

Notice of Meeting

Executive

Thursday, 10th September, 2015 at 6.00 pm

**in the Council Chamber, Council Offices,
Market Street, Newbury**

Date of despatch of Agenda: Wednesday, 2 September 2015

For further information about this Agenda, or to inspect any background documents referred to in Part I reports, please contact Democratic Services Team on (01635) 519462

e-mail: executivecycle@westberks.gov.uk

Further information and Minutes are also available on the Council's website at www.westberks.gov.uk



Agenda - Executive to be held on Thursday, 10 September 2015 (continued)

To:	Councillors Dominic Boeck, Keith Chopping, Hilary Cole, Roger Croft, Lynne Doherty, Marcus Franks, Graham Jones, Alan Law, Gordon Lundie and Garth Simpson
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Agenda

Part I

Page(s)

- 1. Apologies for Absence**
To receive apologies for inability to attend the meeting (if any).
- 2. Minutes**
To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 23 July 2015. 7 - 12
- 3. Declarations of Interest**
To remind Members of the need to record the existence and nature of any Personal, Disclosable Pecuniary or other interests in items on the agenda, in accordance with the Members' [Code of Conduct](#).
- 4. Public Questions**
Members of the Executive to answer questions submitted by members of the public in accordance with the Executive Procedure Rules contained in the Council's Constitution. *(Note: There were no questions submitted relating to items not included on this Agenda.)*
- 5. Petitions**
Councillors or Members of the public may present any petition which they have received. These will normally be referred to the appropriate Committee without discussion.

Items as timetabled in the Forward Plan

Page(s)

- 6. Council Performance Report 2015/16: Q1 (Key Accountable Measures and Activities) (EX2961)**
(CSP: All)
Purpose: To present the basket of key accountable measures and activities for 2015/16. 13 - 40
- 7. Home to School Transport Policies (EX2989)**
(CSP: P+S, HQL, MEC, HQL1 & MEC1)
Purpose: To review the consultation feedback on the proposed policies for 2015/16 and 2016/17 and determine the Council policy. 41 - 196



West Berkshire
C O U N C I L

Agenda - Executive to be held on Thursday, 10 September 2015 (continued)

8. **Treasury Management Annual Report 2014/15 (EX3016)** 197 - 208
(CSP: MEC & MEC1)
Purpose: To inform Members of the treasury management activity and performance of the Council's investments for the financial year 2014/15
-
9. **Financial Performance Report 2015/16 - Quarter One (EX3019)** To Follow
(CSP: MEC & MEC1)
Purpose: To inform Members of the latest financial performance of the Council.
-
10. **Implementing the Living Wage (EX3038)** 209 - 218
(CSP: MEC & MEC1)
Purpose: To ensure that no employee directly employed by the Council (excluding schools) is paid less than "The Living Wage" set by The Living Wage Foundation each November.
-
11. **Members' Question(s)**
Members of the Executive to answer questions submitted by Councillors in accordance with the Executive Procedure Rules contained in the Council's Constitution. *(Note: There were no questions submitted relating to items not included on this Agenda.)*
12. **Exclusion of Press and Public**
RECOMMENDATION: That members of the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items as it is likely that there would be disclosure of exempt information of the description contained in the paragraphs of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 specified in brackets in the heading of each item. [Rule 8.10.4 of the Constitution refers.](#)

Part II

13. **Progress on smoking cessation service procurement and request for delegated authority to Strategic Director of Public Health for approving final provider of services (EX3043)** 219 - 228
(Paragraph 3 - information relating to financial/business affairs of particular person)
(CSP: BEC, P+S, HQL, P+S1 & HQL1)
Purpose: To provide Executive with an update of the procurement process to date and to seek delegated authority to award the contract for the provision of smoking cessation service to the successful provider via the Joint Commissioning Team. (Bracknell).

Andy Day
Head of Strategic Support



West Berkshire Council Strategy Priorities and Principles

Council Strategy Priorities:

BEC – Better educated communities

SLE – A stronger local economy

P&S – Protect and support those who need it

HQL – Maintain a high quality of life within our communities

MEC – Become an even more effective Council

Council Strategy Principles:

BEC1 – Improve educational attainment

BEC2 – Close the educational attainment gap

SLE1 – Enable the completion of more affordable housing

SLE2 – Deliver or enable key infrastructure improvements in relation to roads, rail, flood prevention, regeneration and the digital economy

P&S1 – Good at safeguarding children and vulnerable adults

HQL1 – Support communities to do more to help themselves

MEC1 – Become an even more effective Council

If you require this information in a different format or translation, please contact Moira Fraser on telephone (01635) 519045.



DRAFT

Note: These Minutes will remain DRAFT until approved at the next meeting of the Committee

EXECUTIVE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY, 23 JULY 2015

Councillors Present: Dominic Boeck, Hilary Cole, Roger Croft, Lynne Doherty, Marcus Franks, Graham Jones, Alan Law and Garth Simpson

Also Present: Steve Broughton (Head of Culture & Environmental Protection), Nick Carter (Chief Executive), Andy Day (Head of Strategic Support), Karen Felgate (Contracts and Commissioning Manager), Peta Stoddart-Crompton (Public Relations Officer) and Rachael Wardell (Corporate Director - Communities), Stephen Chard (Policy Officer), Councillor Lee Dillon (Shadow Executive Portfolio: Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Finance), Councillor Dave Goff, Councillor Mollie Lock (Shadow Executive Portfolio: Education and Young People, Adult Social Care), Councillor Alan Macro (Shadow Executive Portfolio: Leader of the Opposition, Housing, Planning, Transport, Environment, Culture) and Jo Reeves (Policy Officer)

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting: Councillor Keith Chopping and Councillor Gordon Lundie

PART I

12. Minutes

(Councillor Roger Croft, Deputy Leader, in the Chair)

The Minutes of the meeting held on 28 May 2015 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Deputy Leader.

The Minutes of the meeting held on 9 June 2015 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Deputy Leader, subject to the following amendment:

Item 11 – Superfast Berkshire Phase 2 Procurement:

RESOLVED that the recommendations in the exempt report be agreed, **with the additional agreement that the Council would endeavour to do all it could to ensure that the appointed contractor was incentivised to implement at least 90% coverage of Superfast Berkshire Phase 2.**

13. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest received.

14. Public Questions

A full transcription of the public question and answer session is available from the following link: [Transcription of Q&As](#).

(a) **Question submitted by Mr Tony Vickers to the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Transport and Emergency Planning**

A question standing in the name of Mr Tony Vickers on the subject of the need to introduce additional reminder painted 'roundels' in the 20mph zone in Newbury in order to increase road safety was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Transport and Emergency Planning.

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(b) **Question submitted by Mrs Martha Vickers to the Portfolio Holder for Property, Culture, Customer Services, Environmental Health, Trading Standards, Countryside, Cleaner & Greener, Waste**

A question standing in the name of Mrs Martha Vickers on the subject of the recently removed drinking fountain in the Wharf Toilets and whether this was to be replaced was answered by Councillor Hilary Cole on behalf of the Portfolio Holder for Property, Culture, Customer Services, Environmental Health, Trading Standards, Countryside, Cleaner & Greener, Waste.

(c) **Question submitted by Mr John Gardner, to be asked by Mrs Martha Vickers, to the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Economic Development, Newbury, Hungerford, Thatcham and Eastern Area Visions**

A question standing in the name of Mr John Gardner (asked on his behalf by Mrs Martha Vickers) on the subject of whether the Council would publish the traffic studies used for planning the infrastructure supporting the proposed Sandleford Housing Development was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Economic Development, Newbury, Hungerford, Thatcham and Eastern Area Visions.

15. **Petitions**

There were no petitions presented to the Executive.

16. **Provisional Financial Outturn Report 2014/15 (EX2832)**

The Executive considered a report (Agenda Item 6) which informed Members of the provisional financial outturn for the Council for the 2014/15 financial year. These provisional figures might change during closedown and as a result of the External Audit process.

The total revenue expenditure in 2014/15 was £121m with a provisional year end overspend of £30k or 0.02% of the net budget. This overspend would result in a reduction in the General Fund.

The Council had delivered revenue outturns close to its budget requirement over recent years. The revenue underspend as a percentage of net budget was 0.44% in 2011/12, 0.5% in 2012/13, 0.37% in 2013/14 and, as reported, an overspend of 0.02% in 2014/15.

The Communities Directorate year end position was an overspend of £605k, which was due to pressures in Children's Services. The Environment Directorate year end position was an underspend of £324k and the Resources Directorate an underspend of £272k.

In summary, the Council had managed to achieve a relatively small revenue overspend in what had been a challenging year. This had been achieved through effective management of its finances over the last 12 months against a back drop of continued local and national financial volatility.

The Capital Programme was underspent by £4.7m, against the revised budget of £35.2m. It was proposed to carry forward this sum to 2015/16 to meet ongoing capital commitments.

Councillor Alan Macro challenged that the overspend was £30k and instead argued that the Council had overspent by £275k as some funding had been drawn down from the risk fund. Councillor Macro stated that the use of the risk fund had not been made clear in the report. Councillor Roger Croft offered assurance that movements from the risk reserve were part of normal accounting practices. Councillor Alan Law added that Councillor Macro's net figure was not correct and further information on the use of risk reserves would be provided in the audited accounts. Councillor Croft advised that he would ask

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the Section 151 Officer to provide a written statement to Councillor Macro which detailed all movements of funds from the risk reserves.

Councillor Lee Dillon contested the validity of some of the savings identified in the report. He put forward the argument that savings would be made by providing the same services for less money whereas the Council had been providing fewer services for less money. Councillor Dillon stated that cuts had harmed the most vulnerable people in the community and while he recognised the context of the economic downturn and the need to make savings, it needed to be clear in the report where a saving was achieved versus where a cut had been made.

Councillor Macro, referring to pages 28 and 29 of the agenda, noted the overspend in Children's Services. He noted that the number of Looked After Children was increasing as the number of children receiving Early Intervention services was decreasing. Councillor Macro asserted that by seeking savings in the Early Intervention service's budget, extra pressure had been placed upon Children's Services as a whole and therefore the budget was overspent. Councillor Lynne Doherty explained that 34 additional children had required care packages in 2014/15 than had been forecast. Children's Services had a demand-led budget and some hard decisions had been made to enable the most vulnerable children to receive care packages.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

Reason for the decision: n/a.

Other options considered: None.

17. **Council Performance Report 2014/15: Year End (Key Accountable Measures and Activities) (EX2780)**

The Executive considered a report (Agenda Item 7) which presented the basket of key accountable measures and activities contained in the 2014/15 Council Performance Framework; reported quarter four outturns against these measures and activities; and reported by exception those measures/activities not achieved and the remedial action taken as a result/its impact.

The report informed of the progress made against the basket of 52 key accountable measures and activities aligned to the objectives set out in the Council Strategy. Of these 52 reported measures, outturns were available for 51, 40 of which were reported as 'green' – achieved or exceeded the targets by year end. This gave a percentage of 78.4% of measures with targets achieved or exceeded, the previous year's percentage was 78.3%.

11 measures were reported as 'red' - meaning the Council had not achieved the activity or target within the year. Reported 'reds' at year end were:

Education

1. KS1-2: Proportion of pupils making 2+ levels of progress in Writing.

Older people and vulnerable adults

2. Maintain the proportion of adults with a learning disability who live in their own home or with their family (ASCOF 1G)
3. Reduce the number of repeat safeguarding referrals through the monitoring and review of protection plans
4. Decrease the level of delayed transfers of care from hospital and those attributable to social care from acute and non-acute settings (ASCOF 2C Part 2)

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5. Maintain the overall satisfaction of carers with social services. (ASCOF3B)
6. Increase the number of carers receiving a carers assessment or review
7. Maintain the percentage of people accessing a housing related support service who have been assessed as needing support who go on to achieve economic wellbeing by improving debt management skills

Infrastructure

8. Aim to complete at least 75% of all works orders for permanent pothole and edge of road repairs within 28 days of the order date
9. Bring 80 empty homes back into use by 31/03/15 using the councils framework for engaging with identified empty home owners
10. Nos of West Berkshire premises able to receive standard broadband services 2Mb/s or above

Community safety

11. Work with the Environment Agency and other partners to deliver flood alleviation scheme in Purley.

The exception reports provided a narrative relating to these missed targets.

Councillor Marcus Franks commented that the successful delivery of 40 measures was a good achievement and showed how well the Council was performing. He also drew attention to the areas where services had outperformed anticipated outturns which included maintaining a low percentage of children receiving a child protection plan for a second or subsequent time within a two year period; as well as measures in relation to the road network and in Planning.

Councillor Alan Macro referred to the fact shown in the report that there had been a reduction in the number of planning applications received in 2014/15 compared to 2013/14. This would have contributed to the ability of the Council to determine planning applications within set timeframes.

Councillor Macro then turned to some of the red indicators and highlighted that some measures missed their target quite significantly. For the measure 'increase the number of carers receiving an assessment or review', there was an inconsistency in the exception report with 537 and 457 given as the achieved number against the target of 700. The number achieved needed to be confirmed. However, either way the number achieved was a very significant downturn from the previous year's outturn of 682. Councillor Hilary Cole responded to this point by advising that the carer's assessments were outsourced and there was a concern that data recording was inaccurate. It was therefore not necessarily the case that there had been a reduction in the number. This issue was being addressed and the numbers double checked.

(Post-meeting note: Regarding the discrepancy identified by Councillor Alan Macro, the figure of 457 was a typographical error and should read 537 as elsewhere in the document where the provisional number of carers receiving an assessment or review was reported.)

Councillor Macro then turned to the measure 'bring 80 empty homes back into use by 31/03/15 using the Council's framework for engaging with identified empty home owners', with an outturn of 64 achieved. Councillor Macro felt the target set was modest when there was a shortage of affordable homes and all efforts should have been made to achieve this target. Councillor Cole was disappointed that it had not been possible to meet this target, she did however point out that the situation in this area had improved

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significantly in recent years. However, further improvements would continue to be sought. Councillor Cole made the further point that it was not possible to force people to bring their property back into use if they did not wish to, although Officers worked hard to try and achieve this target.

Councillor Lee Dillon was concerned at the high number of 'red' measures in relation to activity concerning vulnerable older people and adults (around 30% of the measures in this area). He asked what additional monitoring would be undertaken to avoid continued poor performance in this single important area. Councillor Cole acknowledged that there were red indicators in this area but was of the view that Adult Social Care was not a failing service. Actions were being put in place to ensure West Berkshire's vulnerable residents were kept safe. This included a good deal of work being undertaken within the West Berkshire and Berkshire wide Safeguarding Boards. The arrangements for safeguarding adults matched those in place to safeguard children and young people. She was therefore confident that improvements would be made where necessary.

Councillor Graham Jones made the point that the Council set itself ambitious targets. There was therefore a possibility that some would be missed. Councillor Roger Croft agreed that it was important for aspirational targets to be set.

RESOLVED that:

- (1) progress against the key accountable measures and activities would be noted;
- (2) those areas reporting as 'red' be reviewed to ensure that appropriate corrective or remedial action had been put in place.

Reason for the decision: This framework compiles and monitors progress in relation to the objectives laid out in the Council Strategy and on key activities and areas of risk from the Council's individual service delivery plans. In doing so, it expresses the purpose and ambition of the Council and by extension the Council's main focus of activities and key measures of success against which the Council can assess itself and publicly report progress.

Other options considered: n/a.

18. Members' Questions

A full transcription of the Member question and answer session is available from the following link: [Transcription of Q&As](#).

- (a) **Question to be answered by the Portfolio Member for Adult Social Care, Housing submitted by Councillor Alan Macro**

A question standing in the name of Councillor Alan Macro on the subject of the action being taken by the Council to bring the affordable homes in the Parkway development into use was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care, Housing.

- (b) **Question to be answered by the Portfolio Member for Planning, Economic Development, Newbury, Hungerford, Thatcham and Eastern Area Visions submitted by Councillor Alan Macro**

A question standing in the name of Councillor Alan Macro requesting an update on the implications of the Firlands planning appeal was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Economic Development, Newbury, Hungerford, Thatcham and Eastern Area Visions.

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(c) Question to be answered by the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Member for Finance, Insurance, Health & Safety, Human Resources, Pensions, ICT & Corporate Support submitted by Councillor Lee Dillon

A question standing in the name of Councillor Lee Dillon on the subject of the Council's plans to encourage take up among residents of Superfast Broadband was answered by the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance, Insurance, Health & Safety, Human Resources, Pensions, ICT & Corporate Support.

(d) Question to be answered by the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Member for Finance, Insurance, Health & Safety, Human Resources, Pensions, ICT & Corporate Support submitted by Councillor Lee Dillon

A question standing in the name of Councillor Lee Dillon on the subject of how the Council's ICT Service would work with service providers to maximise the benefits of having nearly 100% Superfast Broadband coverage was answered by the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance, Insurance, Health & Safety, Human Resources, Pensions, ICT & Corporate Support.

19. Exclusion of Press and Public

RESOLVED that members of the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the under-mentioned items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as contained in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information)(Variation) Order 2006. Rule 8.10.4 of the Constitution also refers.

20. Contract Award - Social Care Case Management System (EX2991)

(Paragraph 3 – information relating to financial/business affairs of particular person)

The Executive considered an exempt report (Agenda Item 10) which sought to obtain authority from the Executive to award the contract for the Social Care Case Management System following completion of the tendering process and to enter into a contract with the successful bidder.

RESOLVED that the recommendations in the exempt report be agreed.

Reason for the decision: as set out in the exempt report.

Other options considered: as set out in the exempt report.

21. Contract Award - Cleaning Services (EX2923)

(Paragraph 3 – information relating to financial/business affairs of particular person)

The Executive considered an exempt report (Agenda Item 11) which sought to obtain authority from the Executive to award the contract for the provision of Building Cleaning Services following completion of the tendering process and to enter into a contract with the successful bidder.

RESOLVED that the recommendations in the exempt report be agreed.

Reason for the decision: as set out in the exempt report.

Other options considered: as set out in the exempt report.

(The meeting commenced at 6.00 pm and closed at 6.43 pm)

CHAIRMAN

Date of Signature

Agenda Item 6.

Title of Report:	Key Accountable Performance 2015/16 Q1
Report to be considered by:	Executive on 10 September 2015
Forward Plan Ref:	EX2961

Purpose of Report: To report quarter one outturns against the key accountable measures and activities contained in the 2015/16 council performance framework.

To report by exception those measures / activities, not achieved / expected to achieve and to cite remedial action taken and the impact it has had.

Recommended Action: To note progress against the key accountable measures and activities.

Review those areas reporting as 'amber' and 'red' to ensure that appropriate corrective or remedial action has been put in place.

Reason for decision to be taken: This framework compiles and monitors progress in relation to the objectives laid out in the Council Strategy and on key activities and areas of risk from the council's individual service delivery plans.

In doing so, it expresses the purpose and ambition of the council and by extension the council's main focus of activities and key measures of success against which we can assess ourselves and publicly report progress.

Other options considered: n/a

Key background documentation: Council Strategy 2015-19

Published Works:

The proposals will help achieve the following Council Strategy aims:

- BEC – Better educated communities**
- SLE – A stronger local economy**
- P&S – Protect and support those who need it**
- HQL – Maintain a high quality of life within our communities**
- MEC – Become an even more effective Council**

The proposals contained in this report will help to achieve the following Council Strategy priorities:

- BEC1 – Improve educational attainment**
- BEC2 – Close the educational attainment gap**
- SLE1 – Enable the completion of more affordable housing**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	SLE2 – Deliver or enable key infrastructure improvements in relation to roads, rail, flood prevention, regeneration and the digital economy
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	P&S1 – Good at safeguarding children and vulnerable adults
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	HQL1 – Support communities to do more to help themselves
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	MEC1 – Become an even more effective Council
The proposals contained in this report will help to achieve the above Council Strategy aims and priorities by: articulating progress within the Council's key accountable measures and activities.	

Portfolio Member Details	
Name & Telephone No.:	Councillor Gordon Lundie - Tel 01488 73350
E-mail Address:	glundie@westberks.gov.uk
Date Portfolio Member agreed report:	

Contact Officer Details	
Name:	Catalin Bogos
Job Title:	Research, Consultation and Performance Manager
Tel. No.:	01635 519102
E-mail Address:	cbogos@westberks.gov.uk

Implications

Policy:	Any implications will be highlighted in the individual exception reports. □□□□□
Financial:	Any implications will be highlighted in the individual exception reports.
Personnel:	Any implications will be highlighted in the individual exception reports.
Legal/Procurement:	Any implications will be highlighted in the individual exception reports.
Property:	Any implications will be highlighted in the individual exception reports.
Risk Management:	Any implications will be highlighted in the individual exception reports.
Corporate Board's Recommendation:	For the report to be considered by Management Board.

Is this item relevant to equality?	Please tick relevant boxes	Yes	No
Does the policy affect service users, employees or the wider community and:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is it likely to affect people with particular protected characteristics differently? 		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is it a major policy, significantly affecting how functions are delivered? 		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will the policy have a significant impact on how other organisations operate in terms of equality? 		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the policy relate to functions that engagement has identified as being important to people with particular protected characteristics? 		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the policy relate to an area with known inequalities? 		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Outcome (Where one or more 'Yes' boxes are ticked, the item is relevant to equality)			
Relevant to equality - Complete an EIA available at http://intranet/EqIA			<input type="checkbox"/>
Not relevant to equality			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Executive Summary

1. Reporting Methodology

- 1.1 This is the first report produced against the new Council Strategy and based on the revised performance management methodology.
- 1.2 Information included in this report reflects both the progress towards achieving agreed targets against the key accountable measures and the newly introduced performance intelligence/narrative. Work continues on the implementation of the new performance management approach to ensure it supports effectively the decision making process.

2. Key Accountable Measures

- 2.1 The report appraises progress against a basket of 27 key accountable measures and activities aligned to the objectives set out in the Council Strategy.
- 2.2 Of the 27 reported measures, outturns are available for 19. (Data is not yet available for 5 annual measures (3 educational attainment, 1 for highway maintenance and 1 for the LGA review))
- 14 are reported as 'green'; on track to be delivered / achieved by year end.
 - Those reported as 'amber'; behind schedule, but expected to be achieved at year end are:

List of reported 'amber' measures / activities	Target	Q1 outturn
Priority 5. Good at Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults		
1. To maintain a high percentage of (single) assessments being completed within 45 working days	>=90%	71.2%
2. To increase the percentage of children subject to a CP Plan that have received a visit within the past 10 working days	>=95%	84.1%
3. The number of weeks taken to conclude care proceedings (children social care)	<=26 weeks	27 weeks
4. % Completion of Pathway Plans for Looked after Children	100%	79.9%
Core Business		
5. Proportion of clients with Long Term Support (LTS) receiving a review in the past 12 months	90%	61.6%

3. Proposals

- 3.1 The report provides information for the Executive to note the performance levels achieved by the end of the quarter under each priority area of the Council Strategy. Supplementary exception reports are included on key accountable measures that are assessed as 'behind schedule' to allow the scrutiny and approval of the corrective or remedial actions put in place.

4. Equalities Impact Assessment Outcomes

4.1 This item is not relevant to equality.

5. Conclusion

5.1 The overall performance at the end of quarter one, against the new Council Strategy is similar to the level achieved at the end of first quarter of the previous financial year as 74% of reported measures are assessed as on schedule to achieve the end of year targets (compared to 73% of the measures in Q1 2014/15).

5.2 There are no measures assessed as not likely to achieve their year end targets. In addition, all areas identified behind schedule to achieve their targets include remedial plans without requirements for more strategic actions to be taken.

Appendices

There are no Appendices to this report.

Consultees

Local Stakeholders:

Officers Consulted: All data provided and signed off by service heads, Corporate Board

Trade Union:

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West Berkshire Council Performance Report

Key accountable measures and activities 2015/16

Update: Quarter one

compiled by:

Jenny Legge

Research, Consultation & Performance Officer

Strategic Support Unit

westberks.gov.uk/performance

August 2015

For queries contact: Catalin Bogos (01635 519102 or cbogos@westberks.gov.uk)

Available from westberks.gov.uk/strategyandperformance

Purpose of this report







To provide an update on progress against the council's key accountable measures and activities at quarter one 2015/16.

The key measures / activities within this report have been distilled from those routinely monitored and managed through individual service delivery plans to focus more singularly on those which are of particular importance / significance key in delivering the strategic objectives in the Council Strategy and to the ongoing work of the council as a whole. This report therefore:

- provides assurance to the Executive that the objectives laid out in the Council Strategy are being delivered;
- provides assurance to the Executive that areas of significance / particular importance are performing;
- acts as an early warning system, flagging up areas of significance / particular importance which are not performing - or are not expected to perform - as hoped;
 - and therefore ensures that adequate remedial action is put in place to mitigate the impact of any issues that may arise.

Conventions used in this report

Throughout the report we have used a RAG 'traffic light' system to report progress:

-  means we have either achieved / exceeded, or expect to achieve what we set out to do;
 -  means we are behind schedule, but still expect to achieve or complete the measure / activity by year end;
 -  indicates that we have not achieved, or do not expect to achieve, the activity or target within the year;
 -  indicates that data can only be reported at a single point of the year and progress cannot be tracked – e.g. GCSE results or the road condition survey, whilst;
 -  indicates that quarterly data is unavailable when this report was published
 -  indicates that a measure is not targeted and results are being recorded as a baseline for future monitoring.
- (E) indicates that an outturn is an estimate and will be confirmed during the year.

Where measures / activities are reported as 'red', an exception report provides (a) a description of why the measure / activity will not be achieved / completed, (b) the impact of not achieving, (c) the remedial action being taken to mitigate the impact of this as well as (d) the revised anticipated year end position.

In total, there are 27 key measures or activities which are appraised by the Executive through this reporting mechanism. In the report, these are aligned to the strategic priorities laid out in the Council Strategy.

The main body of the report presents these in more detail. Along with a description of the measure, the table also provides:

- *Column 1*: a reference code
- *Column 2*: the title of the measures
- *Column 3-6* previous years' outturns and comparative performance
- *Column 7*: the current year's target.

- *Columns 8-9:* quarter 1 outturn and RAG rating.
- *Column 10:* and supporting commentary or volume data.

Comparative outturns

To complement monitoring progress in absolute terms, an indication of our comparative standing is provided. This will only relate to standardised, nationally reported measures and by default the data is compared to England as a whole. Outturns are presented in relation to quartiles, although in some cases it should be noted that a direct, national comparison is not possible as the measure is locally defined and monitored.

Because of the timescales involved in compiling, validating and publishing relative performance statistics, these are usually available 6-12 months in arrears. As such, the data we are able to use to compare our relative performance, will ordinarily relate to the previous year.

Summary of Performance

Across this reporting framework as a whole, 27 key accountable measures and activities are captured in total.

Education operates on an academic year basis and their service plan covers the academic year ending September 2015. A suite of key accountable measures, relating to attainment in this period, are included in this basket of measures.

Data for one Children and Family service measure has been reported in order to calibrate a baseline data.

Of the 27 reported measures, outturns are available for 19. Those not reported are comprised of, 5 which are reported once a year and 2 were unavailable for the publication of this report.

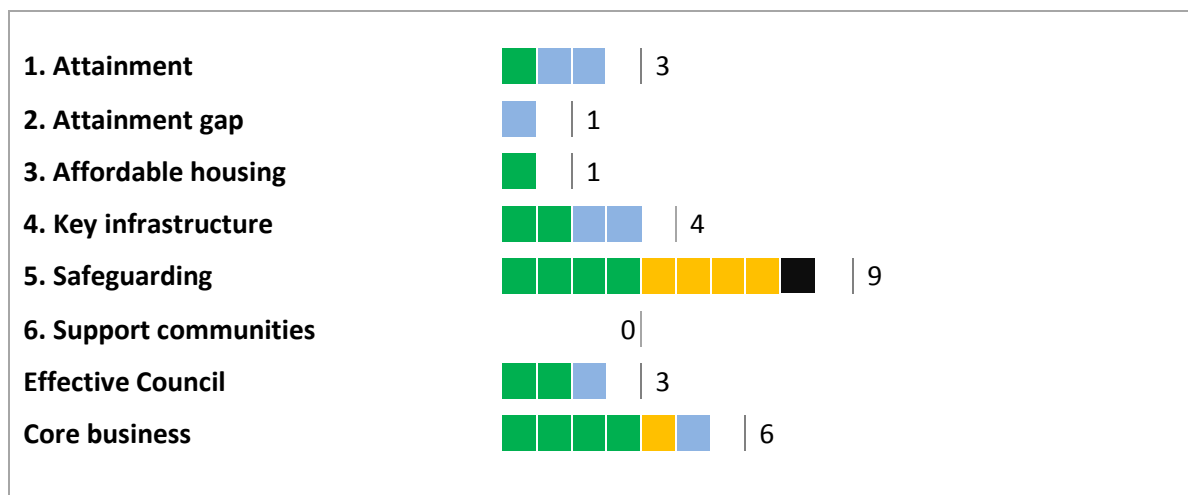
14 are reported as 'green' – or are on track to be delivered / achieved by year end.

5 are reported as 'amber'- behind schedule, but still expect to achieve or complete the measure / activity by year end.

The summary table below shows year end outturns by directorate.

Overview of performance outturns	2012/13 YE	2013/14 YE	2014/15 YE	2015/16 (Quarter one)			
				Overall	Comm	Env	Res
Green	45	36	40	14	11	2	1
Amber	0	1	0	5	5	0	0
Red	3	9	11	0	0	0	0
<i>Annual (yet to be reported)</i>	0	1	0	5	3	1	1
<i>Baseline (yet to be targeted)</i>	-	-		1	1	0	0
<i>Unavailable at time of publication</i>	1	0	1	2	0	2	0
Total	49	47	52	27	20	5	2

This graph summarises the same data against the council's priorities.



The 5 measures reported as 'amber' are listed below. (For more information on each of these measures, including detailed outturns, commentary and exception reports – please consult the main body of this report:

<i>List of reported 'amber' measures / activities</i>	<i>Target</i>	<i>Q1 outturn</i>
Priority 5. Good at Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults		
1. To maintain a high percentage of (single) assessments being completed within 45 working days	>=90%	71.2%
2. To increase the percentage of children subject to a CP Plan that have received a visit within the past 10 working days	>=95%	84.1%
3. The number of weeks taken to conclude care proceedings (children social care)	<=26 weeks	27 weeks
4. % Completion of Pathway Plans for Looked after Children	100%	79.9%
Core Business		
5. Proportion of clients with Long Term Support (LTS) receiving a review in the past 12 months	90%	61.6%

Narratives by Council Strategy Priorities (key achievements, key challenges, demand management)

This section highlights only key achievements, key challenges or significant evolution of the levels of demand.

1. Contextual intelligence/demand on services

- Compared with the first quarter of 2014/15, the increase in demand for Children and Families Services (20% increase in all enquiries, 45% increase in Child Protection (S47) enquiries) seems to be managed / translated into an increase in Children in Need numbers (up 20%) whilst CPP (Child Protection Plan) and LAC (Looked After Children) numbers reduced.

- The number of qualifying live applicants on the Common Housing Register has seen an increase of 17% compared to Q1 last year.
- Quarter 1 has shown a reduction in claimant count (-33% for 16-64 age group and -42% for 18-24 group).
- The number of Freedom of Information requests and Stage 2 complaints have also reduced compared to Q1 last year.
- Strategic Support Service had a significant peak in its workload, particularly in relation to the following issues: Parliamentary, District and Parish and Town Council elections (involved a whole unit response with impact on a number of services, individuals and performance); Primary School Admission Appeals, Annual Meeting, Member Induction, Ofsted Inspection, Preparation for the Annual Recognition Event. Despite this the performance of the whole unit should be recognised as being very positive due to supplementary efforts of some individuals in the team.

2. Key Achievements (✓) and Key Challenges (▲) – by Council Strategy priorities

(i) Attainment

✓ The Education Service is working to transform early intervention mental health to children and families by reducing dependency on PCAMHS (tier 2) (Pre-Children's and Adolescents' Mental Health Services) and instead, co-designing a multi-agency, community based response and is also re-defining public expectations in relation to Home to School transport, which must reduce discretionary provision to make the required financial savings.

▲ Schools will be facing significant challenges with the new Ofsted inspection framework from September 2015 and a rising of outcome thresholds from summer 2016. This could result in more schools being seen as less than good or "coasting". There will be a subsequent pressure on Local Authority delivery of school improvement.

✓ Exclusions are reducing and attendance improving, but there continues to be more to do in both these areas, particularly around vulnerable groups.

(ii) Attainment Gap

✓ New SEN arrangements continue to be rolled out and imbedded, with positive feedback from schools and parents/carers. Newly configured Early Years and Children's Centre arrangements have been in place from 1 April. The Education Service continues to work to increase two year old take up of the free entitlement and close the 'good level of development' gap.

(iii) Affordable Housing

✓ In Q1 the Housing Service were notified that they have been recognised as one of just fifteen Bronze Standard Authorities in the UK for its homelessness services by the National Practitioner Support Service. Good performance regarding homelessness prevention achieved for this quarter may be negatively impacted by unpredictable peak in demand.

(iv) Key Infrastructure

There are no key achievements or key challenges to report relating to this priority. Activity is reported as progressing as expected.

(v) Safeguarding

✓ A potential dip in performance in relation to safeguarding activity, post Ofsted inspection, has been avoided.

▲ Focus on reducing drift and delay in deciding the best solutions to support vulnerable children and young people resulted in an increased workload relating to court proceedings and timescales slightly exceeding 26 weeks target. This triggered a decision to employ an additional Case Manager Officer.

✓ In Adult Social Care (ASC) the levels of people benefiting from Long Term Services have reduced (18-64 age group) or have been maintained (over 65). The service expects to complete the change programme 'New Way of Working' by May 2016. This is intended to reduce demand on long term services with a greater focus on prevention and early intervention. Early indications are that it is having the intended effect. At the moment the focus is on scaling up this approach to make a whole system change. The Health and Social Care integration is also progressing well and delayed transfer of care has further improved.

▲ Capacity is an issue for the ASC service as it is facing high demand by new clients who may need help and need to be assessed, and having to review all existing clients under the new eligibility criteria by 31 March 2016.

▲ The financial pressure arising from the ongoing increase in the number of Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DOLS) applications and an anticipated increase in Court of Protection and 16/17 year old applications is within the ASC budget and has been identified as a pressure for 16/17.

(vi) Support Communities

▲ There has been a slight decline in physical visits to libraries and this would seem to be a general trend, although consideration needs to be given to the reduced opening times introduced in 13/14 and also an increase in digital access and use.

✓ Overall the use of libraries is fairly constant. There is also a noticeable increase in the use of the free Wi-Fi within libraries which has consequentially seen a reduction in the use of the public PC provision with customer using their own equipment.

(vii) Overarching aim - Effective Council

✓ The Employee Attitude has been run and the latest response rate (as at 09/07/15) was 70% (which is the minimum amount expected to be achieved). The next stage is to analyse and present the results of the survey.

✓ Council Tax and Business Rate collection rates for the last financial year were robust. West Berkshire was second within Berkshire and in the top quartile nationally.

(viii) Other areas - Core Business

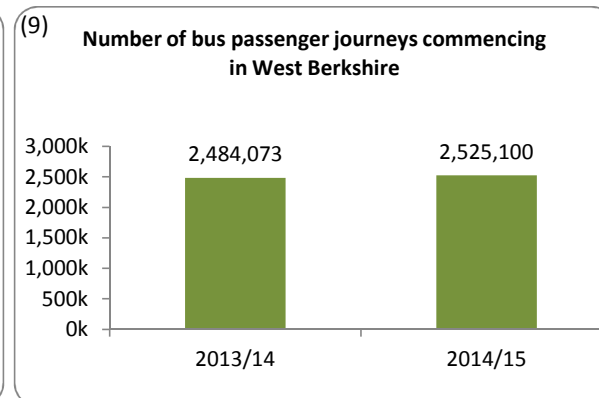
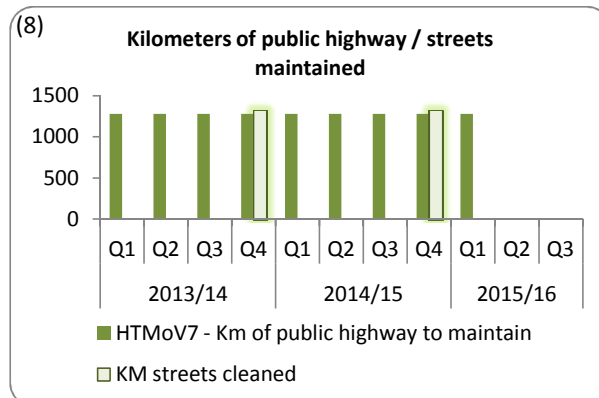
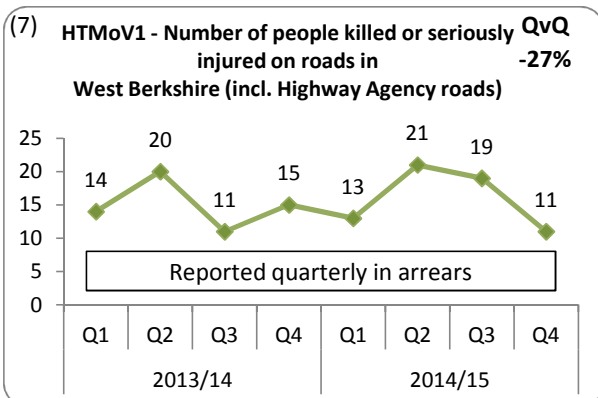
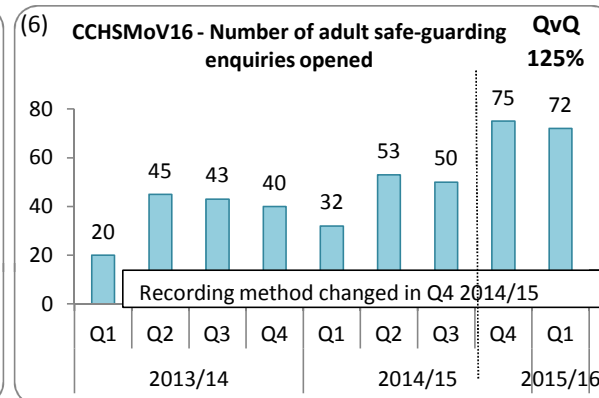
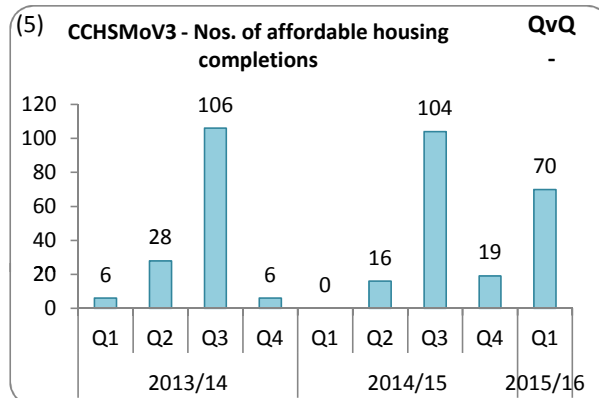
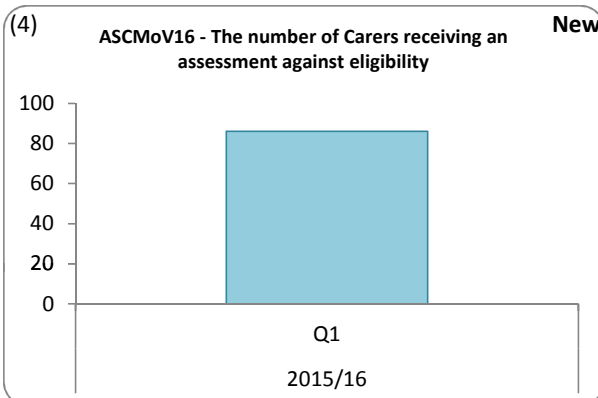
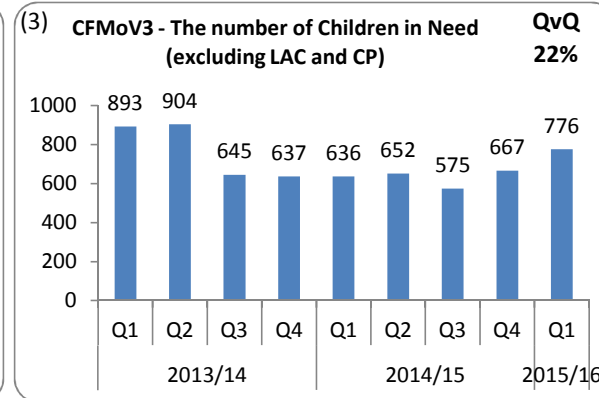
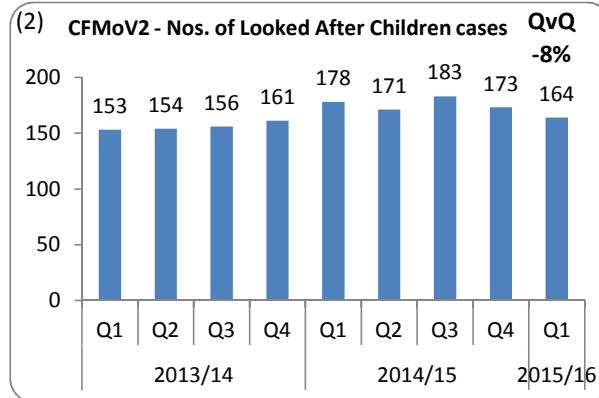
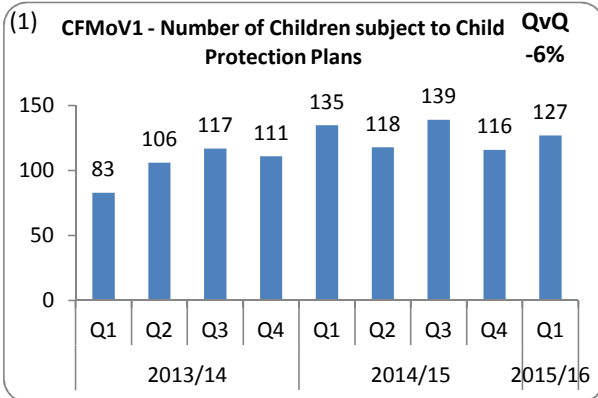
✓ The expected increase in demand for welfare benefits assessments has not yet materialised and timeliness performance remains good. However, high levels of additional demand are still anticipated due to the implementation of phase two of the Care Act, should it proceed.

