior to starting any study programme.

5.2.3 The Council recognises that independent travel, including the use of public transport, is not always a possibility for students with severe and complex learning difficulties and disability, and additional assistance with travel will be required.

5.2.4 The eligibility criteria (section 2) and principles (section 4) apply, with the following exceptions:

- a. young people with learning difficulties and disability in exceptional circumstances may receive transport assistance up to the age of 25 years; and
- b. may receive assistance for journeys of less than 3 miles.

5.2.5 Travel assistance will be provided only to the nearest available school or college offering a programme of study that will reasonably meet the identified needs of the learner. The study programme must provide an educational or training benefit to the student. Coventry City Council will make this judgement based on discussions held throughout the transition reviews. Coventry City Council will not provide assistance to students who choose not to attend the nearest school or college offering a study programme that reasonably meets these identified needs.

5.2.6 Learners who qualify for travel assistance and who are attending the same provider may be expected to travel together at the start and end of the day. This may mean students will need to be prepared to attend earlier or later than their course starts or finishes. It is the responsibility of the student and/or parents and carers of the student to discuss the programme timetable with the provider.

5.2.7 If the learner is attending residential provision, for example an Independent Specialist College, the travel assistance offered by the Council will be limited to a maximum of one return journey i.e. at the beginning and end of the academic year.

5.2.8 Existing sources of support must be identified at the point of application, including but not limited to any mobility allowance, direct payment and awards made under the 16-19 Bursary Fund, and will be taken into account when making a decision about the level

and type of travel assistance that may be provided. A decision may be taken that additional travel assistance will not be provided.

5.2.9 The Council will expect an average contribution of £600 per academic year from students or their parents towards the cost of transport. The amount of travel assistance offered may depend on household income.

6 Application

6.1 Making an application

6.1.1 Application forms for Post-16 Travel Assistance are available to download from www.coventry.gov.uk. The Scheme operates on an annually reviewed basis. All students are required to apply annually and to confirm their eligibility annually.

6.1.2 Applications for travel assistance should be made before the beginning of the academic year or before the start of the study programme. Travel assistance will only be considered from the date the application for travel assistance is received and cannot be backdated.

6.1.3 The application form will ask for the following information:

- how the eligibility criteria are met
- the name of the education or training provider and whether an offer of a place has been received and accepted
- reasons for the choice of named learning provider;
- what form of travel assistance is sought;
- details of any benefits or support which are or may be relevant to the application;
- details of any exceptional circumstances;
- evidence to support the application.

6.2 The decision

6.2.1 Where the eligibility criteria are met, the Council will decide whether to provide travel assistance and the level and type of assistance that will be offered. Applications which do not meet the above eligibility criteria will only be considered in exceptional circumstances.

6.2.2 In making a decision the Council will have regard to the following:

- a. The needs of those for whom it would not be reasonably practicable to attend a particular establishment to receive education or training if no arrangements were made;
- b. The need to ensure that people in Coventry have reasonable opportunities to choose between different establishments at which education or training is provided;
- c. the Council's general duties to ensure that enough suitable education and training is provided to meet the reasonable needs of 16-18 year olds;
- d. Distance and journey time from the student's home to the learning provider, the cost of transport and alternative means of facilitating attendance at establishments;
- e. The nature of the route or alternative routes which the young person could reasonably be expected to take;
- f. Any preference to attend a particular educational establishment based on religion or belief;

- g. The nature of the young person's special educational needs, disability or learning difficulty;
- h. Anything recorded in an Education, Health and Care Plan or Transition Plan promoting independent travel skills.
- i. Whether there is a nearer learning provider which is suitable and can provide the same or similar qualification(s);
- j. The best use of the Council's resources.

6.2.3 If the eligibility criteria for Travel Assistance is met the Council will choose the travel assistance offer taking into account 5.2.2 above and will offer assistance in the following order of preference:

- Independent Travel Training (if deemed appropriate)*
- Bus Pass
- Assisted transport – you may be expected to travel to a pick up point to access assisted transport

6.2.4 If your application for assistance with transport is refused, you will receive a written notification outlining the reasons for this decision. The letter will tell you that you have a right of appeal and advise you how to exercise that right.

