

Cabinet Member for Education

8 April 2015

Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member for Education - Councillor D Kershaw

Director Approving Submission of the report:

Executive Director of People

Ward(s) affected:

All

Title: Feedback from the consultation on potential changes to the eligibility policy for transport for children and young people with Special Education Needs and Disabilities

Is this a key decision?

No - as this report provides feedback on the consultation only there is no impact on communities at this stage

Executive Summary:

On 12 November 2014 it was agreed that a public consultation would be started on possible changes to the eligibility criteria for pupils/students in receipt of Special Educational Needs transport to school/college. The original proposal at that time was to implement any changes from September 2015. This consultation started on 24 November and ran until 23 January 2015.

In December 2014, the Cabinet Member for Education released a statement delaying any possible decisions on revised eligibility criteria. He stated that there would be no changes to the September 2015 criteria and that the consultation would continue in order to gather full public, parental and young people's feedback into proposals. It was made clear at that stage that any changes which may be proposed for September 2016 would be subject to a further period of statutory consultation.

Recommendations:

The Cabinet Member (Education) is requested to:

1. Note the responses received from the consultation and include consideration of these into any further decisions on whether to consult on changes to the eligibility criteria.

List of Appendices included:

1. Consultation document used in consultation meetings (amended slightly following Cabinet Member statement in December)
2. Table of results of web responses
3. Details of the themes emerging from the seven public consultation events across the City.

Background papers

None

Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?

Scrutiny considered the original proposal as part of their meeting on 27 November 2014. This was prior to the Cabinet Member statement in December 2014.

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: Feedback from the consultation on potential changes to the eligibility policy for transport for pupils/students with Special Education Needs and Disabilities

1. Context (or background)

- 1.1 On 12 November 2014 the Cabinet Member for education agreed to initiate a consultation on changing the eligibility criteria for school/college transport for pupils/students with special education needs and disabilities. Consultation started on 24 November 2014 and ended on 23 January 2015.
- 1.2 The consultation was initiated following the Department for Education issuing new statutory guidance on the provision of school travel assistance in 2014. Coventry City Council currently offers a greater entitlement than that which is statutorily required. Current mainstream travel assistance is in line with the statutory minimum required by the Department of Education. The consultation was considering bringing the eligibility for pupils with Special Education Needs and Disabilities in line with the statutory minimum.
- 1.3 At the moment, approximately 1000 children and young people qualify for some form of travel assistance (minibuses, taxis or personal travel budgets) under the revised proposals, an estimated 270 under 16's would no longer have been eligible for any assistance and an estimated 65 post 16s would have been charged for any transport they received. (The reason this is estimated is because an assessment of eligibility based on needs of the child/young person would need to take place to determine who does receive assistance)
- 1.4 On 9 December 2014 following some feedback to the consultation, the Cabinet Member for Education announced that plans to revise eligibility from September 2015 would not be progressed. He was keen, however that the consultation continued so that people could give their views of possible changes to eligibility so that these could be considered in any future decision making.

2. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 2.1 The consultation focused on identified areas where savings could have been made These were:

- a) To cease transport provision for early years (pre– reception) pupils.

This currently costs £70k for a full year. The transport currently provided goes to the specialist ASD provision at Larch House (on the Corley Site), to Limbrick Centre for youngsters with special needs and to Cannon Park Annex for youngsters with hearing and visual impairment. Additionally all of the broad spectrum primary special schools can have nursery age youngsters and currently these are transported

- b) To cease free post 16 transport for schools and colleges (except in cases of a pupil with a severe learning disability)

This currently costs an estimated cost of £190k for a full year.

- c) To introduce charging for any post 16 transport which is provided

The proposal is to introduce a charge equivalent to a termly “Centro” 16-18 bus pass for any transport provided.

- d) To align the distance criteria for automatic eligibility for travel assistance for pupils with SEND to the same qualifying distance criteria as mainstream pupils.

For those pupils with SEND who no longer receive automatic eligibility based on distance, there will be an individual assessment to determine whether travel assistance is required.

3. Results of consultation undertaken

- 3.1 This paper outlines in detail the consultation responses received. There were 7 consultation events held at various venues across the City. The venues and attendance details are in the table below:

Date	Location	Numbers attended
Tuesday 2 December 2014	Sherbourne Fields School	32
Wednesday 3 December 2014	Corley Centre	9
Tuesday 6 January 2015	Hereward College	7
Wednesday 7 January 2015	Alderman’s Green School	2
Thursday 8 January 2015	Baginton Fields School	14
Thursday 8 January 2015	Diamond Room 2	1
Monday 12 January 2015	Woodfield School	2

- 3.2 In addition to the consultation events there was an online questionnaire to which 139 people responded. Most of them (113) responded before the announcement by the Cabinet Member to not implement from September 2015.