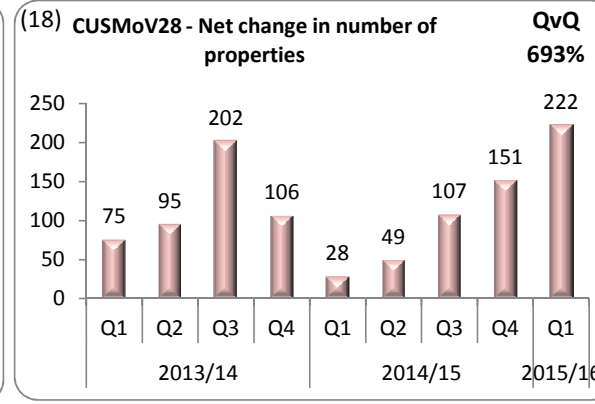
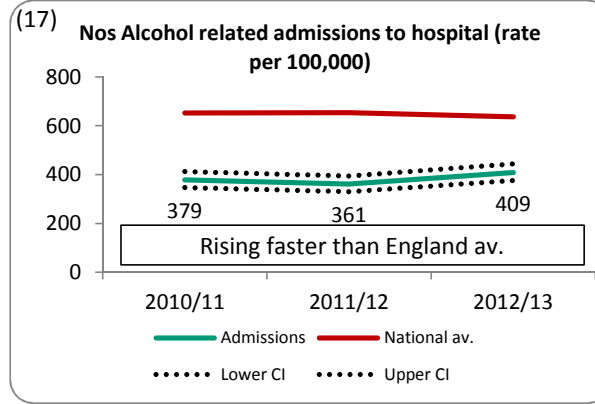
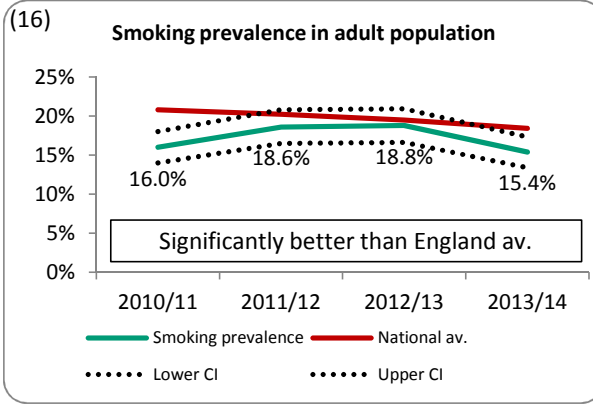
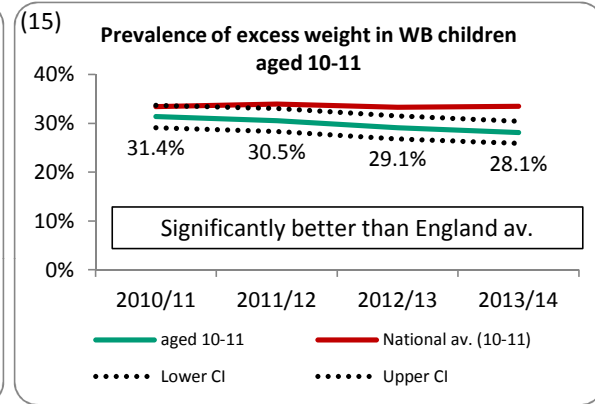
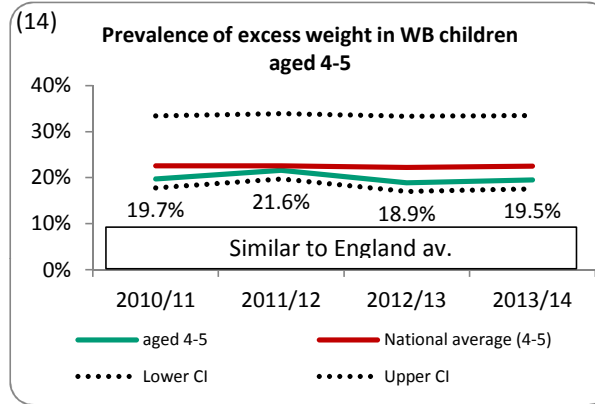
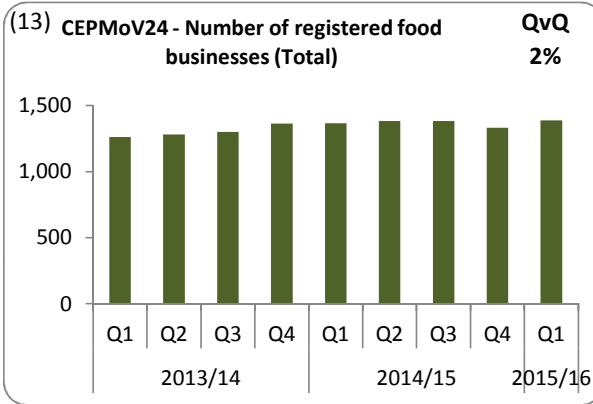
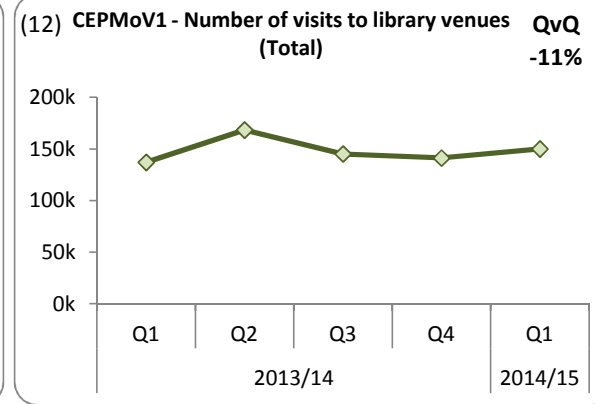
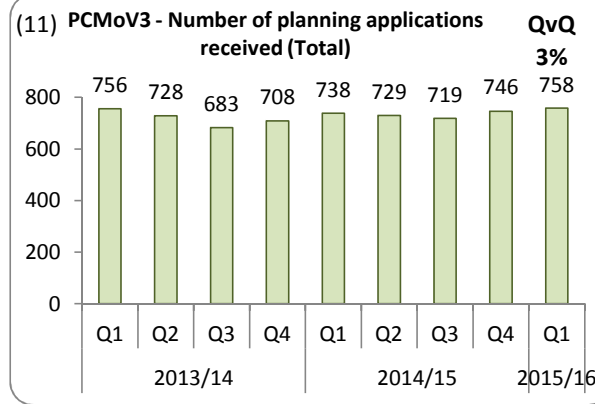
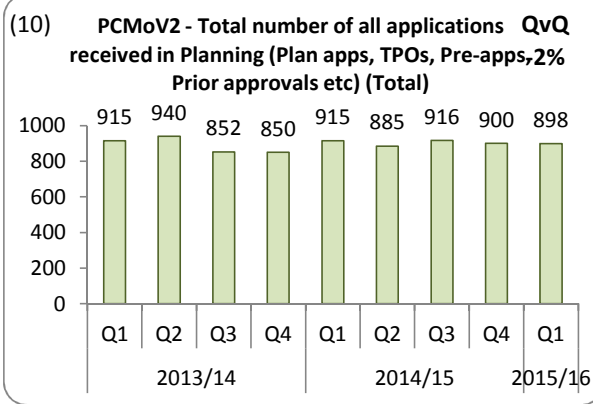
✓ Performance on determining planning applications is estimated well above the targets and the demand regarding new planning enforcement notifications has reduced by 35% compared to Q1 last year.

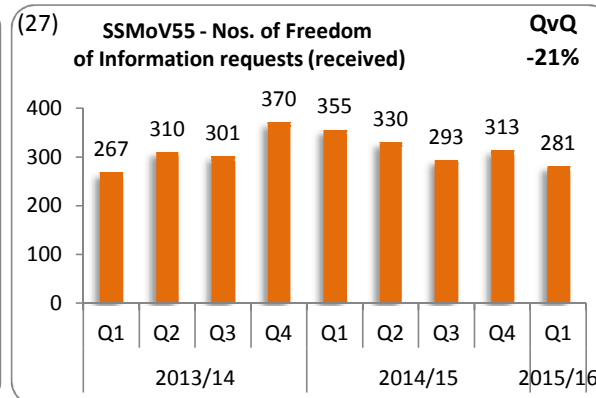
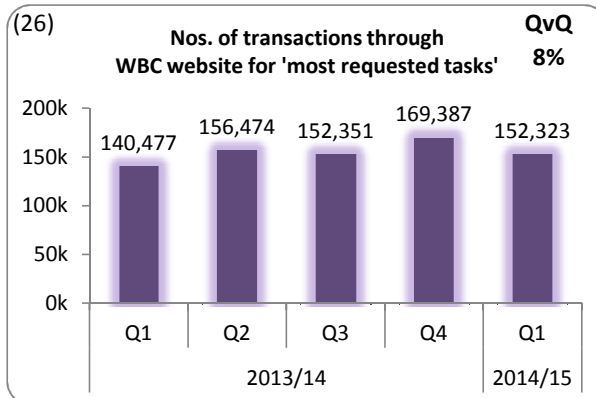
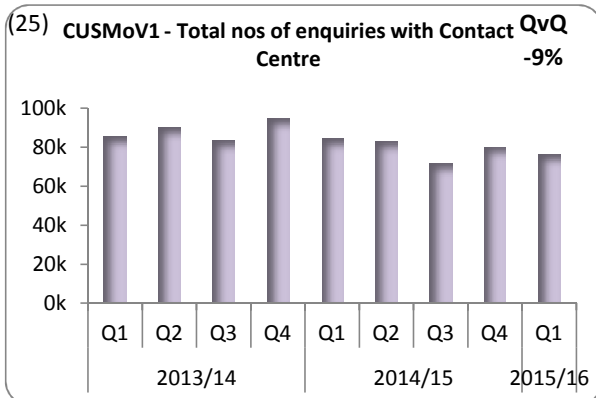
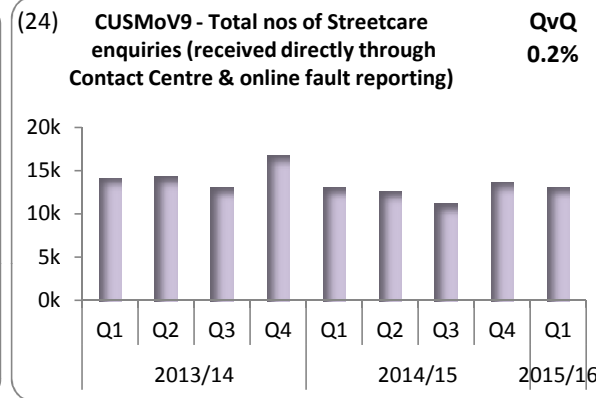
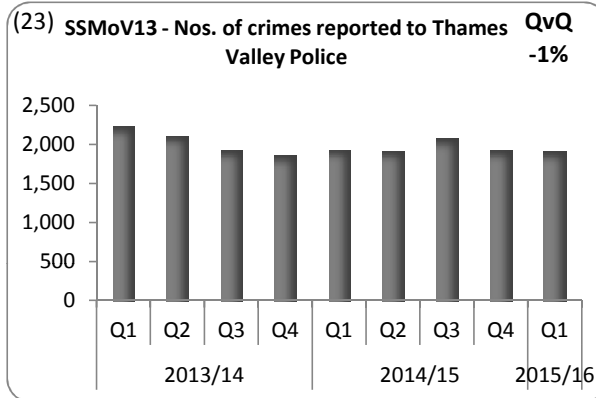
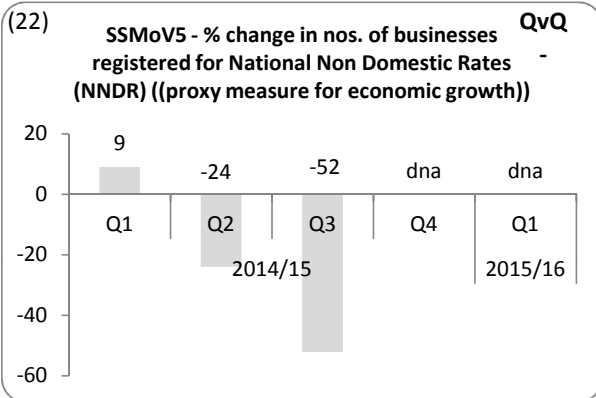
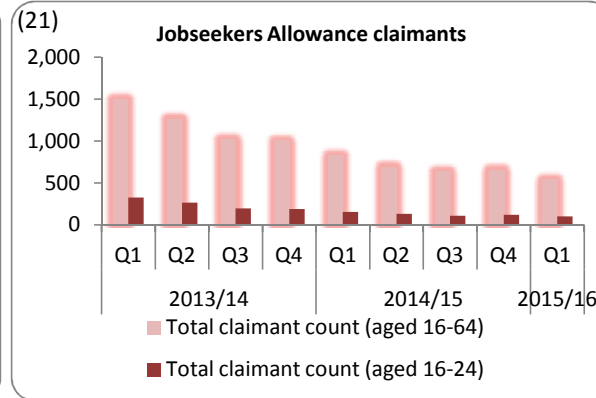
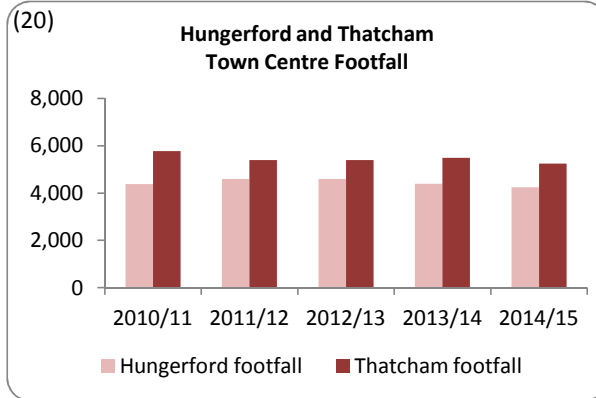
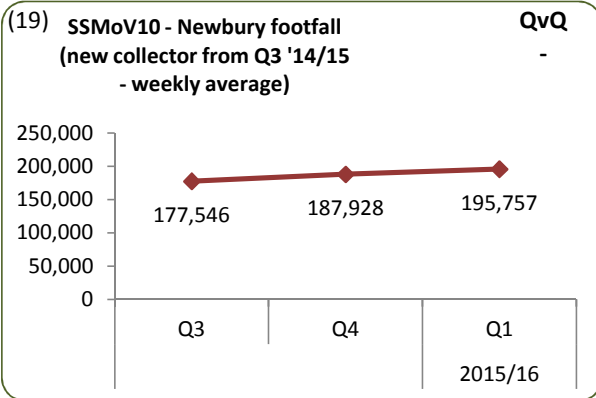
Key accountable measures and activities 2015/16

Quarter One

Contextual and volume measures







Key accountable measures and activities 2015/16

Quarter One

Exception reports

To maintain a high percentage of (single) assessments being completed within 45 working days

Executive	2014/15 Year End	2015/16				Target	Polarity
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
RAG	★	◆				≥90%	Lower is better
Qrtly outturn		-					
YTD outturn	70%	71.2%					

REASON FOR AMBER:

Our performance against this indicator has improved since the start of the year (61%) as the backlog of historical completions drop out of frame.

REMEDIAL MANAGEMENT ACTION BEING UNDERTAKEN:

There is day to day close scrutiny of single assessments that are still open.

The daily scrutiny of single assessments is having results and should continue to do so over the coming months. However, the high percentage of agency staff within the CAAS team means that performance is still vulnerable.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS REQUIRED

None at this stage.

To increase the percentage of children subject to a CP Plan that have received a visit within the past 10 working days

Executive	2014/15 Year End	2015/16				Target	Polarity
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
RAG		♦				≥95%	Higher is better
Qrtly outturn		-					
YTD outturn	84%	84.1%					

REASON FOR AMBER:

Our performance against this indicator is improving (84% in March 2014). However, there are ongoing challenges with respect to both the speed and accuracy of recording CP Visits. Where children are both CP and LAC, recording a visit as a LAC Visit is not sufficient.

REMEDIAL MANAGEMENT ACTION BEING UNDERTAKEN:

Regular discussions are taking place at the newly established Performance Board. Staff are aware of this as a priority area in terms of addressing recording issues.

Continued focus on this indicator and associated recording issues should result in

STRATEGIC ACTIONS REQUIRED

None at this stage.

Rachael Wardell / Mac Heath		Children and Family Service				23 July 2015		AMBER		
The number of weeks taken to conclude care proceedings (children social care)										
Executive	2014/15 Year End	2015/16				Target	Polarity			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4					
RAG		♦				<=26 weeks	Lower is better			
Qrtly outturn		-								
YTD outturn	31	27								
<p>REASON FOR AMBER:</p> <p>Our performance ytd is very slightly above the target of 26 weeks but it is likely to be continually challenging over the next two quarters due to the increase in care proceedings issues.</p> <p>REMEDIAL MANAGEMENT ACTION BEING UNDERTAKEN:</p> <p>Interviews are timetabled for July to appoint a new Case Management Officer to give clear scrutiny to the timeliness and quality of our court work.</p> <p>STRATEGIC ACTIONS REQUIRED</p> <p>None at this stage.</p>										

Rachael Wardell / Mac Heath		Children and Family Service				23 July 2015		AMBER		
% Completion of Pathway Plans for Looked after Children										
Executive	2014/15 Year End	2015/16				Target	Polarity			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4					
RAG		♦				100%	Higher is better			
Qrtly outturn		-								
YTD outturn	100%	79%								
<p>REASON FOR AMBER: Targets have only recently been agreed.</p> <p>REMEDIAL MANAGEMENT ACTION BEING UNDERTAKEN: Panel is due to be undertaken in mid August to review current LAC and consider plans in place and any LAC where plans are overdue</p> <p>STRATEGIC ACTIONS REQUIRED None at this stage</p>										

Rachael Wardell / Tandra Forster		Adult Social Care				14 July 2015	AMBER
Proportion of clients with Long Term Support (LTS) receiving a review in the past 12 months							
Executive	2014/15 Year End	2015/16				Target	Polarity
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
RAG	★	◆				90%	Higher is better
Qrtly outturn							
YTD outturn	62%	61.6%					
REASON FOR AMBER:							
<p>The change in eligibility framework resulting from the Care Act has created a new imperative for this work; all long term clients will have to have had a review under the new framework by 31 March 2016. Additional capacity has been brought in to focus on this area of work, it has taken time to bed in so there was a slow start to work in quarter 1. More recent information is showing that the pace has picked up and we expect improved performance in quarter 2.</p>							
REMEDIAL MANAGEMENT ACTION BEING UNDERTAKEN:							
<p>Additional staff are now in place, new performance monitoring reports have been created and weekly meetings are used to monitor progress and ensure appropriate capacity is in place.</p>							
STRATEGIC ACTIONS REQUIRED							
<p>None at this stage.</p>							

Key accountable measures and activities 2015/16

Quarter One

Performance outturns by strategic priority

2015/16 West Berkshire Council Key Accountable Measures Performance Report - Quarter one

Ref:	Measure / activity	National Rank / Quartile 2012/13	2013/14 Year end outturn	National Rank / Quartile 2013/14	2014/15 Year end outturn	2015/16 target	Q1 RAG / outturn		Q1 Supporting commentary
Priority 1. Improve educational attainment									
BEC1ed03	The number of schools judged good or better by Ofsted under the new Framework (harder test)	-	-	-	63	63	★	67	79% of schools
BEC1eday08	KS2: Prop'n pupils achieving at least level 4 in Reading, Writing and Maths	3rd	82%	2nd	due in Q3 '15/16	AY 2014/15 82%	🕒	Annual	
BEC1eday09	KS4: Proportion pupils gaining 5+ A*-C at GCSE including English and Maths (maintained and Acad)	2nd	65%	1st	due in Q3 '15/16	AY 2014/15 61% 1st Qtile	🕒	Annual	
Priority 2. Close the educational attainment gap									
BEC2eday19	To reduce the GCSE educational attainment gap to 22 percentage points	-	23%	-	due in Q3 '15/16	AY 2014/15 22pp	🕒	Annual	
Priority 3. Enable the completion of more affordable housing									
CBO1cchs11	Maintain the proportion of claims for Discretionary Housing Payment are determined within 28 days following receipt of all relevant information	-	84%	-	86%	80%	★	97.2%	Q1: 69 / 71
Priority 4. Deliver or enable key infrastructure improvements in relation to roads, rail, flood prevention, regeneration and the digital economy									
SLE2ht03	Ensure that no more than 5% of the principal road network (A roads) is in need of repair	50/143 2nd	3%	-	3%	5%	🕒	Annual	
SLE2ht06	Aim to complete at least 75% of all works orders for permanent pothole and edge of road repairs within 28 days of the order date.	-	(267/330) 81%	-	(413/610) 68%	75%	🕒	dna	Reported quarterly in arrears
SLE2ht11	Completion of at least 90% of the flood prevention and drainage improvement schemes listed in the capital programme.	-	-	-	(25/25) 100%	90%	★	9.5%	Q1: 2 / 21
SLE2ict04	Increase nos of West Berkshire premises able to receive Superfast Broadband services 24Mb/s or above	-	41,287 (60.0%)	-	-	tbc Q2	★	79%	Superfast coverage increased by 90% of 10,653 THP = 9,588 premises. This will take district coverage to 79.1%

2015/16 West Berkshire Council Key Accountable Measures Performance Report - Quarter one

Ref:	Measure / activity	National Rank / Quartile 2012/13	2013/14 Year end outturn	National Rank / Quartile 2013/14	2014/15 Year end outturn	2015/16 target	Q1 RAG / outturn	Q1 Supporting commentary
Priority 5. Good at safeguarding children and vulnerable adults								
P&S1c&f07	To maintain a high percentage of (single) assessments being completed within 45 working days	Local	New	Local	70%	>=90%	◆ 71.2%	Q1: 227 / 319 See exception report for details.
P&S1c&f08	ICPCs (Initial Child Protection Conferences) held within 15 days of S47 (child protection) enquiry (year to date)	3rd	0.81	dna	77%	>=90%	★ 97.4%	Q1: 38 / 39
P&S1c&f10	Child Protection Reviews - held on time (snapshot)	1st	0.93	4th	100%	>=95%	★ 100.0%	Q1: 85 / 85
P&S1c&f11	To increase the percentage of children subject to a CP Plan that have received a visit within the past 10 working days	-	-	-	84%	>=95%	◆ 84.1%	Q1: 106 / 126 See exception report for details.
P&S1c&f14	The number of weeks taken to conclude care proceedings (children social care)	-	-	-	31	<=26 weeks	◆ 27	See exception report for details
P&S1c&f17	Percentage of LAC with Health Assessments on time	-	-	-	63%	1	⚡ 50.8%	Q1: 64 / 126
P&S1c&f21	% Completion of Pathway Plans for Looked after Children	-	-	-	100%	100%	◆ 79.0%	Q1: 79 / 100 See exception report for details.
P&S1asc03	Maintain % of safeguarding concerns responded to within 24 hours.	-	87%	-	91%	92%	★ 92.1%	
OP3asc15	Proportion of older people (65+) who were still at home 91 days after discharge from hospital into reablement/rehabilitation services	-	-	-	93%	92%	★ 92.9%	Q1: 65 / 70 Small cohort prone to fluctuations.
Priority 6. Support communities to do more to help themselves								
PLACEHOLDER - additional measure to be confirmed for supporting communities approach linked to Health Visiting and School Nurses services								
Become a More effective council								
OP1asc06	Implement first phase of health and social care integration programme under the Better Care Fund framework.	.	.	.	-	Completed by March 2016	★ On track	
OP3asc17	A new way of delivering adult social care (change programme) will be completed by May 2016	-	-	-	-	Completed by May 2016	★ On track	Phase one evaluation has been completed and reported to Project Board at the end of June 2015.

2015/16 West Berkshire Council Key Accountable Measures Performance Report - Quarter one

Ref:	Measure / activity	National Rank / Quartile 2012/13	2013/14 Year end outturn	National Rank / Quartile 2013/14	2014/15 Year end outturn	2015/16 target	Q1 RAG / outturn	Q1 Supporting commentary
Core Business								
OP2asc13	Proportion of clients with Long Term Support (LTS) receiving a review in the past 12 months	-	-	-	62%	90%	◆ 61.6%	Q1: 796 / 1,292 See exception report for details. *Completed reviews in the reporting period for current LTS clients as a proportion of all current LTS clients (community/res/nursing) Snapshot of current LTS clients on a given date - end of quarter/ month (cannot be taken historically)
OP3asc14	Decrease the level of delayed transfers of care (DTC) from hospital and those attributable to social care from acute and non-acute settings (ASCOF 2C Part 2)	138 / 141 4th	9	-	5	4	★ 3.3	* DTC is a snapshot count of the number of patients (per 100,000 aged 18+) delayed at midnight on the last Thursday of a reporting period (a calendar month). This number is attributable to social care services only (ie. excluding Health services). Data is reported a month in arrears
CBO1cchs08	Ensure 95% of claims for Local Welfare Provision are processed within 10 working days	-	95%	-	97%	95%	★ 97.0%	Q1: 64 / 66
CBO1cchs09	Maintain % of benefits assessments within 3 weeks of referral from Children's Services	-	95%	-	96%	85%	★ 96.8%	Q1: 61 / 63
CBO1cep13	Maintain the proportion of household waste recycled/composted/reused/recovered (Local Indicator)	-	tbc	-	tbc	80%	★ 83.2% (E)	Q1: 18,827 / 22,625 This quarters result is an estimate based on partial availability of data and will not be finalised until the next quarter. This result is also subject to change once figures are validated and confirmed by DEFRA after quarter 4.
CBO3cep16	Maintain an acceptable level of litter, detritus and graffiti (as outlined in the Keep Britain Tidy local environmental indicators).	-	Good	-	Satisfactory	Good	⌘ dna	Reports from Q2
CEO5	Milestone: confirm plans regarding LGA review	-	-	-	-	Mar-16	● Annual	

End of report

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Agenda Item 7.

Title of Report:	Home to School Transport Policy and post-16 Transport Statement Consultation
Report to be considered by:	Executive on 10 September 2015
Forward Plan Ref:	EX2989

Purpose of Report: To review the consultation feedback on the proposed policies for 2015/16 and 2016/17 and determine the Council policy.

Recommended Action:

1. To approve the 2015/16 and 2016/17 policies.
2. To approve the specific proposal to remove free transport to the catchment school for secondary students.

Reason for decision to be taken: Statutory requirement to determine the Home to School Transport Policy and the post-16 Transport Statement

Other options considered: None

Key background documentation: Home to School Transport Policy, Post 16 Statement, Fare Payer Scheme

Published Works: Home to School Statutory Travel and Transport Statutory Guidance

The proposals will help achieve the following Council Strategy aims:	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	P&S – Protect and support those who need it
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	HQL – Maintain a high quality of life within our communities
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	MEC – Become an even more effective Council
The proposals contained in this report will help to achieve the following Council Strategy priorities:	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	HQL1 – Support communities to do more to help themselves
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	MEC1 – Become an even more effective Council

Portfolio Member Details	
Name & Telephone No.:	Councillor Dominic Boeck
E-mail Address:	dboeck@westberks.gov.uk
Date Portfolio Member agreed report:	20/7/2015

Contact Officer Details	
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Implications

Policy: The Home to School Transport policy is reviewed annually, and there is an annual consultation with the public on any proposed changes.

Financial: The proposals within the report have been reviewed and verified by the Home to School Transport Working Group. The proposals underpin corporate savings strategies for financial year 2016-17 and beyond. The potential savings would be within the range £57k - £90k for a full year.

Personnel: There are no implications.

Legal/Procurement: The duty to provide free school transport is contained in [section 508B](#) of the Education Act 1996 (EA 1996). The duty is owed by the Council if the child is an "eligible child" in its area; and either a) no arrangements relating to travel in either direction between their home and school are provided free of charge by any other person; or b) such travel arrangements are provided but (even if taken together with any other such arrangements) they are not suitable for the purpose of facilitating their attendance at school. Eligible child is defined in the EA 1996.

Under [Section 508C](#) of the EA 1996 travel arrangements for ineligible children may include a requirement for the child or his parent to pay some or all of the costs.

Under the Statutory Guidance for Home to School travel and transport July 2014 (the Guidance), the Secretary of State expects Councils to consider all possible options before embarking on changing/ disturbing well established arrangements.

Council is also obliged to consult widely on any proposed changes to their local policies on school travel arrangements with all interested parties. A phased in approach is preferred.

Any decision to change policy needs to take account of the above in particular the EA 1996 and the statutory guidance.

Property:

Risk Management:

Corporate Board's Recommendation: For the report to be considered by Management Board.

Is this item relevant to equality?	Please tick relevant boxes	Yes	No
Does the policy affect service users, employees or the wider community and:			
• Is it likely to affect people with particular protected characteristics differently?		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Is it a major policy, significantly affecting how functions are delivered?		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Will the policy have a significant impact on how other organisations operate in terms of equality?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
• Does the policy relate to functions that engagement has identified as being important to people with particular protected characteristics?		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Does the policy relate to an area with known inequalities?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Outcome (Where one or more 'Yes' boxes are ticked, the item is relevant to equality)			
Relevant to equality - Complete an EIA available at http://intranet/EqIA			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Not relevant to equality			<input type="checkbox"/>

Is this item subject to call-in?	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No: <input type="checkbox"/>
If not subject to call-in please put a cross in the appropriate box:		
The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Considered or reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission or associated Task Groups within preceding six months	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Item is Urgent Key Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Report is to note only	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Executive Summary

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Parents are legally responsible for making sure that their children get to and from school at the appropriate times each day.
- 1.2 The Council reviews its Home to School Transport Policy, post-16 Transport Statement and Fare Payer Scheme annually and publicly consults on the proposals. The consultation began on 8th June 2015 and ended on 17th July 2015. A Consultation Summary Report is provided at Appendix A.

2. Consultation

- 2.1 In relation to the 2015/16 policy, two matters were raised, which have been addressed by amending the wording in the final version of the Policy:
 - the process for responding to urgent need in relation to temporary re-housing
 - the position for children of separated or divorced parents who live in two households
- 2.2 The 2016/17 policy will mirror the 2015/16 policy in this regard.
- 2.3 The 2016/17 policy included a proposal to remove free entitlement to discretionary transport to secondary catchment schools and introduce a fee. There is no legal entitlement to free transport to the catchment school, only to the nearest school. The Council is not obliged to provide catchment transport without a charge. The proposed fee was £250 p.a. (equivalent to £1.32 per school day for a return journey).
- 2.4 There was universal opposition to this proposal, which would affect c.400 students out of a cohort of 11500. The overwhelming majority of responses came from Curridge, Chieveley and Hermitage villages which feed The Downs school, which is the area most affected by the proposal.
- 2.5 Other Local Authorities have withdrawn some or all aspects of discretionary transport. Examples include Warrington, Essex, Herefordshire, Rochdale, Oxfordshire and Cornwall.

3. Finance

- 3.1 Home to School Transport budgets have been reduced for the last 4 years, (from £3.9m p.a to £3.3m p.a.) through robust procurement and streamlining routes. The ability to continue to make savings on Home to School Transport without impacting on families is now exhausted.
- 3.2 The proposed requirement to deliver a further £100,000 savings in 2016/17 is the driver for the proposal. This proposal will deliver some of the required savings for 2016/17.
- 3.3 The proposal would deliver between 57k and 90k of savings in a full year. The actual amount of savings would depend on whether parents paid a fee to use the school bus or made alternative arrangements. If parents opted for their child to use the school bus and pay the fee, the savings would be the lower figure. If parents elected to make alternative arrangements, savings could be achieved by reviewing and

rationalising bus routes and minimising provision to match demand. This could deliver up to £90k savings p.a.

4. Equalities Impact Assessment Outcomes

- 4.1 A Stage 2 Equalities Impact Assessment was undertaken, in discussion with Rachel Craggs, who is the Council's lead on equalities matters. There are mitigation measures within the proposal and the proposal was not considered to be discriminatory.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 The Board is asked to approve the revised Policies for 2015/16 and 2016/17.

Executive Report

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Parents are legally responsible for making sure that their children get to and from school at the appropriate times each day.
- 1.2 West Berkshire Council's Home to School Transport Policy sets out the circumstances in which it will provide free transport to children and young people travelling to school or college. It relates to West Berkshire residents of statutory school age (from the term following 5th birthday to the end of Year 11).
- 1.3 West Berkshire Council's post-16 Transport Statement sets out how the Council will meet the requirements of the statutory guidance for post-16 pupils.
- 1.4 Local Authorities are required by law to provide help for some pupils but may also provide help for others on a discretionary basis, such as through the Fare Payer Scheme.
- 1.5 The Council reviews its Home to School Transport Policy, post-16 Transport Statement and Fare Payer Scheme annually and is required to consult on proposed changes.
- 1.6 The major change considered in the consultation was a proposal to remove the free entitlement of discretionary transport to the secondary catchment school. The proposed requirement to deliver a further £100,000 savings in 2016/17 was the driver for the proposal.
- 1.7 The proposal would deliver in the range of 57k and 90k of savings in a full year. The actual amount of savings would depend on whether parents paid a fee to use the school bus or made alternative arrangements. If parents opted for their child to use the school bus and pay the fee, the savings would be the lower figure. If parents elected to make alternative arrangements, savings could be achieved by reviewing and rationalising bus routes and minimising provision to match demand. This could deliver up to £90k savings p.a.

2. Consultation Process

- 2.1 The consultation began on 8th June 2015 and ended on 17th July 2015.
- 2.2 The information was available on the Council's website and information was sent to schools on 3 June 2015 to cascade to all primary and secondary school parents. The information was also circulated to Councillors and Headteachers.
- 2.3 In response to initial feedback, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) were produced, added to the consultation portal and circulated to schools for cascade to parents.
- 2.4 The Consultation Report includes:
 - A Summary of the proposed changes to the Policy.
 - Key Themes – You said, we responded
 - Equality Impact Assessment
 - Downloads of the comments received

3. Consultation Feedback

- 3.1 The feedback in relation to the 2015/16 policy was minimal. Two specific matters were raised, which have been addressed by amending the wording in the final version of the Policy. These are explained in the Consultation Report and relate to:
- the process for responding to urgent need in relation to temporary re-housing
 - the position for children of separated or divorced parents who live in two households
- 3.2 The 2016/17 policy mirrors the 2015/16 policy, with one exception. The main proposal for 2016/17 in relation to removal of free entitlement and introduction of a fee for discretionary transport to the secondary catchment schools is covered in section 4, which in turn affected the content of the discretionary Fare Payer Scheme.
- 3.3 Aside from the proposal in Section 4, any changes as a result of the consultation to the 2015/16 policy would also feature in the 2016/17 policy.
- 3.4 There were no other comments in relation to the 2016/17 policy.
- 3.5 A summary of the amended wordings is attached to this report at Appendix B.
- 3.6 The remainder of this report focuses on the proposal to remove free entitlement to discretionary transport to secondary catchment schools.

4. Removal of free entitlement to discretionary transport to the secondary catchment schools

- 4.1 There is statutory transport guidance which the Local Authority must comply with and this only requires free transport to the nearest school (subject to other criteria such as distance). The national guidance does not use the admission catchment as a measure of entitlement.
- 4.2 The Council currently provides the statutory entitlement to nearest school and the discretionary entitlement to catchment school at no cost to families. The consultation made the public aware that the current policy on home to school transport includes support on a discretionary basis for some communities. This is at a significant cost to the council at a time of reducing financial resources.
- 4.3 The Council's use of catchment for transport entitlement is a discretionary element of our provision. The national transport guidance is quite clear that discretionary elements can be charged for. Therefore, the Council is not obliged to provide catchment transport at no cost.
- 4.4 The 2016/17 Policy included a proposal to remove the free entitlement of discretionary transport to the secondary catchment school for new applications. The proposal included a guarantee of a place on the school bus for the nearest or catchment school, subject to the payment of a fee if a family do not qualify for free transport. A family may prefer to use the school bus and or, alternatively, a family may choose to make other arrangements. It would be for the family to decide what works best for them.

- 4.5 The proposal included the following considerations to mitigate the impact on affected families who may wish to continue to use the school bus, but would be required to pay a fee:
- Guaranteed seat on the bus
 - Reduced Fee
 - Flat Rate Fee
 - Ability to pay in instalments
 - Low Income
 - Appeal process, where Exceptional Circumstances could be considered.
 - Up to 4 years protection for students who are receiving free transport before the implementation date of the change (proposed for September 2016).
- 4.6 The scale of budget reductions means that the Council needs to prioritise statutory functions, and consider whether it can continue to provide discretionary elements of its Home to School Transport services.
- 4.7 The Home to School Transport budgets have reduced year on year, primarily through robust procurement and the streamlining of routes and resources. The ability to continue to make savings on Home to School Transport without impacting on families is now exhausted. The figures show the actual budget after deduction of savings and the addition of inflationary increases where applicable.

BUDGETS	2012/2013	2013/2014	2014/2015	2015/2016
Mainstream	£1,843,610	£1,762,280	£1,664,610	£1,605,120
Special Educational Needs	£1,791,670	£1,632,610	£1,581,170	£1,497,950
Pupil Referral Units	£271,600	£286,030	£277,340	£269,190
Total	£3,906,880	£3,680,920	£3,523,120	£3,372,260

- 4.8 For 2016/17 and beyond, future savings need to be made by reducing discretionary elements of the policy, whilst maintaining a robust procurement process for transport provision.
- 4.9 The proposed requirement to deliver a further £100,000 savings in 2016/17 is the driver for the proposal. This proposal will deliver some of the required savings for 2016/17. The Council is working in partnership to deliver revised arrangements to meet the rest of the required savings.
- 4.10 The potential savings would be within the range £57k - £90k. The introduction of a fee would generate income of £57k p.a. if parents elected to continue to use the guaranteed places on the school bus (at the subsidised rate of £250 per year, which is equivalent to £1.32 per school day). If parents elected to make alternative arrangements, savings could be achieved by reviewing and rationalising bus routes and minimising provision to match demand. This could deliver up to £90k savings p.a.
- 4.11 The flat rate in the Fare Payer Scheme proposal is £250 p.a. This compares, for example, to the average cost of a seat on the buses which travel to the Downs school of £572 p.a, and represents a Council subsidy of £322 p.a. per seat.

4.12 Using daily rates as a comparator, over 190 school days per year:

Fare Payer Scheme	£1.32 per day for a return journey
Cost to Council	£3.01 per day for a return journey
Public Bus Pass	£3.68 per day for a return journey (based on 4 x 90-day pass)

4.13 Based on existing students, it was estimated that the proposal would affect the following numbers of students at any one time, out of a total cohort of 11500 secondary students. As the older cohorts leave the schools and young cohorts join the schools, the total number affected should remain relatively constant:

School	Students affected
The Downs	225
Theale Green	78
The Willink	28
Kennet	16
St. Bartholomew's	7
Trinity	36
Total	390

4.14 It should be noted that other Local Authorities have withdrawn some or all aspects of discretionary transport due to financial pressures, and, in some cases, have also removed the subsidy on Fare Payer prices. Examples include Warrington, Essex, Herefordshire, Rochdale, Oxfordshire and Cornwall.

4.15 The finally determined Policy for 2016/17 would be published in September 2015.

5. Consultation Responses – Key Themes

5.1 Downloads of the responses to the consultation can be found in Appendices to the Consultation Summary Report. Example quotes from the responses and the Council's reply in relation to the key themes is available at the Consultation Report – in the section "Key Themes: You said, we responded".

5.2 The 5 main themes were:

1. Respondents did not understand why the Admissions process uses *catchment* school and the Transport proposal uses *nearest* school. Some suggested that, if transport entitlement is changing, catchment areas should change too.
2. Respondents thought that there would not be a guaranteed space on the school bus.
3. The cost of a Fare Payer place would place a financial strain on families
4. The cost of a Fare Payer place would be a burden on families on lower incomes.
5. There would be traffic congestion if parents used their cars to transport their children, with a risk of accidents.

- 5.3 Some respondents were also concerned about:
- Working parents and the potential impact on their domestic arrangements.
 - Rural families are disproportionately affected and respondents felt this was discriminatory (see Equalities Impact Assessment).
 - The proposal will “split” villages based on transport entitlement and this will impact on community cohesion/spirit.
 - Parents would have to choose a school which has transport, rather than the school which provides the best education for their child.
 - Going on the school bus has a positive effect on social and emotional wellbeing.

6. Considerations

- 6.1 There was universal opposition to this proposal, particularly from rural areas. The proposal affects 6 out of 10 secondary schools in West Berkshire.
- 6.2 An overwhelming majority of responses opposed the proposal and these responses came from the Downs catchment area. This is the geographical area that would be most affected. The families from Curridge, Chieveley and Hermitage (which feed the Downs school) unanimously rejected the proposal to charge for home to school transport. It was clear from the consultation responses that families would prefer the free entitlement to remain unchanged.
- 6.3 The proposal would mean that affected families would either have to pay a fee to access the school bus or make alternative arrangements to get their child to school. Alternatively, they could select a school based on the ability to access transport, but this might not be their preferred school. These issues have always existed when parents choose secondary provision, hence not all parents opt for their nearest or catchment area schools.
- 6.4 The Council’s use of catchment for transport entitlement is a discretionary element of our provision. There is no legal entitlement to free transport to the catchment school, only to the nearest school. The Council is not obliged to provide catchment transport without a charge.
- 6.5 The decision to apply for a place at a particular school is one of parental preference. Parents can express a preference for any school regardless of whether their child has attended a partner primary to a particular secondary school.
- 6.6 The Council has no legal obligation to meet the travel cost associated with this decision if the child could have accessed a place at a nearer school from home.
- 6.7 To ensure fairness and consistency, any changes in discretionary support should apply to all pupils.
- 6.8 It is not proposed that there is mitigation for specific communities. The Council provides free transport to a large number of secondary pupils on a discretionary basis. However it does not provide free transport to all secondary children. Therefore implementation of the proposal will mean that secondary children are only provided with transport assistance when there is a legal obligation to do so, which means that the policy will be fairer overall for all communities.

6.9 The Council has the ability, as described in paragraphs 36 and 37 of the statutory transport guidance, to impose a charge or fee for discretionary transport. As per the guidance, the proposal includes mitigation for low income families.

36. Section 508C of the Act provides local authorities with discretionary powers to go beyond their statutory duties and provide transport for children who are not entitled to free transport. Charges can be made, or, as stated in Subsection (5) of 508C local authorities may also pay all or part of the reasonable travel expenses of children who have not had travel arrangements made either under the statutory duty placed on local authorities, or under their discretionary powers to make travel arrangements. Where charges are imposed, good practice suggests that children from low income groups (those not eligible for extended rights, either due to being just outside financial eligibility or live outside of the distance criteria and therefore not in receipt of free travel) should be exempt.

37. It is very much for the individual local authority to decide whether and how to apply this discretion as they are best placed to determine local needs and circumstances. It is recognised that local authorities will need to balance the demands for a broad range of discretionary travel against their budget priorities. While the department offers guidance, the final decision on any discretionary travel arrangements must rest with the individual local authority who should engage with parents and clearly communicate what support they can expect from the local authority.

6.10 The proposals are mindful of the impact on the families that would be affected and include a range of mitigating factors, including protection for existing students, a phased-in approach, mitigation of the cost of the Fare Payer fee and guarantees to ensure that families can rely on transport arrangements.

7. Recommendation

The Executive is asked:

1. To approve the Home to School Transport policy for 2015/16, with minor amendments following the consultation.
2. To approve the specific proposal to remove free transport to the catchment school for secondary students and determine whether to proceed with this proposal.
3. To approve the Home to School Transport policy for 2016/17, updated with minor amendments mirrored from the 2015/16 Policy following the consultation.

Appendices

Appendix A – Consultation Summary – Home to School Transport, and its' Appendices:

- 1: Transport Consultation – summary of Changes
- 2: Key Themes: You said, we responded
- 3: Equalities Impact Assessment
- 4: Email responses
- 5: Letter responses
- 6: Survey Monkey responses

Appendix B – Proposed Amendments following the Consultation

Appendix C – FAQs

Appendix D – Original consultation documents

Consultees

Local Stakeholders: Public consultation, Headteachers, Councillors

Officers Consulted: Rachael Wardell (Director – Communities), Ian Pearson (Head of Education), Rachel Craggs (Principal Policy Officer (Equalities), Shannon Coleman-Slaughter (Finance Manager), Melvina Dimmott-Franking (Finance) Shiraz Sheikh (Principal Solicitor), Andrew Brown (Transport) , Emma Jameson (Transport), Corporate Board

Trade Union:

CONSULTATION SUMMARY
HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT

July 2015

1. Background

- 1.1. Parents are legally responsible for making sure that their children get to and from school at the appropriate times each day. This includes a parent making appropriate arrangements for their child where the parent has working commitments at the relevant times in the school day.
- 1.2. West Berkshire Council's Home to School Transport Policy sets out the circumstances in which it will provide free transport to children and young people travelling to school or college. It relates to West Berkshire residents of statutory school age (from the term following 5th birthday to the end of Year 11).
- 1.3. West Berkshire Council's post-16 Transport Statement sets out how the Council will meet the requirements of the statutory guidance for post-16 pupils.
- 1.4. Local Authorities are required by law to provide help for some pupils but may also provide help for others on a discretionary basis, such as through the Fare Payer Scheme.
- 1.5. The Council reviews its Home to School Transport Policy, post-16 Transport Statement and Fare Payer Scheme annually and is required to consult on proposed changes. This consultation includes the Home to School Transport Policy 2015/16 as the Council is re-consulting on this policy following clarification amendments.
- 1.6. The changes are outlined in Appendix A.

2. Consultation Process

- 2.1. The consultation was initially available on the West Berkshire Council website between 8th June 2015 and 10th July 2015.
- 2.2. The Consultation documentation was circulated to all Headteachers in West Berkshire maintained schools and academies on 3rd June 2015.
- 2.3. The Consultation documentation was sent to all Councillors on 21 May 2015.
- 2.4. Using the routine method of communication with parents, a letter was provided for the schools to cascade to parents, to alert parents about the consultation and encourage them to respond. Schools were asked to send this out on 3rd June 2015.
- 2.5. The consultation featured in the Newbury Weekly News on 4th June 2015, encouraging residents to respond.
- 2.6. Respondents were asked for their views on the proposed changes.
- 2.7. Following feedback that a few schools had experienced email issues around the start of the consultation period, the documentation was re-sent to schools with a further request for them to cascade to parents if they had not already done so. This reminder was sent on 22 June 2015. The closing date for the consultation was extended to 17th July 2015 to allow more time for responses.
- 2.8. In responses to initial feedback, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) were produced and added to the consultation portal. The FAQs were also circulated to schools on 25 June 2015 for cascade to parents.

3. Analysis of Responses

3.1. The majority of responses were received via the Consultation Survey.

3.2. Responses which included comments on the proposals were received from:

The Downs	102
Chieveley	9
Curridge	12
Hermitage	2
Newbury Academy Trust	6
Other schools	6
Other	8
Total no. of responses	145

3.3. Where indicated, the respondents identified themselves as:

Parent currently receiving transport	66
School	18
Governor	12
Parish Council	2
Local Authority	3
Sub-total	101

3.4. A letter was received from the Management Committee of the Pupil Referral Units in relation to the changes for Pupils attending a Pupil Referral Unit.

3.5. Councillor Docherty replied through the survey form in relation to the Appeals process for children in temporary housing.

3.6. 127 out of 145 respondents accessed the survey to comment on the proposal in Section 6 to remove free entitlement and introduce a fee for discretionary transport for secondary pupils to the catchment school (unless this is the nearest school) from 2016/17.

3.7. 42 emails were received about the proposal in Section 6, including emails from Curridge Residents' Association, Hermitage Governing Body and Councillors Cole, Bale and Jones.

3.8. A petition was received from the Curridge Primary School PTA objecting to the proposal. The petition had 162 signatures. Please note that some of those who have signed the petition may also have responded via the consultation survey form.

4. Consultation Responses 2015/16 Policy

- 4.1. The definition of an *Available route* was expanded to provide more information on what is considered. There was one response asking for clarification about a particular route.
- 4.2. In relation to Pupils attending a Pupil Referral Unit, the content was updated to reflect current practice. There was one comment from The Council's Transport Team, with suggestions for minor amendments to the wording for clarity. ***In response to this comment, the wording in the policy will be amended.***
- 4.3. In relation to Pupils permanently excluded from school, the content was updated to reflect current practice. There were no comments for this question.
- 4.4. In relation to post-16 students with a statement of Special Educational Needs, the content was updated in the light of the SEND reforms. There were no comments for this question.
- 4.5. In relation to children with a Statement of Special Education Needs/EHC Plan, the content was updated in the light of the SEND reforms. There were no comments for this question.
- 4.6. A comment was received with regard to the speed of decisions in relation to temporary housing. The Lead Councillor for Children was concerned that the process for managing Exceptional Circumstances using the Appeals Process could impact on Looked After Children and those children who may be on the edge of care. The response noted that *"If they are re-homed on a temporary basis and it is in their best interest to remain at their existing school then an appeal process that will take 40+ working days to secure transport costs to that school is not going to work."*
- 4.7. The timescale for the Appeals process is congruent with the recommendations in the national guidance, which also notes *"the timings are recommended and not compulsory. We envisage that many appeals will be dealt with much sooner than these timings, particularly those which have a time pressure, whilst complex cases may take longer"*. In practice, the majority of appeals are dealt with much more quickly than the recommended timescales. ***In response to this comment, the process for responding to urgent need in relation to temporary re-housing will be reviewed and the wording in the policy will be amended.***
- 4.8. One comment noted that the policy is not clear about the position for children of separated or divorced parents who live in two households. This is also a matter which has been raised with the Education Service directly by other families during the consultation. ***In response to this comment, the policy wording will be amended to include clarity on this scenario.***

5. Consultation Responses 2016/17 Policy

- 5.1. For the analysis about the proposal to remove free entitlement to discretionary transport to the catchment schools from 2016/17, see section 6. There were no other comments in relation to the 2016/17 policy.
- 5.2. The 2016/17 policy mirrors the 2015/16 policy. Aside from the proposal in Section 6, any changes as a result of the consultation to the 2015/16 policy will also feature in the 2016/17 policy.