6.3 Changes in circumstance and reviews

6.3.1 Post 16 students (which includes those who started the course of study before their 19 birthday and who remain on that course) in receipt of travel assistance must inform Coventry City Council of any change of circumstance which will (or might) affect their entitlement to assistance.

6.3.2 The Council reserves the right to withdraw travel assistance from post 16 students where:

- a. The education or training provider state that attendance has not been satisfactory (measured over the previous term);
- b. It is proven that assistance was obtained on the basis of fraudulent or misleading information, or
- c. Where changes in the individual or household circumstances of the person of sixth form age result in either the person of sixth form age no longer being eligible for assistance or no longer requiring assistance.

7 Appeals

7.1 Making and appeal

7.1.1 This section outlines the appeal procedure to be used where you believe that the decision made by officers with respect to your eligibility for travel assistance is incorrect. This is not a statutory right of appeal.

7.1.2 An appeal must be submitted in writing within **28 calendar days** of the letter refusing travel assistance or proposing changes to existing arrangements to:-

* If a young person is deemed able to travel independently and travel training is refused the Local Authority is not under a duty to make an alternative offer

7.1.3 Appeals must be sent to the SEN Team, Coventry City Council, Floor 3, Civic Centre 2, Earl Street, Coventry Cv1 5RS or by e-mail to SEN@coventry.gcsx.gov.uk within 28 calendar days of receiving the decision not to provide travel assistance.

7.2 Stage 1

7.2.1 This will be considered by a Senior Officer within SEN Service.

7.2.2 The letter of appeal must provide the reasons for challenging Coventry's refusal of assistance or changes to proposed arrangements and include any fresh documentary evidence.

7.2.3 Your appeal will be reviewed and all evidence submitted will be considered. The original decision may be upheld, overturned or alternative solutions may be identified. If the application is not approved the young person will be notified of the decision in writing and will be informed of the next and final stage of the appeal process.

7.3 Stage 2 – Final Appeal

7.3.1 This will be considered by an independent appeal panel. Final appeals must be submitted in writing within 28 days of the date of the stage 1 decision. This letter of appeal must provide the reasons for challenging the stage 1 decision and may include new documentary evidence.

7.3.2 The young person will be informed of the final decision in writing.

7.3.3 If the young person is unhappy with the decision reached they have a further right of appeal to the Secretary of State if it is considered that the Council has failed to comply with procedural rules or there were any irregularities in the way the appeal was handled.

7.3.4 If the young person considers that the decision is flawed on public law grounds, they may apply for a judicial review.

7.3.5 During the appeals process no new travel assistance will be provided or in the case of existing arrangements, no change will be implemented. A young person will be responsible for ensuring that they attend the educational establishment until the outcome of the appeal is determined.

7.3.6 There is no right of appeal if a decision is made to vary the form of travel assistance. There is only a right of appeal if an application for travel assistance is refused or if existing travel assistance is ceased.

8 Ending of Travel Assistance and Complaints

8.1 Removal of support

8.1.1 The Council may remove travel assistance with immediate effect where it is proven that assistance was obtained on the basis of fraudulent or misleading information, or where the young person's individual circumstances have changed, which results in young person no longer being eligible for support or has been assessed as not requiring such support. It may also cease on the written request of the young person who, if necessary, has made alternative arrangements for them to travel to the education provision.

8.1.2 The Council expects young people to behave appropriately on transport and must ensure health and safety of all passengers and staff is maintained. Any behavioural issues whilst on transport will be dealt with by the Council in conjunction with young person's educational establishment. Transport will be suspended whilst an investigation is undertaken. In such circumstances, it will remain the responsibility of the young person to ensure that they attend the educational establishment in the interim period.

8.1.3 On-going or serious behavioural issues may result in transport arrangements being suspended or permanently removed.