- 3.3 Overall, once the Cabinet Member made his announcement, there was a significant reduction in engagement with the consultation.

3.4 Summary of responses

3.4.1 Scrutiny Board

The proposals were discussed at the Education and Children Scrutiny Board (2) meeting on 27 November 2014. Members raised a number of questions and issues. They were concerned at the impact of ceasing transport for pre-school children and the negative effect that could have on their development and success in future. They were also concerned about the assessment criteria to establish whether travel assistance would be provided when the distance criteria was not met. They also wanted further clarity on the make-up of the appeal panel for cases where travel assistance was not granted.

3.4.2 Online

From the online survey as well as from feedback at consultation events, it was very clear that those parents, staff and members of the public in attendance were largely opposed to the changes. Less than 2% of the online respondents who indicated an answer said the changes would have a positive effect. Nearly 85% said it would have a negative effect with the remainder unsure. An allocation of the reasons given by those who added text to the online response is included at **Appendix 2**.

3.4.3 Events

Similarly at the events there was considerable opposition to the proposals with many areas of concern raised. The main focus was the implications of removing travel assistance and what that would mean for families as well as the assessment criteria by which travel assistance was allocated where the distance criteria was not met. Each consultation event had very similar concerns raised. Details of the themes of these concerns are given at **Appendix 3**.

At each event attendees were asked to suggest alternative ways to reduce the costs of travel assistance, but there was very little input to those discussions. Extensions to independent travel training were not generally popular.

3.4.4 Direct emails / correspondence

There were few direct emails / letters received but these were all in opposition to the proposals. The issues raised included costs of alternatives and preventing young people being able to access appropriate provision.

3.4.5 Feedback from young people

Young people at Corley centre were invited to give feedback directly through the staff. This was consolidated and fed back. The issues raised by these young people focused on cost of transport, the fact that there is no direct bus service to Corley, concerns about bus travel in terms of being victimised and concerns about what would happen when arrangements fell through. This group did however offer some helpful suggestions around supported group travel to / from Pool Meadow with a recognised escort.

3.4.5 Assessment criteria – clarity provided during consultation period

As described above some of the feedback received was concerned with the criteria for deciding on whether a young person who did not receive travel assistance based on distance could in fact still be eligible for assistance. As this

concern was raised in a number of meetings, in late December a draft assessment criteria document was created and shared at later consultation events. This draft document, is at **Appendix 4**.

4. Timetable for implementing this decision

- 4.1 There is currently no timescale for implementation as it has been agreed that no changes will be implemented from September 2015. Were the Council to wish to change eligibility from September 2016, then a further statutory consultation would need to be held of 28 working days not including school holidays and in time to allow for publication of the policy by 31 May 2016.

5. Comments from Executive Director of Resources

5.1 Financial implications

Spend on SEN Transport provision in 2013/14 amounted to £3.4m against a budget of £3.2m resulting in a £0.2m overspend. This overspend is forecast to continue at the same level in 2014/15 and could increase slightly due to increased special school placements. Significant actions have already been taken to reduce the transport overspend which previously stood at £0.8m overspend.

The review of SEN transport forms part of the SEND fundamental service review which has an overall saving target of £1m. £0.7m of the savings target has already been achieved with the forecast transport savings expected to meet the majority of the shortfall in 2015/16.

As a result of the political decision to not implement changes in September 2015 the savings target will not be achieved. One off Corporate resource has been identified to meet this shortfall in 2015/16, however savings will need to be identified to meet the shortfall in 2016/17.

5.2 Legal implications

The home to school travel and transport guidance: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities (July 2014) states that local authorities should consult widely on any proposed change to their local policies on school travel arrangements with all interested parties. Consultations should last for at least 28 working days during term time. This period should be extended to take account of any school holidays that may occur during the period of consultation.