6. Consultation Responses – Removal of Free Entitlement to Discretionary Transport to Catchment School

Rationale for Proposal

- 6.1. The 2016/17 Policy included a proposal to remove the free entitlement of discretionary transport to the catchment school.
- 6.2. Parents are legally responsible for making sure that their children get to and from school at the appropriate times each day. This includes a parent making appropriate arrangements for their child where the parent has working commitments at the relevant times in the school day.
- 6.3. There is statutory transport guidance which the Local Authority must comply with and this only requires free transport to the nearest school (subject to other criteria such as distance). The national guidance does not use the admission catchment as a measure of entitlement.
- 6.4. The Council currently provides the statutory entitlement to nearest school and the discretionary entitlement to catchment school at no cost to families. The consultation made the public aware that the current policy on home to school transport includes support on a discretionary basis for some communities. This is at a significant cost to the council at a time of reducing financial resources.
- 6.5. The Council's use of catchment for transport entitlement is a discretionary element of our provision. The national transport guidance is quite clear that discretionary elements can be charged for. Therefore, the Council is not obliged to provide catchment transport at no cost.
- 6.6. The scale of budget reductions means that the Council needs to prioritise statutory functions, and consider whether it can continue to provide discretionary services, such as those elements of Home to School Transport.

6.7. Home to School Transport budgets have been reduced year on year for the last 4 years, primarily through robust procurement and the streamlining of routes and resources. The ability to continue to make savings on Home to School Transport without impacting on families is now exhausted.

BUDGETS	2012/2013	2013/2014	2014/2015	2015/2016
Mainstream	£1,843,610	£1,762,280	£1,664,610	£1,605,120
Special Educational Needs	£1,791,670	£1,632,610	£1,581,170	£1,497,950
Pupil Referral Units	£271,600	£286,030	£277,340	£269,190
Total	£3,906,880	£3,680,920	£3,523,120	£3,372,260

6.8. For 2016/17 and beyond, future savings would need to be made through the reduction of discretionary elements of the policy, whilst maintaining a robust procurement process for transport provision. The requirement to deliver a further £150,000 savings in 2016/17 is the driver for the proposal, and it is noted that any change to entitlement will impact on some families.

6.9. The introduction of a fee towards the cost of discretionary support would generate income of £57k p.a. for the Council if parents elected to continue to use the guaranteed places on the school bus. This would be generated from Fare Payer income from parents, at the subsidised rate of £250 per year, which is equal to £1.32 per school day.

6.10. If parents elected to make alternative arrangements, savings could be achieved by reviewing and rationalising bus routes and minimising provision to match demand. This could deliver up to £90k savings p.a.

6.11. The full financial impact of this proposal would not be received until after the phasing-in period, although there would be some impact from September 2016 onwards.

6.12. Based on existing students, it was estimated that the proposal would affect the following numbers of students at any one time, out of a total cohort of 11500 secondary students:

School	Students affected
The Downs	225
Theale Green	78
The Willink	28
Kennet	16
St. Bartholomew's	7
Trinity	36
Total	390

- 6.13. It should be noted that savings must be made and, therefore, it was necessary to bring forward proposals for consultation. The continuation of current expenditure on Home to School Transport was not an option.
- 6.14. Other Local Authorities have withdrawn some or all aspects of discretionary transport due to the financial imperative, and, in some cases, have also removed the subsidy on Fare Payer prices. Examples include Warrington, Essex, Herefordshire, Rochdale, Oxford and Cornwall.
- 6.15. The Council has endeavoured to bring forward proportionate proposals, impacting fewer families, with a view to retaining discretionary provision where possible. The Council has also taken mitigating steps being mindful of the impact on the families that would be affected.

The Detailed Proposal

- 6.16. The proposal is to remove free entitlement and introduce a fee for discretionary transport to the catchment school for new applications which take effect from September 2016. The proposal includes a guarantee of a place on the school bus for the nearest or catchment school, subject to the payment of a fee if a family do not qualify for free transport. A family may prefer to use the school bus and or, alternatively, a family may choose to make other arrangements. It would be for the family to decide what works best for them.
- 6.17. The proposal took account of the following considerations to mitigate the impact on affected families who may wish to continue to use the school bus, but would be required to pay a fee:
- **Guaranteed seat on the bus** – subject to applying on time and making either the full payment or the first payment in an instalment plan by the relevant deadlines.
 - **Reduced Fee** – A new rate for nearest or catchment school was proposed, which for 2016/17 would be £250 per year. This is an equivalent to £1.32 per school day. It should also be noted, whilst that the actual cost of a seat on the bus varies by route, the Fare Payer fees are already subsidised by the Council and therefore the flat rate fee represents a significant cost reduction compared to the actual cost.
 - **Flat Rate Fee** It does not matter how far the child lives away from the school, the fee is the same. This reduces the cost of using the bus compared to the old banding rate, where some distances, especially to rural schools, would have attracted a fee of £430 p.a. or £800 p.a. (2014/15 rates, depending on distance).
 - **Ability to pay in** up to 6 instalments to spread the cost.
 - **Low Income** – the statutory provision is different for those families that meet the national low income criteria, and families would be entitled to free transport to the 3 nearest schools between 2 and 6 miles from their house. This would usually include the catchment school and they would qualify for free transport.
 - **Appeal process**, where Exceptional Circumstances could be considered.

- 6.18. The proposal included up to 4 years protection for students who are receiving free transport before the implementation date of the change (proposed for September 2016). Current secondary students who receive transport will continue to be entitled to free transport on their existing route until the end of Year 11. If the proposal goes ahead, it will be phased in from September 2016 for all new transport applications - new students when they start secondary education or existing students if they change their secondary school route.
- 6.19. The finally determined Policy would be published in September 2015 ensuring that parents can access transport information before making their secondary school choices for September 2016.

Consultation Process

- 6.20. The responses from residents objected to the proposal.
- 6.21. The vast majority of responses were from the villages which feed The Downs school, especially Curridge, Chieveley and Hermitage. This included a petition from Curridge Primary School PTA and responses from Curridge Residents Association, Hermitage School Governing Body, and Chieveley Parish Council.
- 6.22. As feedback began to come in about this proposal, it was clear from a substantial number of the initial responses that the details of mitigation added to the Fare Payer Scheme had not been understood.
- 6.23. It appeared that the initial letter to parents was not clear enough, and this led to some misunderstanding. Respondents focused on one phrase in the letter which said *a place is not guaranteed, subject to availability*. On reflection, this would have been better worded if it had said *a place is guaranteed (provided the application was made on time and the fee paid)*.
- 6.24. There was confusion about guarantee of a place on the bus, the cost of a place on the bus and the notion that the Council was removing the buses completely, which could affect traffic congestion and parking and the environment and would disadvantage working parents and those who don't drive.
- 6.25. The Fare Payer Scheme document that was within the original consultation documents did explain the detail of the guarantee – *“Pupil/Student Guarantee - Where the pupil/student is attending their nearest or catchment school, they are guaranteed a place on an existing school bus route provided by West Berkshire Council”*. Where a respondent contacted the Council about this point, they were reassured.
- 6.26. To address the misunderstandings more widely and provide clarity for parents, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and maps were added to the consultation web page. The additional information was also circulated to Headteachers on 25 June 2015 for onward cascade to parents.

- 6.27. The FAQs clarified the position about the guarantee and the flat rate fee, and explained the mitigation measures in more detail.
- 6.28. Despite this further action, misconceptions persisted throughout the remaining 3 weeks of the consultation period.
- 6.29. Some consultation responses demonstrated that the respondents had not looked at the documentation that was provided and had relied on the limited information in the initial letter, hearsay and discussion within the community to judge the proposal. This was evidenced by parents quoting Fare Payer fee rates which did not match what was proposed, for example.
- 6.30. The Education Service will undertake a post-consultation review to inform future Home to School Transport consultations.
- 6.31. Therefore, when considering the consultation responses, **it is important to ascertain which issues relate to the proposal which was actually made, and which issues are resolved through making the points of the proposal clearer.**

Themes from the Consultation

- 6.32. There were 5 main themes from the responses:
1. Respondents did not understand why the Admissions process uses *catchment* school and the Transport proposal uses *nearest* school. Some suggested that, if transport entitlement is changing, catchment areas should change too.
 2. Respondents had misunderstood and thought that there would not be a guaranteed space on the school bus.
 3. The cost of a Fare Payer place would place a financial strain on families
 4. The cost of a Fare Payer place would be a burden on families on lower incomes.
 5. There would be traffic congestion if parents used their cars to transport their children, with a risk of accidents. Lack of parking at the Downs school if parents transported children themselves.
- 6.33. Some respondents were also concerned about:
- Working parents and the potential impact on their domestic arrangements.
 - Rural families are disproportionately affected and respondents felt this was discriminatory.
 - The proposal will “split” villages based on transport entitlement and this will impact on community cohesion/spirit.
 - Parents would have to choose a school which has transport, rather than the school which provides the best education for their child.
- 6.34. Example quotes from the responses and the Council’s reply in relation all of these themes are available at Appendix B – Key Themes: You said, we responded. An Equalities Impact Assessment is available at Appendix C.

Appendix 1

Transport Consultation – summary of changes

Clarification and Amendments - 2015/16 Home to School Transport Policy

In response to queries from parents, the Council has amended the wording of the policy to provide more clarity:

- Parent's responsibilities – these are now highlighted throughout the policy for ease of reference.
- The information that is required to allow us to consider applications for transport under the *temporary medical condition* or *parental disability* clauses is now explained (page 5)
- The definition of an *Available route* has been expanded to provide more information on what is considered (section 8)
- In relation to *Appeals* (section 18), the content has been updated to provide a clearer explanation of the grounds for an Appeal and to explain the process where we need to ask for additional evidence.
- In relation to *Complaints* (section 19), the content has been updated to provide a clearer explanation of when a representation from a parent is a complaint and when it is an Appeal.

These changes do not affect entitlement.

Amendments have been made:

- In relation to *Pupils attending a Pupil Referral Unit*, the content has been updated to reflect current practice. (Page 6)
- In relation to *Pupils permanently excluded from school*, the content has been updated to reflect current practice. (Page 6)
- In relation to *post-16 students with a statement of Special Educational Needs*, the content has been updated in the light of the SEND reforms. (page 9-10)
- In relation to *children with a Statement of Special Education Needs/EHC Plan*, the content has been updated in the light of the SEND reforms (pages 6, 9-10, 14-15)

Change of Entitlement - 2016/17 Home to School Transport Policy

- The Council proposes to remove the discretionary criteria to provide transport for secondary students to their catchment school

Changes to the Fare Payer Scheme

- Changes to the banding structure in response to the proposal for nearest and catchment school
- Discount for siblings is reduced from 20% to 10%.

Appendix 2 – Key Themes – You said, we responded...

The table below provides a summary of the points made by residents in response to the consultation, together with a comment on each issue.

Theme	You said...	We responded...
Catchment School versus Nearest School	<p>Why does the Admissions process uses <i>catchment</i> school and the Transport proposal uses <i>nearest</i> school?</p> <p>You said: <i>“As a proposal, this is counter-intuitive, as in these instances a family would have to choose to select a catchment school without transport or a non-catchment school with transport”</i> <i>“If the student is in catchment, then they should have an automatic right to free transport”</i></p>	<p>The Admissions Code is the statutory guidance that covers how admission to schools operates. Catchment areas are a mechanism for managing oversubscription for school places at a school during the admission process. We use catchment areas in West Berkshire. Catchment areas also create ‘partnerships’ of secondary and ‘feeder’ primary schools, which enhance learning opportunities and aid transition.</p> <p>The Statutory guidance for Transport requires Local Authorities to provide transport to the <i>nearest</i> school. Catchment is not used in transport legislation. However for some students the nearest and the catchment schools are the same.</p> <p>These are two different bodies of legislation about two different processes. Whilst parent’s choice of school may be affected by transport to the school, the national requirements keep the two matters quite separate.</p> <p>Our use of catchment for transport is a discretionary element of our provision at the moment and the transport guidance is quite clear that discretionary elements can be charged for. Therefore, the Council is not obliged to provide catchment transport at no cost.</p> <p>The Council will continue to meet its statutory obligations, including where extended rights to transport exist, such as for low income families.</p> <p>There is no legal entitlement to transport to a catchment school.</p> <p>There is no intention to alter admissions catchment areas.</p>

Theme	You said...	We responded...
Fare Payer Scheme	<p>There would not be a guaranteed space on the school bus</p> <p>You said: <i>“Paying is not ideal, but not being guaranteed a place on the bus to our catchment school is not acceptable”</i> <i>“At a minimum, places on the bus must be guaranteed for those of us in this situation”</i> <i>“I would pay a contribution to the bus fare but I feel that not being able to guarantee a place on the bus is ridiculous”</i> <i>“It is not the cost I am objecting to, it is the provision of transportation”</i> <i>“What happens if parents do not drive?”</i></p>	<p>The Fare Payer Scheme includes a guarantee of a seat on the school bus to your nearest or catchment school. This means that, if you do not qualify for free transport, your child will be guaranteed a seat. This benefits working parents and parents without their own transportation, for example.</p> <p>However, parents are required to apply on time (during the application window) and pay the fee (either the full payment or the first instalment of an agreed repayment schedule before the pass is issued).</p> <p>The guarantee does not apply to late applications or where there is non-payment.</p> <p>As a result of the consultation, we have updated the wording of the Fare Payer Scheme to make this point clear.</p>
Fare Payer Scheme	<p>The cost of a Fare Payer place would place a financial strain on families.</p> <p>You said: <i>“£440 per year x 2”</i> <i>“£400 per year for my child”</i> <i>“£450 extra on the school bus”</i> <i>“having two children will cost the parent £855 per year”</i> <i>“just short of £1000 per year for 2 children”</i> <i>“It is unfair to penalise families based on their location”</i></p>	<p>We have introduced a new subsidised flat rate fee for nearest or catchment school, which for 2016/17 is £250 per year. This is an equivalent to £1.32 per school day. It does not matter how far you are away from the school, the fee is the same. This reduces the cost of using the bus compared to the old banding rate, where some distances, especially to rural schools, would have attracted a fee of £430 per year or £800 per year (2014/15 rates). Therefore, the Council has provided a greater subsidy on the Fare Payer place than in previous years to mitigate the impact of this change. This is especially of benefit to rural communities.</p> <p>You can choose to pay in one lump sum at the beginning or in up to 6 monthly instalments. Either the full payment or the first instalment of an agreed repayment schedule must be made before the pass is issued.</p>

Theme	You said...	We responded...
Fare Payer Scheme	<p>The cost of a fare Payer place would be a burden on families on lower incomes</p> <p>You said: <i>“As a single parent on a tight budget, I can’t afford it”</i> <i>“The associated cost will be an additional burden on our household”</i> <i>“Removing free transport will put financial pressure on some families”</i></p>	<p>If you are in receipt of free school meals or the maximum working tax credit without any deductions, you should check your entitlement with the Transport Officer on 01635 519777. If you meet the national low income criteria, you would still be entitled to free transport to the 3 nearest schools between 2 and 6 miles from your house. This would usually include your catchment school.</p> <p>If you are not entitled to free transport, you can arrange a payment plan to spread the cost over 6 months.</p> <p>Where there are Exceptional Circumstances, these can also be considered under the Policy.</p>
Congestion on roads	<p>There would be traffic congestion if parents used their cars to transport their children, with a risk of accidents.</p> <p>You said: <i>“From an environmental perspective, it is much better to have one bus taking all the children than 20 or 30 individual cars driving the same route each day.”</i> <i>“Traffic issues will arise”</i> <i>“Increased traffic flow on small rural roads”</i> <i>“Risk of accidents on the roads with increased traffic”</i></p>	<p>At this stage, we cannot be sure what arrangements parents may choose to put in place. Parents may choose to transport their child themselves or may choose to continue to use the school bus and pay a Fare Payer fee.</p> <p>If the latter proves to be the case, any environmental impact would be substantially mitigated as the transport will continue to operate and parents have the option to access a guaranteed space on the bus for their child.</p> <p>Many responses were concerned about the lack of parking at The Downs school and the traffic issues which may arise journeying to that school.</p> <p>It would be for each family to decide what works best for their family.</p>

Theme	You said...	We responded...
Working Parents	<p>I have to go to work and this change could be inconvenient for me.</p> <p>You said: <i>“Many working families have set up their domestic lives on the basis that they can rely on transport for their children”</i> <i>“This will put more pressure on hard working parents, either financially or the logistics of taking your child to school before work”.</i></p>	<p>Parents are legally responsible for making sure that their children get to and from school at the appropriate times each day. This includes a parent making appropriate arrangements for their child where the parent has working commitments at the relevant times in the school day.</p> <p>The proposal includes a guarantee of a place on the school bus for the nearest or catchment school, subject to the payment of a fee. This was included as we knew that many families would not want their domestic arrangements to change and relied on the bus as part of their family life.</p> <p>You may prefer to continue using the school bus, which would address the practicalities, but this will attract a subsidised cost of £250 per year (price correct for 2016/17), which can be paid in instalments.</p> <p>Alternatively, you may choose to make other arrangements for some or all of your children, if you did not wish to use the Fare Paying Scheme. It would be for you to decide what works best for your family.</p>
Rural Families	<p>The impact of this proposal on rural families is discriminatory and rural families are disproportionately affected.</p> <p>You said: <i>“It is unfair to penalise families based on their location”</i> <i>“The Commission of Rural Communities...report [2012] into the barriers to education, employment and training for young people in rural areas...concluded that rural families are significantly more reliant than their urban counterparts on subsidised and public transport when attending schools and colleges”</i></p>	<p>The proposal affects 6 out of 10 secondary schools in West Berkshire. The most heavily affected is The Downs school. The impact here is matched by the high number of responses from the Downs catchment area (85% of responses).</p> <p>The Council provides free transport to a large number of secondary pupils on a discretionary basis. However it does not provide free transport to all secondary children. Therefore implementation of the proposal will mean that secondary children are only provided with transport assistance when there is a legal obligation to do so, which means that the policy will be fairer overall for all communities.</p> <p>The proposal recognises that parents need reliable transport and retains a guaranteed place on the school bus. This would require parents to make a contribution to the subsidised cost of transport if they are no longer eligible. It would be for you to decide what arrangements works best for your family.</p>

Theme	You said...	We responded...
Village communities	<p>The proposal will “split” villages and affect community cohesion</p> <p>You said: <i>“Families in some villages will be divided as to whether their children receive free transportation or not, possible reducing social and community cohesion”</i> <i>“Another blow for the rural community”</i> <i>“Could be divisive”</i> <i>“Destroying local community spirit”</i></p>	<p>Applications for transport are confidential. Regardless of the whether the bus pass is issued for a child with free entitlement, a child from a low income family or a Fare Payer seat, the bus pass looks the same. Therefore, it would not be possible to identify who has paid and who has not by the bus pass.</p> <p>The drawing of any line, whether a catchment line or a direct measurement of distance, would always have some families who are placed close to a line who may feel disadvantaged. The current entitlement to free transport is based on distance from the school, and the concept of entitlement being determined by a dividing line operates in this example as well. Some families qualify for free transport because the distance is greater than 3 miles, but those at 2.9 miles would have to pay for a Fare Payer place on the school bus. Sometimes the difference between qualifying and not qualifying is merely metres, but there have to be eligibility criteria applied to transport entitlement.</p> <p>Following the requirements of the Transport legislation, therefore, is a fair way to apply the Policy.</p>
Parental Choice of School	<p>Parents would have to choose a school which has transport, rather than the school which provides the best education for their child.</p> <p>You said: <i>“Parents and students will make decisions based on financial considerations not which is the best school...educationally”</i> <i>“I don’t want to be forced into a school choice on the basis of cost of transport”</i></p>	<p>The decision to apply for a place at a particular school is one of parental preference. The Council has no legal obligation to meet the travel cost associated with this decision if the child could have accessed a place at a nearer school from home. To ensure fairness and consistency, any changes discretionary support should apply to all pupils.</p> <p>Parents can express a preference for any school regardless of whether their child has attended a partner primary to a particular secondary school.</p> <p>These issues have always existed when parents choose secondary provision, hence not all parents opt for their nearest or catchment area schools.</p>

Appendix 3- Equality Impact Assessment Template

Name of item being assessed:	Home to School Discretionary Transport to Catchment School	
Owner of item being assessed:	Caroline Corcoran	
Name of assessor:	Caroline Corcoran	
Date of assessment:	13/7/2015	
<p>1 What are the main aims of the item?</p> <p>To review the feedback from the consultation on the Home to School Transport Policy. The Policy included a proposed change for September 2016 which would remove free discretionary transport to catchment schools for secondary students. The scale of budget reductions means that the Council needs to prioritise statutory functions, and therefore, the proposal includes a fee for access to this discretionary transport provision.</p>		
<p>2 What are the results of your research?</p> <p>Note which groups may be affected by the item; consider how they may be affected and what sources of information have been used to determine this.</p> <p>(Please demonstrate consideration of all strands – Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion or Belief, Sex and Sexual Orientation.)</p>		
Group Affected	What might be the effect?	Information to support this.
Age	<p>This policy applies to all children of Home to School Transport Age and provides statutory and discretionary transport provision – Positive Effect.</p> <p>The proposal in the Policy for 2016/17 to remove free transport to catchment schools will affect some secondary school pupils and their families. To continue to access the bus the families would be required to pay a fee, initially set at £250 per year. Alternatively, a family could make alternative arrangements – Negative Effect.</p> <p>The proposal to remove free transport to catchment school for primary pupils was not included.</p>	<p>The transport provision in the policy meets the LA's statutory duties under the statutory guidance. The policy also includes some discretionary provision to support families.</p>

Group Affected	What might be the effect?	Information to support this.
Disability: including children with special educational needs	This policy has specific entitlement to transport for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and also in relation to parents who cannot accompany their children due to temporary or permanent illness of disability – Positive Effect.	The transport provision in the policy meets the LA's statutory duties under the statutory guidance. The policy also includes some discretionary provision to support families.
Gender Reassignment	No impact	Gender is not a distinguishing factor in the application process or the allocation of school transport.
Marriage and Civil Partnership	Feedback from families has indicated that there are families where the split is exactly 50:50, and that the Council's position in relation to this should be spelled out in the Policy.	Where parents are separated or divorced, our policy is to provide transport from the home address where the child spends the majority of their time
Pregnancy and Maternity	No impact	Pregnancy and maternity are not distinguishing factors in the application process or the allocation of school transport.
Race	No impact	Race is not a distinguishing factor in the application process or the allocation of school transport.
Religion or Belief	No impact	Religion or beliefs are not distinguishing factors in the application process or the allocation of school transport.
Sex	No impact	Sex is not a distinguishing factor in the application process or the allocation of school transport.
Sexual Orientation	No impact	Sexual Orientation is not a distinguishing factor in the application process or the allocation of school transport.

Group Affected	What might be the effect?	Information to support this.
Socio-economic factors: Impact on low income families	<p>The proposal in the Policy for 2016/17 to remove free transport to catchment schools will affect some secondary school pupils and their families. In the case of low income families, there are extended entitlements in the policy, in line with statutory guidance, and this would usually include the catchment school (based on distance). Low income families attending their catchment school are likely to continue to be entitled to free transport. Positive Impact.</p>	<p>The transport provision in the policy meets the LA's statutory duties under the statutory guidance. Statutory provision is different for those families that meet the national low income criteria, and families would be entitled to free transport to the 3 nearest schools between 2 and 6 miles from their house.</p>
Socio-economic factors: Financial impact on families	<p>The proposal in the Policy for 2016/17 to remove free transport to catchment schools will affect some secondary school pupils and their families. Some families may have income above the national low income criteria but would still be negatively affected by the requirement to pay a fee to use the school bus.</p> <p>Parents have expressed their desire for a guaranteed place on the school bus, as this suits their domestic arrangements.</p> <p>Parents have the option of making other arrangements for their child if this better suits their domestic arrangements.</p>	<p>The Fare Payer Scheme outlines the cost of accessing a place on the school bus.</p>

Group Affected	What might be the effect?	Information to support this.
Rural families	<p>Respondents felt that the impact of the proposal on rural families was discriminatory as rural families are disproportionately affected.</p> <p>The proposal affects 6 out of 10 secondary schools in West Berkshire. The most heavily affected is The Downs school. The impact here is matched by the high number of responses from the Downs catchment area (85% of responses).</p>	<p>The Council provides free transport to a large number of secondary pupils on a discretionary basis. However it does not provide free transport to all secondary children. Therefore implementation of the proposal will mean that secondary children are only provided with transport assistance when there is a legal obligation to do so, which means that the policy will be fairer overall for all communities.</p> <p>The proposal recognises that parents need reliable transport and retains a guaranteed place on the school bus. This would require parents to make a contribution to the subsidised cost of transport if they are no longer eligible.</p>

Further Comments relating to the item:

The proposal in relation to the removal of free transport for secondary students to their catchment school took account of the following considerations to mitigate the impact on affected families who may wish to continue to use the school bus, but would be required to pay a fee:

- **Guaranteed seat on the bus** – subject to applying on time and making either the full payment or the first payment in an instalment plan by the relevant deadlines.
- **Reduced Fee** – A new rate for nearest or catchment school was proposed, which for 2016/17 would be £250 per year. This is an equivalent to £1.32 per school day. It should also be noted, whilst that the actual cost of a seat on the bus varies by route, the Fare Payer fees are already subsidised by the Council and therefore the flat rate fee represents a significant cost reduction compared to the actual cost.
- **Flat Rate Fee** It does not matter how far the child lives away from the school, the fee is the same. This reduces the cost of using the bus compared to the old banding rate, where some distances, especially to rural schools, would have attracted a fee of £430 p.a. or £800 p.a. (2014/15 rates, depending on distance).
- **Ability to pay in instalments** – families are able to pay the fee in up to 6 instalments to spread the cost.
- **Low Income** – the statutory provision is different for those families that meet the national low income criteria, and families would be entitled to free transport to the 3 nearest schools between 2 and 6 miles from their house. This would usually include your catchment school and they would qualify for free transport.
- **Appeal process**, where Exceptional Circumstances could be considered.
- **Up to 4 years protection for students who are receiving free transport** before the implementation date of the change (proposed for September 2016). Current secondary students who receive transport will continue to be entitled to free transport on their existing route until the end of Year 11.

3 What actions will be taken to address any negative effects?

Action	Owner	By When?	Outcome
Feedback indicated that the policy is not clear about the position for children of separated or divorced parents who live in two households.	Caroline Corcoran	August 2015	The policy wording will be amended to include clarity on this scenario.
Feedback indicated that there needed to be more clarity on how the Appeals process would work in relation to temporary re-housing.	Caroline Corcoran	August 2015	The policy wording will be reviewed to ensure that there is clarity between the standard timescales for appeals and how urgent cases are managed.

Action	Owner	By When?	Outcome
<p>There was significant feedback objecting to the proposal to remove free entitlement for transport to catchment schools for secondary students.</p> <p>The proposal ready included a range of mitigation measures outlined on page 22.</p>	Caroline Corcoran	August 2015	The feedback summarised in the Consultation Report will be scrutinised and further mitigating measures will be considered.
<p>4 What was the final outcome and why was this agreed?</p> <p>The feedback summarised in the Consultation Report will be scrutinised and further mitigating measures will be considered. A formal report with options will be brought through the corporate Executive cycle, for Councillors to determine the final Policy.</p>			
<p>5 What arrangements have you put in place to monitor the impact of this decision?</p> <p>The Council consults on its Home to School Transport Policy each year, and therefore there is an annual opportunity to review and amend the Policy. For example, the Policy for the academic year 2017/18 (starting September 2017) will be consulted upon in 2016 and will be published by the Council by September 2016.</p>			
<p>6 What date is the Equality Impact Assessment due for Review?</p> <p>An Equality Impact Assessment is completed each year as part of the annual review of the Policy and consultation process.</p>			
Signed: Caroline Corcoran		Date: 21/7/2015	

Appendix 4-6

- Email responses
- Letter responses
- Survey Monkey responses

Other Consultation documentation:

- Home to School Transport Policy 2015/16 and 2016/17
- Post 16 Transport Statement 2016/17
- Fare Payer Scheme 2016/17
- Summary of Changes
- FAQs
- Letter for Parents
- Letter for Primary Heads
- Letter for Secondary Heads

Email Responses *

*email responses that have also been submitted via surveymonkey are not included in this document.

Response 1

*I am mailing to express my concern at the changes which are being looked at for school and transport. My daughter starts at The Downs school this September, if transport needs to be paid for as we are nearer to Trinity this will cause us a huge issue I am not sure how we will afford transport each year as my son also starts in 2 years time!!
What happens if I can not pay to get my children to school ??
I am sure I am not the only parent who will be in this position, how do we get our children to school when we are having to work also??*

Response 2

I have just been made aware of the potential changes to free bus places for children to secondary school.

I understand that even though our children will be in catchment for The Downs School, Compton they may not be entitled to a free bus pass because the closest school is Trinity. I have concerns about this and strongly believe that the free travel to school should be made available to all catchment places.

I currently have two daughters, one in Yr5 and one in Yr4. Therefore, they could both be affected.

Please keep me informed of what is happening here and include my opinion in discussions going forward. I have also completed the survey money. If I need to do anything else please let me know.

Response 3

I am writing in regards to the ridiculous proposal of changes to my children's educational future. How on earth does giving free transport to the nearest school even if it is not the catchment school make sense. Can you honestly see us using such a monumentally ludicrous idea, let's send our children to the wrong school because it's free. I don't think so, the alternative is to be charged for something that is their human right. A FREE Education. I would hope that the local authority sees sense over this and makes a complete u turn on this proposterous plan. Try cutting back on your internal spending instead of penalising the people who vote you into your jobs.

Response 4

I read of the proposed changes to the transportation policy with some concern. It has raised a huge amount of anxiety in amongst parents. I would ask two questions:

a) has an environmental study been undertaken considering the impact of the 800 or so additional parental journeys per day that this policy will introduce. At the Downs School, for example, there is little or no parking available for parents.

b) is this policy move a precursor of redrawing of the catchment boundaries in areas where this policy will be active? Is this an 'under the radar' attempt to incentivise parents to move these catchment boundaries themselves?

Response 5

I am a parent of a child who has an existing free taxi from Ashmore Green Road (who I understand will not be affected because she can keep her place until year 11). However, my problem is to do with my younger child, currently at primary school but who will move to Trinity in two years' time (Sept 2017). Under the new rules, he would not be entitled to a place on the taxi, yet my daughter would. That is incredibly hard to manage in itself. But I feel that the proposal is unfair because where we live possibly puts us in a slightly different category from the main bulk of those affected by the policy because a) we live on a dangerous road – no pavements or streetlights, b) our nearest school is Kennet but our catchment is Trinity and that was the school we were told we had to have a place for ie. even though it is much further from our house, c) there are actually lots of other children in the same position on Ashmore Green Road.

I understand that where a parent has voluntarily chosen a school which is not their nearest or is out of catchment, savings need to be made, but since we are in the impossible position of being made to go to our catchment which also happens to not be our nearest school, it seems unfair. I would hope that perhaps our taxi arrangement for this particular road could continue as an exception based on the fact that we have not elected to go to other schools further away from our local one, but have been forced to go to the further one due to catchment rules. Or perhaps a slightly larger minibus could pick up all the children on our road (which is about a mile long) and then there is the cost of one vehicle, not two? The current service is such a life saver for us, and as parents locally, we have often praised the council for helping our children to be safe, so we would be incredibly grateful if the current arrangements for our road could continue in some form.

I would be grateful if my concerns could be passed on.

Response 6

I would like to write with my objection to the proposed changes to home/school transportation.

I strongly object to this change it is not fair to tell a child they are within the catchment of the school, give them a place to start at that school but then discriminate against them because they live a bit further away than other children.

Either leave it as it is or charge everyone to make it fair.

I cannot take my child to school as I have a job and work very hard as a parent so why penalise me all this extra money ??

Please lodge my strong objection about this change

Response 7

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to your proposal to remove free school travel to those not travelling to their nearest school.

As a resident of Compton, living close to The Downs School site, I am gravely concerned regarding the potential impact of the proposed changes to the Home to School travel policy. Although I believe there are many detrimental issues to the families and children affected, personally, I am extremely troubled about the likely increase in car travel along the narrow country roads leading to Compton and the inevitable increase in congestion that is going to arise around the school site.

What is more, parking around the school site is at a premium. At collection times the inconvenience caused to local residents as additional parents look for parking spaces, whilst they wait to collect their children, will be immeasurable. This will not doubt erode the positive relationship that residents currently have with the school and its student population.

*I understand that West Berkshire Council has a Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy for Schools (SMoTS) and a Local Transportation Plan. I would like to ask how these proposed changes will work towards the Council's vision of "**Delivering effective transport solutions for all by increasing choice and minimising congestion**" that it has pledged in these documents.*

In conclusion, I would strongly encourage the Council to reject the proposed changes.

Response 8

I would like to object in the strongest possible manner to the proposed Home to school transport policy outlined on your website. With a son already at the Downs and my daughter to attend the school in a few years I find it hard to understand why you think a change in the policy is indeed fair.

Both my children either attended or attend Curridge Primary School which is a feeder school and in the catchment area for The Downs which is an excellent school. We know other schools in Newbury are geographically closer, Trinity 3.6 miles whereas The Downs is 6.4 miles from our home. The proposal to only fund trips that would take into account the nearest school and not the one in the catchment area is wholly unacceptable and unfair. As you mention in your proposal this would affect c 400 students out of 11500. It just so happens that two of those 400 are my children.

If this proposal were agreed the impact it would cause to the practicalities of getting our children to school would be enormous. Both my wife and I work so we rely on the bus as we can then leave at the same time as our son in order for us to get to work on time. If this were to change it would be conceivable that one of us may have to give up work of indeed find another option to get him to school and also my daughter in a few years time.

I guess this is a cost saving measure, but if it only includes 400 children out of 11500 are there not other policies that would have a greater cost saving impact?

Curridge Village is a close community and central to it are Curridge Primary School and the relationship it's people have with The Downs, any change in policy inevitably would force some children to go to a school that is closer, fracturing the community, one that its residents have taken pride in building up over the years.

I would urge you to reconsider this proposal.

Due to the importance of this issue I have cc'd my MP.

Response 9

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

I am concerned about the policy of removing free school transport from catchment schools and replacing it with "nearest". This could create the very odd and unfair situation in Lambourn where children who live 7 miles from JOG will receive free school transport but those who live 8 miles away will not, despite this being the catchment school. Whilst I am told no children at present will be affected this could happen in the future should KAs in Wantage not be able to accommodate all children who apply from the Lambourn Valley.

Response 10

I strongly disagree with proposed changes to secondary school transport . My postcode is RG189SL and currently the majority of children at this postcode go to The downs school. If the changes come in to affect and transport is only provided to your catchment school that would mean potentially 400 plus parents dropping their children to the downs which couldn't cope with that number of vehicles in the morning . Or alternatively those children going into their catchment school which is the Kennet and if my understanding is correct a coach would have to be provided to take them there anyway which by road is a longer distance and longer time .

People who have more then one or two children will not pay over £1000 per year to get their children to and from school they will drive creating mayhem on the roads during their times.

I hope my views are taken into consideration .

Response 11

I do have some concerns about this policy.

Is this "open house" for parents to choose their nearest school rather than the catchment school?

If so – what is the point in defining catchment schools in future?

Also this could mean that siblings who would have gone to the school attended by their elder sibling will now attend a different school.

Response 12

I understand that you are currently reviewing the transportation that you provide to secondary schools in West Berkshire and that there may no longer be free transport provided to pupils where their catchment school is not the closest.

I live in Winterbourne and as such my two children are in the catchment for the Downs School, which is not our closest secondary school. We will therefore be directly affected and penalised by your proposed changes to which I strongly object.

I can see no justification why we should be targeted unfairly in this way, it is not our responsibility to draw the catchment boundaries and as there is a high risk of not getting your child into a non-catchment school we are stuck between a rock and a hard place! We either take on the risk of applying for a non-catchment school in the hope of free transport, or we apply to our catchment school (which is what the school system encourages us to do) and have to either pay for transport or potentially not get a place on the bus at all. Neither option is satisfactory and I wonder which you would advise is the lesser of the two evils that you are proposing we will need to suffer?!

As a mother of two I will need to rely on the transport service to enable me to get my two children to two different schools on time, school drop off will otherwise be impossible precisely because we live further away from our catchment secondary school. It seems to me that you are targeting the wrong pupils here, it is those living furthest away who have the greatest need of the buses.

In addition, the government seems to be encouraging mothers in particular to go back to work having had children, And as such I would have thought that it should be a top priority of West Berks council to support working families, and one of the ways of doing this is to help to get children to and from school. If parents are required to replace the current bus service this will not only have a major impact on road safety and traffic around the schools, but it will also have a massive impact on parents' ability to have careers. I am a solicitor and I know how hard it is to fit child care around a demanding career and I do not relish the prospect of this becoming harder due to your proposed changes.

I therefore strongly urge you to reconsider these misguided proposals.

Response 13

I strongly disagree with this proposal

The parking at The Downs school is pretty bad now, if this happens it will increase traffic in and around the school grounds there are a few reasons why this is not good, It will make it dangerous for pupils crossing the car park There are double yellow lines on the road outside the school and a lot of cars already park where there are no double yellow lines, because the road is not straight visibility is not good, there will be an awful lot of extra cars parking along that stretch of road making it dangerous not only for pedestrians but for passing traffic, it will be an absolute nightmare.

This is a ridiculous proposal you will be putting children's life's at risk.

Response 14

In response to your proposed changes to School Transport Policy for year 1 - 11 pupils.

As a resident in Chieveley with our catchment school as The Downs, I believe your suggested changes to the current policy is not only ill thought out but also one which will disproportionately affect rural families where the catchment school is not necessarily the closest school.

By charging for transportation, affected families (particularly those with more than one child - I have 3 children) will certainly have significant reason to drive children to school - causing additional congestion issues at school sites, negative impacts to local residents and potential

danger to students. This will also increase traffic to and from school sites (on country roads) with the obvious associated environmental impacts.

This change will also add financial pressure to rural families - even when attending their catchment school - catchments which have been decided by the council presumably to encourage a spread of attendance depending on location.

You say your change would affect '400 students out of a total school population of 11500' so surely making this change is of little benefit to the council, but will be of great detriment (financial, environmental, convenience, safety, local residents) and unfair on those who are attending catchment schools which doesn't happen to be their nearest school. We pay our council tax in the same way as others, why should we not receive the same services when all we are doing is attending our catchment school?

For these reasons, I hope that you will reconsider your proposed policy changes and continue to provide free, guaranteed transportation to catchment schools.

Response 15

Whilst I fully understand the need of WBC to make considerable savings, this proposal is ill-thought out in respect of the effect it will have upon rural communities such as the ward I represent.

In the case of Chieveley, the nearest school for part of my ward is Trinity, whereas the catchment school is The Downs.

Has consideration been given as to how pupils will be accommodated at the nearest school (Trinity) which is currently over-subscribed. Further, what consideration has been given to The Downs school losing pupils to Trinity and how will this gap be filled? If the answer is by pupils from outside West Berkshire, this in itself raises a further issue, that of West Berkshire educating children from another authority, and the associated cost of this.

I would like to see the comparative costings of transporting a child from a fixed point in Chieveley to Trinity vs The Downs. If, as I suspect, the difference between the distances in question is minimal, then little saving would be made, Furthermore, there is not currently, a school bus service to Trinity from Chieveley ward, so if this proposal is adopted, it will mean additional school busses picking up and dropping off pupils in the affected villages. This in itself will cause additional congestion and inconvenience to residents in the narrow village streets, from where not only state school busses operate, but also those of independent schools.

Has consideration also been given to the effect this proposal will have on the wider Downland road network? Parents will, I expect, still want their child to attend the catchment school, and in the absence of school transport, will undertake their own arrangements. Parking at The Downs is already under pressure, and the village of Compton will be unable to cope with the extra traffic generated by parents driving children to school, as the timetabling of the public bus service will not get children to and from school. So, whilst solving one problem, further and potentially greater problems are being created.

Finally, this proposal will split the community within my ward, something which I find unacceptable. Under the current regime, the majority of children moving into secondary education do so with their classmates (I accept that some children will go to other schools of choice), this proposal would mean this would no longer happen. I doubt very much that the implications of this and the effect it will have upon close-knit communities has even been

considered. In my view, this should be a primary consideration during the decision making process,

I think it fair to say, that this issue has cause great concern and anguish within my Ward, and I have had more phone calls and emails on the topic than any other issue, apart from a proposal to build and Incinerator at J13 of the M4, during all the time I have served as ward member.

I trust you will seriously consider my concerns and either abandon this proposal or adapt the policy to ensure a sensible resolution.

Response 16

We are in the catchment area for The Downs School, upon which basis we are entitled to the bus provision which Year 7 onwards children currently enjoy.

I would compound this negative initiative (admittedly a Lib Dem policy which they appear proud of) currently being considered with the recent introduction of free school meals for children up to and including Year 3 – my child started Year 4 two months (in September '14), so I now incur a cost of some £300 per year (for when he has school lunches) which I would not have incurred if my son was younger – I am no better able to afford to pay this than parents with younger children.

So, the notion of introducing a scheme which potentially could penalise us just in time for when my son would start @ Secondary school really does grate against me, as it seems we have the worry of paying where no predecessors have had to.

My son (an only child) already goes to Cubs in Compton and has attended events @ the school and is looking forward to going there because of some of the new friends he has made there. Whilst this is not really an arguement for my case againsy your proposal, it is another obstacle which our predecessors have not had to encounter.

We have also chosen to live in north Newbury i.e. Curridge since 1997 and we strongly wish to keep our son in the school of our choice and catchment, and do not want to be victimto your cost-cutting initiatives.

I hope this is a loud message to you.

Response 17

I would like to express my great concern over the proposed changes to the home to school transport policy.

I have children at Chieveley Primary, it's a way off yet for them as they are currently in year 3 and 1, however if this does take affect it will cause us and many others big problems.

It seems to be very ill thought out and I would like to know what contingency plans are being put in place for the following points;

- This will result in small villages and communities being split in half with one half of children going on the bus and the other half not. Surely this will affect children's wellbeing if they are not able to go on the bus with their friends just because they live a few hundred metres down the road from them?*
- The roads to the Downs School are small and chaotic – namely the A34. There are already countless accidents on that road and by removing bus transport you are*

forcing a massive increase of car traffic onto that road and to the subsequent B road to the school itself.

- This will in turn result in late arrivals for some children and in some cases probably absenteeism – if the A34 is shut, parents will just not bother taking their children in!*
- Having to pay for the bus, even if there is a place available which is not guaranteed, will put further financial strain on families.*
- This will not support the government drive to get parents back to work if they have to personally take and collect their child from school each day.*
- It seems crazy to just not provide transport to your catchment school!!! Surely its simpler just to make the rule that the free transport is provided to the catchment school and no others?? In my case, the school bus to Downs is currently 100 metres from our home. Yet my children would not be entitled to travel on it!*
- Access and parking at the Downs school is already compromised – how will this be addressed?*
- Reducing bus transport and increasing cars on the road is hardly encouraging “green” living!*

I sincerely hope these points will be considered and this proposal does not take effect as I am sure I am not the only one with grave concerns.

Response 18

I have been notified that there are to be changes to the school transport policies. Currently living in Chieveley my daughters catchment school is The Downs School and she is provided with a free bus pass to get to school. I have been told that with the new policy would mean that this isn't our nearest school. Does this mean that I will now have to pay for her travel and may not actually get a place? Further more does this mean when my other children reach secondary school age I have to send them to my nearest school rather than my catchment school?

As I have 4 children 2 of which have additional needs this is of some concern to me. Especially as my 13 year old is a type 1 diabetic and may have her travel and current support on her journey compromised!

I look forward to your response.

Response 19

On behalf of the Curridge Residents' Association, I would like to comment on the proposed Changes to Home to School Transport Policy Consultation.

As a rural community, these proposed changes would have a significant impact on our residents and potentially impact on future development of the village (and numerous others in the district with non closest catchment schools).

Without free transport provided to catchment schools, and no guarantee of fare-paying transport as an alternative, we believe that this change unfairly affects people within rural communities and rural schools.

We do not wish for the young people of our community to become divided by choice of secondary school, upon leaving our very successful and close knit primary school, solely due to the additional financial and logistical concerns that this policy would bring to bear upon their families. Nor would we wish for these concerns to cause families to choose to leave the village in order to move into different secondary school catchment areas, or to prevent new families moving into the area for the same reasons. We are extremely

concerned that this policy could create a number of 'black listed' areas across West Berkshire for families with children of secondary school age, and this could have a knock on effect on the future of rural primary schools such as our own, which will in turn increase pressure on the schools in the major centres that already at or close to the limit of their capacities.