8.2 Complaints

8.2.1 Once travel assistance has been agreed any concerns regarding the daily provision of the service should be made in the first instance to the transport provider, young people will be given these details.

8.2.2 Any formal complaints should be handled through Coventry City Council's Corporate complaints process by contacting:-

Complaints Manager
Coventry City Council
The Council House, Earl Street, Coventry CV1 5RR
<http://www.coventry.gov.uk/comments>

Proposed policy for public consultation

Appendix A: Detailed eligibility criteria Eligible learning and training providers.

Your study programme or training must take place through a publicly-funded provider:

- A publicly-funded school or academy (including a free school or University Technical College (UTC));
- A publicly-funded further education institution, including sixth form college and further education college;
- A local authority maintained or assisted institution providing further or higher education;
- An establishment funded directly by the Education Funding Agency (EFA), including independent specialist providers (ISP) for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities;
- A learning provider that is funded by a local authority to deliver accredited programmes of learning which lead to positive outcomes (this could include colleges, charities and private learning providers).

Eligible Qualifications:

- 1 Level 2 qualifications include: GCSEs, BTEC First Diploma, NVQ Level 2 and functional Skills qualifications at this level.
- Level 3 qualifications include: A Level, Access courses, BTEC National Diploma/Certificate, NVQ Level 3, Higher National Certificate (HNC), Higher National Diploma (HND).

Proof of household income

Travel assistance will be provided only to students whose families or carers provide evidence that they are in receipt of one of the following support payments:

- Income Support; or
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance; or
- Income-based Job Seekers Allowance; or
- Child Tax Credit, provided they are not entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual income (as assessed by HM Revenue & Customs) that does not exceed £16,190; or
- Working Tax credit 'run on' - the payment someone may receive for a further fourweeks after they stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit; or
- Guarantee Element of State Pension Credit; or
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.

Young people who receive Income Support or Income-based Job Seekers Allowance in their own right are also eligible.

Note: A number of the above benefits are being replaced by Universal Credit. This will include: Income Support, Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, Income-related Employment Support Allowance, Housing Benefit, Working Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit.

Appendix B: Useful contacts

Coventry local Providers with Post-16 Provision will supply information on 16-19 Bursary and Discretionary Learner Support (DLS) Applications.

CWT Training	www.cwt.org.uk	02476 231122
City College	www.covcollege.ac.uk	02476 791000
Heart of England	www.hoet.co.uk/full-time-courses	02476 630703
Henley College	http://www.henley-cov.ac.uk	02476 626300
Hereward College	www.hereward.ac.uk/our-offer/	02476 461231
Learndirect	www.learndirect.com/centresearch/centre/details/WM03LC82	02476 662096
MGTS (Midland Group Training Services)	www.mgts.co.uk/	02476 630333
Midland Training & Development	www.midlands.co.uk	02476 796422
Solihull College	www.solihull.ac.uk	0121 678 7000
Warwickshire College	www.warwickshire.ac.uk	01926 318000

For information about school sixth forms see:

https://www.coventry.gov.uk/directory/10/schools_and_their_contact_details

For further information about smaller training providers and third sector organisations offer post 16 provision see:

www.prospects.co.uk

Appendix C: Useful Contacts

Coventry City Council, Education and Inclusion Service

Eligibility for support to travel to FE colleges for young people aged 16-18 with learning difficulties and/or disabilities will be assessed by the Local Authority in line with the eligibility criteria set out in this policy and taking account of the needs that have been identified in the young person's Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP). Young people and their parents/carers should discuss this with their school in the first instance. Travel Assistance will be dealt with by the SEN Team, Civic Centre 2 Floor 3 New Council Offices, Coventry CV1 5RS Tel 02476831614 or e-mail sen@coventry.gcsx.gov.uk

Coventry City Council – Independent Travel Team

The team offer training in the practical skills required to travel independently. They also manage and assess risk by teaching safe practice and road safety and support people to build on their skills and develop their confidence.