S508B of the Education Act 1996 sets out the categories of children in the local authority's area for whom the authority is required to make travel arrangements. Schedule 35B of the Act sets out the definition of "eligible children" for the purposes s508B. The local authority has a duty to ensure that suitable travel arrangements to and from school are made where necessary to facilitate the attendance of children of compulsory school age at a qualifying school. Where the local authority is under a statutory duty to provide travel assistance it must be supplied free of charge. The local authority is under a statutory duty to provide travel assistance where the child's nearest qualifying school is beyond the

statutory walking distance, which for children under the age of 8 is where they live more than 2 miles from their nearest qualifying school; and for children over the age of 8 where they live more than 3 miles from their nearest qualifying school. The local authority also has a statutory duty to provide free travel assistance where, because of the nature of the walking route, it is not reasonable to expect the child to walk to school (accompanied as necessary) because of their special educational needs, disability or mobility problems.

In addition the local authority has a statutory duty to provide free of charge travel assistance to children over the age of 8 and below the age of 11, from low income families (where the parent/carer for the child meets the criteria for their child to be entitled to free school meals, or where the family is in receipt of the maximum level of Working Tax Credit (WTC), where they live more than 2 miles from their nearest qualifying school. In respect of children over the age of 11 from low income families, they are eligible for free travel assistance to a choice of one of three of their nearest qualifying schools, where they live more than 2 miles but not more than 6 miles from the school. Children over the age of 11 from low income families are also eligible for free travel assistance to the nearest school preferred by reason of a parent's religion or belief if they live more than 2 miles but not more than 15 miles from the qualifying school.

S509AA of the Education Act 1996 requires the local authority to publish annually by the 31 May each year a transport policy statement specifying the arrangements for the provision of transport or otherwise (which must include financial assistance in respect of reasonable travelling expenses and may include asking for a contribution to transport costs) that the local authority considers necessary for the purposes of facilitating the attendance of all persons of sixth form age who are receiving education or training at school; institutions maintained or assisted by the local authority providing further or higher education; institutions within the further education sector; 16-19 academies; and any establishment at which the local authority secures the provision of education or training for persons over compulsory school age but under 19, or over 19 with an Education Health and Care plan. The transport policy statement must set out the arrangements that are in place for facilitating the attendance of young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Public authority decision makers are under a duty to have due regard to 1) the need to eliminate discrimination, 2) advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not 3) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not (public sector equality duty - s 149(1) Equality Act 2010). The protected characteristics are sex, race, age, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity.

Decision makers must be consciously thinking about these three aims as part of their decision making process with rigour and with an open mind. The duty is to have "due regard", not to achieve a result but to have due regard to the need to achieve these goals. Consideration being given to the potential adverse impacts and the measures needed to minimise any discriminatory effects.

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)?

The results of this consultation will ensure that the views of those affected by any future change proposals can be fed into them should they be made.

6.2 How is risk being managed?

N/A

6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?

There is no impact currently as changes are not currently proposed

6.4 Equalities / EIA

A draft EIA was created for the changes on which consultation was taking place. As these changes are not now being implemented it has not been updated. However, should any further consultation in this area take place, then a revised EIA will be created using input from the consultation responses reported in this paper.

6.5 Implications for (or impact on) the environment

None

6.6 Implications for partner organisations?

Schools were involved in discussions as part of this consultation. There are no implications for other partners.

Report author(s):**Name and job title:**

Isabel Merrifield, Assistant Director

Directorate:

People

Tel and email contact:

02476 833403

isabel.merrifield@coventry.gov.uk

Enquiries should be directed to the above person.

Contributor/approver name	Title	Directorate or organisation	Date doc sent out	Date response received or approved
Contributors:				
Michelle Salmon	Governance Services Officer	Resources	6 March 2015	6 March 2015
Marian Simpson	Senior Officer SEN	People	6 March 2015	16 March 2015
Sue Johnson	Head of Business and Performance	People	6 March 2015	7 March 2015
Helen Shankster	Insight Manager (Engagement)	Chief Executive's	6 March 2015	13 March 2015
Adrian Coles	Programme Delivery Manager	People	6 March 2015	16 March 2015
Names of approvers for submission: (officers and Members)				
Richard Adams	Finance Manager	Resources	6 March 2015	12 March 2015
Elaine Atkins	Solicitor, Legal Services	Resources	6 March 2015	10 March 2015
Brian Walsh	Executive Director	People	25 March 2015	26 March 2015
Councillor D Kershaw	Cabinet Member for Education	-	16 March 2015	16 March

This report is published on the council's website: www.coventry.gov.uk/councilmeetings

Appendix 1 – Consultation document – version used at events in January 2015

Changes to travel assistance policy for pupils in Coventry with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

A consultation

Consultation period – 24 November 2014 – 23 January 2015

Please reply to this consultation through our online survey which can be found at:

www.coventry.gov.uk/SENDtravelsurvey2014

This document tells you about possible changes to the Local Authority's Travel Assistance policy for pupils in Coventry with SEND that could be considered and how you can take part in the consultation. Please note that the earliest any changes to eligibility would be considered is September 2016. Further information on the consultation, including a proposed new policy can be viewed at

www.coventry.gov.uk/SENDtravelconsultation

Background

Every Local Authority has to provide travel assistance for pupils based on a number of specific criteria. These include the distance from their home to the nearest suitable school, the age of the pupil and whether they have any special education needs and disabilities (SEND).