If a new transport policy must be adopted in West Berkshire then we kindly request that is undertaken only with a review of the secondary education catchment areas to align with 'closest school' for rural communities.

Also, this proposal has not been widely communicated to residents, particularly those with pre-school children. There has been no direct communication about this proposal from the council, meaning that many residents who may be impacted are unaware of the changes.

As a Residents' Association, we ask that you bear our thoughts in mind during the consultation, and we are ensuring that information regarding potential changes are communicated to residents.

Response 20

Please find below my concerns re removing free school bus transport for The Downs School for secondary school children in Chieveley.

- Rural families will be disproportionately affected by the removal of subsidised bus travel to catchment schools which are not their closest.
- Those living the greatest distances from their catchment schools will be negatively impacted.
- Families affected by the proposed changes may choose, or be forced to drive as places on school buses are not guaranteed. This will lead to congestion at school sites, impact heavily on the environment, and potentially put lives at risk.
- Removal of subsidised school transportation could lead to an increase in lateness and absenteeism.
- Travelling by school bus can have a positive effect on a child's emotional, developmental and social wellbeing.
- Families in some villages will be divided as to whether their children receive free transportation or not, possibly reducing social and community cohesion.
- Removal of free school transportation will add financial pressure to rural families.

Response 21

On behalf of the Governing Body of Hermitage Primary School, I wish to register our concern and disappointment over the proposed changes to the Home to School Transport Policy 2016/17.

As you may or may not be aware, this proposal splits Hermitage village in two. The north end of the village will continue to receive free transport, but the middle and southern end of the village will fall into the category of having to pay for the school bus, or use other means should families wish to send their children to their catchment school.

It is worth pointing out that a number of children who will fall into the “fare-paying” post codes will be walking to the bus stop in the village which is located in the “free transport” post code. How can you justify children at the same bus stop being split between payers and non-payers?

This policy discriminates against the rural aspect of The Downs Federation of Primary Schools, as a rural secondary school such as The Downs will have a wider catchment area due to the rural nature of the villages and sparsity of the population. Clearly, a secondary school in the town will have a much smaller catchment area due to the density of the population, so naturally some rural villages will be closer to other schools in mileage terms.

At present, there is no School Bus provided by West Berkshire Council from Hermitage to Trinity or Kennet School, both of which are closer to some parts of the village, so should families decide to go to their nearest school, rather than catchment school, will additional buses be provided to cater for this? If so, the financial implications seem ludicrous.

The Council should also consider the implications of parents choosing to transport their children themselves to The Downs rather than pay for the bus, particularly for larger families. Not only will this have a huge impact on the already busy rural roads and the congestion at The Downs, but will have huge financial implications on lower income or single vehicle families, not all of whom are in receipt of, or eligible for, Pupil Premium funding.

The Governing Body of Hermitage Primary School therefore strongly objects to the changes proposed and urge the Council to reconsider and continue to provide free transport to catchment schools.

Response 22

I have heard of the planned changes to school bus transportation system and cannot help but to think that the plans are short sighted for us in rural areas. Apart from the generic concerns included below, surely the easier solution would be to offer families the option to pay the difference or take the nearer school option.

- *Rural families will be disproportionately affected by the removal of subsidised bus travel to catchment schools which are not their closest.*
- *Those living the greatest distances from their catchment schools will be negatively impacted.*
- *Families affected by the proposed changes may choose, or be forced to drive as places on school buses are not guaranteed. This will lead to congestion at school sites, impact heavily on the environment, and potentially put lives at risk.*
- *Removal of subsidised school transportation could lead to an increase in lateness and absenteeism.*
- *Travelling by school bus can have a positive effect on a child’s emotional, developmental and social wellbeing.*
- *Families in some villages will be divided as to whether their children receive free transportation or not, possibly reducing social and community cohesion*
- *Removal of free school transportation will add financial pressure to rural families.*

Response 23

I am a parent of two children at Hermitage Primary school and under the proposed changes will be affected directly. We live in the southern end of the village and as I hope you are already aware, this proposal splits Hermitage village in two. The north end of the village will continue to receive free transport, but the middle and southern end of the village will fall into the category of having to pay for the school bus, or use other means should families wish to send their children to their catchment school. My postcode puts my catchment school at the 3rd furthest from our house. This is your chosen catchment school for us – not ours. Given the oversubscription to schools in the area the chances of us getting into a non catchment school are virtually nil, yet you would cover the transport to it, without even contributing to the cost of our own catchment school which is just 1 mile more away from us. At present, there is no School Bus provided by West Berkshire Council from Hermitage to Trinity or Kennet School, both of which are closer to some parts of the village, so should families decide to go to their nearest school, rather than catchment school, will additional buses be provided to cater for this? If so, the financial implications seem ludicrous.

My children are one of a number of children who will fall into the “fare-paying” post codes will be walking to the bus stop in the village which is located in the “free transport” post code. How can you justify children at the same bus stop being split between payers and non-payers?

your proposed policy appears to discriminate against the rural aspect of The Downs Federation of Primary Schools, as a rural secondary school such as The Downs will have a wider catchment area due to the rural nature of the villages and sparsity of the population. Clearly, a secondary school in the town will have a much smaller catchment area due to the density of the population, so naturally some rural villages will be closer to other schools in mileage terms.

The Council should also consider the implications of parents choosing to transport their children themselves to The Downs rather than pay for the bus. Compton does not have the road infrastructure to deal with this volume of cars.

Response 24

I wish to register my concern and disappointment over the proposed changes to the Home to School Transport Policy 2016/17.

As you may or may not be aware, this proposal splits Hermitage village in two. The north end of the village will continue to receive free transport, but the middle and southern end of the village will fall into the category of having to pay for the school bus, or use other means should families wish to send their children to their catchment school.

It is worth pointing out that a number of children who will fall into the “fare-paying” post codes will be walking to the bus stop in the village which is located in the “free transport” post code. How can you justify children at the same bus stop being split between payers and non-payers?

This policy discriminates against the rural aspect of The Downs Federation of Primary Schools, as a rural secondary school such as The Downs will have a wider catchment area due to the rural nature of the villages and sparsity of the population. Clearly, a secondary school in the town will have a much smaller catchment area due to the density of the population, so naturally some rural villages will be closer to other schools in mileage terms.

At present, there is no School Bus provided by West Berkshire Council from Hermitage to Trinity or Kennet School, both of which are closer to some parts of the village, so should families decide to go to their nearest school, rather than catchment school, will additional buses be provided to cater for this? If so, the financial implications seem ludicrous.

The Council should also consider the implications of parents choosing to transport their children themselves to The Downs rather than pay for the bus, particularly for larger families. Not only will this have a huge impact on the already busy rural roads and the congestion at The Downs, but will have huge financial implications on lower income or single vehicle families, not all of whom are in receipt of, or eligible for, Pupil Premium funding.

I therefore strongly object to the changes proposed and urge the Council to reconsider and continue to provide free transport to catchment schools.

Response 25

I wish to register my concern and disappointment over the proposed changes to the Home to School Transport Policy 2016/17.

As you may or may not be aware, this proposal splits Hermitage village in two. The north end of the village will continue to receive free transport, but the middle and southern end of the village will fall into the category of having to pay for the school bus, or use other means should families wish to send their children to their catchment school.

It is worth pointing out that a number of children who will fall into the "fare-paying" post codes will be walking to the bus stop in the village which is located in the "free transport" post code. How can you justify children at the same bus stop being split between payers and non-payers?

This policy discriminates against the rural aspect of The Downs Federation of Primary Schools, as a rural secondary school such as The Downs will have a wider catchment area due to the rural nature of the villages and sparsity of the population. Clearly, a secondary school in the town will have a much smaller catchment area due to the density of the population, so naturally some rural villages will be closer to other schools in mileage terms.

At present, there is no School Bus provided by West Berkshire Council from Hermitage to Trinity or Kennet School, both of which are closer to some parts of the village, so should families decide to go to their nearest school, rather than catchment school, will additional buses be provided to cater for this? If so, the financial implications seem ludicrous.

The Council should also consider the implications of parents choosing to transport their children themselves to The Downs rather than pay for the bus, particularly for larger families. Not only will this have a huge impact on the already busy rural roads and the congestion at The Downs, but will have huge financial implications on lower income or single vehicle families, not all of whom are in receipt of, or eligible for, Pupil Premium funding.

I therefore strongly object to the changes proposed and urge the Council to reconsider and continue to provide free transport to catchment schools.

Response 26

I am writing to register our concern and disappointment over the proposal to remove the discretionary criteria to provide transport for secondary students to their catchment school.

Our daughter is currently finishing Year 8 at The Downs School. Our son has two more years at Hermitage Primary School, a school which is part of the Downs Federation of Schools, which feed into the Downs School. Based on previous years' admissions to other secondary schools in Newbury, he is more likely to gain a place at The Downs School (our catchment school), and we hope this will be the case. In addition, much work is undertaken between the teaching bodies of the Downs Federation of Schools and The Downs School to ensure a smooth transition from primary to secondary education, and this is important for children's success and confidence in later years. These are some of the primary reasons for our move to West Berkshire in 2008.

It seems very unfair - ridiculous even - that he will be directly affected by the proposed changes. We will be a family with entitlement to one bus pass for one child, and additionally have to make our own provision for our son to attend school. Our children are our future and need to be able to easily get to and from school especially when both parents work.

You say that transport will be provided for children who have started their secondary education but how can buses pass through the village without picking up the younger students who are being discriminated against by virtue of their age and their postcode?

I strongly agree with the letter sent to you by the Governors of Hermitage Primary School. I agree that this proposal splits Hermitage village in two. The north end of the village will continue to receive free transport, but the middle and southern end of the village (where we are) will fall into the category of having to pay for the school bus, or use other means, should families wish to send their children to their catchment school.

The letter from the Governors of Hermitage Primary School also points out that a number of children who will fall into the "fare-paying" post codes will be walking to the bus stop in the village which is located in the "free transport" post code. How can you justify children at the same bus stop being split between payers and non-payers?

The Governors point out that this policy discriminates against the rural aspect of The Downs Federation of Primary Schools, as a rural secondary school such as The Downs will have a wider catchment area due to the rural nature of the villages and sparsity of the population. Clearly, a secondary school in the town will have a much smaller catchment area due to the density of the population, so naturally some rural villages will be closer to other schools in mileage terms.

At present, there is no School Bus provided by West Berkshire Council from Hermitage to Trinity or Kennet School, both of which are closer to some parts of the village, so should families decide to go to their nearest school, rather than catchment school, will additional buses be provided to cater for this? If so, the financial implications seem ludicrous.

The Council should also consider the implications of parents choosing to transport their children themselves to The Downs School rather than pay for the bus, particularly for larger families. Not only will this have a huge impact on the already busy rural roads and the congestion at The Downs School, but will have huge financial implications on lower income or single vehicle families, not all of whom are in receipt of, or eligible for, Pupil Premium funding.

I therefore strongly object to the changes proposed, and urge the Council to reconsider and continue to provide free transport to catchment schools

Response 27

I wish to register my concern and objection over the proposed changes to the Home to School Transport Policy 2016/17 and concur with the email sent from Hermitage School Governing

Response 28

As I am sure you are aware, this proposal will split Hermitage village in two. The north end of the village will continue to receive free transport, however the middle and southern end of the village will fall into the category of having to pay for the school bus, or use other means should families wish to send their children to their catchment school.

I would like to point out that a number of children who will fall into the "fare-paying" post codes will be walking to the bus stop which is actually in the village and is located in the "free transport" post code. How can you justify children at the same bus stop being split between payers and non-payers?

I am concerned that this policy discriminates against the rural aspect of The Downs Federation of Primary Schools, as a rural secondary school such as The Downs will have a wider catchment area due to the rural nature of the villages and sparsity of the population. Clearly a secondary school in the town will have a much smaller catchment area due to the density of the population, so naturally some rural villages will be closer to other schools in mileage terms.

At present, there is no School Bus provided by West Berkshire Council from Hermitage to Trinity or Kennet School, both of which are closer to some parts of the village, so should families decide to go to their nearest school rather than catchment school, will additional buses be provided to cater for this? If so, the financial implications seem ludicrous.

The Council should also consider the implications of parents choosing to transport their children themselves to The Downs rather than pay for the bus; particularly for larger families. There will be a huge impact on the volume of traffic around Hermitage Primary School at pick up time which is already a big concern. In addition, not only will this have a huge impact on the already busy rural roads and the congestion at The Downs, but will have huge financial implications on lower income or single vehicle families. These families are possibly not all in receipt of, or eligible for Pupil Premium funding.

Response 29

Please find below my reasons for objecting to the proposed transport policy. I am a parent living in Curridge with 2 children that will be affected.

I understand the need to save money there are there lots of reasons to object to the council proposal.

Changing the transport policy and not changing the school catchment areas makes no sense at all and isn't rational.

Just because we are the furthest away from our catchment school we are being singled out and penalised. Its not fair or equitable.

Curridge, Chieveley and Hermitage students make up over half of the students affected. So I hope that we have a big say in this consultation.

There is a strong feeling in the community against these policy changes and you will receive a petition with over 160 signatures from those affected in the Curridge area.

It will affect individual families

Why should we have to pay to go to our local authority nominated catchment school just because we live the wrong side of a line that has been drawn?

Can all of us afford £225 per child? Significant amount of money, especially if we have 2 or more children. There is no guarantee that the fee will stay the same year on year and once we have chosen the Downs School for our children and if we choose to pay, aren't we at the mercy of any price rises, as there is no guarantee that the price will stay the same.

For us with children already at the Downs, we have an even harder choice, pay, transport children ourselves or send our children to Trinity school. This has the potential to split families, especially those families that are least able to pay.

It will affect our villages and our parish

In each village, our children are all at primary school together, and currently the significant majority all go to the Downs together. These proposals mean there will probably be more children that go to Trinity school. This has the potential to split village communities. The implications of this might be significant. Do we really want to run this risk?

In Chieveley the line for school transport is drawn somewhere in the middle of the village. So on one bus to the Downs, and at the bus stop, there will be children that get free transport next to neighbours who have had to pay. This can't be fair and just to the residents in a single village surely.

It will affect the secondary schools

This policy change will affect about a quarter of the Downs intake. 45 out of 180 students each year. Is this a way of reducing the oversubscription of places at the Downs school. If more parents choose to drive their children to school, how will the school given how busy the school car park is already at drop off and pick up time.

For Trinity school, do they have additional spaces for these extra students from our area? Up to 25% of their annual intake. I am not aware of any increase in capacity at Trinity school.

With the amount of new build happening in Newbury now and in the future, this will only increase the pressure on school places in town. So it doesn't make sense to further increase pressure on town school places and move students away from the Downs.

Also I don't believe that the secondary schools knew about these proposals when they were made public. Given it might significantly affect them, how can that be right.

It will affect the primary/secondary school links

Primary schools make links with their catchment secondary schools, and this is strongly encouraged. These links are important for students in their education, especially in specific subjects like maths and numeracy, science etc, and to ease their transition to the next stage in their education. The impact of these proposals means that both the primary will have to make links with more than one secondary school, and Trinity school will have to make links with more primary schools.

How can having more links be better for either the primary or the secondary schools? It will just make the links they have less effective. This is not good for either to the detrimental benefit of the students.

I question how much money will it really save?

If all of us in our parish choose to send our children to Trinity school, then for the next few years the council will have to put on buses to both Downs (for existing students) and extra routes to Trinity. Surely this would actually cost the council more. From Curridge, there is only a 2 mile difference between both schools, the time taken to get there won't be much different, so how can a Trinity bus be much cheaper?

Until the council knows which schools we choose, and then which transport option we take, which will be well after March next year, their understanding of how much money they might save will be at least 6 months after this transport policy is agreed.

So how can the council say how much money it will save, if any.

At the moment, most of our children get on 1 bus. In the future there will be a Downs bus, with paid and unpaid places, new Trinity routes/buses. Army children will come and go and each year the numbers will change. How can this be an efficient way of managing school transport? Have the council factored in the increased costs of managing this policy?

Apparently, other councils that have done this have not saved the amount of money they thought they would. Perhaps the council could investigate the actual savings in Essex to get their actual experience.

It will impact on the area as a whole

If we can't or choose not to pay, but still want our child to go catchment school, then we will drive. The country roads to the Downs school either via Hermitage and the B4009 or via Beedon, A34 and East Ilsley are narrow, twisty with no cats eyes, white lines, edges and lots of pot holes. The traffic through these villages will increase and I feel they are an accident waiting to happen.

And also, looking at the effect on emissions, from the national express carbon emission calculator, a month of transport on the bus compared to in car would save the equivalent of boiling 1000 kettles, or powering a house for 80 hours. So there is a big environmental impact if there are more cars on the roads.

So, this proposal will

- affect the finances of individual families,*
- could split each village and our parish,*
- will affect our secondary schools,*
- will affect our local area*
- and could increase pollution*

and may cost the council more money in the short term

There is a very strong feeling in our community about this, it is not a fair or equal policy and does not make sense.

I look forward to your response

Response 30

Further to your recent consultation on the proposed changes to the Home to School Transport policy, I would like to register my indignation at this ridiculous scheme.

I am single parent, renting in Oare in Hermitage, which will in fact currently receive transport. We are looking to buy in Hermitage and are already restricted by the lack of available housing stock. This further restricts our choices as to where we might be able to consider buying.

How can you consider restricting the free transport for the catchment school, this makes no sense at all! If it is not accessible, why is it the catchment school??

This makes no sense in any places other than the centre of town in Newbury.

I would strongly urge that you reconsider as placing the burden to transport children in the event of any lack of fare paying places combined with the cost of doing so, is just ludicrous and a waste of money. How do you propose to transport children to the other schools instead???

Response 31

I am a parent who would be affected by the suggested change to the Home to School Transport Policy.

I live in hermitage where this policy would have the effect of splitting the village. The effect the proposed changes would have is that my eldest child would receive free transport, but my other 2 children would fall into the category of having to pay for the school bus, or use other means should a place on the not be available (the proposal states that paid places will not be guaranteed). What is the policy for allocating a 'fare-paying' seat on the bus?

Our post code falls into a "fare-paying" zone, yet all my children will be walking to the bus stop in the village which is located in the "free transport" post code and boarding the bus non fare-paying pupils. This does not seem at all right and sets a divisive tone in a village where all the families are encouraged to send their children to the catchment school.

Having contacted your offices I now understand that lack of alignment between the transport policy and the catchment policy has created a loophole where the current transport service can be legally be withdrawn. While I understand that the council is looking to save money it seems to me that the only justification for this is the fact that it only effects minority of the school population, therefore it is alright. In this way, this policy discriminates against the rural aspect of secondary schools such as The Downs where there will always be a wider catchment area due to the rural nature of the villages and sparsity of the population.

The Council should also consider the implications of parents like us choosing to (or having to) transport our children to The Downs rather than pay for the bus, as we may be financially better off. Not only will this have a huge impact on the already busy rural roads and the congestion at The Downs, but is counter intuitive to environmental policies.

I therefore would like to register my strongest objection to this policy.

Response 32

I would like to make the following comments about the Home School Transport Proposal

- Rural families will be disproportionately affected by the removal of subsidised bus travel to catchment schools which are not their closest.*
- Those living the greatest distances from their catchment schools will be negatively impacted.*
- Families affected by the proposed changes may choose, or be forced to drive as places on school buses are not guaranteed. This will lead to congestion at school sites, impact heavily on the environment, and potentially put lives at risk.*
- Removal of subsidised school transportation could lead to an increase in lateness and absenteeism.*

- Travelling by school bus can have a positive effect on a child's emotional, developmental and social wellbeing.
- Families in some villages will be divided as to whether their children receive free transportation or not, possibly reducing social and community cohesion.
- Removal of free school transportation will add financial pressure to rural families.

Response 33

I wish to register our concern and disappointment over the proposed changes to the Home to School Transport Policy 2016/17.

As you may or may not be aware, this proposal splits Hermitage village in two. The north end of the village will continue to receive free transport, but the middle and southern end of the village will fall into the category of having to pay for the school bus, or use other means should families wish to send their children to their catchment school.

I believe Kiln Close may fall under the category of free transport to Trinity School, which isn't my catchment school. Both of us work full time, we absolutely need to be able to rely upon a school bus 100% being available to take our children to the Downs school, when the time comes.

It is worth pointing out that a number of children who will fall into the "fare-paying" post codes will be walking to the bus stop in the village which is located in the "free transport" post code. How can you justify children at the same bus stop being split between payers and non-payers? My children will indeed be walking to that same bus stop on the village high street.

This policy discriminates against the rural aspect of The Downs Federation of Primary Schools, as a rural secondary school such as The Downs will have a wider catchment area due to the rural nature of the villages and sparsity of the population. Clearly, a secondary school in the town will have a much smaller catchment area due to the density of the population, so naturally some rural villages will be closer to other schools in mileage terms.

At present, there is no School Bus provided by West Berkshire Council from Hermitage to Trinity or Kennet School, both of which are closer to some parts of the village, so should families decide to go to their nearest school, rather than catchment school, will additional buses be provided to cater for this? If so, the financial implications seem ludicrous. Further, I moved to Hermitage for a limited number of reasons but proximity to the M4 to get to work, and being in The Downs catchment area, were the top two reasons for buying in Hermitage.

I would not wish to be financially penalised by having to pay a school bus fare (if there is even space to get a place on the fee-paying bus which I understand isn't even guaranteed), for simply choosing to send my children to the catchment school of choice. There is already a premium on house prices for those in good school catchment prices, we all know location drives up house prices, but some of us scrape the money together each month in order to remain in those catchments of choice.

The Council should also consider the implications of parents choosing to transport their children themselves to The Downs rather than pay for the bus, particularly for larger families. Not only will this have a huge impact on the already busy rural roads and the congestion at The Downs, but will have huge financial implications on lower income or single vehicle families, not all of whom are in receipt of, or eligible for, Pupil Premium funding.

We strongly object to the changes proposed and urge the Council to reconsider and continue to provide free transport to catchment schools.

Response 34

I am writing to you in response to the proposed Changes to Home to School Transport Policy as I have the following objections:

This change unfairly affects people within rural communities and rural schools who tend to live further from schools.

It will split communities as it will divide Chieveley (Downend will be Downs, other end Trinity if people apply on bus catchment) and Hermitage (roughly north of the Fox will be the Downs, south of the Fox will be Trinity if people apply on bus catchment) and so could become divisive.

This change might have an adverse affect on the Downs school pupil numbers, again another blow for the rural community.

Is there any plan in place to increase the number of places available at Trinity school should all parents affected want their children to attend this school?

There is no guarantee that even if parents did want to pay for a bus, there would be one provided or there would be a space.

There is also no guarantee what the ongoing cost of this bus would be.

This means that if parents wanted their children to go their catchment school, the council can provide no commitment about what the method of transport to this school would be.

The impact of parents having to transport their children to the school would mean increased traffic flow on small rural roads, many of which are not even B roads, and are narrow and twisty. This has the potential to increase road maintenance on these roads, increase emissions and pollution, increase congestion at the Downs School at both ends of the school day, which is very congested already. It will be bad for the environment. The risk of accidents on the roads will only increase with increased traffic.

Given the Government focus on encouraging people to work, there would also be a big impact on working hours as parents may choose to transport their children instead of paying the bus fee.

If we chose to go to the more local out of catchment school, there is no guarantee that we would get a place, as there is no plans to increase the number of places this school has.

As there are only about 2 miles difference, from Curridge road/Long Lane junction to either Downs School or Trinity School, is there a significant reduction in transport costs compared to the increased management and administration time of implementing this policy.

This proposal has not been widely communicated. There has been no direct communication about this proposal from the council directly to potentially affected parents.

It has been left to schools, via a single email, to notify parents. For some schools, who may only have one or two parents affected, this might not have been done at all.

Response 35

I am writing with reference to the Home to school transport changes. We live in Curridge with our catchment school being The Downs. However under the proposed plans our nearest school is Trinity and therefore we will only be entitled a free transport service to this school. The catchment school and transport school will be different for many families, we are expected to apply for our catchment school but will not be given transport service to this school. This seems like a sneaky way of changing the catchment. If we choose to apply for a place at our nearest school as transport will be essential but this is not catchment there will be no guarantee that we will receive a place and therefore risk be offered a place at a school that is neither catches nor nearest. This will make it impossible for working parents. There will be little difference in cost from transporting the child to the catchment and nearest school as a bus service will still be required. We live in a rural area that means that both catchment and nearest school will be impossible for the children to walk to school as it is too dangerous. We already have one child at the Downs and in 2017 we will have another child needing to go to secondary school and as a family we would like our children to attend the same school.

There will also be congestion at the Downs with parent transporting their children to school. This will put children's lives at risk as there will be more cars and more potential for an accident. The local community in Compton will also be affected by these changes as it will bring more traffic to their area.

I feel this proposal is creating more work for West Berks and stress for families and with a system that works perfectly well this is a underhand way of cutting expenses for West Berks council. I would very much like your team to reconsider these changes as it will make the transition from primary to secondary school very difficult for many families.

Response 36

I would like to raise objection to the proposed changes to the WBC school transport policy.

My main objection is in regards the nearest school being calculated from the child's residence rather than the allocated pick up point (allocated by WBC). This leads to the ridiculous situation of a child having to walk nearly half a mile or more from a "fare paying" post code to a pick up point that is in a "non fare paying" postcode to stand next to a child who has walked only a few yards to get collected for free! Absolutely ludicrous.

Furthermore there appears to be contradictions in the proposed changes and what is in your FAQs. In particular the guarantee of getting a fare paying place..One says no guarantee and the other say there is...With that in mind your proposed changes cannot be passed due to the inaccuracies of the documentation, if they were to be passed they could be contested as misleading in any appeal against not getting a fare paying place...you may find you will have to provide a bus for a single child if the numbers do not fit the seats on a bus...! Furthermore there has been confusion over the cost of the fares, I have seen two figures....?

Response 37

I am writing to you to express my disappointment with regards to the proposed change of policy for school transport in West Berkshire. I agree whole-heartedly with the points raised below from the Governors of Hermitage Primary School and urge you to reconsider based on the impact to the rural community.

Response 38

I am wholeheartedly opposed to the proposed item in the Home to School Transport Policy for 2016-17 regarding the removal of the discretionary criteria to provide transport for secondary students to their catchment school. It is morally wrong that parents are required to pay for transport for their child/children to attend a school within the catchment of the parents' choice (as in they have chosen to live in a particular area for their child/children to attend a certain school).

The authority is very strict about catchment boundaries in the secondary school allocation process, therefore it is highly unfair to then put families at a disadvantage and request payment for transportation for each of their children. As Headteacher of one of the rural, village schools affected, I am greatly concerned as to the impact on our current parents of pupils in Year 5 and under, in addition to prospective parents who may choose not to send their children to Curridge School because transport to the secondary catchment school, the Downs School, is not free.

On a final note, we are very proud of our Green Flag status, a whole-school initiative which shows our commitment to the environment. If parents choose to drive their children to the Downs School rather than pay for them to take the school bus, it would mean 15 cars travelling daily along country lanes to a site which is currently restricted in space.

I would be grateful if you could kindly consider my concerns.

Response 39

I am against the proposal contained within the Home to School Transport Policy for 2016-17 regarding the removal of the discretionary criteria to provide transport for secondary students to their catchment school.

Parents should not have to pay for transport for their child/children to attend a school within their catchment area and be forced to send their child/children to a school not of their choice.

I am concerned as to the impact on the parents and pupils of Curridge Primary School and all prospective parents who may decide not to send their children to Curridge School because transport to the secondary catchment school, the Downs School, is not free.

On a final note, we are very proud of our Green Flag status, a whole-school initiative which shows our commitment to the environment. If parents choose to drive their children to the Downs School rather than pay for them to take the school bus, it would mean 15 cars travelling daily along country lanes to a site which is currently restricted in space.

I would be grateful if you could kindly consider my concerns.

Response 40

I am against the proposal contained within the Home to School Transport Policy for 2016-17 regarding the removal of the discretionary criteria to provide transport for secondary students to their catchment school.

Parents should not have to pay for transport for their child/children to attend a school within their catchment area and be forced to send their child/children to a school not of their choice.

I am concerned as to the impact on the parents and pupils of Curridge Primary School and all prospective parents who may decide not to send their children to Curridge School because transport to the secondary catchment school, the Downs School, is not free.

On a final note, we are very proud of our Green Flag status, a whole-school initiative which shows our commitment to the environment. If parents choose to drive their children to the Downs School rather than pay for them to take the school bus, it would mean 15 cars travelling daily along country lanes to a site which is currently restricted in space.

I would be grateful if you could kindly consider my concerns.

Response 41

I am against the proposal contained within the Home to School Transport Policy for 2016-17 regarding the removal of the discretionary criteria to provide transport for secondary students to their catchment school.

Parents should not have to pay for transport for their child/children to attend a school within their catchment area and be forced to send their child/children to a school not of their choice.

I am concerned as to the impact on the parents and pupils of Curridge Primary School and all prospective parents who may decide not to send their children to Curridge School because transport to the secondary catchment school, the Downs School, is not free.

On a final note, we are very proud of our Green Flag status, a whole-school initiative which shows our commitment to the environment. If parents choose to drive their children to the Downs School rather than pay for them to take the school bus, it would mean 15 cars travelling daily along country lanes to a site which is currently restricted in space.

I would be grateful if you could kindly consider my concerns.

Response 42

Please do not change your school transport policy for secondary school children. Parents should not have to pay for transport for their child/children to attend a school within their catchment area and be forced to send their child/children to a school not of their choice.

This is not helping the environment as more parents will feel that they will have to transport their children to school. It is also penalising the village people of The Downs area which covers a larger area and the majority of the children do not live within walking distance and therefore have to have transport to get to school. This is penalising people who live in villages.

I would be grateful if you could kindly consider my concerns.

Letter Responses

Home to School Transport

Whilst Governors acknowledge that the Local Authority is experiencing significant financial pressures, we have major concerns over the proposed changes to Home to School Transport arrangements which West Berkshire Council is introducing from September 2015. Whilst the budget for Home to School Transport is held by the Local Authority, Governors have a duty of care for the safeguarding, safety and well being of students accessing both the Alternative Curriculum and Reintegration Services.

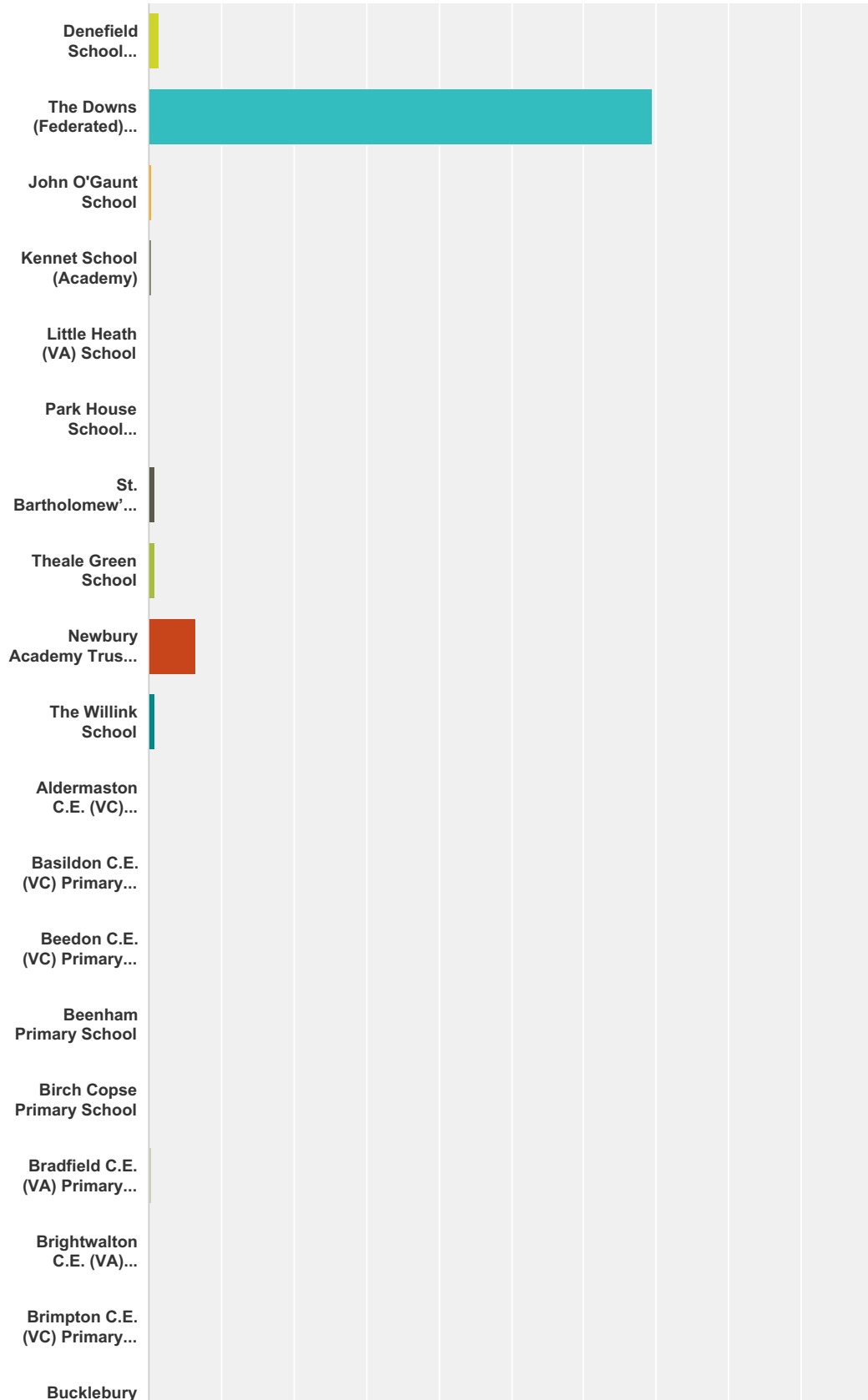
Governors share the concerns of both Headteachers that these changes are being introduced for the most vulnerable of children and young people within West Berkshire, without the opportunity to undertake a full risk assessment of the increased potential dangers they present for our students.

Both the ACS and RS play a vital role in safeguarding its students and the current system of taxis to and from the unit's, means that they are able to track students whereabouts and to ensure as far as possible that they are safe.

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Q1 Which school are you answering this survey about?

Answered: 216 Skipped: 10



Home to School Transport Policy 2016/17

C.E. (VC)...									
Burghfield St Mary's C.E....									
Calcot Infant School and...									
Calcot Junior School									
Chaddleworth St Andrew's...									
Chieveley Primary School									
Cold Ash St Mark's C.E....									
Compton C.E. (Federated)...									
Curridge Primary School									
Downsway Primary School									
Enborne C.E. (VA) Primary...									
Englefield C.E. (VA)...									
Falkland Primary School									
Fir Tree School and...									
Francis Baily Primary School									
Garland Junior School									
Hampstead Norreys C.E....									
Hermitage Primary School									
Hungerford Primary School									
The Ilsleys Primary School									
Inkpen Primary School									

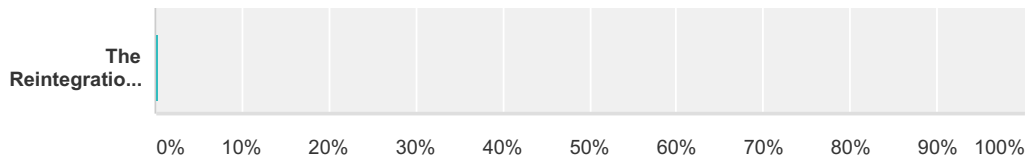
Home to School Transport Policy 2016/17

John Rankin Infant &...									
John Rankin Junior School									
Kennet Valley Primary School									
Kintbury St Mary's C.E....									
Lambourn C.E. (VC) Primary...									
Long Lane Primary School									
Mortimer St John's C.E....									
Mortimer St Mary's C.E....									
Mrs. Bland's Infant and...									
Pangbourne Primary School									
Parsons Down Infant School									
Parsons Down Junior School									
Purley C.E. (VC) Primary...									
Robert Sandilands...									
Shaw-cum- Donnin gton C.E. (V...									
Shefford C.E. (VC) Primary...									
Speenhamland Primary School									
Springfield Primary School									
Spurcroft Primary School									
St Finian's Catholic (VA...									
St John the Evangelist C...									

Home to School Transport Policy 2016/17

St Joseph's Catholic (VA)...									
St Nicolas C.E. (VA)...									
St Paul's Catholic (VA)...									
Stockcross C.E. (VA)...									
Streatley C.E. (VC) School									
Sulhamstead and Ufton...									
Thatcham Park C.E. (VC)...									
Theale C.E. (VC) Primary...									
Welford & Wickham School									
Westwood Farm Infant School									
Westwood Farm Junior School									
Whitelands Park Primary...									
The Willows Primary School									
The Winchcombe School									
Woolhampton C.E. (VA)...									
Yattendon C.E. (VA) Primary...									
Hungerford Nursery Scho...									
Victoria Park Nursery Scho...									
Brookfields Special School									
The Castle School									
Alternative Curriculum...									

Home to School Transport Policy 2016/17



Answer Choices	Responses	
Denefield School (Academy)	1.39%	3
The Downs (Federated) School	69.44%	150
John O'Gaunt School	0.46%	1
Kennet School (Academy)	0.46%	1
Little Heath (VA) School	0.00%	0
Park House School (Academy)	0.00%	0
St. Bartholomew's School (Academy)	0.93%	2
Theale Green School	0.93%	2
Newbury Academy Trust Trinity School	6.48%	14
The Willink School	0.93%	2
Aldermaston C.E. (VC) Primary School	0.00%	0
Basildon C.E. (VC) Primary School	0.00%	0
Beedon C.E. (VC) Primary School	0.00%	0
Beenham Primary School	0.00%	0
Birch Copse Primary School	0.00%	0
Bradfield C.E. (VA) Primary School	0.46%	1
Brightwalton C.E. (VA) Primary School	0.00%	0
Brimpton C.E. (VC) Primary School	0.00%	0
Bucklebury C.E. (VC) Primary School	0.00%	0
Burghfield St Mary's C.E. (VC) Primary School	0.00%	0
Calcot Infant School and Nursery	0.00%	0
Calcot Junior School	0.00%	0
Chaddleworth St Andrew's C.E. (VC) Primary School	0.00%	0
Chieveley Primary School	7.87%	17
Cold Ash St Mark's C.E. (VC) School	0.00%	0
Compton C.E. (Federated) Primary School	0.00%	0
Curridge Primary School	6.94%	15

Home to School Transport Policy 2016/17

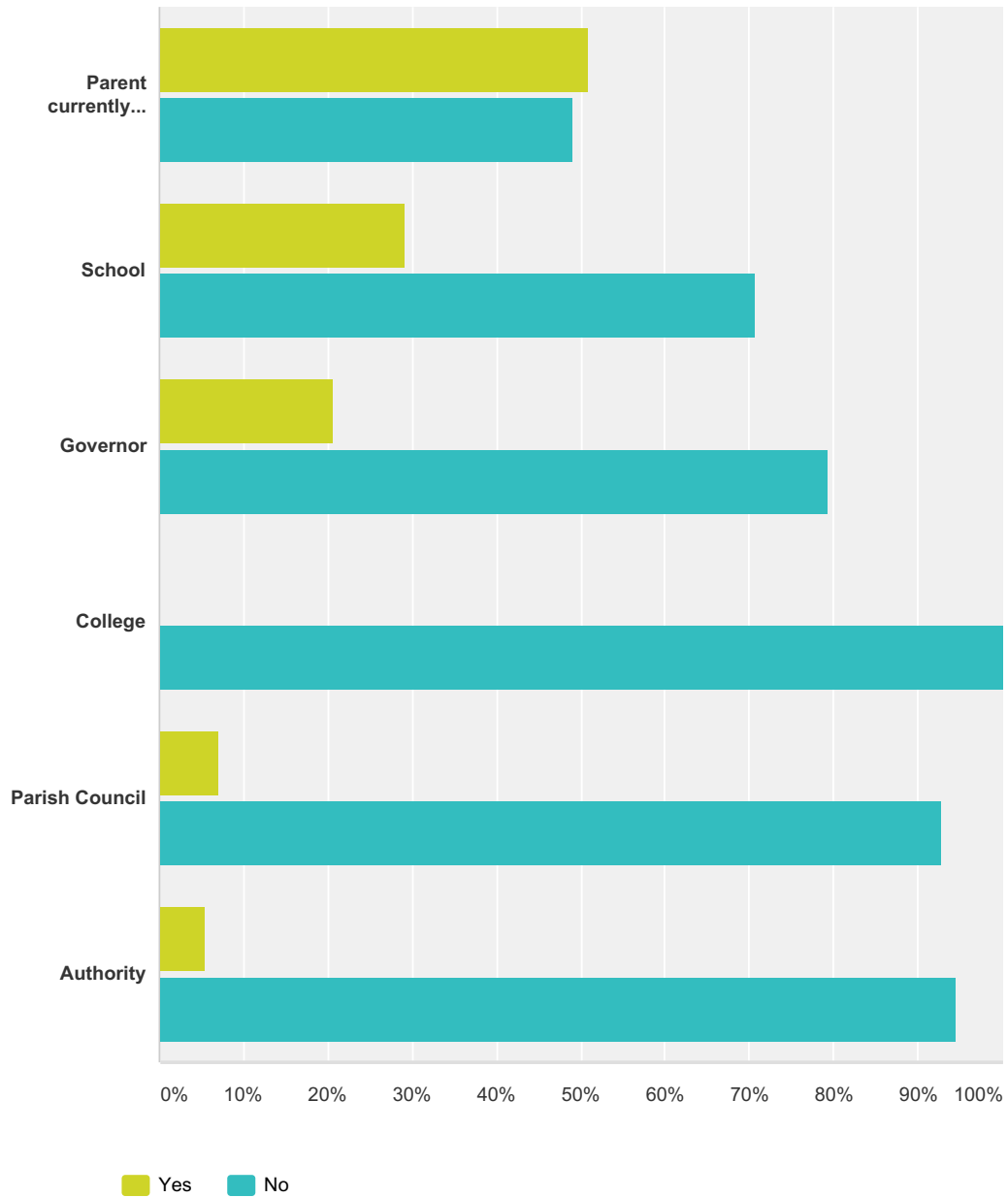
Downsway Primary School	0.00%	0
Enborne C.E. (VA) Primary School	0.00%	0
Englefield C.E. (VA) Primary School	0.00%	0
Falkland Primary School	0.00%	0
Fir Tree School and Nursery Newbury Academy Trust	0.00%	0
Francis Baily Primary School	0.00%	0
Garland Junior School	0.00%	0
Hampstead Norreys C.E. (VC) Primary School	0.00%	0
Hermitage Primary School	1.85%	4
Hungerford Primary School	0.00%	0
The Ilsleys Primary School	0.00%	0
Inkpen Primary School	0.00%	0
John Rankin Infant & Nursery School	0.00%	0
John Rankin Junior School	0.00%	0
Kennet Valley Primary School	0.00%	0
Kintbury St Mary's C.E. (VC) Primary School	0.00%	0
Lambourn C.E. (VC) Primary School	0.00%	0
Long Lane Primary School	0.00%	0
Mortimer St John's C.E. (VC) Infant School	0.00%	0
Mortimer St Mary's C.E. (VA) Junior School	0.00%	0
Mrs. Bland's Infant and Nursery School	0.00%	0
Pangbourne Primary School	1.39%	3
Parsons Down Infant School	0.00%	0
Parsons Down Junior School	0.00%	0
Purley C.E. (VC) Primary School	0.00%	0
Robert Sandilands Primary School & Nursery	0.00%	0
Shaw-cum-Donnington C.E. (VC) Primary School	0.00%	0
Shefford C.E. (VC) Primary School	0.00%	0
Speenhamland Primary School	0.00%	0
Springfield Primary School	0.00%	0
Spurcroft Primary School	0.00%	0
St Finian's Catholic (VA) Primary School	0.00%	0

Home to School Transport Policy 2016/17

St John the Evangelist C.E. (VA) Infant & Nursery School	0.00%	0
St Joseph's Catholic (VA) Primary School	0.00%	0
St Nicolas C.E. (VA) Junior School	0.00%	0
St Paul's Catholic (VA) Primary School	0.00%	0
Stockcross C.E. (VA) School	0.00%	0
Streatley C.E. (VC) School	0.00%	0
Sulhamstead and Ufton Nervet C.E. (VA) Primary School	0.00%	0
Thatcham Park C.E. (VC) Primary School	0.00%	0
Theale C.E. (VC) Primary School	0.00%	0
Welford & Wickham School	0.00%	0
Westwood Farm Infant School	0.00%	0
Westwood Farm Junior School	0.00%	0
Whitelands Park Primary School	0.00%	0
The Willows Primary School	0.00%	0
The Winchcombe School	0.00%	0
Woolhampton C.E. (VA) Primary School	0.00%	0
Yattendon C.E. (VA) Primary School	0.00%	0
Hungerford Nursery School Centre for Children and Families	0.00%	0
Victoria Park Nursery School and Children's Centre	0.00%	0
Brookfields Special School	0.00%	0
The Castle School	0.00%	0
Alternative Curriculum 14-19 (Key Stage 4 & 5)	0.00%	0
The Reintegration Service	0.46%	1
Total		216

Q2 Which of these best describes you (tick all that apply)?