Telephone number: 02476 294434. E-Mail: itt@coventry.gov.uk. Website www.coventry.gov.uk/itt

Coventry City Council Transportation (Place Directorate) - Provides information on travel plans and cycle routes.

Transport Policy Senior Officer: Martin Wilkinson - 024 7683 1184

Transport Policy Senior Officer: Nigel Mills – 024 7683 1563

Prospects Careers - This is a service for 13 to 19 year olds (up to 25 for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities) encouraging continuing training at work or through full-time education. They keep full details of educational establishments and courses offered.

Careers Advisers also work from the Coventry Job Shop, Bull Yard, Coventry where there is a drop in service between 9.00 -5.00 pm, Monday to Friday.

www.prospects.ac.uk

National Express - National Express is the main bus operator in Coventry; they provide information on bus travel in Coventry and the West Midlands including details of fares such as all-day and off-peak travel cards, plus route maps and timetables in the local area.

Information can be found at: www.nxbus.co.uk/coventry or the NX Coventry Travel Card and Information Centre, Pool Meadow Bus Station, Coventry.

Coventry City Council
Equality and Consultation Analysis (ECA) Form

In line with the principles of decision making outlined in the City Council Constitution, the Council will ensure that its decision making is open and transparent, and that due regard is given to the Council's obligations and desire to promote equality of opportunity and equal treatment.

Part 1

This part must be completed and before formal consultation is undertaken and must be available during the consultation stage.

Author of this document: Adrian Coles

Name of Service Area/Proposal: Special Education Needs Travel Assistance

Head of Service: Jeannette Essex

Date of completion: 20th October 2016

Background to the planned changes

1. What is the background to the planned changes? Why is this change being considered? *If further information is available on the different scenarios that have been considered as part of this work, provide a link to the public document which contains this information.*

Coventry City Council has statutory responsibilities for travel assistance for eligible children and young people. However, it currently over-provides traditional forms of transport for children and young people compared to statutory duties and the provision made by other local authorities.

There are two key consequences of this. Firstly, some children and young people are missing out on the opportunity to develop independent travel skills. Independent travel skills gained in adolescence can be taken forward into adult life. Secondly, there is significant forecast overspend on the Council's Home to School Transport budget (2016/17 quarter 1 forecast £3.5m spend against a £3.1m budget). Current policies and practice are not aligned with national statutory duties.

The recommendation is for a public consultation on the following proposals:

- a) A revised Travel Assistance Policy (Statutory School Age Children) which aligns the statutory walking distance eligibility criteria to national levels and has a stronger focus on the Council's travel assistance on public transport and innovative travel options aimed at reducing dependence on minibus and taxi options as appropriate.
- b) A new Travel Assistance Policy for post 16 and post 19 students that fully reflects current statutory requirements. This policy includes a contributory charge towards the cost of travel assistance for all post-16 students whose families do not meet the criteria for low income household concessions.

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2. Who do you need to consider as part of this ECA? **stakeholder analysis*

The following are stakeholders:

- Children and young people who currently receive travel assistance from Coventry City Council
- Parents/.carers of children and young people who currently receive travel assistance from Coventry City Council.
- Schools and colleges attended by children and young people who currently receive travel assistance from Coventry City Council
- One Voice Parent/Carer Forum and other support groups

Pre-Consultation Engagement

This section refers to any activities that took place (such as briefings, meetings, workshops, scoping exercises etc.) with stakeholders before the formal consultation period.

3. What engagement activities took place prior to formal consultation and what feedback was received in relation to equality issues?

A workshop took place in February 2016 attended by a range of stakeholders (young people, education professionals, elected members and parents). In this workshop, the objectives of enabling children and young people to develop independent travel skills leading to increased independence coupled with the need for the financial context were discussed. The workshop identified ideas for how these objectives could be taken forward. The fundamental principle of enabling children and young people to develop the independent skills necessary to enjoy an 'ordinary life' are at the centre of Coventry's SEN strategy. This principle was fully endorsed by all stakeholders at a series of inclusion events held during 2015. The proposed Travel Assistance Policies are designed to enable children and young people to develop independent travel skills in preparation for adulthood, whilst taking into account any barriers or challenges in terms of maturity, cognition and mobility.