The Department for Education gives us guidance on what we must provide by law, but we do not receive dedicated funding to provide it. At the moment, the City Council is providing a service which is above the legal minimum but in the current financial climate, we can no longer afford to guarantee to do this in future.

The current situation

The City Council currently has two travel assistance policies; one for pupils with no special needs and one for pupils with special needs. The eligibility criteria for these policies are different and we are proposing to align elements of the eligibility criteria and have them in one policy.

If we were to do this, it would mean there would be changes to the eligibility for travel assistance for some pupils with special education needs and disabilities.

At the moment (December 2014), approximately 1000 children and young people qualify for some form of travel assistance (minibuses, taxis or personal travel budgets) under the revised proposals, an estimated 270 under 16's may no longer be eligible for any assistance and an estimated 65 post 16s may still be eligible but would be charged for any transport they received. (The reason this is estimated is because an assessment of eligibility based on needs of the child would need to take place to determine who does receive assistance)

Limiting the impact of these changes

For all pupils of statutory school age (5-16) there would still be an opportunity within the policy for their travel assistance needs to be met with support if their special need or disability means that they require this.

If travel assistance is turned down, then a new appeal process is being introduced with a panel to hear a parent or carers appeal.

We have invested in additional 'travel trainers' who can help those young people who can be supported to develop their independent travel skills so they can travel without support.

The legal requirements relating to additional support for travel for pupils in families on low income will apply for SEND pupils as they do currently for mainstream pupils.

The detail of the changes being considered

The table below summarises the possible changes to our travel assistance policies. These would align our SEND travel assistance policies to meet the legal minimum statutory duties to provide travel assistance.

Current	Change	Future
Separate mainstream and SEND travel assistance policies	Aligning the policies	One policy
Different distance criteria for eligibility	Use same distance criteria	Eligibility automatic over 2 miles for up to 8 years, over 3 miles for over 8 years
SEND early years pupils eligible for transport. No mainstream early years transport provided	Align eligibility to statutory requirements	No early years transport or travel assistance provided
SEND post 16 transport provided free of charge, no transport for mainstream post 16	Align policies	No automatic eligibility post 16, (except for severe learning disabilities) those eligible will be charged the cost of a bus pass

What would be the impacts of these changes?

The table below gives an indication of the impacts this policy change could have on numbers of pupils. As we know that the nature of some special education needs and disabilities means that some pupils will always need some form of travel assistance, we have assumed that only half of all pupils would be affected by the policy change.

Type of pupil	Change	Estimated Impact (at 50% of cohort)
All Pupils living under 1 mile from school	No change (No automatic eligibility, but based on an individual assessment of need as now)	No change

Pupils living between 1-2 miles of school and aged under 8 years	No automatic eligibility, but an individual assessment of need	35 pupils affected
Pupils living 2 or more miles from school and aged under 8 (or those over 8 living over 3 miles from school)	No change	No change
Pupils living 1-3 miles and aged over 8	No automatic eligibility, but an individual assessment of need	110 pupils
Pre-school / early years	Cease transport entirely	60 children affected
Post 16 pupils with SEND attending school	Cease assistance except for some pupils with significantly complex needs	40 pupils no longer eligible, any eligible pupils to be charged for provision
Post 16 pupils with SEND attending college		25 pupils no longer eligible, any eligible pupils to be charged for provision
Introduce charging towards cost of all post 16 travel assistance	Charging	65 pupils (accounted for in post 16 above)
Total		270 / 65 charged

Further ideas to reduce the costs of travel assistance

Following the Council announcement that changes will not be introduced in September 2015, we have more time to gather ideas as to how costs of travel assistance could be reduced other than by reducing who is eligible. We could consider:

- Introducing drop off / pick up points rather than a door to door service
- Offering escorted public transport for small groups from bus stops on public bus routes
- Offering bus passes for pre-school parents

We would be grateful for any suggestions from people at events or through the consultation questions on the web-site which may help reduce our costs and meet the reduction in our Council funding.