Answered: 226 Skipped: 0



	Yes	No	Total
Parent currently receiving transport	51.00% 102	49.00% 98	200
School	29.21% 26	70.79% 63	89
Governor	20.73% 17	79.27% 65	82
College	0.00% 0	100.00% 71	71

Home to School Transport Policy 2016/17

Parish Council	7.04% 5	92.96% 66	71
Authority	5.41% 4	94.59% 70	74

#	Other (please specify)	Date
1	Parent of child who was hoping to receive transport from 2019	7/17/2015 7:34 PM
2	Parent of child who will need transport in future	7/17/2015 1:36 PM
3	Parent of 3 children attending Curridge Primary School - with Downs as catchment, Trinity as nearest secondary	7/17/2015 10:30 AM
4	Parent that will have child affected by changes in 2016	7/17/2015 8:00 AM
5	Interested citizen, resident of Thatcham	7/16/2015 6:07 PM
6	Member of Staff	7/16/2015 5:24 PM
7	Mother of children of primary school age and younger, future secondary school bus users.	7/16/2015 11:29 AM
8	District Councillor	7/16/2015 9:58 AM
9	Parent of child starting in September 2016	7/14/2015 1:55 PM
10	Parent of future secondary school children	7/13/2015 9:32 PM
11	Other parent (not currently receiving transport)	7/13/2015 9:29 PM
12	Parent of future secondary school children	7/13/2015 9:24 PM
13	Pupil currently at chieveley school	7/10/2015 9:15 PM
14	My son currently is in the catchment, for the Downs, currently at Chieveley primary	7/10/2015 9:12 PM
15	Parent of child currently attending Chieveley Primary School	7/10/2015 1:34 PM
16	Parent of child in year 2 Chieveley Primary School	7/10/2015 1:22 PM
17	Parent of child starting in September 2016	7/8/2015 9:59 PM
18	Parent of child who would have received transport for future secondary school	7/8/2015 7:52 PM
19	Parent requiring transport in the future for my children	7/8/2015 10:32 AM
20	Parent requiring transport in the future for my children	7/7/2015 10:37 PM
21	Parent requiring transport in the future for my children	7/7/2015 10:00 PM
22	Soon to be Downs-student Parent	6/30/2015 7:01 PM
23	Soon to be Downs-student Parent	6/30/2015 5:48 PM
24	Parent of child attending secondary school from September 2016	6/30/2015 3:20 PM
25	parent with a child due to start secondary in Sept 2016	6/30/2015 2:53 PM
26	Parent of child who will need transport	6/30/2015 9:39 AM
27	Parent potentially requiring transport	6/29/2015 6:31 PM
28	Parent in catchment for Downs with child still in junior school education	6/28/2015 11:33 PM
29	Parent of 3 future catchment school pupils	6/28/2015 9:41 PM
30	Future parent	6/27/2015 9:58 PM
31	Parent of a child who will go to the Downs School	6/27/2015 9:54 AM
32	Lead Member Children & Young People	6/26/2015 11:01 AM
33	Lead Member Children & Young People	6/26/2015 10:57 AM

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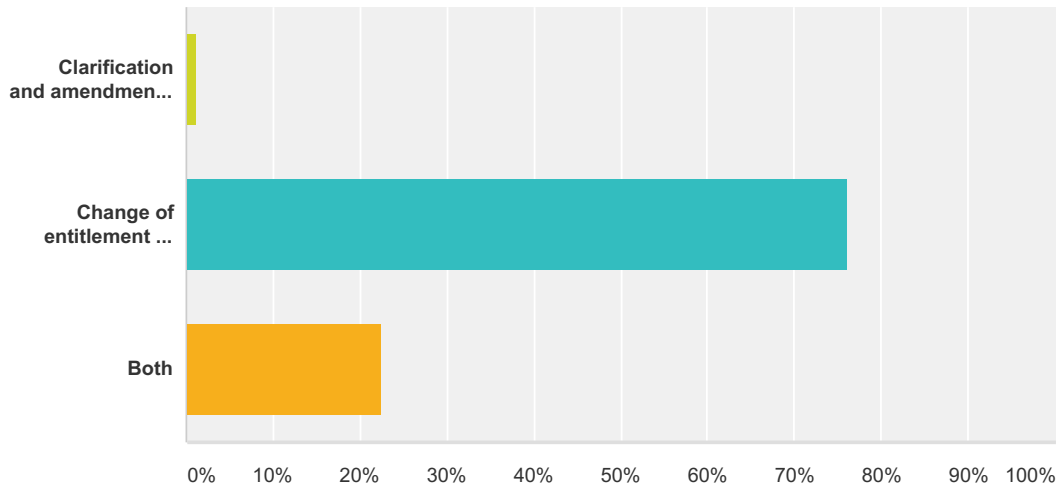
34	I have one daughter in y6 about to start scondary and. Second daughter in y5	6/25/2015 9:00 PM
35	Parent of Yr 5 pupil	6/25/2015 12:56 PM
36	Worried mother of Yr5 pupil at Curridge School	6/25/2015 12:51 PM
37	parent	6/25/2015 9:46 AM
38	Parent of children planning to come to the downs	6/25/2015 7:27 AM
39	Parent of children planning on coming to the downs	6/25/2015 7:23 AM
40	Parent of three children due to go to the downs and requiring transport	6/25/2015 7:15 AM
41	Parent of three children due to go to the downs and requiring transport	6/25/2015 6:52 AM
42	Family living in Curridge with Yr 5 child	6/24/2015 2:42 PM
43	I have children at the downs school currently AND my youngest will join 2017/18	6/24/2015 2:31 PM
44	parent who will be affected	6/24/2015 1:36 PM
45	Parent of primary school child	6/24/2015 1:20 PM
46	Parent of children who will be affected in the future	6/24/2015 9:45 AM
47	Parent with child who will be affected by this policy	6/24/2015 9:26 AM
48	Parent who will be applying for transportation in 2016	6/23/2015 10:20 PM
49	I currently have children at Chieveley primary school	6/23/2015 10:19 PM
50	Parent of child to attend school in 2017	6/23/2015 10:15 PM
51	Parent of child to attend school in 2017	6/23/2015 10:12 PM
52	Parent who's child will one day go to the downs	6/23/2015 9:57 PM
53	Parent with children due to go to The Downs	6/23/2015 9:45 PM
54	Parent of children who will attend the above school and require transport.	6/23/2015 9:32 PM
55	Parent	6/23/2015 8:51 PM
56	Parent who will be affected	6/23/2015 8:47 PM
57	Local parent	6/23/2015 8:44 PM
58	Prospective parent	6/23/2015 7:55 PM
59	Parent in the future	6/23/2015 7:49 PM
60	I have 2 x 14 month old twins and live in Curridge and on day will need to use this bus service for them.	6/23/2015 7:38 PM
61	Parent of primary school child	6/23/2015 6:32 PM
62	Future parent	6/23/2015 6:22 PM
63	Future parents	6/23/2015 6:14 PM
64	Also expected future parent for current primary school child	6/23/2015 6:13 PM
65	Parent not receiving transport	6/23/2015 4:18 PM
66	Parent who's child will be starting Secondary School Sept 2016	6/23/2015 4:06 PM
67	Parent who's child will be starting Secondary School Sept 2016	6/23/2015 4:03 PM
68	Parent with a child hoping to attend the downs	6/23/2015 2:59 PM
69	Parent whose children are starting in Sept '15, Sept '17 and Sept '19	6/23/2015 1:47 PM
70	Parent with child starting Secondary School in Sept 2016	6/23/2015 1:28 PM
71	Parent who's child will be starting Secondary School Sept 2016	6/23/2015 1:13 PM

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72	and Parent that will not receive travel for siblings	6/23/2015 12:34 PM
73	Parent with Yr5 child	6/22/2015 9:39 PM
74	Parent with YR5 child	6/22/2015 9:12 PM
75	Parent	6/22/2015 5:09 PM
76	Parent of child due to receive transportation	6/22/2015 2:41 PM
77	Parent who's child will be affected in a couple of years	6/22/2015 2:34 PM
78	Parent of child in 2016 intake	6/22/2015 10:39 AM
79	Parent	6/21/2015 9:48 AM
80	Parent of children who will be going to the Downs.	6/20/2015 8:22 AM
81	concerned parent of a future bus taker	6/19/2015 8:32 PM
82	Parent about to get transport	6/19/2015 5:11 PM
83	parent with children due to join their sibling at the catchment school in the next few years	6/19/2015 5:09 PM
84	In Downs catchment with child applying for place in 2016	6/19/2015 12:50 PM
85	parent of prospective pupil, currently year 4	6/19/2015 11:47 AM
86	Future parent to downs school children	6/16/2015 9:04 PM
87	Parent that will be impacted by changes	6/11/2015 3:43 PM
88	Parent in catchment, but not nearest school	6/8/2015 2:08 PM

Q3 Would you like to comment on the proposed policy changes to...?

Answered: 226 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses
Clarification and amendments for 2015/2016	1.33% 3
Change of entitlement for secondary pupils from 2016/17	76.11% 172
Both	22.57% 51
Total	226

Q4 The definition of an Available route has been expanded to provide more information on what is considered (section 9)

Answered: 10 Skipped: 216

#	Responses	Date
1	The catchment school and transport school will be different for many families, we are expected to apply for out catchment school but will not be given a transport service to this school. This seems like a sneaky way of changing the catchment. If we choose to apply for a place at our nearest school as transport will be essential but this is not catchment there will be no guarantee that we will receive a place and therefore risk be offered a place at a school that is neither catches nor nearest. There will be little difference in cost from transporting the child to the catchment and nearest school as a bus service will still be required. We live in a rural area that means that both catchment and nearest school will be impossible for the children to walk to school as it is too dangerous. There will also be congestion at the Downs with parent transporting their children to school. This will put children's lives at risk as there will be more cars and more potential for an accident.	7/16/2015 7:10 PM
2	My son will need transport to Downs School from Leckhampstead when he leaves Primary School, transport from the village is non existent and as both myself and my husband work full time in Newbury it would prove extremely difficult time consuming and costly. Our 3 nephews also live in the village and would need transport to Downs School, the change of the rules and provision of transport to schools needs to be. in addition Rural families will be disproportionately affected by the removal of subsidised bus travel to catchment schools which are not their closest. · Those living the greatest distances from their catchment schools will be negatively impacted. · Families affected by the proposed changes may choose, or be forced to drive as places on school buses are not guaranteed. This will lead to congestion at school sites, impact heavily on the environment, and potentially put lives at risk. · Removal of subsidised school transportation could lead to an increase in lateness and absenteeism. · Travelling by school bus can have a positive effect on a child's emotional, developmental and social wellbeing. · Families in some villages will be divided as to whether their children receive free transportation or not, possibly reducing social and community cohesion. · Removal of free school transportation will add financial pressure to rural families.	7/10/2015 1:32 PM
3	Actually it is section 8. We still don't understand if this would affect our child. To us it seems that our child cannot walk through the woods to school, as there is not a continuous path. But is this going to be considered acceptable?	7/8/2015 7:23 PM
4	I live in Ashmore Green Road and my nearest school is Kennet, but the catchment where my children attend is actually Trinity, so the new ruling makes our entire road and area somewhat in a black hole in terms of the policy. Also my son along with around 10 other children rely on the taxi service as we have no street lights and pavements at all to be able to safely walk to any bus route or pickup. Maybe the executives deciding this proposed new policy, need to include exclusion roads or areas, ours being one that does not fit into the agreed policy guidelines. One idea to save council money, would be tender for the entire collection of 10 children in one large taxi rather than the three separate taxis that operate along the road every day. Just a thought...also all of the parents in this road, have siblings which are due to attend Trinity hopefully in the coming 1-2 years and we would dearly not want to have one child being allowed taxi service and one not...I truly hope the council see sense in our particular cases..	7/6/2015 12:13 PM
5	Routes should be 'shared'. For example there is a bus which travels from Park House past my house. Yet children are not allowed to use it.	7/6/2015 10:06 AM
6	I feel this is an unfair decision we moved from the north 4 yrs ago deciding our new home to live on distance from work and also for our children to be in an area for good schools. Living in a rural area also has it's difficulties on our children getting to and from school as we are both working parents which having transport in place made our decisions on where to live an easier one	6/30/2015 8:37 PM
7	By changing the policy for free transport to closest school, not catchment school, many issues will arise. What provisions are being made to improve road links for the increased amount of car traffic to the Downs School - which is already on a small country road? What is being done about parking at the Downs School for the increased amount of traffic? This will not help working parents if they need to drive their children to school at a time when the government is trying to get people back to work. It makes no sense to stop providing transport to your catchment school and will result in small villages being split into two.	6/30/2015 1:19 PM
8	This statement isn't clear. It means what?	6/29/2015 9:47 AM

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9	This change unfairly affects people within rural communities and rural schools	6/23/2015 8:46 PM
10	We currently live in cur ridge and are concerned that we will lose the opportunity to send my children on the current route as the council may choose to not run the route as it has been	6/23/2015 1:34 PM

Q5 In relation to Pupils attending a Pupil Referral Unit, the content has been updated to reflect current practice. (Page 6)

Answered: 2 Skipped: 224

#	Responses	Date
1	<p>Hi Caroline, Reading this, I wondered if this box needs to be a bit clearer in terms of who's eligible rather than what they will receive and instead state something along the lines of: Pupil Referral Unit Parents may wish to transport pupils themselves. (If the pupil is entitled to free transport and there is no appropriate more cost effective bus/train route available, a mileage allowance may be offered). A bus / train pass to the Pupil Referral Unit for those pupils who are not attending mainstream schools (and are entitled to free transport) may be provided. Transport (assistance) may be withdrawn from pupils who regularly fail to attend the PRU – responsibility for attendance will then pass to parent/carers. Parents/carers must be aware that if the child requires transport to and from the Pupil Referral Unit outside of the bus timetable covered by the bus pass, it is the parent's responsibility (including exclusions). Transport assistance will be provided in line with statutory age/distance criteria. ie living over 2 miles from term after 5th birthday to 7 years of age (extended to 10 years old if low income (FSM / maximum working tax credit) / over 3 miles walking distance from 8th birthday to last day in academic school year in which 16th birthday falls or 2 miles if low income (FSM / maximum working tax credit).</p>	7/2/2015 2:22 PM
2	??	6/29/2015 9:47 AM

Q6 In relation to Pupils permanently excluded from school, the content has been updated to reflect current practice. (Page 6)

Answered: 0 Skipped: 226

#	Responses	Date
	There are no responses.	

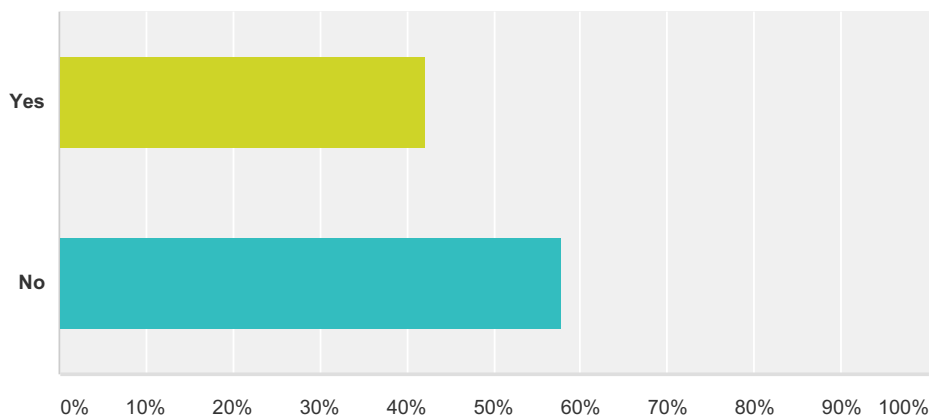
Q7 In relation to children with a Statement of Special Education Needs/EHC Plan , the content has been updated in the light of the SEND reforms (pages 6, 9-10, 14-15)

Answered: 0 Skipped: 226

#	Responses	Date
	There are no responses.	

Q8 Would you like to add anything further?

Answered: 19 Skipped: 207



Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	42.11% 8
No	57.89% 11
Total	19

#	Please comment here	Date
1	Rural families will be disproportionately affected by the removal of subsidised bus travel to catchment schools which are not their closest. · Those living the greatest distances from their catchment schools will be negatively impacted. · Families affected by the proposed changes may choose, or be forced to drive as places on school buses are not guaranteed. This will lead to congestion at school sites, impact heavily on the environment, and potentially put lives at risk. · Removal of subsidised school transportation could lead to an increase in lateness and absenteeism. · Travelling by school bus can have a positive effect on a child's emotional, developmental and social wellbeing. · Families in some villages will be divided as to whether their children receive free transportation or not, possibly reducing social and community cohesion. · Removal of free school transportation will add financial pressure to rural families.	7/13/2015 8:34 PM
2	The situation is confusing. We don't know if we will be affected or not and how we can find out.	7/8/2015 7:23 PM
3	Please can you ensure all details in section 4 which I have completed are read and taken into account, many thanks,.	7/6/2015 12:13 PM
4	Policy does not take into consideration the needs of children who have two households (divorced parents). for example in my circumstance children spend 45% of time with father, in old parental home. Yet because I am in Clere school catchment and the children live the rest of the time in St Barts School catchment, the children have to have separate transport arrangements to my house. Children like stability and this uncertainty adds to feelings of insecurity in the child.	7/6/2015 10:06 AM
5	Except to say that maybe you could put this into plain English!	6/29/2015 9:47 AM
6	5,Discretionary Transport, b,Exceptional Circumstances that will need to go through the Appeals Process. Temporary re-housing This will impact on our Looked After Children and those children who may be on the edge of care. If they are re-homed on a temporary basis and it is in their best interest to remain at their existing school then an appeal process that will take 40+ working days to secure transport costs to that school is not going to work.	6/26/2015 11:10 AM

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7	<p>I moved to Curridge so my children would grow up in a village environment with other children the same. They are twins so if I had to pay a fare of £440 a year x 2 would be a real blow to me and probably impossible. If I have to drive them to school and collect this will affect how much work I can do. It's a chicken and egg situation. I think it will really affect the village parents badly in so many ways and as for going to Trinity or Kennet as it is deemed closer people don't move to the villages for their children to attend town schools. It's making life harder for working families .</p>	6/23/2015 7:45 PM
8	<p>I am disgusted to be honest that the council will pay for my child to go to trinity school but not her catchment school the downs - this is crazy. My daughter is currently in year 5 and we live in Curridge. Why should I have to pay for a place on the bus when we are in catchment? My son currently attends the downs school in year 8 I am also worried that you will remove the route which is currently pick up and drop off at Curridge crossroads.</p>	6/23/2015 1:34 PM
9	<p>It seems crazy that when my children go to downs school in a few years time that I will have to pay for transport despite the fact that the school is our catchment school. Why would I want free transport to a school that's closer if it's not catchment? I moved to the area for the catchment school which is downs and I would expect for transport to the catchment school to be free. I think it's a disgrace to expect parents to pay.</p>	6/16/2015 9:07 PM

Q9 Removal of secondary catchment transport provision The Council proposes to remove the discretionary criteria to provide transport for secondary students to their catchment school but will continue to provide transport to the nearest school to their home address (subject to meeting the relevant criteria). This change means that, in the future: Where the nearest school and the catchment school are the same school, entitlement will not be affected. Students could still qualify for free transport to their nearest secondary school (e.g. under the distance or low income criteria, if this applied to their circumstances). Students wishing to travel to their catchment school, if this is not their nearest school, could apply for a Fare Payer place on the school bus, under the rules of the Fare Payer Scheme – a fee is payable. The bus may be over-subscribed and a place is not guaranteed. This change would affect about 400 students out of a total secondary school population of 11500. In line with national guidance, this change is being phased in from September 2016. This will apply to all new transport applications - new students when they start secondary education or existing students if they change their secondary school route. Current secondary students who receive transport will continue to be entitled to free transport on their existing route until the end of Year 11.

Answered: 119 Skipped: 107

#	Responses	Date
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Home to School Transport Policy 2016/17

1	<p>I feel this proposal will have many negative effects on pupils living in rural areas, as well as their parents. If I have to take my child to school (approx 9 mile drive), in addition to the journey I already take to take and collect my younger child to primary school, how will I ever be able to get back into the workplace, which is already pretty tricky within the limitations of school/availability of childcare. This will impact the economic situation within our family but also the wider economy. Is the infrastructure of Compton able to cope with the resultant increase in traffic volumes.? Apart from congestion I would worry about the safety of pedestrians in the village. Is there sufficient parking nearby to accommodate vast numbers of cars? What about the pollution caused by increased car journeys? The children would also miss out on the sense of independence created by making their own way to the bus stop and then on to school. This is a very important part of growing up, and something that rural children often miss out on where local facilities are limited. Please don't limit them further. There have been many campaigns recently to make rural life more positive, why undo this good work by taking away our already very limited services? I believe that housprices would be affected by limiting transport as the best schools become less viable options.</p>	7/17/2015 7:54 PM
2	<p>My children are currently at Chieveley Primary School and I am hoping that they will attend The Downs secondary school. We moved to the area knowing that there would be a good chance of attending The Downs. I am disappointed and hugely concerned that the lack of future guaranteed transport from Chieveley to The Downs will effect many families in the village. In many cases both parents are forced to work and rely heavily on school transport. Removing school transport for any family will put additional stress and pressure on families and is likely to have a negative impact on their children. I disagree strongly with this policy and hope this change is reconsidered and school transport remains free and a seat is guaranteed for all pupils.</p>	7/17/2015 4:00 PM
3	<p>Please clarify the following scenarios: 1. I live in Chieveley, and have children already at the Downs School. They currently receive free bus transport to school as we live in the school catchment area. If we were to move house (still within catchment), which resulted in my children needing to use a different bus/route, are you saying we would then have to start paying for school transport (even though they are currently receiving it for free and would continue to do so if we didn't move)? 2. If we moved out of school catchment (e.g. into Newbury), would we be able to get places on school transport and what would the fees be?</p>	7/17/2015 2:25 PM
4	<p>For people in Pangbourne the changes mean that we would have to pay £400/ year to send our children to any other school than Denefield. Succesive governments have championed choice in eductaion and this proposal effectively restricts choice to people wealthy enough to afford the bus fare. There is no other public transport to local schools from Pangbourne. Were people encouraged to drive their children to school, the increase in traffic would have very negative impacts on congestion and the environment. The impact of traffic going to the very many private schools locally is c lear as congestion along Reading rd drops consdierably at the end of their term</p>	7/17/2015 1:43 PM
5	<p>We are firmly against this proposal and feel it is confusing and unreasonable that a catchment school is given but that free transport is only provided to a different school for some pupils. This seems illogical and will only create parking problems at The Downs in Compton which I am sure the locals will be keen to avoid. This proposal appears to be victimising rural communities which do not have alternative means of transport to the school other than driving a car and many families will not be able to afford the bus fees, especially families with more than one or two children. The Downs does not have parking provision for parents to pick up and collect children and I know that many families (us included) will start driving to avoid paying transport costs. This will create traffic problems at The Downs and has implications for the safety of pupils at the school. It is unfair that we are told to apply to a catchment school where we have a relatively high chance of securing a place but that transport will only be provided for a different school that we are not encouraged to apply to. Working parents rely heavily upon the bus provided too but may not be able to afford the fees or be in a position to drive due to work commitments. The whole proposal targets families in villages where, through no fault of their own, have a situation created by the council that seems ridiculous and an extra financial burden. As if this is not bad enough, we are also told that the bus place is not guaranteed anyway and therefore year after year we will have this uncertainty of how we can get our children to school. This proposal seems very badly thought through and needs to be seriously reconsidered. I have never responded to a council proposal before but feel this time I have to add my voice to stop this from becoming a policy.</p>	7/17/2015 11:50 AM

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6	<p>We have three primary school aged children who we would expect to attend The Downs, they are currently at Curridge Primary school and it is our understanding that the free school bus to The Downs would no longer run. We feel this policy directly discriminates against the rural community - the children attend a rural primary school and have a right to attend a secondary school with their local peers and community. From the proposals, it would appear that to pay their bus fees to The Downs we could face a year on year increase in fees starting out at £1232 and rising to who knows where, without any guarantee that a place would be available on the bus. Both my husband and I work and would be unable to drive the children to The Downs (they cannot walk or cycle as it is too far and quite simply too dangerous) and get to work on time. Furthermore, we do not finish work on time to collect the children from school. The policy therefore discriminates against working parents also - when we understood it to be Government policy to have all parents working. Our understanding is that Trinity was fully subscribed for this year's Y7 intake, and I therefore do not understand how the all the Curridge (not to mention Hermitage and Cheiveley pupils also affected) pupils are to be absorbed within the local school that would offer free transport. Finally, the logistics of parents driving their children from our village out to The Downs along what is a very dangerous road, would be incredibly difficult. Traffic would make getting to school on time and safely very difficult. In bad weather, we would be unable to get the children to school. The impact on the environment would also be very damaging from a huge increase in traffic along rural roads. We therefore strongly object to this policy change and the direct and negative impact that it would have on our lives. The financial cost alone would cause significant problems for our family. If the children were not guaranteed a place on a bus for The Downs, one of us would in all likelihood have to considerably reduce our hours or if that were not possible stop working in order to take the children to and collect them from school. It seems very unfair that our children would not be able to move on to secondary school with the support of their friends and community - the local rural primary schools have worked hard for years to build strong links, and smooth the transition of pupils moving up, encouraging independence and a care and awareness of their environment, that is helped hugely by the support of their friends and peers. Children from a rural community have a right to continue their education in a secondary school that shares the same values and strives to produce children who will help protect that very community as they grow.</p>	7/17/2015 10:51 AM
7	<p>This policy change might split up friendship groups in villages where some people can afford to pay their own bus fare and others can't. In the longterm it might have the positive effect of encouraging more people to attend their nearest schools. We live in East Garston so what is the nearest sixth form to us?</p>	7/17/2015 10:03 AM
8	<p>This is another blow to rural communities and is not right to split a village (Hermitage) where some families will continue to get free transport and others will have to pay or look to apply for a place at the nearest school and maybe still not get a place as it is not in catchment. Some children will also get the bus at the same bus stop but depending on where they live affected families will be forced to pay and that is if they get a space on the bus. More time is needed to look into options as parents have little time from the decision as to when secondary school applications have to be in by. No guarantee that if this policy gets pushed through the price won't rise considerably in future years. Deciding on secondary schools is a HUGE decision for the future of our children and it shouldn't be about if you can afford the transport costs if you live in a rural community and some families have moved into the Downs catchment and then the goalposts are moved by the LA. This wasn't mentioned until after the election and the Conservative government is supposed to be helping working families not making life harder!</p>	7/17/2015 8:24 AM
9	<p>The following points are relevant: 1) as it reads the council will not fund a place to the catchment school but to the local school - this is contrary to the right of children to go with their cohort to the same school 2) school choice will be based upon parents ability to afford the transport for children, for families with more than one child, the cost could be crippling 3) the Council is pushing less well off parents to elect the local school to earn the right (if unsuccessful) to free transport 4) if a parent take the option of their catchment school they have no automatic right to a place even if funded for transport 5) ultimately a child's parents may have elected to pay for school transport but not get a place 6) in the first instance certainly for the next 5 yrs the council will have to provide a bus service to two sites, rather than, using the catchment which would rationalise a bus service to one school</p>	7/16/2015 10:54 PM

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10	<p>Pupils entering secondary school for the first time are more likely to gain a place at their catchment school than their nearest school unless they are one and the same. Parent(s) may have expressed a preference for the nearest school but allocated a place at their catchment school when applying for their child to enter secondary school. These circumstances are outside of the parents control and will make it very difficult if not impossible for these parents. This will be especially true for parents with children attending more than one school for example where one child attends a nearby primary school. At the very least there needs to be some form of guarantee to make available a Fare Payer place for parents who find themselves in this situation. Many children and their parents in the North west area live in tied accommodation and may be asked/instructed by their employer to move a relatively short distance but find themselves requiring a different bus route. I am concerned that pupils already attending their "catchment school" will be badly disadvantaged under the proposal to the extent that the only solution would be to request a move to the "nearest school". Where the nearest school is not also their catchment school it is likely that they will find it impossible to make this change and find themselves in a "catch 22" situation of not being able to travel to their "current" catchment school but not given the option to switch to their nearest school either. West Berkshire and The Downs catchment especially being rural means that distances travelled even to the nearest school can be considerable; if removing the guarantee of a service whether through discretionary or Fare Payer arrangements will make life very difficult if not impossible for parents whose children are allocated to their catchment school.</p>	7/16/2015 10:47 PM
11	<p>The change proposed has an adverse impact on the Downs. it impacts a material proportion of the annual intake of the school. it restricts choice for parents who can not afford to transport their children and forces a decision to apply to schools for which they do not have a catchment right. the decision goes against green targets for local Government as several of the villages impacted run one bus to one school, this decision will involve two buses to go to two schools.</p>	7/16/2015 10:42 PM
12	<p>I would like to object to this change for the following reasons: 1. With more parents transporting chores to school, rather than using bus, this will add to congestion on roads and areas surrounding school, leading to more traffic, more obstructions on road, more risk of traffic accidents with more pedestrians moving around school entrances. 2. Providing transport to closest school and not catchment school will duplicate service in small village like hermitage where buses will now operate going to different schools from same village- duplication of service leads to more costs.</p>	7/16/2015 6:23 PM
13	<p>As most of the secondary schools in West Berkshire are over-subscribed the majority of students are forced to attend their catchment school. As YOU are FORCING these students to attend their catchment school how can you change your criteria to qualify for transport to be for the nearest school - you are NOT allowing these students to attend their nearest school. You should be providing transport to the school you are MAKING the student attend. This will result in some students travelling to school in an inappropriate way, ie walking from Thatcham to Trinity School, which will NOT allow them to be properly prepared for learning when they do attend.</p>	7/16/2015 6:14 PM
14	<p>The change does not affect us in that we are not in the group of 400, rather the remaining 11100. However it is patently unfair as it discriminates purely on postcode. It presents parents with a real dilemma: 1. apply to catchment school and have to pay for transport (if it is even provided?) 2. apply to nearest school and have to pay for transport because the catchment school has not been first choice So whichever school is applied for, it would appear that transport will not be provided. This is simply unfair, no other word for it.</p>	7/16/2015 5:50 PM
15	<p>The proposed change is very unfair as it would financially penalise parents of children whose children cannot get a place at their nearest school because it is oversubscribed. It would also make life very difficult for parents of children whose catchment school is not the same as their nearest school if the school bus to the nearest school is over-subscribed and: - there is no scheduled bus route their children can use - they have no car available for school transport - work commitments mean that they cannot drop off or pick up children from school - they have to transport children to different schools</p>	7/16/2015 10:18 AM
16	<p>Many of our students are in catchment, but The Downs is not the closest school e.g. students in Hermitage and Streatley. This means they will not get free transport to their catchment area school. Further, they might be able to get free transport to school for which they get cannot a place as they are not in catchment. As you do not guarantee a Fare Payer place, many students will be unable to get to The Downs even if their parents are of the means to fund a place. Consequences include: students being unable to attend their school of choice; parents being late to work or unable to get to work at all as they drive student to school; extra traffic congestion; and, negative impact on The Downs if significant numbers of students have to go to other schools. I accept the need to save money but this does not appear to be at all thought through Chris Moss, Chair of Governors, The Downs School</p>	7/15/2015 12:56 PM
17	<p>Pangbourne Parish Council would like to support the views expressed by Councillor Bale. Theale Green is the catchment secondary school for Pangbourne pupils, however, by virtue of the fact that Denefield School is actually nearer to Pangbourne, this means that Pangbourne pupils will now have to pay to go to their catchment school. Pupils will have to pay to travel on the school bus as there is not another appropriate bus service.</p>	7/15/2015 11:12 AM

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18	Rural families will be disproportionately affected by the removal of subsidised bus travel to catchment schools which are not their closest. Those living the greatest distances from their catchment schools will be negatively impacted. Families affected by the proposed changes may choose, or be forced to drive as places on school buses are not guaranteed. This will lead to congestion at school sites, impact heavily on the environment, and potentially put lives at risk. Removal of subsidised school transportation could lead to an increase in lateness and absenteeism. Travelling by school bus can have a positive effect on a child's emotional, developmental and social wellbeing. Families in some villages will be divided as to whether their children receive free transportation or not, possibly reducing social and community cohesion. Removal of free school transportation will add financial pressure to rural families. If no bus seat is available, how do you expect siblings to be delivered to primary and secondary schools at the same time?	7/14/2015 2:16 PM
19	This new ruling adversely affects people in rural areas, where removal of funding to the catchment school may not be the closest school. This may have a negative impact on the roads to the school with increased traffic and congestion at the school when parents decide to or are forced to drive to their catchment school. This will therefore negatively affect the environment and also could potentially put lives at risk.	7/13/2015 9:48 PM
20	I think this is unfair, unreasonable and divisive for pupils on the south side of the Downs School catchment who will no longer be entitled to school transport. It is perverse that pupils lose their entitlement to transport to their catchment school as a consequence of living further way from it.	7/13/2015 9:38 PM
21	This is a regressive policy which restricts choice for people on lower incomes. If it only impacts on about 3% of the secondary school population it is unlikely to generate significant savings.	7/13/2015 9:32 PM
22	It is ridiculous that although The Downs school is our catchment school, transport is not provided which will lead to a lot of extra cars on the road, the A34 is already a really busy and the road to Compton not the best road for potentially hundreds more cars going there twice a day. This is ill thought through and show a lack of seeing the bigger picture eg more transport, more cost to roads etc. our local school Trinity is not our catchment and even if we wanted to go there we would not have a place. In reality how much would it save the council?	7/10/2015 9:26 PM
23	I would like to object to the plans to remove transport provision for catchment school if it is not the nearest school. Chieveley is a split village whereby some homes have Trinity as the nearest school and others have The Downs. Some families qualifying for free transport and others not would create a sense of division rather than the community spirit which currently exists. Rural families will be disproportionately affected by the removal of free bus travel to catchment schools which are not their closest. Chieveley does not have very good public transport, and it is unsafe for the children to walk 5 miles (as the crow flies) to school. This would impact working families if they have to drive the children to school, negatively impacting the small village of Compton with increased traffic flow which would be hard to manage, potentially putting lives at risk. Removal of free school transportation will add financial pressure to rural families. Options are limited in rural communities for transport, unlike in towns so should be given special consideration. We are not in catchment for trinity and cannot be guaranteed a place there (new houses being built near Vodafone will make Trinity even fuller). This creates rather a catch 22 situation, in terms of school applications and transport options which makes no sense.	7/10/2015 8:01 PM
24	This undermines the whole rationale for having catchment areas, which relate to communities in complex ways, and will distort parental choices. Such changes should be made with much greater public consultation including the active engagement with those who may be affected. It is also possible that a parent may apply for a place at the nearest school and the offer to be made for a place at the catchment school - the parent could have been awarded transport costs to the nearest school, which they preferred, but under these arrangements would not be awarded transport to a catchment school which they did not choose. That is simply perverse, will be seen as very unfair, and could easily be the subject of legal challenge - because the rules assume that parents have given preference to the school which their child attends. That is almost wholly true of parental preferences now - but projections for Kennet School, before taking into account any new housing, suggest that the school will be oversubscribed within catchment before long. Given these demographics, there will shortly be larger numbers of parents taking children to schools which were not their first preference. You will be aware that attendance is a great challenge for schools. For some pupils and families, any additional barrier becomes an excuse. The work schools do to foster positive compliance with rules can be hard going. The costs of dealing with any fall-out from this policy will fall on schools in two ways - partly in the money paid to staff to deal with situations as they arise, and partly as the opportunity cost of skilled and dedicated staff being diverted from making more positive interventions to support learning. Changing rules in this way may affect larger families significantly. Moving children from schools where they are happy and settled is not a good option.	7/10/2015 2:29 PM

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25	Rural families will be disproportionately affected by the removal of subsidised bus travel to catchment schools which are not their closest. · Those living the greatest distances from their catchment schools will be negatively impacted. · Families affected by the proposed changes may choose, or be forced to drive as places on school buses are not guaranteed. This will lead to congestion at school sites, impact heavily on the environment, and potentially put lives at risk. · Removal of subsidised school transportation could lead to an increase in lateness and absenteeism. · Travelling by school bus can have a positive effect on a child's emotional, developmental and social wellbeing. · Families in some villages will be divided as to whether their children receive free transportation or not, possibly reducing social and community cohesion. · Removal of free school transportation will add financial pressure to rural families.	7/10/2015 1:35 PM
26	This is a very disappointing move on many different levels. It will increase parental traffic in an already congested school area leading to danger for pupils being dropped off at school. It will lead to more traffic on the roads which is already heavy at this time in the morning. It will financially penalise parents who have strived to send their child to The Downs School. I have children already at The Downs and another due to come up in 2 years time. I do not want to spend an additional £400-£800 a year sending my 3rd child to my catchment school but do not want to have my children split between different school providers in opposite directions...this will penalise their opportunities to take part in after school activities where they need to be picked up at the same time but in different locations. It seems like an unjustly large sum of money which should be phased in more gradually if at all.	7/9/2015 9:27 PM
27	As a family we disagree with the proposed changes from catchment school to nearest school for the following reasons: - It appears unfair that some catchment pupils will receive the transport but not others - Cost is a major factor - If buses are over subscribed and we are forced to make our own arrangements for school travel, this will have an adverse and detrimental effect on our choice of jobs and location. - The Downs school is a countryside based school that supports many villages in the surrounding area. For this very reason, we feel that taking away our ability to travel to the school goes against the ethos of local village community. - Surely a more sensible option would be to prioritise school travel for those furthest away from the school in the catchment rather than those closest to it. -Finally, we've chosen to live in this catchment because of the school itself as well as access to it.	7/9/2015 6:14 PM
28	1. If the proposal is activated it is likely to lead to long term change of preferred school. 2. Why not charge every family £10 a year for school transport? 3. If activated far more car would be going to The Downs school, where already there is traffic congestion. 4. it disagrees with green polices. 5. It puts people living in rural areas at a disadvantage.	7/9/2015 12:35 PM
29	1) Discrimination - Other pupils who attend their "catchment" school will get free transport, but those whose "catchment" school is technically not their nearest through no fault of their own will not be entitled to free transport. - Rural communities are likely to be the worst affected as the only viable alternative to a bus is to drive (walking/cycling on narrow country roads in the rush hour is not feasible). 2) Safety - Increased vehicle traffic around schools at drop off/collection time will increase the chances of accidents, particularly in the winter when there is the potential for bad weather and it will be dark in the afternoon. - There is no alternative to taking motorised transport since there is no safe walk-way or cycle-way along the routes to the Downs school from the surrounding villages. However, some pupils may elect to cycle/walk along the main road, which will be even busier with traffic. - Currently pupils taking the bus to be dropped off in the surrounding villages benefit from safety in numbers as they are together in a group, but without bus provision, they could be on their own, in the dark/bad weather waiting for pick up with a large number of unmonitored people/vehicles in the area. 3) Traffic - Parents not entitled to free transport will be forced to drive their pupils to school increasing traffic on the roads and congestion around the school. 4) Pollution - More car journeys, less travel by bus means greater pollution. Not a very good model to encourage young people to use public transport. This is particularly the case since there are no viable and safe alternatives (e.g. cycling and walking). 5) Catchment vs Nearest School - This is re-drawing the catchment boundaries via the backdoor as many parents who cannot afford for their child to be a fare-payer will have to apply to the nearest school instead of the legitimate catchment school. - Will the local authority provide free bus transport for children in outlying villages to the nearest school where currently there is only a free bus service to the catchment school? If not they are effectively forcing parents to pay more to take their children to school because of their postcode. 6) Practicality - Are parents supposed to apply to their nearest school or catchment school? - If they apply to the nearest school will it be oversubscribed and then catchment rules will apply, which again means forcing parents to pay for transport. - How is it possible for those parents that cannot afford to pay for the provided authority transport, that are forced to as a result provide their own transport, possibly be in two places at the same time? when there are siblings to be dropped off at a local primary schools for 8.50am. The same time for both school in different locations with travel time to take into consideration. This is feasibly impossible to do. As a result which child does one be forced to favour when all children should be provided with equal opportunity and not be discriminated against. 7) Financial - If the aim is to save costs for the council, it could backfire as affected parents will make separate arrangements and therefore the council will not receive additional revenues from the new fare-paying pupils and the service that they must provide for certain students will become effectively less cost-effective (e.g. enormous bus with 3 pupils on board for example).	7/9/2015 10:02 AM

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30	Curridge School and many other small village schools are part of the Downs Federation, and pupils of these primary schools currently attend the Downs School via the free buses. Withdrawal of these buses will mean that many parents will not be able to afford to send their children to their catchment school, destroying local community spirit and adding to traffic on local, narrow country roads,	7/8/2015 7:55 PM
31	We live on Cold Ash Hill in Cold Ash and I am wring with my surprise to the proposal that free transport will no longer be provided to your catchment school, even though it is over 3 miles away. I understand this is as there is another nearer school that we can attend. If we any chance of getting in our nearest school (Kennet) then we would apply for it, however with knowledge of how the catchments and school placements in Newbury seem to work, we opted for our catchment school of Trinity which is further away. This just about works for us as transport is provided as there is no way that we could allow our children to walk from Cold Ash to Trinity as the roads and distance involved are totally unacceptable for an 11 year old. Also with local reports on attempted snachings of girls recently, how you can ever think that it is a viable option for our children to walk nearly 4 miles to school is beyond my comprehension. With child safety in mind and also the human right that children have the right to a free education this proposal seems utterly absurd and we trust that you will be reconsidering the proposal on the understanding that childrens safely/lives could be at risk.	7/8/2015 6:45 PM
32	I am writing to object about the proposal to remove the provision of providing transport to students whose catchment school is not their closest school, for the following reasons: -Unfair discrimination to certain students, all should be treated equally. - Traffic issues that will arise if students need to be taken to Downs School in Compton by parents, impact on A34 north of Chieveley is already bad at rush hour, and several accidents occur frequently. - The parking options outside of the Downs School is also limited, therefore will the Council be injuring extra expenditure to improve these arrangements, this could be more cost then providing transport. - Rural families will be disproportionately affected by the removal of subsidised bus travel to catchment schools which are not their closest. - What happens to students whose parents do not drive, how are they supposed to get to school if the bus is over-subscribed and a place is not guaranteed. - Those living the greatest distances from their catchment schools will be negatively impacted. - Families affected by the proposed changes may choose, or be forced to drive as places on school buses are not guaranteed. This will lead to congestion at school sites, impact heavily on the environment, and potentially put lives at risk. - Removal of subsidised school transportation could lead to an increase in lateness and absenteeism. - Travelling by school bus can have a positive effect on a child's emotional, developmental and social wellbeing. - Families in some villages will be divided as to whether their children receive free transportation or not, possibly reducing social and community cohesion. e.g Chieveley - Removal of free school transportation will add financial pressure to rural families.	7/8/2015 10:43 AM
33	After taking my daughter to the Down's school one morning last week, the level of congestion was unreal. So many parents already dropping their children off and the buses, if this policy goes ahead it will create chaos around the school with more cars and will disrupt education, cause problems for the school staff and generally would not be good for the children, school and parents. I would ask the council to reconsider this proposal as this will affect parents either financially and/or time by taking their children to school when historically transport has always been provided. This policy will deter families from moving to the villages. The majority of parents are not wealthy around the villages and this will cause hardship.	7/7/2015 10:38 PM
34	Why have a catchment area for a secondary school at all if future parents are going to be forced to pay for transport to that school? Why not just allow pupils to attend the closest (as the crow flies) to avoid these costs? I thought that I could only get free transport if I applied to the catchment area school at the moment. A change to this, i.e. only help for the nearest school would mean that The Downs school (far from any towns) would not get many pupils entitled to free transport as their nearest school would be Trinity or maybe King Alfred. Pupil numbers for The Downs School would decrease as the nearest pupils entitled to free transport would live in the sparsely populated surrounding villages. There are few children in the areas closest to The Downs School. Parents would find it difficult to afford to pay for transport out to Compton - the school would become undersubscribed and Trinity etc would become oversubscribed.	7/7/2015 7:23 AM
35	This cannot be deemed to save the council that much money for one as if we all chose the closest schools the council will still have to provide free transport (school league table change and so will parents preferences). The difference between the mileage to the catchment or the closest school is small and therefore the savings therefore must be small. This can only be seen as a back door tax on families not a proper school transport policy. It will force more parent to put children into cars to school - with a knock on affect on the enviroment. Does the policy mean that I can now have first option place at my closest school - rather than my catchment and can I have free school transport for my child if I pick any school that is closer than the catchment - given that there are a number of schools that are closer than my catchment! Wake up West Berkshire Council - you are only adding more buracuracy to other areas of policy and therefore cost to the administration of the whole system!	7/6/2015 11:09 PM