Analysis of Impact

In this section please ensure that you consider the three aims of the general duty as they affect **protected groups**. These groups are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage/Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy/Maternity
- Race
- Religion/Belief

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- Sexual Orientation

The **three aims of the general duty** require that a public authority, in the exercise of its functions, must have due regard to the need to:

1. Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
2. Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
3. Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it

Note – when identifying potential impacts below, please only include impacts that may exist over and above general impacts that may affect the wider community/population. For example, a reduction in grant to Coventry Citizens Advice would affect all service users through a reduced level of first line advice being available to all – but it would affect the following groups more; age, disability, gender and race as they represent a larger proportion of the clients who use the advice service.

4. Outline below how this proposal/review could impact on protected groups positively or negatively, and what steps (if any) could be taken to reduce any negative impact that has been identified. *NB. only include realistic mitigating actions that could be delivered.*

Age

The table below identifies the impact on children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities according to age. This shows that of the 711 children and young people (aged 5-16 years old) who are currently receiving a service 593 (83.4%) would continue to qualify (a reduction of 118/16.6%) under the proposals for this age range.

	Age 5 – 16 years old eligible for travel assistance	Age 16+ years old eligible for travel assistance	Totals
Current Position	711	110	821
Proposed Position	593	100	693
Differences.	118	10	128

Disabilities

The proposed travel assistance policy, is positive for children and young people with severe and complex learning and physical disabilities as it enables equality of access to educational facilities at a level commensurate with their non-disabled peers.

The proposed travel assistance policy eliminates levels of enhanced service provision for children and young people who have the cognitive and physical ability to independently travel to school, accompanied by an adult when appropriate to equalise entitlement with their non-SEN peer group.

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Gender:

	Males age 5 – 16 using the service	Females aged 5 – 16 using the service	Males Age 16+ using the service	Females Age 16+ using the service	Totals
Current Position	543	168	74	36	821
Proposed Position	449	144	66	34	693
Difference	94 (17%)	24 (14%)	8 (10%)	2 (0.5%)	128 (16%)

Gender reassignment, Marriage/Civil Partnership, Pregnancy/Maternity, Religion/Beliefs

No statistical information is available for these characteristics for children and young people who receive travel assistance or their parents or carers

Race/Ethnicity

Information about race/ethnicity is not available for those who receive travel assistance. However, the overall race/ethnic profile for active case of Coventry children and young people with SEN and Education Health and Care Plans is as follows. There is an assumption that the profile of children and young people currently receiving travel assistance is proportioned in a similar way.

Ethnic Groups	Numbers	%
	1,695	100%
White: British	1,039	61%
White: Irish	7	0%
White Eastern European	1	0%
White: Traveller - Irish Heritage	1	0%
White: Other White	69	4%
Gypsy Roma	12	1%
Mixed/multiple ethnic groups: White and Black Caribbean	55	3%
Mixed/multiple ethnic groups: White and Black African	12	1%
Mixed/multiple ethnic groups: White and Asian	23	1%
Mixed/multiple ethnic groups: Other Mixed	28	2%
Asian/Asian British: Indian	79	5%
Asian/Asian British: Pakistani	108	6%
Asian/Asian British: Bangladeshi	22	1%
Asian/Asian British: Chinese	3	0%
Asian/Asian British: Other Asian	60	4%
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British: African	105	6%
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British: Caribbean	14	1%
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British: Other Black	15	1%

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Other ethnic group: Any other ethnic group	22	1%
Information not available	20	1%

Negative Impact:

The potential negative impact for statutory school age is that some children and young people who are currently in receipt of travel assistance will not be eligible. It is proposed that transitional arrangements are offered for those affected, which will include a phased implementation to enable families to make alternative arrangements. For young people aged 16+ year olds it is proposed that the Council levies a financial contribution charge of £600 per year towards the cost of travel assistance, unless parents are assessed as a low income household.