Responding to this consultation

Everyone is asked to respond via the online survey (whether you attend a meeting or not). The questions on the survey are:

- How will this proposal affect you?
- If you have any comments on the current proposal or alternative suggestions, please write them in the space provided below
- What impact do you think the proposal could have for different groups of people (please consider age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race/ethnicity, religion and belief, sex/gender, and sexual orientation)?

The survey will also ask for some demographic information so that we can be sure of responses and issues being raised by all sections of our community.

You can give your feedback at meetings which will be held in some special schools and other locations as follows

Date	Time	Location
Tuesday 6 January 2015	2.30pm – 4.30pm	Hereward College Bramston Crescent Tile Hill Coventry CV4 9SW
Wednesday 7 January 2015	09:30 – 11:30	Alderman's Green School Alderman's Green Road Coventry CV2 1PP
Thursday 8 January 2015	9.45am – 11.45am	Baginton Fields School Sedgemoor Road Coventry CV3 4EA
Thursday 8 January 2015	6pm – 7.30pm	Diamond Room 2 Council House Earl Street Coventry, CV1 5RR
Monday 12 January 2015	3.45pm – 5.00pm	Woodfield School Hawthorne Lane Site Coventry, CV4 9PB

What will happen next?

Following this consultation, views will be considered and ideas will be collated. This will lead to more discussion with Councillors about how we might change the service and reduce costs in future.

Should there be a decision to formally propose a change to the existing policy, then we will need to consult on the changes later in 2015 before being able to implement any changes for September 2016.

Implementation

None of the above changes can be implemented without a further period of consultation. The Council has promised there will be no changes to eligibility in September 2015.

Responding to this consultation in writing

We would prefer an online response to our questionnaire (see the links at the start of the document), but if you are unable to respond online you may respond in writing to:

SEND Travel Assistance consultation
Room 238, Civic Centre 1
Earl Street, Coventry, CV1 5RS

Appendix 2 – Summary on online responses

The online survey offered respondents the opportunity to enter comments on the impact of the proposals. These comments have been coded into various themes as follows:

Please give details of any positive or negative effects you anticipate													
Comment count	Will prevent attendance at school/ make student late	Young person unable to travel independently or likely to find it extremely difficult	Lack of alternative transport	Putting young person at risk of harm	Detrimental effect on young person's education/ development/ social integration	Added pressure/ stress	Will affect carer's ability to work	Difficulty of multiple school drop offs	Expense/ effect on families struggling financially	Increased traffic/ congestion	Limiting choices	Unlikely to be affected	Other
84	30	13	15	9	14	8	7	14	16	2	2	3	13
What impacts do you think the proposal could have for different groups of people? (consider age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race/ethnicity, religion and belief, sex/gender, and sexual orientation)													
Comment count	Disabled young people	People in poverty	Families/ carers	Most vulnerable	Type of impact	Other							
98	69	6	32	7	14	9							
If you have any other comments on the current proposal and/or would like to make alternative suggestions, please write in the space provided below:													
Comment count	Want service to continue/ personal story about benefit	Consider financial or other impact on families of proposals	Unfair/ An additional burden for already vulnerable group	Make savings (or get the money) elsewhere	Council doesn't understand importance	Needs clarification/ assess on case by case basis	Other						
71	10	12	20	22	6	5	14						

Appendix 3 – Summary of themes raised in consultation events by attendees

Wider Council issues and purpose of consultation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council needs to get its priorities right and not target disabled children– for example spending money. The Council doesn't care – all bother about is saving money.
Lack of clarity of travel assistance eligibility criteria
What are the eligibility criteria?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eligibility criteria needs to be published and understood (even as a high-level document) – consultation is meaningless because criteria aren't set properly and unknown – too vague. Concern that safety of children/young people will be compromised. How will you get fairness and equity across the process? Why not say that those on high-rate disability allowance will still receive transport? Why isn't there a definition of severe learning disabilities? (There needs to be – severe to one person may not be severe to another.) By not tightly defining criteria you will be spending a lot on appeals. How will the changing needs of children be taken into consideration?
Who will assess transport needs?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How are they qualified to do this and what involvement will parents have in this process?
When will an assessment take place?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At what stage will assessment take place When will it take place on on-going basis?
Resource implications of travel assistance assessments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have full costs been taken into account? (e.g. additional costs will be incurred: eligibility criteria, appeals, appeals process, pressure of schools for their input – overall costs will outweigh).
Timescales/phasing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive that government guidance will be followed. Government guidance says that good practice is that changes are phased in. Therefore shouldn't these changes be phased in? If fully implemented in September 2015, then this wouldn't be following government guidance. (This raised in context of accusation of Council manipulation of wording of government guidance regarding Corley residential).
Issues with the current fleet of vehicles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposal are about cutting costs and not thinking about the impact on children.
Financial impact on families of proposals
<p>Examples given of financial impact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Daughter is 16 years old the proposals mean that we will lose transport and have to pay a charge of £100 or I will have to transport her to school and back every day. Going to have to give up work to get my son to school. £100/term is still a lot of money to find. Child placed at a special school but living further away – will not be able to work.
Early Years
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concerns that younger children would not be able to benefit from early support to prepare them for education and that this may reduce their achievement later in life.
Children will be on buses for longer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fewer buses on the road. Children may be on buses for longer. Want a good service if parents have to pay for it – and not have children and young people for too long.
Distance criteria