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36	I would like to register my objection. Partly because the consultation does not explain the rationale for the change. If it is to save money then it could have the opposite effect as, for example, in Chaddleworth, the council would have to lay on two buses to support the existing service to the downs. The current discretionary extension to include the catchment appears to make the most sense. Generally kids should go to their catchment school. In fact the only bus service provided is to the catchment school. Please do not change the current policy	7/2/2015 6:39 AM
37	We recently moved to Hermitage, and our prime reason for choosing to live in Hermitage was that the catchment school for the village (the Downs School) was so highly rated. We did not anticipate that there would be a financial burden for sending our children to our catchment school!! Surely the Council needs to encourage parents to send their children to their catchment school, otherwise the system for allocating the right number of children to each school will break down?	6/30/2015 3:44 PM
38	We just moved to Hermitage to ensure our daughter is in the Downs school in Sept 2016, we are relying on the bus services provided between Hermitage & the Downs. The associated cost will be an additional burden on our household.	6/30/2015 2:55 PM
39	I object to the removal of the free transport provision to the catchment secondary school where it is not the nearest school. This would have a big impact on the children of Curridge School who are in the catchment area for The Downs School. Curridge School prepares their children for entry to The Downs School by having close educational links with the secondary school. All this work would be negated by pupils being uncertain of which secondary school they would be going to, because of the cost of school transport. My daughter benefitted immeasurably by attending Curridge School for 7 years and then for, to date, 6 years at The Downs School and I would like other children to benefit in the same way in the future, without concerns over cost. The educational stability of this experience together with access to the superb teaching and leadership at The Downs School has led to attaining the very highest achievement in terms of exam results for my daughter. I think this proposal should be very carefully examined against the Council's strategy priority of 'Improve Educational Attainment' and the strategic vision aim of 'Better Educated Communities'. I believe the track record of improved educational achievements published in the current WBC strategy will have come about because of a wide range of things, including free access to the catchment secondary school that the primary school prepares the children for.	6/30/2015 1:18 PM
40	I object to the principle of what is proposed. How can a child live within a catchment area for a school and parents be put in a position where they may have to apply for a different school and even risk losing out of a school place because of a financial situation. We live in a world that is trying to promote independence/ car sharing/ lower fuel admissions etc and yet suddenly the people who live furthest away are being put in a position where driving might be more feasible. This may even limit the parents employment options. We have recently moved into the Downs Catchment area but under this scheme we would not get a free bus place as Kennet would be nearer, however unless I am mistaken a bus doesn't even go to Kennet from Curridge so you are not giving parents options. On apply for a school place Kennet wouldn't be in catchment so I may then end up with a completely different school, which wasn't the nearest one still and still no way of getting my child there and not an 'Outstanding' school. There could be people on a high income with a free place because they live a bit nearer and someone on the breadline with little option but to find the money- after all if they don't drive they can't decide not to send their child to school! Why not look at taking away the places nearest the school where children could cycle or walk if there is a problem with over crowding?! The school bus stop here always seems very busy so its not like there isn't a need for it. When will policies take into account income rather than unfair criteria. Why should a pensioner who has life savings, money in a property and a final salary pension higher than many peoples wages get a free bus to the shops or pub whilst a child's education may suffer because of this scheme. I know the answer to all these things is money spent on admin is too high to process information based on income etc but there must be other cost saving areas that can be considered before affecting any child's education or the option for parents to work. There must be other areas where money can be saved in the council- turning street lights off late at night, even spending less on parks if it came to it...just take a few moments out to think of all the scenarios where this policy may affect parents and their children and realise that it just wouldn't be fair and for some may mean the difference between working or not. 400 in 11500 doesn't sound much but those 400 are still expected to get to school every day and are still entitled to the best education available.	6/30/2015 10:10 AM
41	This change unfairly affects people within rural communities and rural schools. Changing the entitlement to the nearest, but not necessarily catchment, school and not guaranteeing enough transport to catchment schools will unfairly affect residents in rural areas. There is no mention that the number of places in schools such as Trinity will be increased, therefore a place at the nearest school is no guaranteed. There will be more traffic and congestion on country roads, leading to more accidents and pollution, amongst other problems.	6/29/2015 6:34 PM

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42	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural families will be disproportionately affected by the removal of subsidised bus travel to catchment schools which are not their closest. • Those living the greatest distances from their catchment schools will be negatively impacted. • Families affected by the proposed changes may choose, or be forced to drive as places on school buses are not guaranteed. This will lead to congestion at school sites, impact heavily on the environment, and potentially put lives at risk. • Removal of subsidised school transportation could lead to an increase in lateness and absenteeism. • Travelling by school bus can have a positive effect on a child's emotional, developmental and social wellbeing. • Families in some villages will be divided as to whether their children receive free transportation or not, possibly reducing social and community cohesion. • Removal of free school transportation will add financial pressure to rural families. 	6/28/2015 11:42 PM
43	<p>As a resident in Chieveley with our catchment school as The Downs, I believe your suggested changes to the current policy is not only ill thought out but also one which will disproportionately affect rural families where the catchment school is not necessarily the closest. By charging for transportation, affected families (particularly those with more than one child attending a catchment school, but not their closest school) will certainly have significant reason to drive children to school - causing additional congestion issues at school sites, negative impacts to local residents and potential danger to students. This will also increase traffic to and from school sites (on country roads) with the obvious associated environmental impacts. This change will also add financial pressure to rural families - even when attending their catchment school - catchments which have been decided by the council presumably to encourage a spread of attendance depending on location. For these reasons, I hope that you will reconsider your proposed policy changes and continue to provide free, guaranteed transportation to catchment schools.</p>	6/28/2015 9:51 PM
44	<p>I am strongly opposed to this change as it seems incredibly unfair to not provide transport to a child's catchment school. There would be no guarantee that a space would be available on a school bus even if paying under the Fare Payer Scheme or how much this would be. This change in policy is detrimental to rural communities; detrimental to pupil numbers at the Downs School; detrimental to pupil safety if more parents are forced to drive their children to school.</p>	6/28/2015 3:09 PM
45	<p>This makes no sense with a government whose campaign to win the general election was to help working families and the proposed changes is going against hard working families. If we don't get into the nearest school we may not be able to get transport to our catchment school and how we are supposed to be able to collect at school times as there is very little in the way of after school provision at secondary school. This is another blow for rural communities. There needs to be more time for consultation and the LA need to look into changing the catchment areas in line with the transport policy. A lot of families have moved into the catchment area for their preferred choice of secondary school only for the goal posts to be moved. Not enough information on how much this would actually cost if a place was available on the route required.</p>	6/27/2015 4:14 PM
46	<p>If we are in catchment for a secondary school why is free transportation not provided? Transportation then rules which school we apply for, which doesnt make sense?</p>	6/27/2015 9:58 AM
47	<p>this will penalise children attending their catchment school which may be less than a mile further away than their nearest school and goes in contradiction to the catchment policy. Why should families have to pay transport to attend their catchment school? It will divide rural communities, where a village may be divided in half if one side are paying and another end are not due to their postcode. It is not clear about how the distance will be calculated - which route from downland villages to The Downs school? The reduction of 10% on sibling discount is unreasonable, you are potentially costing families just short of £1000 a year for 2 children. The council should secure a better contract with the transport provider and not pass on their costs to end users.</p>	6/26/2015 1:18 PM
48	<p>I think that this is really unfair. Our catchment school is not our closest school but it is the only school that my children would get a place as all other options are out of catchment and full! I therefore have no choice as to which school they attend. I will have one child already at this school and therefore my choices of where to send my y5 child are even less. If you have a child at the school already the transport should be free as it is u realistic to expect people to have children at different schools. Also I would like to know the difference in cost, I live about 6.5 miles from catchment school and about 6.3 miles from closest school. Why can't I pay just the difference in milage and not the whole cost?</p>	6/25/2015 9:08 PM
49	<p>My catchment school is not the nearest but the nearest is not my catchment so how can that be fair? I have an older child who can get the bus and a younger who may not. This policy does not treat rural families fairly. You should get transport for your catchment school. You should only have to pay if you are out of catchment. That is fair.</p>	6/25/2015 8:59 PM

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50	I am extremely concerned about these proposals because surely if the student is in catchment then they should have an automatic right to free transport. If it works out that the nearest school is not the catchment school then surely it is the catchments that should be reviewed. This proposal could prove extremely divisive and will only affect students from low income families who will not be able to afford paying for the transport or having a lift with parents. This will then completely go against parents and students being able to go to the school of their choice. They will make decisions based on financial considerations not which is the best school for their son/daughter educationally. We have a lot of affluent parents and if this proposal is implemented then they will probably be forced to drive their children to school which will increase the amount of traffic on the roads and increase carbon emissions. Surley West Berks will have carbon emission targets. Also it could increase the volume of dropoffs that we have which already causes problems.	6/25/2015 1:44 PM
51	This is totally unfair and crazy! If the school is within the 'catchment', then free transportation should be provided.	6/25/2015 12:57 PM
52	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural families will be disproportionately affected by the removal of subsidised bus travel to catchment schools which are not their closest. • Those living the greatest distances from their catchment schools will be negatively impacted. • Families affected by the proposed changes may choose, or be forced to drive as places on school buses are not guaranteed. This will lead to congestion at school sites, impact heavily on the environment, and potentially put lives at risk. • Removal of subsidised school transportation could lead to an increase in lateness and absenteeism. • Travelling by school bus can have a positive effect on a child's emotional, developmental and social wellbeing. • Families in some villages will be divided as to whether their children receive free transportation or not, possibly reducing social and community cohesion. • Removal of free school transportation will add financial pressure to rural families. 	6/25/2015 12:54 PM
53	I strongly disagree with this proposed policy change	6/24/2015 5:35 PM
54	I strongly disagree with this proposed change to policy	6/24/2015 5:34 PM
55	This proposed policy discriminates against families living in rural area	6/24/2015 5:31 PM
56	Rural families will be disproportionately affected by the removal of subsidised bus travel to catchment schools which are not their closest.	6/24/2015 5:28 PM
57	This policy seems to be very unfair to those children who attend their catchment school, as allocated by West Berks. Regardless of whether another school is closer, my children attend the school allocated to them by West Berkshire. There are several things which don't seem to have been considered... There is no guarantee that even if parents did want to pay for a bus, there would be one provided or there would be a space. How then are working parents supposed to get children to school? There is also no guarantee what the ongoing cost of this bus would be. Will this just become another way to raise funds for West Berkshire Council? The impact of parents having to transport their children to the school would mean increased traffic flow on small rural roads, the Downs School is extremely congested at both ends of the school day, and has already had to change rules regarding parents picking up at the school. The risk of accidents on the roads will only increase with increased traffic. If we chose to go to the more local out of catchment school, there is no guarantee that we would get a place, as there is no plan to increase the number of places this school has. This is again back to the unfairness of the policy. Either change the catchment areas or continue to fund buses.	6/24/2015 3:45 PM
58	This will impact my child who is currently Yr 5 at Curridge School. We purposely chose to live in the area of Curridge so that we would be within the catchment of The Downs (along with funded transportation). We cannot afford to fund the unexpected cost. We probably do not fall within the criteria for low income, however we are only just above it!! The added cost is a worry for us. We are an extremely hard working family, who work long hours to meet the current bills we face, let alone an additional cost.	6/24/2015 2:50 PM
59	I have no issue of paying for transportation - increase the costs if you like. But there is no other way to get to our CATCHMENT school other than by vehicle - you can either send one bus or you will end up with 50 cars doing the same job. Compton cannot cope with those levels of vehicles. It is not the cost that I am objecting to - it is the provision of transportation.	6/24/2015 10:02 AM
60	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural families will be disproportionately affected by the removal of subsidised bus travel to catchment schools which are not their closest. • Those living the greatest distances from their catchment schools will be negatively impacted. • Families affected by the proposed changes may choose, or be forced to drive as places on school buses are not guaranteed. This will lead to congestion at school sites, impact heavily on the environment, and potentially put lives at risk. • Removal of subsidised school transportation could lead to an increase in lateness and absenteeism. • Travelling by school bus can have a positive effect on a child's emotional, developmental and social wellbeing. • Families in some villages will be divided as to whether their children receive free transportation or not, possibly reducing social and community cohesion. • Removal of free school transportation will add financial pressure to rural families. 	6/24/2015 9:46 AM

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61	This will affect my daughter next September- her catchment school is the downs. She is very shy and will not know anyone at the nearest school which is trinity school. She will lose all peer support. I have 2 other children who will be at Chieveley school. I feel that the rural students are being penalised here. If needs be I would pay a contribution to the bus fare but I feel that not being able to guarantee a place on the bus even in this scenario is ridiculous.	6/24/2015 9:34 AM
62	There will be a number of families affected who currently attend their catchment school, but have free provision of transport to a different school due to the distance calculation. As a proposal, this is counter-intuitive, as in these instances a family would have to choose to select a catchment school without transport, or a non-catchment school with transport. This will cause an imbalance in the allocations and likely lead to additional appeals and further dissatisfaction. It will certainly lead to small numbers of families requesting transport from 'out of catchment' locations, which is likely to lead to additional routes and underfilled vehicles (and probably more cost?)	6/23/2015 10:38 PM
63	I am very concerned about these proposed changes. My child would never get offered a place at our closest school because I live in a village outside of Newbury, there will be too many others from Newbury who would be ahead of me on the waiting list because they live closer. Yet, I will then be severely penalised for living where I do and made to pay over £400 for my child to be transported to their catchment school. How can this be justified? I am a single parent, on a low income (but not low enough to meet your criteria for assistance). I just don't know how I am going to afford it. I strongly encourage the council to reject the proposed changes.	6/23/2015 10:30 PM
64	Removing free transport will put financial pressure on some families. Travelling by bus ensures that they arrive at school on time. No free bus will mean much much more traffic and congestion. As always it will affect the poorest families the most and this is unjust and undemocratic.	6/23/2015 10:22 PM
65	My son is already a student at the downs, my other son is due to start this September and my daughter September 2016. I have used your online information and the downs is 0.5km further from our home than the nearest school. I believe it would be detrimental for my daughters social wellbeing for her to have to go to a completely differently school. To me this new policy is completely absurd. My son has thrived since being at the downs and I really hope the rest of my children will be given the opportunity to study there. We are a large family (8 children), however we are two families joined together. My stepchildren came to live with myself and my husband 3 years ago and we now have full residency of them. We cannot possibly afford to pay for their transport. We originally lived in hermitage however needed a larger house so we moved out to frilsham last October. I take the younger children to school but it would be impossible for me to be able to take all the children to 2 different schools. I think the council perhaps needs to find other ways to make cuts. Not by jeopardising our children's future.	6/23/2015 9:58 PM
66	This discriminates against children living in rural areas. £450 extra on school bus fees is a considerable amount to be asking parents to find when monies are already tight. Do you really think a school like The Downs would be able to cope with hundreds of parents dropping their children off at school each day!! And what if the parents work? How is this feasible?	6/23/2015 9:50 PM
67	It makes no sense to change a transport policy and not change the catchment policy This change unfairly affects people within rural communities and rural schools It will split communities as it will divide Chieveley (Downend will be Downs, other end Trinity) and Hermitage (roughly north of the Fox will be the Downs, south of the Fox will be Trinity) and so could become divisive. This change might have an adverse affect on the Downs school pupil numbers, again another blow for the rural community. Is there any plan in place to increase the number of places available at Trinity school should all parents affected want their children to attend this school? There is no guarantee that even if parents did want to pay for a bus, there would be one provided or there would be a space. There is also no guarantee what the ongoing cost of this bus would be. This means that if parents wanted their children to go our catchment school, the council can provide no commitment about what the method of transport to this school would be. The impact of parents having to transport their children to the school would mean increased traffic flow on small rural roads, many of which are not even B roads, and are narrow and twisty. This has the potential to increase road maintenance on these roads , increased emissions and pollution, increased congestion at the Downs School at both ends of the school day, which is very congested already. The risk of accidents on the roads will only increase with increased traffic. Given the Government focus on encouraging people to work, there would also be a big impact on working hours as one of the parents would actually need to transport their children. If we chose to go to the more local out of catchment school, there is no guarantee that we would get a place, as there is no plans to increase the number of places this school has. As there are only about 2 miles difference, from Curridge road/Long Lane junction to either Downs School or Trinity School, is there a significant reduction in transport costs compared to the increased management and administration time of implementing this policy. This proposal has not been widely communicated. There has been no direct communication about this proposal from the council directly to potentially affected parents. It has been left to schools, via a single email, to notify parents. For some schools, who may only have one or two parents affected, this might not have been done at all.	6/23/2015 9:34 PM

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68	<p>Based on discussions with some parents about these proposals, some have said they may choose to pay, others will provide their own transport. This would mean that in the short term at best there would be both buses and additional cars transporting children to the Downs School. The impact at the Downs School at drop off and pick up would be very significant as it is very congested even now. At the worst you might have a reduced number of buses but an even bigger number of cars, which would make the Downs school at peak times even more difficult. Over time, as the number on the bus (council paid for) diminishes, it would probably become a very expensive option for the few students left on the council paid scheme, so buses would decline and there would be even more traffic on the road, and an even worse situation at the Downs School. The impact of these changes on the local roads will be significant. The roads to the Downs School via Hampsted Norreys and East Illsley are narrow, windy and fast, with limited white lines, cats eyes and in many places pot holes. The Hampsted Norreys road was closed for a considerable time due to the floods last year. Traffic will be increased through East Illsley and Hampsted Norreys. There will be increased traffic/environmental pollution when we are being encouraged to use our cars less. Given the rural nature of the roads, and their level of exposure, especially in the winter, and the increased traffic levels in both the short and longer term, I think the chances of an accident on one of the 3 main routes to the secondary school would be significantly increased. The affect and impact if this did happen would be significant on the whole school community.</p>	6/23/2015 9:09 PM
69	<p>It beggars belief that this is for real. Are you telling me that even though my son (will be sons in 2018) is not entitled to a bus to his catchment school, that I have to pay (not so bothered about that) but that place is not guaranteed? So now I have to see about changing my hours at work to ensure I can get him to school. Failing that he changes school to his nearest (geographically) school and hope he gets a place there. I would very much like to hear from the council the reasons for this, the pro's for making this move. I've yet to hear (on social media channels and the like) of any single parent that thinks this is a great idea.</p>	6/23/2015 8:57 PM
70	<p>I am very disappointed to hear about this change which I feel will have a negative impact on The Downs School as well as parents. Without free transportation provided, parents may be forced to take their children to the school resulting in more traffic on the narrow country roads. Working parents will need to ensure that one of them is available to drop off and pick up so potentially working hours may need to be changed or reduced. This is not an easy thing to do and does not help working parents at all!! Lastly, dividing villages up so that part of a village is closer to one school than the other part does not seem fair to existing and new residents. We are not in agreement with the proposed changes at all and do not feel they can be justified!</p>	6/23/2015 8:02 PM
71	<p>I am outraged at the proposal! Our catchment school will be The Downs, and in order for myself, as a single parent to be required to pay for transportation for my children to get to school is absurd!! I am a Working Mother and a) haven't the time in the morning before work to drive them into school and b) as a single parent on a tight budget, afford it!!</p>	6/23/2015 8:00 PM
72	<p>· Families in rural areas will be hugely disadvantaged by this proposal which makes a mockery of the catchment system, if they are not guaranteed free transport to their catchment schools. I doubt if there is capacity at Trinity school for all those children from Chieveley, Hermitage and other Downland villages in the catchment area of the Downs but slightly closer as the crow flies to Trinity, and it is not clear that free transport would be guaranteed in any case. The allocation of students to schools on catchment grounds would fall apart. · Those living the greatest distances from their catchment schools will be negatively impacted, even though people may have chosen where they bought their homes on the basis of the catchment system. · Families affected by the proposed changes may choose, or be forced to drive as places on school buses are not guaranteed. The Downs school does not have parking or manoeuvring space for hundreds more cars at busy drop off and pick up times and I would have serious concerns for the safety of students, as well as the environmental impact of those cars on the clean countryside air and the state of our narrow country lanes. · Removal of subsidised school transportation could lead to an increase in lateness and absenteeism, not least because of congestion at the school gate caused by huge numbers of private cars. · Travelling by school bus can have a positive effect on a child's emotional, developmental and social wellbeing. My current year 7 daughter aged 12 has had immense benefit from taking the school bus to school since September 2014, in terms of cementing new friendships, taking responsibility for herself with regard to timings and personal effects and looking out for her friends, and has matured greatly, due in great part to her use of the school bus. · Families in some villages will be divided as to whether their children receive free transportation or not, possibly reducing social and community cohesion. Is there any guarantee that children in the same family would be offered the same transport options? Many working families have set up their domestic lives on the basis that they can rely on bus transport for their children. I have no idea how a parent in a rural area is expected to get to work in a town or city for the start of a working day if they have to drive children to school for 08:50. · Removal of free school transportation will add even more financial pressure to rural families, who already have to spend more to drive into town or other villages for shops, libraries, after school sports, swimming lessons etc, and at worst could discourage families from moving to Downland villages, reversing the welcoming, good social mix which these villages currently enjoy where young families live alongside older residents, with all the social benefits and mutual support that this offers.</p>	6/23/2015 7:09 PM

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73	<p>This means that having two children at the school will cost the parent £855 a year. Therefore makes more financial sense to drive. This could prove impossible for working parents who have to start work at 9am. This changes will put families under massive financial pressure. How can you provide transport for your nearest school only when the nearest school is not in catchment and your child would not be able to attend anyway as it is oversubscribed??How can you spilt a community? Half the people can pay up to £855 a year or more while a next door neighbour pays nothing? How are you justifying the divide?. Areas of Cheiveley, Curridge and Hermitage are in an impossible situation as the closest school is not the catchment school. The council defined the catchment areas, will they be changing this now so that "closest" schools are also "catchment" schools</p>	6/23/2015 6:34 PM
74	<p>This would have a big impact on our family finances with two children in consecutive years. Money that would otherwise be directed to their further education. It is unfair to penalise families based on their location.</p>	6/23/2015 6:32 PM
75	<p>I would like to oppose new removal of secondary catchment transport provision for the following reasons: - it's wrong as those affected are in catchment and are entitled to go to a school but will be treated differently to others in catchment, it's not fair. - my son is already at the school my daughter would not be entitled to free transport to and I don't want to be forced into a school choice on the basis of cost of transport. I would like my daughter to go to the same school as my son because it's our first school of choice, my husband and I both work long hours and will not be able to easily transport our daughter to school via an alternative method and the majority of students from Curridge will be going to the Downs school and it would not be good for her socially. - our initial response was to find an alternative way of getting our daughter to school ie by car, if all parents affected take this view the impact on the school during drop off and collection would be huge with the increase in cars around the school it would make it dangerous for students and difficult for staff to manage. - increased traffic around drop off and collection would also have a negative impact on the environment and community eg the villages close to the school such as Hampstead Norreys.</p>	6/23/2015 5:10 PM
76	<p>Item 3 seems to indicate that families who live within a Catchment area and send their child to the Catchment School will be unfairly penalised if they happen to live in a location which is on the periphery of the Catchment area and closer to a school outside of their Catchment. Does this align to the admissions policy or is this a precursor to a planned changes in the admission policy and Catchment areas in September 2016?</p>	6/23/2015 4:20 PM
77	<p>My child attends Chieveley primary school and has watched the school bus that takes children to the downs for many years. If the provision was removed for us and local villages it would have a significant social impact on our children. Some families within the same village may be entitled and others may not which would affect social cohesion. There is also no sufficient, safe space outside the downs to drop off our children of we are forced to bring them by car. Surely it is better for the environment to have a few buses transporting children rather than a significant number of cars??? Please consider these points and others before making a decision!</p>	6/23/2015 3:04 PM
78	<p>I feel that all parents should pay towards school transport, being in the catchment should not give them free transport when they are in a position to pay. Children attending a school which is not there catchment school are expected to pay high fares, also told they may not even be given a place. When a child is accepted by a school, then all children should be treated equally either all contribute or it should be offered free.</p>	6/23/2015 2:23 PM
79	<p>> Rural families will be disproportionately affected by the removal of subsidised bus travel to catchment schools which are not their closest. Tackling disadvantage and social exclusion has been a core local and national government priority for nearly a decade and has become ingrained in the vision and ethos of the Government's Every Child Matters agenda. Education is central to overcoming such inequality and disparity. Recently, the Commission of Rural Communities has published its report into the Barriers to education, employment and training for young people in rural areas (2012), clearly highlighting the difficulties and limitations that young people and their families face in regards to educational choices and the impact that distance and lack of infrastructure play. The report concluded that rural families are significantly more reliant, than their urban counterparts, on subsidised and public transport when attending schools and colleges. Government guidance on the provision of free school transport to only the 'nearest' school and not to a student's 'catchment' school (under consideration by this consultation) translates well in urban environments, where travel distances are short, walking and cycling are viable alternatives, and public transportation is abundant. Yet, it does not work effectively, or fairly, in more rural locations. Within Downlands, for example, there are instances where a Newbury-based school is the closest school for a rural family (i.e. Trinity for residents of Chieveley, Curridge and Hermitage, and Kennet for Frilsham residents). Due to the 'distance to school priority calculation' favouring out of catchment families in urban locations, students living in these outlying villages are placed near the bottom of selection lists for places at their nearest school. Consequently, the only option available to many rural families is their catchment school (they are effectively excluded from other options due to rurality). Under the changes proposed, such families will be further penalised for 'living out of town' and will no longer be eligible for subsidised travel. What is more, students unable to attend their closest school will not be guaranteed a fee-paying place on their catchment school bus. >Those living the greatest distances from their catchment schools will be most negatively impacted. Within the catchment of The Downs School, removal of the 'free to catchment' transportation currently provided will impact most notably of those living furthest away from the school, those living on the periphery of the school catchment boundary. >Families affected by the proposed changes may</p>	6/23/2015 1:59 PM

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choose, or be forced to drive as places on school buses are not guaranteed. This will lead to congestion at school sites, impact heavily on the environment, and potentially put lives at risk. Due to budgetary cuts, public transportation within rural areas is, at the very best, highly restricted. For attendance at educational establishments, it is non-existent from many locations in the Downlands ward. Without the viable options of public transport or cycling to school, rural families affected by the proposed changes may choose to drive instead of paying for fee-paying seats, particularly if they have more than one child at a school site. Moreover, impacted students are not guaranteed a place on a school bus service and may be forced to drive. Travel distances for these families will be typically in excess of six miles (or 24 miles per day). The environmental impact of a single school run per day will therefore be approximately 12kg of carbon dioxide per car, this compares to a return bus journey per passenger of 1.92kg. This increase in private vehicle use will inevitably lead to increased congestion on local roads and, most importantly, in the vicinity of schools. With the increase in the number of school car journeys on rural roads this could result in a greater number of accidents and possible fatalities. Statistics published by the previous governments' THINK! campaign reported that on average three people die each day on rural roads (11 times higher than on motorways), a quarter of drivers have had a near miss, and one driver in 20 has had a collision on a country road. There is no facility for parents to drop off and collect from The Downs School - it's already chaos at morning and evening drop offs. > Removal of subsidised school transportation could lead to an increase in lateness and absenteeism. In rural areas, older and younger siblings frequently attend schools located many miles from each other. Removal of free transportation and increased reliance on private cars will result in elongated school runs and logistical pressure, making late arrival and the potential for non-attendance more likely to occur. > Travelling by school bus can have a positive effect on a child's emotional, developmental and social wellbeing. A recent review of mental health disorders among young people living in urban and rural communities concluded that children living in rural areas are at increased risk of experiencing problems to the point of equalling, and in some cases, exceeding those of urban youth. Predictors of this increase have been shown to include social restriction and geographical isolation. With young people in rural locations increasingly being transported in separate cars from location to location (including school), their informal interaction with others (in this case peers) is dramatically reduced. Travelling by public transport or school bus can help lessen feelings of isolation and improve emotional wellbeing among the student population. > Families in some villages will be divided as to whether their children receive free transportation or not, possibly reducing social and community cohesion. In some cases, families living in the same rural village lying roughly equidistant from their closest and catchment schools (for example, Frilsham, Chaddleworth and Leckhampstead) will be divided as to whether they receive free school transportation or not. This could erode social and community cohesion and lead to resentment between neighbouring families. In Leckhampstead, in particular, two families out of the entire village would not be eligible for free transportation under the proposed changes and could result in these children being excluded from peer socialisation and integration. > Removal of free school transportation will add financial pressure to rural families. Families affected by the proposed changes who are able to gain a fee paying seat will be facing an annual cost of £250 for their first child (discounts are available for second and subsequent children, but these are also being reduced). Parents unable to secure a bus place will be facing considerably higher private transportation costs. Furthermore, such parents will need to factor in additional time to transport their children to and from school, potentially impacting on their working day and income generating activities. Whilst it is clear that councils across the country are under pressure to cut costs, burdening isolated rural families, who already face challenges and limitations with regards to the education of their children, with additional fees and logistical pressures seems unreasonable and erroneous.

80	My third son will be starting the Downs School in September 2016. We both work and it is essential he gets a place on the bus. It is not acceptable for him to go to a different school from his brothers. The downs is our catchment school not our nearest school. Paying is not ideal but not being guaranteed a place on the bus to our catchment school where his brothers go is not acceptable.	6/23/2015 1:59 PM
81	We live in catchment for The Downs, although the nearest school is Trinity. We are already unlikely to obtain a place at Trinity and that's before the new housing scheduled for near Vodafone. There is no where at the Downs to safely drop off and collect children, it's already too busy with car traffic. It should be a uniform policy for all children, why should some be penalised.	6/23/2015 12:52 PM
82	If a house/child is in acatchment of a school then the fee to travel to that school should be paid for from council funds, there has to be one rule for all. The figure of 400 students I can only assume is for one academic year group which will equate to 2000 after 5 years?	6/23/2015 12:24 PM
83	I would like to object strongly to the proposed changes and outline my reasons for doing so below: 1) Rural families will be disproportionately affected by the removal of subsidised bus travel to catchment schools which are not their closest. Tackling disadvantage and social exclusion has been a core local and national government priority for nearly a decade and has become ingrained in the vision and ethos of the Government's Every Child Matters agenda. Education is central to overcoming such inequality and disparity. Recently, the Commission of Rural Communities has published its report into the "Barriers to education, employment and training for young people in rural areas" (2012), clearly highlighting the difficulties and limitations that young people and their families face in regards to educational choices and the impact that distance and lack of infrastructure play. The report concluded that rural families are significantly more reliant, than their urban counterparts, on subsidised and	6/23/2015 12:14 PM

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Consequently, the only option available to many rural families is their catchment school (they are effectively excluded from other options due to rurality). Under the changes proposed, such families will be further penalised for 'living out of town' and will no longer be eligible for subsidised travel. What is more, students unable to attend their closest school will not be guaranteed a fee-paying place on their catchment school bus. 2) Those living the greatest distances from their catchment schools will be most negatively impacted. Within the catchment of The Downs School, removal of the 'free to catchment' transportation currently provided will impact most notably of those living furthest away from the school, those living on the periphery of the school catchment boundary. 3) Families affected by the proposed changes may choose, or be forced to drive as places on school buses are not guaranteed. 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Removal of free transportation and increased reliance on private cars will result in elongated school runs and logistical pressure, making late arrival and the potential for non-attendance more likely to occur. 5) Travelling by school bus can have a positive effect on a child's emotional, developmental and social wellbeing. A recent review of mental health disorders among young people living in urban and rural communities concluded that children living in rural areas are at increased risk of experiencing problems to the point of equalling, and in some cases, exceeding those of urban youth. Predictors of this increase have been shown to include social restriction and geographical isolation. With young people in rural locations increasingly being transported in separate cars from location to location (including school), their informal interaction with others (in this case peers) is dramatically reduced. 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84	If the nearest school is not the catchment school this is not the fault of the student and they should be supported to get to the school they have to go to. It is not optional so they should have free transport as currently.	6/23/2015 12:13 PM
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85	<p>As a parent in a rural location who has one child at our closest catchment school, I am appalled that there is a possibility that parents would be expected to pay for their children to attend a school which was their catchment school for the following reasons:- 1) One of my children is already a pupil at a school where this might be relevant to our community (two non catchment schools are a mile closer) and luckily for us their sibling is due to join them this September. For those who have a sibling due to start after September 2016 no opportunity has been given to them to take this into account when making their original selection for a school for their first child. I cannot see any circumstances where this should be introduced for siblings of existing pupils who are due to start after September 2016. 2) Where the school in question is a child's catchment school, the proposal means that if there was a non catchment school closer then there would be a transport fee to pay. How would this work??? Firstly there is no guarantee that pupils would obtain places at closer non catchment schools for obvious reasons and, if they did then they might not end up in a school where their school friends would be going. This is a complete travesty and tramples over the whole idea and security of having catchment. 3) This will only work if the consultation group rethinks the whole idea of catchment areas. There is no point in having catchment areas if for schools if it does not encompass transport within those areas.</p>	6/23/2015 12:13 PM
86	<p>The changes would not currently affect me. However, I disagree with the changes being proposed. When applying for the secondary school the logical choice is to apply for the school which is in the catchment area in which we reside. To apply for a school based on the fact that we would not have to pay for the bus, does not make sense, as living outside the catchment area for the school would mean that we would be unlikely to secure a place at that school if it was over-subscribed. In effect, this means we could end up having to transport a child to school much further away than either school, thus impacting the family even further. It make no sense to have two separate rules - one for catchment and one for the bus service to the secondary school in catchment. It removes choice and discriminates against the family choosing the school which is in catchment for the primary school they have attended and where they reside. Furthermore, it is not clear from what point (Home or bus stop) the route would be measured.</p>	6/23/2015 12:12 PM
87	<p>In Chieveley the nearest school is Trinity but the catchment area is The Downs, if the proposed changes go through would we pay the whole cost of the school transport or the difference between the cost of going to The Downs v Trinity? Trinity is oversubscribed, what would happen if you couldn't get in to the nearest school with regards to transport. If there are feeder schools and catchment areas why would the Council offer transport to a Secondary School not in the catchment area? If this affects 400 children out of 11,500 then I would question the need to change the policy as it penalises children going to rural schools. West Berkshire has always been a Champion of rural schools</p>	6/23/2015 10:54 AM
88	<p>I think this is an outrage. I can not afford to pay for two children to go to our secondary school. If the school is in the catchment then the transport should be provided !!</p>	6/23/2015 9:07 AM
89	<p>I live in Upper Basildon. The catchment School is Theale Green. The school buses all go to Theale Green as do many children from the village school. Theale Green School is 5.0 miles from Upper Basildon, but Denefield School is 4.8m. No school bus goes to Denefield School, no children go to Denefield School. Theale school is under subscribed & Denefield is full. You will therefore be removing the basic right of travel to the catchment school for a very tiny minority of children for minimal benefit and I assume not changing the catchment schools because of a shortage of school places. Sounds like a story for the BBC!</p>	6/23/2015 9:04 AM
90	<p>It is absurd to not provide transport to a catchment school if another is marginally closer. The catchment areas are set by the councils and schools. I understand if you are out of catchment.</p>	6/23/2015 12:30 AM
91	<p>We are catchment for Downs but closest qualifying school is Trinity. The proposed change in policy puts us in an impossible position; we apply for Downs and because of catchment get a place (with no guarantee of transport) or we apply for Trinity which guarantees transport but not a place as we are out of catchment. At a minimum, places on the bus must be guaranteed for those of us in this situation.</p>	6/22/2015 9:47 PM
92	<p>Although there may be small financial benefits for the council in doing this change, there will be substantial increased health and safety risks for the pupils at the Downs school and in local villages, with an increase in vehicles including parents collecting/dropping off who do not wish to pay the bus fare, an increase in private taxis ferrying children around (some of which may not be licensed properly) and increased buses as parents in some villages decide to move their child to the nearest school, rather than catchment -to avoid the fees e.g in chieveley, there will be buses picking up on one side of the road to go to Downs school and the council will have to provide transport to Trinity, on the other side of the road, causing havoc and health and safety risks to a high number of children in the village. What looks like a policy to drive short term financial gain for the council has not been thought through and could seriously impact the health and safety of our children and local villages at peak times during the day.</p>	6/22/2015 7:05 PM
93	<p>I strongly disagree with this proposal. It is not fair for pupils whose catchment school is not their nearest school. It will create traffic chaos at many schools if parents cannot afford to use the bus service as it will mean hundreds more parents driving their children to school.</p>	6/22/2015 4:43 PM

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94	I think that this new transportation policy is madness. This makes a mockery of having a catchment school, if you may not have guaranteed access to transportation to get there! It discriminates against families who live in a school catchment area but with a different school closer, making it 'not guaranteed' that their child can go to their catchment school. Many parents are unable to take their children to school due to their working commitments, yet many children in rural areas live a long way from their catchment school - again under this system they will be discriminated against. I feel strongly that a child should be able to have an education at their catchment school, and that all pupils at that school should have equal rights to have transportation to that school. You can not discriminate children from going to their catchment school because a 'non catchment school' is closer.	6/22/2015 2:50 PM
95	I think think this is ludicrous especially for Downs children who live miles from any school. If you are only going to provide guaranteed transport to the nearest school are you going to guarantee a place at the nearest school rather than catchment school? For Chieveley we are over 6 miles to any school and therefore transport should be paid and guaranteed as there are no other options.	6/22/2015 2:37 PM
96	The policy does not take into account younger brothers and sisters who will need to get to the school in the following few years. All it will mean if younger siblings aren't allowed free transport, is that parents will take them to school. Good luck West Berks council with the increased traffic on the roads in relation to this.	6/22/2015 2:08 PM
97	This is a mess for younger siblings. Has no one thought how this should be managed? I can't continue to put the older sibling on the free transport that stops outside my house and then pack the younger one off (on a busy unlit road with no pavements) to the bus stop....if there is even a space on the bus!!!	6/22/2015 2:03 PM
98	This is putting parents into a difficult position. They have no choice in their catchment school and now no way of getting their children to school. If it only affect 400 pupils then why not look at a better and more efficient way of saving money. Yet again families living in rural communities will be affected and have to pay more, some will even loose their jobs as they wont be able to get their children to school. Means testing people doesn't always help as many families are just above the threshold and do not have £800 per child, if there is a place on the bus available, what about families with more than one child?	6/22/2015 1:39 PM
99	Yet again the people who put you in your post on by voting, now get to suffer. Try cutting back on your own internal spending before damaging children's education	6/21/2015 10:20 PM
100	Absolutely ridiculous to even consider changing the entitlement for transport! How on earth will it work when you take away transport for the catchment school & replace it with transport to the the nearest? We live in a totally rural area where it is vital that children catch the school bus that serves all the rural villages for which we have no other option of getting our children to school. Also, if our children go to our catchment school (our ONLY catchment school) why are you offering us transport to a school that we wouldn't get a place for anyway? Seems to me that you're just making it exceptionally complicated & holding parents to ransom so that parents are forced to pay the council a fee for ensuring their children attend school. Shall we all give up our jobs so that we can then claim benefits to ensure free transport?????	6/21/2015 10:09 PM
101	We would not consider sending our children to the nearest secondary school (Trinity) and moved house specifically to be in Downs catchment with free transport two years ago which is 3 years ahead of our eldest daughter starting secondary school in 2016.	6/21/2015 2:57 PM
102	It makes no sense to change a transport policy and not change the catchment policy This change unfairly affects people within rural communities and rural schools This change might have an adverse affect on the Downs school pupil numbers, again another blow for the rural community There is no guarantee that even if we did want to pay for a bus, there would be one provided or we would get a space. There is also no guarantee what the ongoing cost of this bus would be. This means that if we wanted our children to go our catchment school, the council can provide us no commitment about what the method of transport to this school would be. The impact of parents having to transport their children to the school would mean increased traffic flow on small rural roads, many of which are not even B roads, and are narrow and twisty. This has the potential to increase road maintenance on these roads , increased emissions and pollution, increased congestion at the Downs School at both ends of the school day, which is very congested at the moment. Given the Government focus on encouraging people to work, there would also be a big impact on working hours as one of the parents would actually need to transport their children. If we chose to go to the more local out of catchment school, there is no guarantee that we would get a place, as there is no plans to increase the number of places this school has. As there are only about 2 miles difference, from Curridge to either Downs School or Trinity School, I can't believe that the cost differential of transport is particularly significantly.	6/21/2015 10:02 AM

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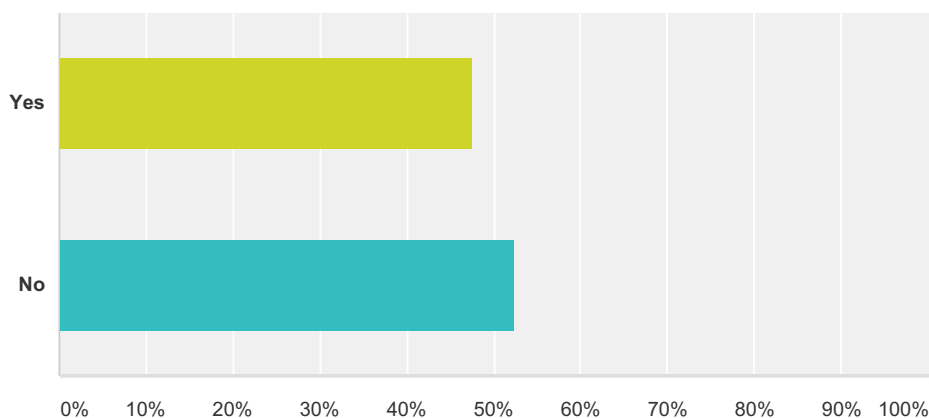
103	This is a really unfair proposal and without a guarantee of a space on the bus, the Downs is the catchment therefore transport should be provided, applying for a different school such as the Kennit (if for example you work near Thatcham and could take/collect, even then jobs/work locations can change) does not guarantee a space as we are out of catchment and then if the downs is the second choice you may not get in. This will put more pressure on hard working parents either financially or the logistics of taking your child to school before work and collecting etc. This does seem to affect rural/remote area unfairly and I believe the education/school transport should help working parents with this. There is no public transport to the Downs. This will cause financial hardship to some families who are not eligible for an assistance particularly if you have more than one child. I would urge the council to please reconsider.	6/20/2015 3:02 PM
104	Already have 2 children at the school, and another 2 due to start in next 3 years. Really do not understand if it is your catchment school why you do not get guaranteed free transport. What you are saying is firstly- your child will only likely to get into catchment school where you live e.g The Downs but conversely we will only provide transport to nearest school e.g Trinity!! Really, a complete contradiction.I require all my children to go to the SAME secondary school, i.e. catchment school where transport is guaranteed and free. Why should a select few have to pay for transport for their children to go to the catchment school when the majority do not .	6/20/2015 2:51 PM
105	Whilst clearly an understandable cost-cutting exercise, there are some major implications here the Council appears not to have considered. See my comments below. On the cost side, the Council needs to understand that this would mean having to run doubled-up services for existing pupils therefore there would a significant cost increase for around 5 years until the changes would have filtered through to apply to all secondary pupils.	6/20/2015 8:22 AM
106	A sneaky way to change catchment areas of under performing secondary schools or just another way to bleed people earning more than the minimum wage? How much is this going to save? Better planning will save twice as much, eg. painting new road markings outside of Hermitage Primary and THEN (days later) resurfacing the road? How many more ways are there to waste my council tax? Idiots.	6/19/2015 8:45 PM
107	I strongly object to this change in policy as it would mean that we would need to transport or pay for transport for 2 of our children to The Downs which is our catchment school. The traffic at The Downs is already chaos at pick up and this change to policy would potentially have another 30 cars from each year at Chieveley taking to and collecting from the school. There is no provision for parking of these cars. It seems mad to penalise some parents within a catchment area and not others. If a charge needs to be made for travel to school to balance the books then it should affect all parents and not just a handful. It seems like the policy is intended to persuade parents in Chieveley to send their children to Trinity. We strongly object to this change.	6/19/2015 7:30 PM
108	I object to the proposal for several reasons. The closest school to Chieveley is not a catchment school and would not have sufficient places to take all the extra non-catchment children. We already have children at The Downs School and would expect to send our primary school child to the Downs also, not send them to a different school just because it is closer. This proposal will force many parents to now drive their children to school which is a) not environmentally friendly b) is likely to cause severe congestion at The Downs as it is not geared up to having the majority of pupils arriving by car, and c) creates issues for parents who would have to get children to both a primary school and a secondary school at the same time in 2 villages which are over 7 miles apart.	6/19/2015 5:27 PM
109	This is ridiculous....how can you not provide transport for children who are going to their catchment school? I think Chieveley Primary school will be affected as our catchment school is The Downs but the nearest school is Trinity. I want my daughter to go to The Downs as it is the catchment school and she already has a sibling who is there in year 8. I don't want to have to pay for her to go on the bus nor apply, pay and then find it is oversubscribed. I can't drive her every day as it will impact on my working day. Also to drive every day will impact on delivering younger children to the schools that they need to be at on time. If the councils have set the catchment areas for schools then surely the free transport should be aligned to this? I don't want chieveley's catchment school to change to Trinity as house prices would be affected as The Downs is seen as more prestigious. Please fix this and stop messing around with something that is not broken. From an environmental perspective too it is much better to have 1 bus taking all the children than 20 or 30 individual cars driving the same route each day.	6/19/2015 1:12 PM
110	We live in a rural area and whis would increase the number of cars doing school runs and it is not fair that we can not get free transport to the catchment school. The admissions policy does not reflect this so I can not see how you think that this is acceptable apart from the fact that we are in the minority. I do not have a choice but to use public trasport or car to get my son to school as we do not live within walking/cycling distnace. Surely you should offer free transport to catchment schools and if parents choose to send their child to another school then they should pay. The whole system should be looked at and linked in with catchment as it is reducing parents choices. Just because we live in a rural area doesn't mean we are all affluent and can afford to pay the transport charges or be forced to drive to collect children, which is again not always convenient when secondary schools do not offer after school clubs that primary schools do when both parents work.	6/19/2015 1:06 PM

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111	My daughter is currently in Yr5 at Chieveley Primary. She will then hopefully go to her catchment school - The Downs. I understand that her free school bus pass may be affected by this amendment as the closest school is Trinity. Therefore, I am concerned about the decision change free funding to schools that you are in catchment for. I believe strongly that all transport to catchment schools should be free.	6/19/2015 12:56 PM
112	Seriously, on what planet would this ever make sense? The school closet to you is not considered when places are allocated it's based on catchment area. To then have a different set of rules based for the transport is ludicrous. If the council are trying to save costs and remove transport for pupils then at least have the 'balls' to stand up and say so.	6/19/2015 12:21 PM
113	Surely it is simpler and will involve far less bureaucracy to leave things as they are, particularly as you state that it will only affect 400 pupils, ie just over 4%, a tiny amount of pupils.	6/19/2015 11:52 AM
114	We would like to have it noted that we do not agree with this change of policy. Our daughter will be starting at The Downs in September 2015 and our son in 3 years time (who may be affected by not being able to catch the bus if oversubscribed) and that is now a real concern to us.	6/19/2015 11:48 AM
115	Perhaps the council could reduce the ridiculous salary the chief ex gets and support West Berkshire's fantastic education and give hard working parents a break.	6/18/2015 6:23 PM
116	This directly affects people in rural areas disproportionately, rural areas already have higher costs such as council tax, petrol etc. We have no other way of getting our child to school like most parents in Curridge and this proposal is unfair. I thought education money was ringed fenced. This will just add more pressure to working parents, whilst others who don't work will get it free.	6/18/2015 6:14 PM
117	Our son currently goes to our catchment secondary school and we have other children coming up though primary school, one of which is due to start school in 2016. Our catchment school is not our nearest school. Both schools are more than 3 miles walking distance from our home. Since our nearest school is consistently oversubscribed we have little or no chance of sending our children to this school within the first round of applications for secondary school. This proposed change in policy, which removes free transport to catchment schools based on long distance, means we will be unfairly penalised for sending our children to our catchment school. Since neither school is within walking distance, how can it make sense for the Council to be willing to pay for free transport to one (the nearest) and not the other (catchment) when it may only be a matter of a couple of miles difference between the two. I note that the change in policy states that if a child is unable to gain a place in the nearest school on application, they are expected to stay on a waiting list and move schools if and/or when a place should become available in their nearest school, in order to receive ongoing free transport. Is there any consideration here for the upheaval which can be caused by moving children from school to school? What about the financial cost to parents (new uniforms, etc.) and most importantly, the emotional impact on the child? Surely there is much more to take into account here than budget squeezing and number crunching. Can we please think about the wider implications of this policy?	6/12/2015 11:36 AM
118	This is a very significant problem for families (ie. most!) who have younger brothers or sisters who will not be entitled to the existing free transport once their turn to join secondary school comes. How are parents supposed to deliver to multiple schools at the same time? In addition, we live on a road where there are no pavements/streetlights, etc and the cars speed round the blind bends - it is simply dangerous, especially in the winter months. I feel it is also unfair since my child could not attend our nearest school due to West Berks Council putting her in our catchment school – it was not our decision to go to our catchment school but not we are being penalised for it.	6/12/2015 9:42 AM
119	I feel that this will penalise parents in large rural catchments, especially where the nearest school is over subscribed. The high cost of housing in this area necessarily means that even families who have reasonable incomes are forced to spend a high proportion of household income on housing. Living in one of the places likely to be affected by this change, our 'nearest' school is over subscribed, therefore we may not be allocated a place there if we applied as the home to school distance is large given the rural nature of the area. In addition we currently rent a property due to the lack of housing stock. We may well be required by our landlords to move during the time that our children are in education, which will then mean that we would then need to pay for 2 farepayer places to our catchment school, once our second child starts, this would represent a huge burden on our family, in spite of having lived in this area prior to the 1st child starting secondary school. There is NO suitable public transport which would enable our child to get to school as the earliest bus would arrive an hour and a half before school opens, and the next bus would mean my child would be late for school by half an hour every day. In a large rural catchment with a boundary to an urban oversubscribed area, I cannot see how this can possibly be workable for the families affected.	6/8/2015 2:18 PM

Q10 Would you like to add anything further?