Positive impacts

The stronger focus on public transport and innovative travel options would mean that as travel options are reviewed (on at least an annual basis) the percentage of eligible children and young people independently accessing public transport options will increase, reducing reliance on minibus and taxis and therefore the Council's carbon footprint

Mitigating Factors

Independent travel training will be offered to students, requiring assistance to build the confidence and skills to access public transport. The policy places an expectation that this will be taken up, when appropriate.

Under the proposals the Local Authority may consider a personal transport budget, where this is financially beneficial to the Council. This option would provide greater choice and control to young people and/or their carer's.

Where Independent Travel Training is not appropriate and due to the child's age, it would not be appropriate for a parent to accompany them on public transport, alternative vehicles may be used e.g. a minibus or taxi.

5. Are there any other vulnerable groups that could be affected? i.e. deprivation, looked after children, carers.

The policy makes provision for exceptional circumstances that can take into account social need

Also include any information about the health/Marmot implications of this proposal. Contact Georgia Faherty (georgia.faherty@coventry.gov.uk or tel. 7683 1950) or Hannah Watts (hannah.watts@coventry.gov.uk or tel. 7683 3973) in Public Health for more information.

There are some positive and some negative implications of this proposal from a health inequalities/ Marmot perspective. By encouraging children and young people to travel independently (walking, or using public transport), this will enable them to develop skills and independence which will benefit them throughout their lives, both by increasing their knowledge and experience of different forms of

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transport which they can continue to use and by increasing their sense of independence and ability to take control over their lives. This will also increase levels of physical activity and result in fewer car journeys, which will lead to better health and wellbeing for children and young people.

At the same time, reducing travel assistance for children and young people to access could create a barrier for some children and restrict access to educational opportunities, and this could lead to poorer educational attainment, which in turn could have long term implications for a child's health, wellbeing and life chances. This has been mitigated in the proposal to some extent by continuing to provide travel assistance to low income families and those who have health or mobility problems. There is a small risk that families who do not meet these criteria will be negatively impacted by the proposal and this may have an impact on the ability of the child to access education and future educational attainment and opportunities, and/or on the resources of families, which may lead to them being less able to meet their health and wellbeing needs.

6. What are the gaps in evidence? Can this be addressed during the consultation stage? If so, how?

The gaps in evidence have been identified above. An understanding of the full impact of these proposals may be gained during the consultation process.

7. What are the likely impacts of this project/review on staff from protected groups?

The impact on staff is unknown at this stage. In the future as fewer minibuses are utilised there could be an impact on the number of drivers and escorts required.

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Part 2

This section should be completed AFTER the consultation stage has been concluded.

Author of this document:

Date of completion:

Post-Consultation

8. Referring to the information detailed in question 4 of Part 1 of the ECA Form, state if the consultation has confirmed the potential impacts identified that were identified. Also detail below any additional information about potential impacts that has been highlighted during the consultation.

Outcome of equality impact

9. Indicate which of the following best describes the equality impact of this project/review:

- There will be **no** equality impact if the proposed option is implemented
- There will be **positive** equality impact if the proposed option is implemented
- There will be **negative** equality impact if the proposed option is implemented but this can be objectively justified
- There will be both **positive and negative** impacts if the proposed option is implemented

Summary of ECA

Write a paragraph below which summarises the key aspects of this ECA.

NB. - This paragraph will be included in the Decision-making Report as well as the end of year ECA report

Where specific objectives have been set for any protected groups around equality impact, also include this information below.

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Next steps

Please send this completed ECA to the Insight Team as follows:

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Jaspal Mann (jaspal.mann@coventry.gov.uk tel. 7683 3112)

Version Control

Version	Date	Summary of changes (Author)
1.0	10 th October 2016	Lisa Harasym
1.1	11 th October 2016	Gemma Tate
1.2	13 th October 2016	Jeannette Essex
1.3	20 th October 2016	Hannah Watts
1.4	20 th October 2016	Wendy Ohandjanian
1.5	20 th October 2016	Adrian Coles