- Clarity as to how distance would be measured

Travel training

- Proposals risk pushing children towards Travel training. This may not be appropriate for all pupils

Location of provision

- Specific issue that there is no public service bus to Corley and therefore no public transport alternative to that location if travel assistance is removed.

Risk that children and young people will not go to school / will give up at 16

- Parents won't be able to transport a young person to school, so attendance will drop
- Parents will not be able to afford post 16 fees so young people will have to leave education and this is not good for them

Appendix 4 – Draft proposed criteria for eligibility where distance requirement is not met. As discussed in consultation events, January 2015.

Assessing need of pupils with SEND for travel assistance

Transport assistance will be given if you are:

- A resident within Coventry
- The pupil lives more than the **statutory walking distance** from their nearest qualifying school. **Statutory walking distance** is defined as two miles for children from Reception to Year 3, and three miles for children from Year 4 to Year 11. The measurement of the “statutory walking distance” is measured by the shortest route along which a child, accompanied as necessary, may walk safely. The measured route may include footpaths, bridleways, and other pathways, as well as recognised roads. Walking distance will be measured from the centre of the home to the nearest school gate using the local authority geographical mapping measurement system.
- Your child is attending the nearest appropriate and allocated school to your home. If a school placement has been agreed on the grounds of parental preference and this school is not the nearest school with places available, there is no duty on the Council to provide travel assistance. Where a parent(s) of a child with a Statement of SEN or Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan request that their child attend a special school (or special provision) that is not the nearest suitable school that can meet need the parent(s) will be required to make and fund their own travel arrangements.

In addition the Council must also assess the travel needs of children or young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) (including those aged 16 and over) and provide assistance which the Council considers suitable and necessary for the purpose of facilitating the child or young person's attendance at school.

Wherever possible the Council expects parents/carers of pupils with a Statement of SEN or Education, Health and Care plan to make arrangements for their child to attend school in the same way as for parents/carers of other pupils, as this is an important factor in developing the pupil's independence, social and life skills

All children with special educational needs will be considered carefully for eligibility for travel assistance at the point of their Statutory Assessment. The Local Authority will consider the assessment advice received for the EHC Plan or Statement of SEN.

This will be kept under regular review by:

- seeking information from headteachers and other professionals involved
- checking the updated information at each statutory Annual Review meeting
- considering any additional evidence submitted by a parent.

Transport may be provided for pupils who do not meet the statutory distance described above. This will be on the grounds that there is evidence that the pupil's learning and /or

physical difficulties prevent them from walking the statutory distance, even if accompanied by a responsible adult.

NB If a parents working arrangements made it difficult to accompany their child to school, the parent has a duty to make arrangements for another responsible person to do so.

Some of the factors that will be considered are detailed in the table below:

Will consider	Won't consider
Safety of walking route	Making two sets of arrangements for children who live between two parents addresses
Availability of alternatives (e.g. public transport)	Working hours of parent
Physical capability of child to walk given distance	
Cognitive abilities associated with Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD)	
Emotional Immaturity with restricted mobility	
Sensory Impairment with restricted mobility.	
Medical needs of child (e.g. need to travel with large medical equipment)	
Long term Medical Condition with restricted mobility	
Associated family circumstances (e.g. disability of parent - where the pupil lives with a single parent, ages of siblings)	

Transport will not be provided:

- To work experience placements or other extracurricular placements.
- To dental or hospital appointments.
- To clinical, medical or non-educational appointments.
- In the event of sickness in the school day
- In the event of detention
- Following persistent misbehaviour occurring on transport

Reference should be made to the full Council's Travel Assistance Policy.