Answered: 130 Skipped: 96



Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	47.69% 62
No	52.31% 68
Total	130

#	Please comment here	Date
1	The proposal to provide transport to the nearest school rather than catchment school, makes a mockery of the catchment system. Is this a pre cursor to amending the catchment areas? I also believe that many parents would be prepared to pay a contribution to the cost of transport, if spaces were guaranteed, otherwise a large question mark simply hangs over the future of our children's education.	7/17/2015 7:54 PM
2	This is discrimination. Perhaps school boundaries need reassessing. Not fair that some children will be free and others will have to pay!	7/17/2015 10:04 AM
3	What is the transport policy for students in Years 12 & 13?	7/17/2015 10:03 AM
4	If this policy is agreed then will more school transport be provided to the closest school or will the service be removed for the catchment school ie bus to Downs from the army barracks? It will only save the LA money if parents are going to pay as buses will still be running from the locations to the schools for the children who are still entitled to free transport. It may only make school routes busier around Hermitage Primary and Outside The Downs.	7/17/2015 8:24 AM
5	7) if no bus is provided to the Downs school there will be a significant increase in private cars going through Hermitage and or the A34 8) there is already insufficient parking and drop off at the Downs and there is the potential that one bus will overtime be replaced by multiple private vehicles 9) Green and health and safety concerns must be voiced this policy will lead to a significant risk in road safety and pollution 10) is the council saying it wishes the school to terminate its relationship with the Downs and start moving its children to a new federation with Trinity 11) if this is the case will Trinity be able to provide the additional spaces and at what point does the council intend to adjust boundaries, educational relationships and strategies?	7/16/2015 10:54 PM
6	I recognise the need for fiscal discipline and prudence, however not linking need to provision whilst legal does seem perverse. In this case we are potentially offering a place at one school and a seat on a bus to another school. Any business that wished to stay in business would match provision to demand. If the council feels unable to match provision to demand by making discretionary and Fare Payer places to catchment schools for example by removing the provision to the nearest school (non-catchment) I would urge the council to look for savings elsewhere.	7/16/2015 10:47 PM

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7	A significant loss of enrolment into consecutive years will place undue pressure financially on one of West Berks "Outstanding Schools." It is not possible/obvious to determine the savings involved as in the first instance there will be duplication of services to two disparate sites and thus the number of "bus miles" at least in the first few years will increase. From a local community basis it creates divisions within villages. with no guarantee of a bus place, even if parents are prepared to fund said bus, the only alternative is to drive children to the school. With approximately 60 -70 children involved this will increase traffic flow around the school and also on local country roads which are ill equipped to deal with the current level of traffic flow.	7/16/2015 10:42 PM
8	It would be fairer to make an equal small charge to the parents of all 11500 children. With just 3.5% of the school population affected, £35 collected for each child would raise the same amount of money as £1000 from each of the 400. Who could object to that?	7/16/2015 5:50 PM
9	Your change description above says "this change is being phased in from September 2016" above. This implies that the change will be implemented no matter what and makes this consultation meaningless	7/16/2015 10:18 AM
10	Beyond negative impact on students, parents, traffic and the school, this proposal runs contrary to the councils obligation to reduce carbon emissions, by replacing buses with multiple car journeys.	7/15/2015 12:56 PM
11	Will there be any further discount for siblings, who will attend at a later date?	7/14/2015 2:16 PM
12	This issue potentially creates divisions in villages as to whether people meet the criteria for free transport. It also unfairly impacts those families who live furthest from their catchment school.	7/13/2015 9:48 PM
13	. Rural families will be disproportionately affected by the removal of subsidised bus travel to catchment schools which are not their closest. · Those living the greatest distances from their catchment schools will be negatively impacted. · Families affected by the proposed changes may choose, or be forced to drive as places on school buses are not guaranteed. This will lead to congestion at school sites, impact heavily on the environment, and potentially put lives at risk. · Removal of subsidised school transportation could lead to an increase in lateness and absenteeism. · Travelling by school bus can have a positive effect on a child's emotional, developmental and social wellbeing. · Families in some villages will be divided as to whether their children receive free transportation or not, possibly reducing social and community cohesion · Removal of free school transportation will add financial pressure to rural families.	7/13/2015 9:44 PM
14	The question is aimed at parents receiving school transport now but should also include primary school parents who will be affected in the future.	7/13/2015 9:38 PM
15	As chair of a local charity, I have had one approach about charitable support for transport to secondary school. I find this quite shocking - as one of my fellow trustees said, "that is not what our funds were given for." I am happy to have my name associated with this response - Mark Bennet, chair of Kennet Local Governing Body.	7/10/2015 2:29 PM
16	I have said everything in the box above so it remains for me to say that I am absolutely against this proposal.	7/9/2015 9:27 PM
17	Please reconsider this potential change. I have achil in year 7 and year 4 an it seems like they will no longer get the same treatment. How can I make the younger one walk to secondary school with the older in a bus?? This really would not be right.	7/8/2015 6:45 PM
18	On the face of it, it would appear that families in Rural areas will be severely affected Families affected by the proposed changes would be forced to drive leading to an increase in cars on Rural/semi rural roads, creating congestion on school sites which could lead to accidents/children getting hurt. Removing the subsidised school transportation could lead to an increase in lateness and absenteeism if parents are forced to take children to different schools, miles apart with different start times. Removing free school transportation will add to financial pressures on Rural families.	7/8/2015 1:53 PM

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19	<p>*The primary goal of your department should be to provide Fare Access to Education to all children in your jurisdiction. This is already not happening and the new proposals will make the situation more unfair. *It beyond the understanding of most of the other parents that I have talked to, how their can be one rule for school entitlement under the catchment policy and a different set of criteria for the means of how to get there?!! *This is a highly prejudicial policy: It discriminates against pupils of certain schools far more than others. I would very much like to know out of you estimation 400 children that will be affected what the split is between each of the schools? My own knowledge tells me that this will effect a large proportion of pupils from St Marks School, Cold Ash who are in Trinity Catchment but closer to Kennet. It discriminates against rural families whose location places them on the boundaries of Newbury and Thatcham, and who are not within a safe walking/cycling route; It discriminates against working parents who rely a school bus service in order that they may work. More and more parents are being forced to drive there children to school. West Berkshire Council needs to compare the costs of school transport with the general Road and Transport services before making changes that will increase the pressure on local roads. *My final and most important point is regarding the Clarity of Information regarding school transport costs. This information should be made obvious on the school applications procedure so that parents can make a informed choice as to which school to apply for. They need to know that the transport to some schools are far higher than to others and they need to have the opportunity to use this in any appeals procedure. It has been my experience and others I know that this information remains hidden until after parents have accepted the school places. It can then come as a nasty shock when parents are given little choice but to pay large amounts upfront for a school bus that may only be used for some of the week. My personal example is that pupils from Cold Ash and North Thatcham can 'pay as they go' for a bus to Kennet school (or walk/cycle in relative safety) but pupils in the same area i.e. closer the Kennet but placed in their Catchment School of Trinity are faced with a large upfront fee for a bus service: If the parents works part time and can help with school transport; if the pupil wishes to attend a after school club; if a pupil wishes to bring a friend home after this bus service cannot be used but still has to be payed for as part of the upfront fee that is only in place for certain schools! How will this policy enable FARE ACCESS TO EDUCATION?</p>	7/8/2015 12:47 PM
20	<p>The Council is unfairly discriminating students that live near a school not in their catchment area, what is the point of having catchment areas if you do not wish students to attend that school. Does the Council expect students to apply to their nearest school instead, this could cause issues in relation to transport to areas that buses do not normally go to which will definitely be extra cost for the Council. Also has the Council thought about impact on student numbers at schools if students apply to schools outside catchment area.</p>	7/8/2015 10:43 AM
21	<p>Leave the free school transport for the school catchment areas.</p>	7/7/2015 7:23 AM
22	<p>It just seems very unfair that a student who lives in Chieveley, for example, who has a catchment school of The Downs but is nearest to Trinity will need to pay £800 without even having the guarantee of a space! Surely if a student goes to their catchment school they should not have to pay and should only have to pay if at all, if they go to a school out of catchment (regardless of the distance of that school!)</p>	6/30/2015 7:06 PM
23	<p>I question whether it is worth implementing such a blantly unfair policy. Your figures suggest that it will affect less than 3.5% of journeys.</p>	6/30/2015 3:44 PM
24	<p>We just moved to Hermitage to ensure our daughter is in the Downs school in Sept 2016, we are relying on the bus services provided between Hermitage & the Downs. The associated cost will be an additional burden on our household.</p>	6/30/2015 2:55 PM
25	<p>thank you for the opportunity to comment.</p>	6/30/2015 1:18 PM
26	<p>This in as unfair policy which will unduly affect the rural communities around Newbury . The Downs school is our catchment school in Hermitage, but may not be the closest school . Surely if a child attend his/her catchment school they are entitled to transport to this school. This entitlement should be equal for everyone independent of postcode.</p>	6/30/2015 12:30 PM
27	<p>You say your change would affect '400 students out of a total school population of 11500' so surely making this change is of little benefit to the council, but will be of great detriment (financial, environmental, convenience, safety, local residents) and unfair on those who are attending catchment schools, but not their nearest school. We pay our council tax in the same way as others, why should we not receive the same services when all we are doing is attending our catchment school?</p>	6/28/2015 9:51 PM
28	<p>Due to the rural area of the Downs catchment, it is preposterous to remove the transport or make it fare-paying just because Trinity and Kennet are closer. I live in Hermitage. Do you propose to provide school buses to these other schools to cater for these children who may not get on the bus to the Downs? If so, you are tripling the buses coming through the village. If bus places to the Downs are not guaranteed, you are forcing parents to drive their children to their catchment school, greatly increasing the flow of traffic in narrow country lanes. Please see some sense for the Downs pupils and don't penalise us for living in a rural village.</p>	6/28/2015 8:32 PM

Home to School Transport Policy 2016/17

29	I feel it very unfair that if we choose a school that we believe is the best for our child and it not being the nearest school in our catchment, we should not have to pay for transport.	6/26/2015 5:31 PM
30	I think the proposed changes will be to massive detriment to rural communities, and cause influx of demand for housing and school spaces in schools which may not have anticipated extra demand (trinity verses downs). Why change the transport policy and not catchment, it makes no sense.	6/26/2015 1:18 PM
31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural families will be disproportionately affected by the removal of subsidised bus travel to catchment schools which are not their closest. • Those living the greatest distances from their catchment schools will be negatively impacted. • Families affected by the proposed changes may choose, or be forced to drive as places on school buses are not guaranteed. This will lead to congestion at school sites, impact heavily on the environment, and potentially put lives at risk. • Removal of subsidised school transportation could lead to an increase in lateness and absenteeism. • Travelling by school bus can have a positive effect on a child's emotional, developmental and social wellbeing. • Families in some villages will be divided as to whether their children receive free transportation or not, possibly reducing social and community cohesion. • Removal of free school transportation will add financial pressure to rural families. 	6/25/2015 12:57 PM
32	I object to the removal of free transport to my daughters secondary catchment school.	6/25/2015 12:54 PM
33	<p>Suggested reasons for objection to the policy It makes no sense to change a transport policy and not change the catchment policy This change unfairly affects people within rural communities and rural schools It will split communities as it will divide Chieveley (Downend will be Downs, other end Trinity) and Hermitage (roughly north of the Fox will be the Downs, south of the Fox will be Trinity) and so could become divisive. This change might have an adverse affect on the Downs school pupil numbers, again another blow for the rural community. Is there any plan in place to increase the number of places available at Trinity school should all parents affected want their children to attend this school? There is no guarantee that even if parents did want to pay for a bus, there would be one provided or there would be a space. There is also no guarantee what the ongoing cost of this bus would be. This means that if parents wanted their children to go our catchment school, the council can provide no commitment about what the method of transport to this school would be. The impact of parents having to transport their children to the school would mean increased traffic flow on small rural roads, many of which are not even B roads, and are narrow and twisty. This has the potential to increase road maintenance on these roads , increased emissions and pollution, increased congestion at the Downs School at both ends of the school day, which is very congested already. The risk of accidents on the roads will only increase with increased traffic.</p> <p>Given the Government focus on encouraging people to work, there would also be a big impact on working hours as one of the parents would actually need to transport their children. If we chose to go to the more local out of catchment school, there is no guarantee that we would get a place, as there is no plans to increase the number of places this school has. As there are only about 2 miles difference, from Curridge road/Long Lane junction to either Downs School or Trinity School, is there a significant reduction in transport costs compared to the increased management and administration time of implementing this policy. This proposal has not been widely communicated. There has been no direct communication about this proposal from the council directly to potentially affected parents. It has been left to schools, via a single email, to notify parents. For some schools, who may only have one or two parents affected, this might not have been done at all.</p>	6/25/2015 7:27 AM

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<p>34</p>	<p>Suggested reasons for objection to the policy It makes no sense to change a transport policy and not change the catchment policy This change unfairly affects people within rural communities and rural schools It will split communities as it will divide Chieveley (Downend will be Downs, other end Trinity) and Hermitage (roughly north of the Fox will be the Downs, south of the Fox will be Trinity) and so could become divisive. This change might have an adverse affect on the Downs school pupil numbers, again another blow for the rural community. Is there any plan in place to increase the number of places available at Trinity school should all parents affected want their children to attend this school? There is no guarantee that even if parents did want to pay for a bus, there would be one provided or there would be a space. There is also no guarantee what the ongoing cost of this bus would be. This means that if parents wanted their children to go our catchment school, the council can provide no commitment about what the method of transport to this school would be. The impact of parents having to transport their children to the school would mean increased traffic flow on small rural roads, many of which are not even B roads, and are narrow and twisty. This has the potential to increase road maintenance on these roads , increased emissions and pollution, increased congestion at the Downs School at both ends of the school day, which is very congested already. The risk of accidents on the roads will only increase with increased traffic. Given the Government focus on encouraging people to work, there would also be a big impact on working hours as one of the parents would actually need to transport their children. If we chose to go to the more local out of catchment school, there is no guarantee that we would get a place, as there is no plans to increase the number of places this school has. As there are only about 2 miles difference, from Curridge road/Long Lane junction to either Downs School or Trinity School, is there a significant reduction in transport costs compared to the increased management and administration time of implementing this policy. This proposal has not been widely communicated. There has been no direct communication about this proposal from the council directly to potentially affected parents. It has been left to schools, via a single email, to notify parents. For some schools, who may only have one or two parents affected, this might not have been done at all.</p>	<p>6/25/2015 7:23 AM</p>
<p>35</p>	<p>Suggested reasons for objection to the policy It makes no sense to change a transport policy and not change the catchment policy This change unfairly affects people within rural communities and rural schools It will split communities as it will divide Chieveley (Downend will be Downs, other end Trinity) and Hermitage (roughly north of the Fox will be the Downs, south of the Fox will be Trinity) and so could become divisive. This change might have an adverse affect on the Downs school pupil numbers, again another blow for the rural community. Is there any plan in place to increase the number of places available at Trinity school should all parents affected want their children to attend this school? There is no guarantee that even if parents did want to pay for a bus, there would be one provided or there would be a space. There is also no guarantee what the ongoing cost of this bus would be. This means that if parents wanted their children to go our catchment school, the council can provide no commitment about what the method of transport to this school would be. The impact of parents having to transport their children to the school would mean increased traffic flow on small rural roads, many of which are not even B roads, and are narrow and twisty. This has the potential to increase road maintenance on these roads , increased emissions and pollution, increased congestion at the Downs School at both ends of the school day, which is very congested already. The risk of accidents on the roads will only increase with increased traffic. Given the Government focus on encouraging people to work, there would also be a big impact on working hours as one of the parents would actually need to transport their children. If we chose to go to the more local out of catchment school, there is no guarantee that we would get a place, as there is no plans to increase the number of places this school has. As there are only about 2 miles difference, from Curridge road/Long Lane junction to either Downs School or Trinity School, is there a significant reduction in transport costs compared to the increased management and administration time of implementing this policy. This proposal has not been widely communicated. There has been no direct communication about this proposal from the council directly to potentially affected parents. It has been left to schools, via a single email, to notify parents. For some schools, who may only have one or two parents affected, this might not have been done at all.</p>	<p>6/25/2015 7:15 AM</p>

Home to School Transport Policy 2016/17

36	<p>Suggested reasons for objection to the policy It makes no sense to change a transport policy and not change the catchment policy This change unfairly affects people within rural communities and rural schools It will split communities as it will divide Chieveley (Downend will be Downs, other end Trinity) and Hermitage (roughly north of the Fox will be the Downs, south of the Fox will be Trinity) and so could become divisive. This change might have an adverse affect on the Downs school pupil numbers, again another blow for the rural community. Is there any plan in place to increase the number of places available at Trinity school should all parents affected want their children to attend this school? There is no guarantee that even if parents did want to pay for a bus, there would be one provided or there would be a space. There is also no guarantee what the ongoing cost of this bus would be. This means that if parents wanted their children to go our catchment school, the council can provide no commitment about what the method of transport to this school would be. The impact of parents having to transport their children to the school would mean increased traffic flow on small rural roads, many of which are not even B roads, and are narrow and twisty. This has the potential to increase road maintenance on these roads , increased emissions and pollution, increased congestion at the Downs School at both ends of the school day, which is very congested already. The risk of accidents on the roads will only increase with increased traffic. Given the Government focus on encouraging people to work, there would also be a big impact on working hours as one of the parents would actually need to transport their children. If we chose to go to the more local out of catchment school, there is no guarantee that we would get a place, as there is no plans to increase the number of places this school has. As there are only about 2 miles difference, from Curridge road/Long Lane junction to either Downs School or Trinity School, is there a significant reduction in transport costs compared to the increased management and administration time of implementing this policy. This proposal has not been widely communicated. There has been no direct communication about this proposal from the council directly to potentially affected parents. It has been left to schools, via a single email, to notify parents. For some schools, who may only have one or two parents affected, this might not have been done at all.</p>	6/25/2015 7:11 AM
37	Removal of subsidised school transportation could lead to an increase in lateness and absenteeism	6/24/2015 5:35 PM
38	Removal of free school transportation will add financial pressure to rural families.	6/24/2015 5:34 PM
39	This will have a negative impact on the environment - with more parents forced to drive their children to school. A very backwards step	6/24/2015 5:31 PM
40	To not fund transport to a catchment school is completely unacceptable	6/24/2015 5:28 PM
41	I understand that from your point of view this may only affect 400 students, but those students accepted places offered to them at their catchment school in good faith that they would be able to attend and be transported to the school for the duration of their time there. You are leaving people with an impossible choice, the changes to the transport provision feel discriminatory at best.	6/24/2015 3:45 PM
42	This may result in parents ferrying children to and from school in private cars which is not ideal for a number of reasons: - childs safely with sooo many cars being parked outside the school - local area impact of numerous vehicles - pollution issues from additional vehicles. - inconvenience for parents to juggle transportation to school and work.	6/24/2015 2:50 PM
43	<p>My son will start at secondary school in September 2016. His catchment school is the Downs at Compton, however the closest school is Trinity in Newbury. The second closest is Kennet in Thatcham. From what I understand from applications in the past he stands little chance of getting into a non catchment school, yet you will provide transport provision to a school that he would be unlikely to get into. Therefore I would have to drive him myself (cycling his own way there not really an option at 6 miles on dangerous roads every day aged 11). Have you considered the impact of the traffic chaos in Compton. This is a small village with poor road infrastructure and limited routes to the village. It makes no sense to send 10's of cars to the school each day instead of a bus - you will end up with a risk to budget in your roads and highways department, even if you save it the education line. The net effect will not save you money. This change unfairly affects people within rural communities and rural schools where children don't have an option to make their own way by foot or by cycle. We live in Hermitage yet only half the village will be affected. One end of the village will be entitled to transport, and the other half won't - yet all are in the same school catchment. Change the school catchments in line with this policy if you are going to change the policy. At least that way it is consistent.</p>	6/24/2015 10:02 AM
44	This change dissporportionally impacts children living in rural locations in West Berkshire - impacting the childrens ability to get to school independantly, there by impacting parents ability to work (as lifts will have to be provided to and from school), will break up year groups and will force more traffic onto rural roads. Whilst I am not adverse to paying for transporation - and in fact would be prepared to pay more than the amount stated by the council, I do not see why the amount of transportation should be limited. Surely if there are enough children prepared to pay for transportation arranged through the council it should be made available.	6/24/2015 9:21 AM
45	Every household is linked to a school via the catchment allocation. Linking transport to the catchment school is a clear, straightforward and obvious policy. I struggle to undersdtand the motive for change?	6/23/2015 10:38 PM

Home to School Transport Policy 2016/17

46	It is unreasonable of the council to enforce this new proposed policy for transport, the council decide on the catchment school boundaries we are closer to Newbury than Compton yet our catchment school is in Compton. How can the council propose such an unreasonable policy when it is that who decide the catchments. This is a very unfair and unjust proposal. We pay premium for our council tax and this is how we are repaid. It is the fault of the council that there are not enough secondary schools in Newbury forcing us to go further a field making the catchment for Downs school reach the outskirts of Newbury. I do not believe that it will only effect 400 students it will be far more, and if it is only 400 why penalise the few who have no choice. This is a ludicrous proposal which if taken to the court of law would be rule on as unfair and unjust. A council can not penalise those who live nearer to a school which is not their catchment school, that is the whole point of catchment schools that dwellers go to the school the council would choose to be in their catchment to help the authorities manage the numbers of students. I urge you to reconsider this proposal. This proposal has the potential to end in a huge court battle.	6/23/2015 10:28 PM
47	It's a ridiculous system that is causing absolute confusion and disruption to a system that has worked and would continue to work if left alone	6/23/2015 8:57 PM
48	The wider implications of this proposed policy change on our cohesive village communities, our environment and our children's safety, wellbeing and development, as well as the financial cost to hard pressed rural working families are immense.	6/23/2015 7:09 PM
49	Forcing more parents to drive their children to school means more traffic on the roads, especially dangerous in Hermitage when the Primary school finishes at 3.30pm and all the traffic from the Downs School hits Hermitage as the Downs finishes at 3.15pm. This is already a dangerous situation. Hermitage suffers very badly from the volume of traffic this will only compound the situation.	6/23/2015 6:34 PM
50	How does this in any way meet the sustainability agenda? more traffic, more pollution! I look forward to the complaints you have from the residents of Compton on the extra 300 cars a day! This is totally nuts! Plus given parents will now need to drive their children to school and pick up whats the economic impact on the local economy of arriving late, leaving early? This is a really poor and unfair plan. In addition, saying 'This change would affect about 400 students out of a total secondary school population of 11500' is disgusting - so now we are creating a minority that's excluded? really? This is disgusting.	6/23/2015 6:26 PM
51	In Chieveley our nearest school would be Trinity (I am guessing) and yet our catchment is Downes - it is totally ridiculous and unfair to say 'Where the nearest school and the catchment school are different their is no entitlement' - or more correctly there is entitlement, but only to take the children to the nearest school, not the school they attend - what?! How has that any purpose at all! Come on! that's just ridiculous logic .. well not even logic! Firstly, its unfair on the kids, but also if this is to save expense then good luck, as you are only shifting the budget to Roads as they will need fixing more regularly due to the weight of traffic! This is a ridiculous policy and I am ashamed of our council for proposing it.	6/23/2015 6:20 PM
52	Would like to see transport provision for Denefield students who live in Pangbourne. Denefield is a west Berkshire school , yet transport is not provided for west Berkshire students , yet reading borough council provide buses for reading students to get to a west Berkshire school , due to denefield school continuing to meet ofsted requirements more and more students from the village will be choosing it over theale green school . It could be argued that denefield is a shorter distance on foot than theale green , however the safety of the students is put at risk due to their being a very narrow footpath on reading road where the speed limit is 50mph and often floods in the winter months.	6/23/2015 4:27 PM
53	Can you please provide specific details of which schools/locations make up the approximate 400 students that you estimate will be effected. Ideally each parent should be told directly if they will be effected before they select Secondary Schools for September 2016.	6/23/2015 4:20 PM
54	We live in Cold ash and my children have had to use the private Weaveraway bus to get to their school which is The Downs. This means that this will have cost us nearly £21000 (£1000 x 7 x3) to get our children to school which is an extortionate cost and a sum which has been very difficult for us to find . it seems very unfair that for parents like us there is no help with transport costs or reduction in cost for siblings. 2 of our children have just left and we only have one now going into Yr 13 but is there going to be any additional help for us in the new policy - it is very confusing	6/23/2015 12:45 PM
55	You should provide a free school bus equally for everybody and not pick on a few unlucky people because of their address. Free transport should be provided to the catchment school. If you want to change that to the nearest school, then you need to change the catchment boundaries so everyone goes to their nearest school and provide the extra capacity in the nearest school if required. Does not seem to me that this has been thought out properly!	6/23/2015 9:04 AM
56	In your guidance you should advise which villages are affected	6/23/2015 12:30 AM

Home to School Transport Policy 2016/17

57	Has the impact of the additional vehicles visiting the schools carrying the 400 students (let's say 200 cars) been considered?	6/22/2015 9:47 PM
58	I would like to see the policy include younger siblings who are attending the same school if it is there catchment.	6/22/2015 2:03 PM
59	I am writing to express my concern at proposed changes to West Berks home to school transport. My children attend their catchment school - Trinity school - however Kennet school is closer to our home. Currently my children are entitled to free places on the school bus as we live over three miles from their school, but the proposed changes would mean that we would have to pay for their transport in future (I have a younger child who will be moving on to secondary school in a few years time who will be affected by the proposed changes.) I question the proposed change's fairness. As the council itself uses catchment areas over school proximity to decide how places are to be allocated to students, it seems odd that transport funding changes should favour proximity. I would like to know why the proposed changes would allow funding to continue to be given to those children attending their 'nearest' school whilst funding will be taken from those children who attend their 'catchment' school.	6/22/2015 12:47 PM
60	I and plenty of parents I know cannot afford any charges & I'm convinced that this ludicrous money making idea will lead to a massive increase in children not attending school. I cannot stress enough that you MUST NOT go ahead with this ridiculous proposal!	6/21/2015 10:09 PM
61	Firstly I have no axe to grind here; our nearest school and our catchment school are one and the same. However I seem a looming legal problem for the Council with this change -- unless a change of boundaries will take place at the same time. The Council needs to consider what they will do in the event that there is no space for a particular pupil at the nearest school (to which there is transport provision) but there is space at the catchment school (to which there would be no transport). There is a legal obligation to go to school; however there is NO legal obligation for parents to transport their children to school or pay for their transport to school unless they choose to send their child to a non-catchment school. What happens if the parents are unable or unwilling to foot the bill to get their children to the catchment school? I think the Council will find it would be on very thin ice legally in this situation.	6/20/2015 8:22 AM
62	I believe transport should be provided free to the catchment school as that is where we are encouraged to apply to send our children. There are already enough issues with insufficient school places in catchment schools without compounding this by encouraging parents to apply to non-catchment schools, citing their reason for applying that it is the only school with free transport. What is the point of a catchment school in this case?	6/19/2015 5:27 PM
63	I would urge the council to reconsider and allow extra time for consultation as applications for secondary schools have to be in by October and does not allow parents enough time to consider all options. Also not sure if it would save money as if majority of parents decided to drive to school then buses would be running half empty with no extra money being paid.	6/19/2015 1:06 PM

Following the Consultation, the following amendments have been made:

2015/16 Policy

- Page 3 – The Statutory Position. Additional paragraph added:
The Statutory Guidance states that “A child’s “home” is the place where he/she is habitually and normally resident”. Where parents are separated or divorced, entitlement is assessed from the home where the child spends the majority of their time. Where a child spends equal amounts of school days with each parent, travelling from two addresses to school, entitlement will be assessed from both addresses. Evidence may be required.
- Page 6 – Pupils attending a Pupil Referral Unit – para 1 amended to: *Parents may wish to transport pupils themselves. If the pupil is entitled to free transport, a bus or train pass to the Pupil Referral Unit for those pupils who are not attending mainstream schools may be provided. Free transport entitlement is subject to statutory age and distance criteria.*
- Page 7 summary list: add to the summary d) *Post-19 students with an EHC Plan or Learning Difficulty Assessment* (content already in the Policy on page 9).
- Page 10 para 6 – Families in receipt of... replace *maximum working tax credit* with *free school meals*.
- Under section 18 – Appeals. Additional paragraph added:
The timings are recommended and not compulsory. We envisage that many appeals will be dealt with much sooner than these timings, particularly those which have a time pressure, whilst complex cases may take longer. Where there is an urgent matter which has safeguarding implications or the case relates to a Looked After Child, the Appeal will be processed at Stage 1 as a priority.

2016/17 Policy

The changes above will also be transcribed into the 2016/17 Policy.

Post-16 Transport Statement 2016/17

No changes.

Fare Payer Scheme 2016/17

- How to apply – para 3: Text amended to “Where there are more applications than available places *from those who do not qualify for a guaranteed place...*”
- How to apply – para 4 – Text amended to “Late applications will be added to the waiting list *in order of receipt...*”
- Waiting List – first bullet removed.
- Spaces on Contracted School Transport and Withdrawal of places on Contract School Transport – text updated to make the guarantee clearer.

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HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT CONSULTATION FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

These FAQs relate to the proposed change to the 2016/17 policy in relation to transport to catchment schools for secondary students.

1. How do I know if I am affected? How do I know which is my nearest school?

Please note that, we have published a range of maps on the consultation page to enable parents to more easily see whether they are likely to be affected by the change.

Due to the scale, the map should only be used as a guide. The closest school can be checked on the website: www.westberks.gov.uk by typing the postcode into the search box.

2. Will I be able to get a place on the school bus?

Yes, the Fare Payer Scheme includes a guarantee of a seat on the school bus to your nearest or catchment school. This means that, even if you do not qualify for free transport and have to pay a fee, your child will be guaranteed a seat – provided that you apply on time and pay the fee.

Some responses to the consultation have indicated that we have not made this point clear, and we will amend the wording in the Fare Payer Scheme so that there is no misunderstanding.

3. How much will a seat on the bus cost?

We have introduced a new flat rate fee for nearest or catchment school, which for 2016/17 is £250 per year. This is an equivalent to £1.32 per school day. It does not matter how far you are away from the school, the fee is the same. This reduces the cost of using the bus compared to the old banding rate, where some distances, especially to rural schools, would have attracted a fee of £430 per year (2014/15 rates).

Some responses have asked whether there is any further discount for siblings, and we will be looking at this point when we consider the consultation responses.

4. Do I have to pay the fee in one lump sum?

You can choose to pay in one lump sum at the beginning or in up to 6 monthly instalments. Either the full payment or the first instalment of an agreed repayment schedule must be made before the pass is issued.

5. I am on a low income. Is there any help for me?

If you are in receipt of free school meals or the maximum working tax credit without any deductions, you should check your entitlement with the Transport Officer on 01635 519777. If you meet the national low income criteria, you would still be entitled to free transport to the 3 nearest schools between 2 and 6 miles from your house. This would usually include your catchment school. If you are not entitled to free transport, you can arrange a payment plan to spread the cost over 6 months.

6. I have to go to work and this change could be inconvenient for me.

Parents are legally responsible for making sure that their children get to and from school at the appropriate times each day. This includes a parent making appropriate arrangements for their child where the parent has working commitments at the relevant times in the school day.

The proposal includes a guarantee of a place on the school bus for the nearest or catchment school, subject to the payment of a fee. You may prefer to continue using the school bus, but this will attract a cost of £250 per year (price correct for 2016/17).

Alternatively, you may choose to make other arrangements for some or all of your children, if you did not wish to use the Fare Paying Scheme. It would be for you to decide what works best for your family

7. I have children at the school already – will they be affected?

Current secondary students who receive transport will continue to be entitled to free transport on their existing route until the end of Year 11. If the proposal goes ahead, it will be phased in from September 2016 for all new transport applications - new students when they start secondary education or existing students if they change their secondary school route.

8. I have children at the school already and other children joining the school in the next couple of years – how would this work?

There is transport protection in place for current students (see Question 7).

The proposal includes a guarantee of a place on the school bus for the nearest or catchment school, subject to the payment of a fee if you do not qualify for free transport. You may prefer to continue using the school bus and this would attract a cost of £250 (2016/17 annual fee). Therefore, for a period of time you could have some children travelling free and others for whom you have to pay a fee.

Alternatively, you may choose to make other arrangements for some or all of your children, if you did not wish to use the Fare Paying Scheme. It would be for you to decide what works best for your family.

9. Why are the admissions rules and transport rules different?

There is statutory transport guidance which the Local Authority must comply with and this only requires free transport to the nearest school (subject to other criteria such as distance). The national guidance does not use the admission catchment at all.

Our use of catchment for transport is a discretionary element of our provision at the moment and the transport guidance is quite clear that discretionary elements can be charged for. Therefore, the Council is not obliged to provide catchment transport at no cost.

However, we recognise that this proposal would have an impact on families, and that is why we are consulting on the proposal. This will allow us to better understand the views of our residents.

10. Does this mean you are thinking about changing school admission catchment areas?

There is no intention to alter admissions catchment areas.

11. Has an environmental study been undertaken considering the impact of the 800 or so additional parental journeys per day that this policy will introduce?

At this stage, we cannot be sure what arrangements parents may choose to put in place. Parents may choose to transport their child themselves or may choose to continue to use the school bus and pay a fee. If the latter proves to be the case, any change to the environmental impact as a result of this proposal would be substantially mitigated as the transport is currently operating. We have not undertaken an environmental study.

Home to School Transport Policy 2015/16

1. Introduction

The Council is responsible for setting a Home to School Transport policy which ensures the equitable provision of transport to those who qualify under the Council's statutory duties and to explain when discretionary transport provision might be available.

The Council consults with the public on the Home to School policy on an annual basis, and it should be noted that the Council's policy is in line with the statutory guidance.

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

This policy applies to West Berkshire residents only and covers:

- a. Free Transport (see Section 4)
- b. Discretionary Transport (see Section 5)

Transport is only provided at the beginning and end of the normal school day.

Exclusions

The Policy is written in the context of an accompanied child. The law states that the responsibility for ensuring that a child gets to school sits with the parents. This includes the parent determining how their child will get to school and may include making appropriate arrangements such as with a friend or a childminder to ensure that the child is accompanied, as appropriate.

Transport is not provided for:

- Journeys during the course of the day
- Journeys to a work placement
- After school activities
- Induction/open day/interview visits
- Medical and dental appointments
- Parent/Carer attendance at school
- Respite Care
- Exchange students

2. School Admissions

Admission and Transport policies are separate and not directly linked. This reflects the national legislation. Eligibility for a place at a school is not affected by this transport policy and obtaining a place at a school does not bring with it any entitlement to transport, even if a pupil is attending their catchment school.

The policy may change before a pupil completes their time at school. The Council recognises that it is good practice for changes to be phased in and whilst the Council will endeavour to do this, it is not guaranteed, and entitlement may be subject to change, depending on specific circumstances.

The pupil's circumstances may change during their time at school, and this could also affect eligibility, e.g. moving house or school, no longer qualifying under low income, no longer qualifying under distance as age changes (see section 3). The Council may also take steps to create safe walking routes.

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

If a child does not qualify for transport under the provisions in this policy, parents may wish to explore the Council's Fare Payer Scheme for places on school transport. This discretionary scheme is not an entitlement and is often over-subscribed. Places may also be withdrawn in certain circumstances. Parents are strongly advised to read the rules of Fare Payer Scheme before applying for a Fare Payer place.

3. The Statutory Position

Parents are legally responsible for making sure that their children get to and from school at the appropriate times each day. This includes a parent making appropriate arrangements for their child where the parent has working commitments at the relevant times in the school day.

If parents choose to send their child to a school which is not the nearest qualifying school free transport will not be provided by the Council unless the circumstances meet the discretionary transport criteria described in section 5. Parents will be responsible for arrangements and costs.

West Berkshire Council provides Home to School Transport in line with the national statutory guidelines and this is summarised in the table in section 4.

Definition of a Qualifying School

A *qualifying school* is a school which provides education appropriate to the age, ability and aptitude of the child, and any special educational needs that the child may have. Most schools in West Berkshire fit the criteria of *qualifying school*. To be a qualifying school, the school must be:

- a community, foundation or voluntary mainstream school, or
- an academy, or
- a community, foundation or non-maintained special school, or
- a maintained nursery school, or
- pupil referral unit

Independent and non maintained schools can only be qualifying schools in relation to a child with a Statement of Special Educational Needs or Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan, and then only if the school is named in the child's EHC Plan or Statement

Any other type of school which is not listed above, including other West Berkshire independent schools, is NOT a qualifying school.

There is no legislative entitlement to transport to a particular type e.g. by gender, structure [academy, maintained, free school] or catchment.

There is no legislative entitlement to transport to a particular type by faith for most pupils. The only exception is for secondary pupils from a low income family (see page 4).

The entitlements are set out in the 1996 Education Act and 2006 Education and Inspections Act.

4. Free Transport

The *nearest qualifying school* is explained on page 3. Information on how this operates in practice is included at Appendix A.

Free transport is explained in the table below:

- **Distance**
- **Low Income**
- **Available route (including parental disability)**
- **Temporary medical condition of a pupil**
- **Statement of Special Educational Needs/ EHC Plan (in certain circumstances)**
- **Pupil Referral Units and permanently excluded pupils**

<p>From: the term starting 1st January, 1st April or 1st September following the child's 5th birthday</p> <p>To: 7 years old.</p>	<p>Distance</p> <p>Free transport to the <i>nearest qualifying school</i>, if it is more than 2 miles walking distance from home.</p>
<p>From: the child's 8th birthday</p> <p>To: the last school day in the academic school year in which their 16th birthday falls.</p>	<p>Distance</p> <p>Free transport to the <i>nearest qualifying school</i>, if it is more than 3 miles walking distance from home.</p>
<p>From the child's 8th birthday</p> <p>To 10 years old.</p>	<p>Low income</p> <p>Free transport to the <i>nearest qualifying school</i>, if it is more than 2 miles walking distance from home. To qualify, the child must be entitled to free school meals or whose family is in receipt of maximum working tax credit (i.e. with no deductions due to income)</p>
<p>From the child's 11th birthday</p> <p>To: the last school day in the academic school year in which their 16th birthday falls.</p>	<p>Low income</p> <p>Free transport to one of the three <i>nearest qualifying schools</i>, if it is between 2 and 6 miles walking distance away, or to the school preferred by reason of a parent's religion or belief which is between 2 and 15 miles away from the home address, travelling by road. To qualify, the child must be entitled to free school meals or whose family is in receipt of maximum working tax credit (i.e. with no deductions due to income)</p>

<p>Pupils living within the statutory walking distance but who are unable to walk because there is not an available route</p>	<p>Available Route Free transport to the <i>nearest qualifying school</i>, where the pupil lives within the statutory walking distance from school and where, due to the nature of the route, they are unable to walk in reasonable safety even when accompanied by an appropriate adult.</p> <p>A route is defined as “available” if it is a route along which a child, accompanied as necessary, can walk with reasonable safety to school. A route will be “available” even if the child would need to be accompanied along it by his or her parent or carer.(see section 9)</p>
<p>The parents’ disability prevents them from accompanying the child along a walking route, which is considered safe for a child who is accompanied</p>	<p>Available route and parental disability Where a walking route is considered to be safe for a child who is accompanied, but the parents’ disability prevents them from walking the route, support will be provided where the pupil lives within the statutory walking distance from school. Depending on the medical condition, transport or alternative solutions may be offered.</p> <p>The application <u>must</u> be supported with medical evidence from the GP and/or Consultant. Transport or alternative support may be provided for a time-limited period based on the medical information available, and could be subject to periodic review.</p>
<p>Pupils with a temporary medical condition</p>	<p>Temporary Medical Condition of a pupil A child may develop a temporary medical condition which prevents them getting to school. Parents are expected to have considered whether they can make temporary arrangements, for example by re-arranging their work commitments, driving a child who normally walks or by asking a friend to help for a time-limited period.</p> <p>The application <u>must</u> be supported with medical evidence from the GP and/or Consultant. Transport may be provided for a time-limited period based on the medical information available, and could be subject to periodic review. Depending on the medical condition, alternative solutions may also be offered.</p>

<p>Pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Needs / EHC Plan attending a <u>mainstream</u> school</p>	<p>Special Educational Needs – mainstream school Assistance with transport to the <i>nearest qualifying school</i>, if it is more than 2 miles or 3 miles walking distance from home (see distance rules above re child’s age on page 4).</p> <p>Also, assistance with transport to the <i>nearest qualifying school</i>, where the pupil lives within the statutory walking distance from school and where, due to their special needs or disability, they are unable to travel to school even when accompanied by an appropriate adult.</p>
<p>Pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Needs/ EHC Plan attending a <i>resourced or special</i> school</p>	<p>Special Educational Needs – resourced or special school Assistance with transport to the <i>nearest qualifying school</i>, if it is more than 2 miles or 3 miles walking distance from home (see distance rules above re child’s age on page 4).</p> <p>Also, assistance with transport to the <i>nearest qualifying resourced school or special school</i>, where the pupil lives within the statutory walking distance from school and where due to their special needs or disability they are unable to travel to school even when accompanied by an appropriate adult.</p>
<p>Pupils attending a Pupil Referral Unit</p>	<p>Pupil Referral Unit Parents may wish to transport pupils themselves. A bus pass to the Pupil Referral Unit for those pupils who are not attending mainstream schools may be provided.</p> <p>Transport may be withdrawn from pupils who regularly fail to attend the PRU – responsibility for attendance will then pass to parent/carers.</p> <p>Parents/carers must be aware that if the child requires transport to and from the Pupil Referral Unit outside of the bus timetable covered by the bus pass, it is the parent’s responsibility (including exclusions).</p>
<p>Pupils permanently excluded from school</p>	<p>Permanently excluded pupils The case of a pupil permanently excluded from a school will be considered based on the most appropriate school for the pupil’s needs.</p> <p>The parent must consider transport implications before requesting a specific school and should understand that they would usually be responsible for arranging transport.</p>

5. Discretionary Transport

The Council has extended its transport provision to include other circumstances. These are:

- a) Catchment School
- b) Exceptional Circumstances
- c) Post-16 students with a Statement of Special Educational Needs / EHC Plan who live more than 3 miles from the qualifying school or college
- d) Post-16 students

Discretionary transport may require a financial contribution towards the cost.

Transport provided at the discretion of the Council will be provided for the entirety of the school year in which the assessment has been made, unless otherwise stated. This means that a new assessment will be made for the following academic year and eligibility may be re-checked if personal circumstances have changed. The applicant is required to inform the Council if they move house or school or are no longer entitled under the low income criteria.

a. Catchment School

The Council recognises that parents may also wish to choose the local catchment school for their child. The catchment area for a West Berkshire school is the same as used in the Admissions application process and can be checked on the Council website here:

<http://www.westberks.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=21374>

Where the applicant lives in the catchment area of a Community or Voluntary Controlled school, located in West Berkshire, and they meet the requirements in terms of the walking distance or safety of route, the Council will provide transport.

Where the applicant lives in the catchment area of an Academy, Foundation school, Voluntary Aided school or Free school, located in West Berkshire, and they meet the requirements in terms of the walking distance or safety of route, the Council will provide transport, *except* where the catchment area overlaps with a Community or Voluntary Controlled school.

Where there is an overlap, the Community or Voluntary Controlled school catchment area would take priority and the Council would only consider transport to the Community or Voluntary Controlled school.

The Council will not provide free transport for a catchment school where the school site is outside of West Berkshire (i.e. where a Hampshire or Oxfordshire school has a catchment area which also includes a portion of West Berkshire).

b. Exceptional Circumstances

The Council may take exceptional circumstances into consideration through the Appeal process. There is **no automatic entitlement**. Exceptional Circumstances may include:

- Parental disability or Temporary medical condition for a parent (Where one parent is affected, we would expect other adult(s) with parental responsibility to take the child to school or make appropriate arrangements.)
- Temporary medical condition for the pupil
- Temporary re-housing

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

The Council does not consider work commitments as an exceptional circumstance. The law states that it is the parents' responsibility to ensure that their child gets to school, and this may include making appropriate arrangements. This could include use of a childminder, friend, before school and after school club. Parents may be able to access a Fare Payer place on the school bus, which incurs a fee.

Parental Preference - If a parent has chosen a school which is not the nearest school to the home address or the catchment school, this is parental preference. **The Council expects parents to have considered how to get their child to school.** This could include use of a childminder, friend, before school and after school club. Parents may be able to access a Fare Payer place on the school bus, which incurs a fee.

The decision of the Council is final in relation to consideration of exceptional circumstances.

Where exceptional circumstances are taken into account, transport may be strictly time limited and may not be for the entire school year. Discretionary transport may require a financial contribution towards the cost.

c. Post-16 students with a Statement of Special Educational Needs / EHC Plan

This section of the policy applies from the beginning of the academic year following the young person's 16th birthday.

The Council does not provide travel assistance for students who are 16 years and older who have a Statement of Special Educational Needs / EHC Plan and who attend a *mainstream school*. There is a Council discretionary Fare Payer scheme which post 16 pupils with SEN who attend mainstream schools may be able to access. The student would pay to access the scheme at the prevailing rate, subject to availability.

The Council will provide assistance with transport to a resourced school, special school or FE College that is the nearest qualifying school or college, where the school or college is outside the statutory walking distance of 3 miles, or, if it is within the statutory walking distance, due to their special needs or disability, the student is unable to travel to school or college even when accompanied by an appropriate adult.

The nearest "qualifying" resourced school, special school or FE College will be the nearest establishment which is able to meet the young person's needs. In the case of FE Colleges, preference for specific courses will be taken in to consideration within the context of what is reasonable.

In the majority of cases, travel assistance will take the form of a bus or train pass. Other means of transport will only be offered if the young person is not able to travel independently and is not suitable for independent travel training.

Parents may be required to make a contribution to the cost of transport for post 16 students. This will be in line with the contribution made by parents of post 16 students who do not have SEN.

d. Post 19 Students with an EHC Plan or Learning Difficulty Assessment (LDA)

This section of the policy applies from the beginning of the academic year following the young person's 19th birthday.

Students who have an EHC Plan or Learning Difficulty Assessment may transfer to or continue at FE College after the age of 19 years (and potentially up to 25 years) if they still require educational provision in order to achieve the outcomes set out in their EHC Plan or LDA.

The Council will provide assistance with travel to the nearest "qualifying" FE College if it is necessary to do so in order for the young person to be able to access a place at the qualifying establishment.

In order to determine whether it is “necessary” to provide assistance with transport, the Council will take into consideration what other sources of help have been made available to or could be made available to the young person to enable them to attend college, e.g.

- An adapted vehicle
- Transport assistance provided by the College
- Transport assistance provided by Adult Social Care

The nearest “qualifying” FE College will be the nearest establishment which is able to meet the young person’s needs. Preference for specific courses will be taken in to consideration within the context of what is reasonable.

In the majority of cases, travel assistance will take the form of a bus or train pass. Other means of transport will only be offered if the young person is not able to travel independently and is not suitable for independent travel training.

Assistance with transport for students who have a Learning Difficulty Assessment (but not an EHC Plan) will normally only be offered if the young person is a “high needs student”, i.e. the College receives additional funding from the Local Authority to meet the young person’s special educational needs.

e. Post 16-Students

The Council provides travel assistance for 6th form students at secondary schools or The Porch Pupil Referral Unit. Where a young person wishes to access an existing school bus route to a West Berkshire secondary school (or The Porch), or on an existing bus route originating in West Berkshire to a secondary school in a neighbouring Local Authority, the Council will provide a place on the bus at a subsidised flat rate. Students must apply for a place using the Fare Payers Application Form on our website by the application deadline.

Families in receipt of maximum working tax credit can pay by instalments on request. Evidence may be required.

Students can apply for a train pass with First Great Western train services at a subsidised flat rate for a secondary school, Pupil Referral Unit or further education college.

6. Measuring the *nearest qualifying school*

The *nearest qualifying school* is measured on a computerised GIS mapping system in a straight line between the GIS point of the home address and GIS point of the school.

7. Measuring the *walking distance*

The *walking distance* measured is the shortest available route from the GIS point at the child's home address to the nearest approved entry point to the school site. The distance will be measured on a computerised GIS mapping system. The route measured may include footpaths, bridleways and other permitted paths as well as recognised roads.

Where a school has more than one site, the Council will measure to each of the sites where compulsory school education is provided. This would mean, for example, that a 6th form site would be excluded. If the child qualified for transport to any of the sites which deliver compulsory school education, transport would be granted for the entirety of the compulsory school education at that school, regardless of which site they were being educated on in any specific year.

For low income entitlement, the 6 mile and 15 mile distance is measured as the travelling distance by road taking account of appropriate vehicular access.

8. Determining an *available route*

The Council's does not assess routes for unaccompanied children, as this is not the legal standard which applies, and therefore any consideration about the availability of a route is in the context of an accompanied child.

Risk assessments are undertaken in accordance with guidance notes issued by Road Safety GB in 2012 'Assessment of Walked Routes to School' and the Department for Education 'Home to School Travel and Transport Guidance'.

Appeals on the grounds of an unavailable route will be considered in line with statutory expectations and guidelines.

The Courts have defined an 'available route' as one *"along which a child accompanied as necessary can walk with reasonable safety to school. It does not fail to qualify as 'available' because of dangers which would arise if the child is unaccompanied."*

It is the parents' responsibility to ensure that a child gets to school, including ensuring that they are accompanied if appropriate; and to ensure that a child has suitable clothing and equipment for the journey (for example: boots, wet weather clothing, reflective bands, torch).

Risk Assessment

Assessments usually take place in the morning during the time children would be travelling to school and may also be undertaken at home time in the afternoon. Visits are timed so that crossing assessments of main roads take place at the times when the number of children travelling to school is highest.

No crossing point can be absolutely safe; the term used in the guidance is "reasonable safety" which would make the walking route available.

Assessments do not determine whether a route is “safe” or “dangerous”. All roads may be thought of as presenting some element of road safety risk, whether they are heavily trafficked urban routes, or more lightly trafficked rural routes. Statutory guidelines confirm that available routes may include crossing fields, wooded areas and public parks. Rights of Way will normally be considered available at all times as well as Permitted Paths and Bridleways.

The Council takes a range of factors into account. The fact that there is a high volume of fast-moving traffic is not in itself a reason to grant a route unsuitable - there may be a footpath and good crossing points along the route that would render it safe. Similarly, the lack of a footpath or verge would not be a reason to grant a route unsuitable if there was, for instance, a very low volume of traffic and good visibility. Even if there isn't a footway the walking route might still be assessed as available. The assessment will take account of traffic flows and whether car drivers have enough time to slow down or pedestrians have time to step-off the road or verge.

We will assess:
Road width, visibility and the severity of bends
Existence of 'safe refuge': footpaths and verges, road markings at the side of the road
Existence of Rights of Way, Permitted Paths and Bridle Paths
The volume of traffic at the relevant period of day
The type of traffic and its relative speed
Difficulty of road crossings
Nature of road (urban/rural) and driver expectation
The presence or otherwise of speed limits and other warning signs
The accident record along the route

We will not consider:
Isolation of route
Local weather conditions
Transient events - road closures, construction work, seasonal weather (e.g. flooding, snow, ice)
Temporary surface conditions (e.g. mud, puddles)
Lack of street lighting
Lack of pavements
The presence of uncut hedges
Difficult terrain/arduousness of the route - steep hills are not a hazard
The time taken to walk the route

All assessments are undertaken in line with the guidance from Road Safety GB in 2012 'Assessment of Walked Routes to School' and the Department for Education 'Home to School Travel and Transport Guidance'.

Assessments are recorded in a written report which contains maps and, if necessary, photographs.

The Council has the final decision on whether a route is available.

Concerns about the availability of a route would be addressed through the Complaints process.

Where there is a concern about a route, a formal route assessment will be commissioned by the Education Service and this will clarify the level of risk and a detailed report will be produced.

- a) Where a route is classified as low risk, transport will not be provided, unless exceptional circumstances apply.
- b) Where a route is classified as a medium risk, transport will not be provided, unless exceptional circumstances apply. The parents will be advised of the recommendations in relation to the medium risk sections of the route.
- c) Where a route is classified as high risk, transport will be provided.

Where concerns are raised about the ability of the parent or pupil to walk the route (see page 5), this would be considered under the Appeal process.

Sustainable Travel

The Council will consider, in line with its general transport provision and duty to promote sustainable travel across West Berkshire, the provision of walking routes, and building of footpaths, cycling paths and crossings as more cost effective alternatives to providing free transport. This may result in the withdrawal of transport, where available walking routes are subsequently established.

9. Type of Transport

As required by law¹, the Council will either provide or pay for statutory transport by the most economic means, for pupils resident in West Berkshire, who meet the above criteria. Transport could be:

- School Bus (where necessary supplemented by other methods as appropriate)
- Public Transport – Bus or train season ticket on public transport for the child
- A Personal Transport Budget for mainstream pupils (if this is more cost effective than direct provision of transport).
- A Personal Transport Budget, in the case of children with SEN who qualify for assistance with transport under this policy and are unable to travel independently (if this is more cost effective than direct provision of transport).
- A place in a taxi or minibus for children with SEN who are unable to travel independently. This would usually be shared with other children.

The Council determines the mode of transport and normally only one mode of transport is provided.

¹Sections 508A and 508D of the Education Act 1996, and sections 508A, 508B, 508C, 509AD, and Schedule 35B of the Act which were inserted by Part 6 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

10. Independent Travel Training for children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs / EHC Plan

All children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs or EHC Plan aged 11 years or above who qualify for assistance with transport will be considered for independent travel training (ITT). If a child is considered by the Council to have the potential to travel to school independently, either walking or using a bus or train, they will undergo an assessment of suitability for ITT. If deemed suitable, they will be provided with an intensive programme of travel training with a suitably qualified / experienced travel trainer. If they complete the programme successfully, they will be provided with a bus or train pass, as appropriate.

Transport by other means such as minibus or taxi will only be provided if a child is considered unsuitable for travel training or if they have been unable to complete the travel training course successfully.

A review of transport entitlement and provision will be carried out at each child's annual review. Children allocated transport by taxi or minibus at primary school age will be expected to undertake independent travel training at secondary school age in cases where the child is considered to have the potential to achieve independent travel to school.

11. Personal Transport Budgets (PTBs)

The Council will be piloting Personal Transport Budgets for children and young people with SEN, who qualify for assistance with transport under this policy, from September 2015. In the first instance, PTBs will only be offered to children attending The Castle or Brookfields Special Schools. If the pilot scheme is successful, the scheme may be rolled out to other children with SEN who qualify for assistance with transport.

PTBs will be offered in cases where a child or young person is unable to travel to school independently. This will be an alternative to providing transport by minibus or taxi. The PTB will be calculated based on a formula and will be allocated to families in lieu of direct provision of transport by the Council.

Families will be free to use the funding in any way they see appropriate, provided that they get their child to school safely, on time and in a fit state to learn. A PTB will usually be greater than a traditional mileage allowance, but the Council reserves the right only to offer PTBs in cases where this would be more cost effective than direct provision of transport.

If parents choose to accept a PTB, they will be asked to sign a formal written agreement. Payments will be made in monthly instalments. The Council reserves the right to withdraw the PTB if the parent is unable to deliver the child to school safely, on time and in a fit state to learn.

Parents can withdraw from the PTB scheme if they wish, subject to giving an agreed period of notice.

Parents are not obliged to take up a Personal Transport Budget if they do not wish to do so.

12. Provision of passenger assistants (escorts) for children with SEN

There is no automatic entitlement to provision of a passenger assistant on a vehicle if a child travels by minibus or taxi. The need for a passenger assistant will be considered on a case by case basis, taking in to account the child's age and the nature of their special educational needs.

Provision of passenger assistants for individual children will be subject to ongoing review.

13. Transport to after school activities or respite care for children with SEN

Children and young people who qualify for assistance with transport to school under this policy are not entitled to transport for after school activities or respite care.

The Council will, however, endeavour to assist with transport for after school activities or respite care if this can be offered with no additional cost.

14. The Journey

The Council will determine the boarding and alighting points for the journey. Pupils are expected to walk to and from home to meet their transport. The pick-up point will not normally be more than one mile away from the home address. Journey times will not usually exceed 45 minutes for primary pupils and 75 minutes for secondary pupils.

Parents are responsible for the safety of the child in getting to and from the pick up point, and whilst they are waiting for transport or leaving transport at either end of the day.

15. Poor Behaviour on School Transport

The Council operates a zero tolerance approach to poor behaviour on school transport. Behaviour which endangers other pupils, the driver and other passengers and other road users will not be tolerated. The Council's Home to School Transport Behaviour Code provides more information:

<http://info.westberks.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=29687>

There are two versions, one for pupils and one for parents

The Council will work in partnership with schools to promote good behaviour on school transport through a range of initiatives. The Council will work with the headteacher of a school, to ensure appropriate sanctions are in place for poor behaviour. Sanctions may range from:

- Warning in relation to misbehaviour
- Exclusion from the bus for a temporary period
- Permanent exclusion from the bus for more serious or persistent misbehaviour

16. Transport provided in Error or Subject to Change

Where free or discretionary transport has been provided in error, or where material changes have been made to the route to school, provision may be withdrawn. Six weeks' notice will be provided to allow alternative arrangements to be put in place by the parents.

17. Further Information

For information on how to apply for free home to school transport, please refer to the Transport pages on the Council's website.

<http://info.westberks.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=29687>

18. Appeals

The Council will maintain an appeal process regarding eligibility decisions made under this policy, in line with national guidance. The process is as follows:

Initial Application Declined

Parent has up to 20 working days to decide whether to submit an Appeal



Stage 1 Appeal Submission

- Parent submits appeal on the basis of:
 - Distance measurement (walking)
 - Transport offered, if applicable
 - Exceptional circumstances
- Review of information provided – is additional evidence or information required to fully assess the Appeal? Is this a complaint?
- Information/evidence requested from parent, if applicable.
- Information/evidence received from parent, and Appeal is registered.

Parent has up to 20 working days from initial submission of Appeal to provide the required evidence/information



Stage 1 Appeal (Review by a Senior Officer)

- Senior Officer reviews the circumstances of the case
- Written notification of the outcome is sent to the parent. This will include detailed reasoning of the decision made and notification of the option to escalate to Stage 2.

Up to 20 working days but complex cases may take longer



Stage 2 Appeal Submission

- Parent submits appeal on the basis of:
 - Distance measurement (walking)
 - Transport offered, if applicable
 - Exceptional circumstances

Parent has up to 20 working days to decide whether to submit an Appeal



Stage 2 Appeal (Review by an Appeal Panel)

- Appeal Panel reviews the circumstances of the case
- Written notification of the outcome is sent to the parent. This will include detailed reasoning of the decision made and notification of the option to escalate to Local Government Ombudsman.

Up to 40 working days

19. Complaints

Where a Transport application has been considered through the Transport Appeal process, there is no right to use the complaints process with regard to the decision made. The complaints process has no jurisdiction over the Appeals process.

Where the issue relates to the Home to School Transport policy and the parent feels it is not objective, clear or fair – this is a complaint. The complaint must refer to the current policy and explain which aspect of the policy is unsatisfactory and why.

Where the parent feels that the Transport Appeals process has not been administered correctly – this is a complaint. The complaints process will only look at whether the Appeal was administered correctly. It cannot change the decision made by the Appeal Panel.

The complaint will be reviewed by a Senior Officer, and a response will be provided within twenty working days.

Email: Pupiltransport@westberks.gov.uk

Write to: Service Manager (APT),
West Berkshire Council, West St House, Newbury RG14 1BZ.

20. Consultation

The Council consults on its transport policies for pupils and 16-19 students. The consultation appears on the Council's consultation finder and information is provided to schools to pass onto to its families to make them aware of the consultation.

DRAFT

Appendix A

If the Qualifying school is full and the application for a school place was made in the normal admissions round:

If a parent:

- has applied **on time** for their qualifying school (nearest school or if the nearest is not the catchment schools then both nearest and catchment schools) **and**
- has not been offered a school place at either the nearest school or the catchment school

Then

- the nearest school with available spaces will be considered to be the qualifying school:

Provided that:

- the child remains on the school/s waiting list until a place is offered **and**
- the offer of a place is taken up from a school waiting list. School places are offered for the following half term and at that point transport to the current school would be cancelled.

Children remain on school waiting lists for the remainder of the academic year in which a school place has been applied for. Parents will be prompted to apply for a place in each new academic year which they will be expected to do. If parents do not re-apply the home to school transport will be cancelled from the start of the next academic year.

Parents who apply for a school place **late** and, for that reason, their child is not allocated a school place at their qualifying school are not in the same position. The nearest school with available places will not be considered to be the qualifying school unless the application was late for good reason, e.g. moving into the area.

Applications for school places outside the normal admissions round (In year school admissions) as a result of moving house:

Where a parent has applied for their qualifying school (nearest school or if the nearest is not the catchment schools then both nearest and catchment schools) and has not been offered a school place at either school, the nearest school with available spaces will be considered to be the qualifying school:

Provided that:

- the child remains on the school/s waiting list until a place is offered **and**
- the offer of a place is taken up from a school waiting list. School places are offered for the following half term and at that point transport to the current school would be cancelled

Children remain on school waiting lists for the remainder of the academic year in which a school place has been applied for. Parents will be prompted to apply for a place in each new academic year which they will be expected to do. If parents do not re-apply the home to school transport will be cancelled from the start of the next academic year.

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Home to School Transport Policy 2016/17

1. Introduction

The Council is responsible for setting a Home to School Transport policy which ensures the equitable provision of transport to those who qualify under the Council's statutory duties and to explain when discretionary transport provision might be available.

The Council consults with the public on the Home to School policy on an annual basis, and it should be noted that the Council's policy is in line with the statutory guidance.

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

This policy applies to West Berkshire residents only and covers:

- a. Free Transport (see Section 4)
- b. Discretionary Transport (see Section 5)

Transport is only provided at the beginning and end of the normal school day.

Exclusions

The Policy is written in the context of an accompanied child. The law states that the responsibility for ensuring that a child gets to school sits with the parents. This includes the parent determining how their child will get to school and may include making appropriate arrangements such as with a friend or a childminder to ensure that the child is accompanied, as appropriate.

Transport is not provided for:

- Journeys during the course of the day
- Journeys to a work placement
- After school activities
- Induction/open day/interview visits
- Medical and dental appointments
- Parent/Carer attendance at school
- Respite Care
- Exchange students

2. School Admissions

Admission and Transport policies are separate and not directly linked. This reflects the national legislation. Eligibility for a place at a school is not affected by this transport policy and obtaining a place at a school does not bring with it any entitlement to transport, even if a pupil is attending their catchment school.

The policy may change before a pupil completes their time at school. The Council recognises that it is good practice for changes to be phased in and whilst the Council will endeavour to do this, it is not guaranteed, and entitlement may be subject to change, depending on specific circumstances.

The pupil's circumstances may change during their time at school, and this could also affect eligibility, e.g. moving house or school, no longer qualifying under low income, no longer qualifying under distance as age changes (see section 3). The Council may also take steps to create safe walking routes.

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

If a child does not qualify for transport under the provisions in this policy, parents may wish to explore the Council's Fare Payer Scheme for places on school transport. This discretionary scheme is not an entitlement and is often over-subscribed. Places may also be withdrawn in certain circumstances. Parents are strongly advised to read the rules of Fare Payer Scheme before applying for a Fare Payer place.

3. The Statutory Position

Parents are legally responsible for making sure that their children get to and from school at the appropriate times each day. This includes a parent making appropriate arrangements for their child where the parent has working commitments at the relevant times in the school day.

If parents choose to send their child to a school which is not the nearest qualifying school free transport will not be provided by the Council unless the circumstances meet the discretionary transport criteria described in section 5. Parents will be responsible for arrangements and costs.

West Berkshire Council provides Home to School Transport in line with the national statutory guidelines and this is summarised in the table in section 4.

Definition of a Qualifying School

A *qualifying school* is a school which provides education appropriate to the age, ability and aptitude of the child, and any special educational needs that the child may have. Most schools in West Berkshire fit the criteria of *qualifying school*. To be a qualifying school, the school must be:

- a community, foundation or voluntary mainstream school, or
- an academy, or
- a community, foundation or non-maintained special school, or
- a maintained nursery school, or
- pupil referral unit

Independent and non maintained schools can only be qualifying schools in relation to a child with a Statement of Special Educational Needs or Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan, and then only if the school is named in the child's EHC Plan or Statement

Any other type of school which is not listed above, including other West Berkshire independent schools, is NOT a qualifying school.

There is no legislative entitlement to transport to a particular type e.g. by gender, structure [academy, maintained, free school] or catchment.

There is no legislative entitlement to transport to a particular type by faith for most pupils. The only exception is for secondary pupils from a low income family (see page 4).

The entitlements are set out in the 1996 Education Act and 2006 Education and Inspections Act.

4. Free Transport

The *nearest qualifying school* is explained on page 3. Information on how this operates in practice is included at Appendix A.

Free transport is explained in the table below:

- **Distance**
- **Low Income**
- **Available route (including parental disability)**
- **Temporary medical condition of a pupil**
- **Statement of Special Educational Needs/ EHC Plan (in certain circumstances)**
- **Pupil Referral Units and permanently excluded pupils**

<p>From: the term starting 1st January, 1st April or 1st September following the child's 5th birthday</p> <p>To: 7 years old.</p>	<p>Distance</p> <p>Free transport to the <i>nearest qualifying school</i>, if it is more than 2 miles walking distance from home.</p>
<p>From: the child's 8th birthday</p> <p>To: the last school day in the academic school year in which their 16th birthday falls.</p>	<p>Distance</p> <p>Free transport to the <i>nearest qualifying school</i>, if it is more than 3 miles walking distance from home.</p>
<p>From the child's 8th birthday</p> <p>To 10 years old.</p>	<p>Low income</p> <p>Free transport to the <i>nearest qualifying school</i>, if it is more than 2 miles walking distance from home. To qualify, the child must be entitled to free school meals or whose family is in receipt of maximum working tax credit (i.e. with no deductions due to income)</p>
<p>From the child's 11th birthday</p> <p>To: the last school day in the academic school year in which their 16th birthday falls.</p>	<p>Low income</p> <p>Free transport to one of the three <i>nearest qualifying schools</i>, if it is between 2 and 6 miles walking distance away, or to the school preferred by reason of a parent's religion or belief which is between 2 and 15 miles away from the home address, travelling by road. To qualify, the child must be entitled to free school meals or whose family is in receipt of maximum working tax credit (i.e. with no deductions due to income)</p>

<p>Pupils living within the statutory walking distance but who are unable to walk because there is not an available route</p>	<p>Available Route Free transport to the <i>nearest qualifying school</i>, where the pupil lives within the statutory walking distance from school and where, due to the nature of the route, they are unable to walk in reasonable safety even when accompanied by an appropriate adult.</p> <p>A route is defined as “available” if it is a route along which a child, accompanied as necessary, can walk with reasonable safety to school. A route will be “available” even if the child would need to be accompanied along it by his or her parent or carer.(see section 9)</p>
<p>The parents’ disability prevents them from accompanying the child along a walking route, which is considered safe for a child who is accompanied</p>	<p>Available route and parental disability Where a walking route is considered to be safe for a child who is accompanied, but the parents’ disability prevents them from walking the route, support will be provided where the pupil lives within the statutory walking distance from school. Depending on the medical condition, transport or alternative solutions may be offered.</p> <p>The application <u>must</u> be supported with medical evidence from the GP and/or Consultant. Transport or alternative support may be provided for a time-limited period based on the medical information available, and could be subject to periodic review.</p>
<p>Pupils with a temporary medical condition</p>	<p>Temporary Medical Condition of a pupil A child may develop a temporary medical condition which prevents them getting to school. Parents are expected to have considered whether they can make temporary arrangements, for example by re-arranging their work commitments, driving a child who normally walks or by asking a friend to help for a time-limited period.</p> <p>The application <u>must</u> be supported with medical evidence from the GP and/or Consultant. Transport may be provided for a time-limited period based on the medical information available, and could be subject to periodic review. Depending on the medical condition, alternative solutions may also be offered.</p>

<p>Pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Needs / EHC Plan attending a <u>mainstream</u> school</p>	<p>Special Educational Needs – mainstream school Assistance with transport to the <i>nearest qualifying school</i>, if it is more than 2 miles or 3 miles walking distance from home (see distance rules above re child’s age on page 4).</p> <p>Also, assistance with transport to the <i>nearest qualifying school</i>, where the pupil lives within the statutory walking distance from school and where, due to their special needs or disability, they are unable to travel to school even when accompanied by an appropriate adult.</p>
<p>Pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Needs/ EHC Plan attending a <i>resourced or special</i> school</p>	<p>Special Educational Needs – resourced or special school Assistance with transport to the <i>nearest qualifying school</i>, if it is more than 2 miles or 3 miles walking distance from home (see distance rules above re child’s age on page 4).</p> <p>Also, assistance with transport to the <i>nearest qualifying resourced school or special school</i>, where the pupil lives within the statutory walking distance from school and where due to their special needs or disability they are unable to travel to school even when accompanied by an appropriate adult.</p>
<p>Pupils attending a Pupil Referral Unit</p>	<p>Pupil Referral Unit Parents may wish to transport pupils themselves. A bus pass to the Pupil Referral Unit for those pupils who are not attending mainstream schools may be provided.</p> <p>Transport may be withdrawn from pupils who regularly fail to attend the PRU – responsibility for attendance will then pass to parent/carers.</p> <p>Parents/carers must be aware that if the child requires transport to and from the Pupil Referral Unit outside of the bus timetable covered by the bus pass, it is the parent’s responsibility (including exclusions).</p>
<p>Pupils permanently excluded from school</p>	<p>Permanently excluded pupils The case of a pupil permanently excluded from a school will be considered based on the most appropriate school for the pupil’s needs.</p> <p>The parent must consider transport implications before requesting a specific school and should understand that they would usually be responsible for arranging transport.</p>

5. Discretionary Transport

The Council has extended its transport provision to include other circumstances. These are:

- a) Catchment School (for Primary Pupils)
- b) Exceptional Circumstances
- c) Post-16 students with a Statement of Special Educational Needs / EHC Plan who live more than 3 miles from the qualifying school or college
- d) Post-16 students

Discretionary transport may require a financial contribution towards the cost.

Transport provided at the discretion of the Council will be provided for the entirety of the school year in which the assessment has been made, unless otherwise stated. This means that a new assessment will be made for the following academic year and eligibility may be re-checked if personal circumstances have changed. The applicant is required to inform the Council if they move house or school or are no longer entitled under the low income criteria.

a. Catchment School (for Primary Pupils)

The Council recognises that parents may also wish to choose the local catchment school for their child. The catchment area for a West Berkshire school is the same as used in the Admissions application process and can be checked on the Council website here:

<http://www.westberks.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=21374>

Where the applicant lives in the catchment area of a Community or Voluntary Controlled school, located in West Berkshire, and they meet the requirements in terms of the walking distance or safety of route, the Council will provide transport.

Where the applicant lives in the catchment area of an Academy, Foundation school, Voluntary Aided school or Free school, located in West Berkshire, and they meet the requirements in terms of the walking distance or safety of route, the Council will provide transport, *except* where the catchment area overlaps with a Community or Voluntary Controlled school.

Where there is an overlap, the Community or Voluntary Controlled school catchment area would take priority and the Council would only consider transport to the Community or Voluntary Controlled school.

The Council will not provide free transport for a catchment school where the school site is outside of West Berkshire (i.e. where a Hampshire or Oxfordshire school has a catchment area which also includes a portion of West Berkshire).

b. Exceptional Circumstances

The Council may take exceptional circumstances into consideration through the Appeal process. There is **no automatic entitlement**. Exceptional Circumstances may include:

- Parental disability or Temporary medical condition for a parent (Where one parent is affected, we would expect other adult(s) with parental responsibility to take the child to school or make appropriate arrangements.)
- Temporary medical condition for the pupil
- Temporary re-housing

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

The Council does not consider work commitments as an exceptional circumstance. The law states that it is the parents' responsibility to ensure that their child gets to school, and this may include making appropriate arrangements. This could include use of a childminder, friend, before school and after school club. Parents may be able to access a Fare Payer place on the school bus, which incurs a fee.

Parental Preference - If a parent has chosen a school which is not the nearest school to the home address or the catchment school, this is parental preference. **The Council expects parents to have considered how to get their child to school.** This could include use of a childminder, friend, before school and after school club. Parents may be able to access a Fare Payer place on the school bus, which incurs a fee.

The decision of the Council is final in relation to consideration of exceptional circumstances.

Where exceptional circumstances are taken into account, transport may be strictly time limited and may not be for the entire school year. Discretionary transport may require a financial contribution towards the cost.

c. Post-16 students with a Statement of Special Educational Needs / EHC Plan

This section of the policy applies from the beginning of the academic year following the young person's 16th birthday.

The Council does not provide travel assistance for students who are 16 years and older who have a Statement of Special Educational Needs / EHC Plan and who attend a *mainstream school*. There is a Council discretionary Fare Payer scheme which post 16 pupils with SEN who attend mainstream schools may be able to access. The student would pay to access the scheme at the prevailing rate, subject to availability.

The Council will provide assistance with transport to a resourced school, special school or FE College that is the nearest qualifying school or college, where the school or college is outside the statutory walking distance of 3 miles, or, if it is within the statutory walking distance, due to their special needs or disability, the student is unable to travel to school or college even when accompanied by an appropriate adult.

The nearest "qualifying" resourced school, special school or FE College will be the nearest establishment which is able to meet the young person's needs. In the case of FE Colleges, preference for specific courses will be taken in to consideration within the context of what is reasonable.

In the majority of cases, travel assistance will take the form of a bus or train pass. Other means of transport will only be offered if the young person is not able to travel independently and is not suitable for independent travel training.

Parents may be required to make a contribution to the cost of transport for post 16 students. This will be in line with the contribution made by parents of post 16 students who do not have SEN.

d. Post 19 Students with an EHC Plan or Learning Difficulty Assessment (LDA)

This section of the policy applies from the beginning of the academic year following the young person's 19th birthday.

Students who have an EHC Plan or Learning Difficulty Assessment may transfer to or continue at FE College after the age of 19 years (and potentially up to 25 years) if they still require educational provision in order to achieve the outcomes set out in their EHC Plan or LDA.

The Council will provide assistance with travel to the nearest "qualifying" FE College if it is necessary to do so in order for the young person to be able to access a place at the qualifying establishment.

In order to determine whether it is “necessary” to provide assistance with transport, the Council will take into consideration what other sources of help have been made available to or could be made available to the young person to enable them to attend college, e.g.

- An adapted vehicle
- Transport assistance provided by the College
- Transport assistance provided by Adult Social Care

The nearest “qualifying” FE College will be the nearest establishment which is able to meet the young person’s needs. Preference for specific courses will be taken in to consideration within the context of what is reasonable.

In the majority of cases, travel assistance will take the form of a bus or train pass. Other means of transport will only be offered if the young person is not able to travel independently and is not suitable for independent travel training.

Assistance with transport for students who have a Learning Difficulty Assessment (but not an EHC Plan) will normally only be offered if the young person is a “high needs student”, i.e. the College receives additional funding from the Local Authority to meet the young person’s special educational needs.

e. Post 16-Students

The Council provides travel assistance for 6th form students at secondary schools or The Porch Pupil Referral Unit. Where a young person wishes to access an existing school bus route to a West Berkshire secondary school (or The Porch), or on an existing bus route originating in West Berkshire to a secondary school in a neighbouring Local Authority, the Council will provide a place on the bus at a subsidised flat rate. Students must apply for a place using the Fare Payers Application Form on our website by the application deadline.

Families in receipt of maximum working tax credit can pay by instalments on request. Evidence may be required.

Students can apply for a train pass with First Great Western train services at a subsidised flat rate for a secondary school, Pupil Referral Unit or further education college.

6. Measuring the *nearest qualifying school*

The *nearest qualifying school* is measured on a computerised GIS mapping system in a straight line between the GIS point of the home address and GIS point of the school.

7. Measuring the *walking distance*

The *walking distance* measured is the shortest available route from the GIS point at the child's home address to the nearest approved entry point to the school site. The distance will be measured on a computerised GIS mapping system. The route measured may include footpaths, bridleways and other permitted paths as well as recognised roads.

Where a school has more than one site, the Council will measure to each of the sites where compulsory school education is provided. This would mean, for example, that a 6th form site would be excluded. If the child qualified for transport to any of the sites which deliver compulsory school education, transport would be granted for the entirety of the compulsory school education at that school, regardless of which site they were being educated on in any specific year.

For low income entitlement, the 6 mile and 15 mile distance is measured as the travelling distance by road taking account of appropriate vehicular access.

8. Determining an *available route*

The Council's does not assess routes for unaccompanied children, as this is not the legal standard which applies, and therefore any consideration about the availability of a route is in the context of an accompanied child.

Risk assessments are undertaken in accordance with guidance notes issued by Road Safety GB in 2012 'Assessment of Walked Routes to School' and the Department for Education 'Home to School Travel and Transport Guidance'.

Appeals on the grounds of an unavailable route will be considered in line with statutory expectations and guidelines.

The Courts have defined an 'available route' as one *"along which a child accompanied as necessary can walk with reasonable safety to school. It does not fail to qualify as 'available' because of dangers which would arise if the child is unaccompanied."*

It is the parents' responsibility to ensure that a child gets to school, including ensuring that they are accompanied if appropriate; and to ensure that a child has suitable clothing and equipment for the journey (for example: boots, wet weather clothing, reflective bands, torch).

Risk Assessment

Assessments usually take place in the morning during the time children would be travelling to school and may also be undertaken at home time in the afternoon. Visits are timed so that crossing assessments of main roads take place at the times when the number of children travelling to school is highest.

No crossing point can be absolutely safe; the term used in the guidance is "reasonable safety" which would make the walking route available.

Assessments do not determine whether a route is “safe” or “dangerous”. All roads may be thought of as presenting some element of road safety risk, whether they are heavily trafficked urban routes, or more lightly trafficked rural routes. Statutory guidelines confirm that available routes may include crossing fields, wooded areas and public parks. Rights of Way will normally be considered available at all times as well as Permitted Paths and Bridleways.

The Council takes a range of factors into account. The fact that there is a high volume of fast-moving traffic is not in itself a reason to grant a route unsuitable - there may be a footpath and good crossing points along the route that would render it safe. Similarly, the lack of a footpath or verge would not be a reason to grant a route unsuitable if there was, for instance, a very low volume of traffic and good visibility. Even if there isn't a footway the walking route might still be assessed as available. The assessment will take account of traffic flows and whether car drivers have enough time to slow down or pedestrians have time to step-off the road or verge.

We will assess:
Road width, visibility and the severity of bends
Existence of 'safe refuge': footpaths and verges, road markings at the side of the road
Existence of Rights of Way, Permitted Paths and Bridle Paths
The volume of traffic at the relevant period of day
The type of traffic and its relative speed
Difficulty of road crossings
Nature of road (urban/rural) and driver expectation
The presence or otherwise of speed limits and other warning signs
The accident record along the route

We will not consider:
Isolation of route
Local weather conditions
Transient events - road closures, construction work, seasonal weather (e.g. flooding, snow, ice)
Temporary surface conditions (e.g. mud, puddles)
Lack of street lighting
Lack of pavements
The presence of uncut hedges
Difficult terrain/arduousness of the route - steep hills are not a hazard
The time taken to walk the route

All assessments are undertaken in line with the guidance from Road Safety GB in 2012 'Assessment of Walked Routes to School' and the Department for Education 'Home to School Travel and Transport Guidance'.

Assessments are recorded in a written report which contains maps and, if necessary, photographs.

The Council has the final decision on whether a route is available.

Concerns about the availability of a route would be addressed through the Complaints process.

Where there is a concern about a route, a formal route assessment will be commissioned by the Education Service and this will clarify the level of risk and a detailed report will be produced.

- a) Where a route is classified as low risk, transport will not be provided, unless exceptional circumstances apply.
- b) Where a route is classified as a medium risk, transport will not be provided, unless exceptional circumstances apply. The parents will be advised of the recommendations in relation to the medium risk sections of the route.
- c) Where a route is classified as high risk, transport will be provided.

Concerns about the ability of the parent or pupil to walk the route (see page 5), this would be considered under the Appeal process.

Sustainable Travel

The Council will consider, in line with its general transport provision and duty to promote sustainable travel across West Berkshire, the provision of walking routes, and building of footpaths, cycling paths and crossings as more cost effective alternatives to providing free transport. This may result in the withdrawal of transport, where available walking routes are subsequently established.

9. Type of Transport

As required by law¹, the Council will either provide or pay for statutory transport by the most economic means, for pupils resident in West Berkshire, who meet the above criteria. Transport could be:

- School Bus (where necessary supplemented by other methods as appropriate)
- Public Transport – Bus or train season ticket on public transport for the child
- A Personal Transport Budget for mainstream pupils (if this is more cost effective than direct provision of transport).
- A Personal Transport Budget, in the case of children with SEN who qualify for assistance with transport under this policy and are unable to travel independently (if this is more cost effective than direct provision of transport).
- A place in a taxi or minibus for children with SEN who are unable to travel independently. This would usually be shared with other children.

The Council determines the mode of transport and normally only one mode of transport is provided.

¹Sections 508A and 508D of the Education Act 1996, and sections 508A, 508B, 508C, 509AD, and Schedule 35B of the Act which were inserted by Part 6 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

10. Independent Travel Training for children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs / EHC Plan

All children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs or EHC Plan aged 11 years or above who qualify for assistance with transport will be considered for independent travel training (ITT). If a child is considered by the Council to have the potential to travel to school independently, either walking or using a bus or train, they will undergo an assessment of suitability for ITT. If deemed suitable, they will be provided with an intensive programme of travel training with a suitably qualified / experienced travel trainer. If they complete the programme successfully, they will be provided with a bus or train pass, as appropriate.

Transport by other means such as minibus or taxi will only be provided if a child is considered unsuitable for travel training or if they have been unable to complete the travel training course successfully.

A review of transport entitlement and provision will be carried out at each child's annual review. Children allocated transport by taxi or minibus at primary school age will be expected to undertake independent travel training at secondary school age in cases where the child is considered to have the potential to achieve independent travel to school.

11. Personal Transport Budgets (PTBs)

The Council will be piloting Personal Transport Budgets for children and young people with SEN, who qualify for assistance with transport under this policy, from September 2015. In the first instance, PTBs will only be offered to children attending The Castle or Brookfields Special Schools. If the pilot scheme is successful, the scheme may be rolled out to other children with SEN who qualify for assistance with transport.

PTBs will be offered in cases where a child or young person is unable to travel to school independently. This will be an alternative to providing transport by minibus or taxi. The PTB will be calculated based on a formula and will be allocated to families in lieu of direct provision of transport by the Council.

Families will be free to use the funding in any way they see appropriate, provided that they get their child to school safely, on time and in a fit state to learn. A PTB will usually be greater than a traditional mileage allowance, but the Council reserves the right only to offer PTBs in cases where this would be more cost effective than direct provision of transport.

If parents choose to accept a PTB, they will be asked to sign a formal written agreement. Payments will be made in monthly instalments. The Council reserves the right to withdraw the PTB if the parent is unable to deliver the child to school safely, on time and in a fit state to learn.

Parents can withdraw from the PTB scheme if they wish, subject to giving an agreed period of notice.

Parents are not obliged to take up a Personal Transport Budget if they do not wish to do so.

12. Provision of passenger assistants (escorts) for children with SEN

There is no automatic entitlement to provision of a passenger assistant on a vehicle if a child travels by minibus or taxi. The need for a passenger assistant will be considered on a case by case basis, taking in to account the child's age and the nature of their special educational needs.

Provision of passenger assistants for individual children will be subject to ongoing review.

13. Transport to after school activities or respite care for children with SEN

Children and young people who qualify for assistance with transport to school under this policy are not entitled to transport for after school activities or respite care.

The Council will, however, endeavour to assist with transport for after school activities or respite care if this can be offered with no additional cost.

14. The Journey

The Council will determine the boarding and alighting points for the journey. Pupils are expected to walk to and from home to meet their transport. The pick-up point will not normally be more than one mile away from the home address. Journey times will not usually exceed 45 minutes for primary pupils and 75 minutes for secondary pupils.

Parents are responsible for the safety of the child in getting to and from the pick up point, and whilst they are waiting for transport or leaving transport at either end of the day.

15. Poor Behaviour on School Transport

The Council operates a zero tolerance approach to poor behaviour on school transport. Behaviour which endangers other pupils, the driver and other passengers and other road users will not be tolerated. The Council's Home to School Transport Behaviour Code provides more information:

<http://info.westberks.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=29687>

There are two versions, one for pupils and one for parents

The Council will work in partnership with schools to promote good behaviour on school transport through a range of initiatives. The Council will work with the headteacher of a school, to ensure appropriate sanctions are in place for poor behaviour. Sanctions may range from:

- Warning in relation to misbehaviour
- Exclusion from the bus for a temporary period
- Permanent exclusion from the bus for more serious or persistent misbehaviour

16. Transport provided in Error or Subject to Change

Where free or discretionary transport has been provided in error, or where material changes have been made to the route to school, provision may be withdrawn. Six weeks' notice will be provided to allow alternative arrangements to be put in place by the parents.

17. Further Information

For information on how to apply for free home to school transport, please refer to the Transport pages on the Council's website.

<http://info.westberks.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=29687>

18. Appeals

The Council will maintain an appeal process regarding eligibility decisions made under this policy, in line with national guidance. The process is as follows:

Initial Application Declined

Parent has up to 20 working days to decide whether to submit an Appeal



Stage 1 Appeal Submission

- Parent submits appeal on the basis of:
 - Distance measurement (walking)
 - Transport offered, if applicable
 - Exceptional circumstances
- Review of information provided – is additional evidence or information required to fully assess the Appeal? Is this a complaint?
- Information/evidence requested from parent, if applicable.
- Information/evidence received from parent, and Appeal is registered.

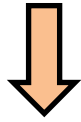
Parent has up to 20 working days from initial submission of Appeal to provide the required evidence/information



Stage 1 Appeal (Review by a Senior Officer)

- Senior Officer reviews the circumstances of the case
- Written notification of the outcome is sent to the parent. This will include detailed reasoning of the decision made and notification of the option to escalate to Stage 2.

Up to 20 working days but complex cases may take longer



Stage 2 Appeal Submission

- Parent submits appeal on the basis of:
 - Distance measurement (walking)
 - Transport offered, if applicable
 - Exceptional circumstances

Parent has up to 20 working days to decide whether to submit an Appeal



Stage 2 Appeal (Review by an Appeal Panel)

- Appeal Panel reviews the circumstances of the case
- Written notification of the outcome is sent to the parent. This will include detailed reasoning of the decision made and notification of the option to escalate to Local Government Ombudsman.

Up to 40 working days

19. Complaints

Where a Transport application has been considered through the Transport Appeal process, there is no right to use the complaints process with regard to the decision made. The complaints process has no jurisdiction over the Appeals process.

Where the issue relates to the Home to School Transport policy and the parent feels it is not objective, clear or fair – this is a complaint. The complaint must refer to the current policy and explain which aspect of the policy is unsatisfactory and why.

Where the parent feels that the Transport Appeals process has not been administered correctly – this is a complaint. The complaints process will only look at whether the Appeal was administered correctly. It cannot change the decision made by the Appeal Panel.

The complaint will be reviewed by a Senior Officer, and a response will be provided within twenty working days.

Email: Pupiltransport@westberks.gov.uk

Write to: Service Manager (APT),
West Berkshire Council, West St House, Newbury RG14 1BZ.

20. Consultation

The Council consults on its transport policies for pupils and 16-19 students. The consultation appears on the Council's consultation finder and information is provided to schools to pass onto to its families to make them aware of the consultation.

DRAFT

Appendix A

If the Qualifying school is full and the application for a school place was made in the normal admissions round:

If a parent:

- has applied **on time** for their qualifying school (nearest school or if the nearest is not the catchment schools then both nearest and catchment schools) **and**
- has not been offered a school place at either the nearest school or the catchment school

Then

- the nearest school with available spaces will be considered to be the qualifying school:

Provided that:

- the child remains on the school/s waiting list until a place is offered **and**
- the offer of a place is taken up from a school waiting list. School places are offered for the following half term and at that point transport to the current school would be cancelled.

Children remain on school waiting lists for the remainder of the academic year in which a school place has been applied for. Parents will be prompted to apply for a place in each new academic year which they will be expected to do. If parents do not re-apply the home to school transport will be cancelled from the start of the next academic year.

Parents who apply for a school place **late** and, for that reason, their child is not allocated a school place at their qualifying school are not in the same position. The nearest school with available places will not be considered to be the qualifying school unless the application was late for good reason, e.g. moving into the area.

Applications for school places outside the normal admissions round (In year school admissions) as a result of moving house:

Where a parent has applied for their qualifying school (nearest school or if the nearest is not the catchment schools then both nearest and catchment schools) and has not been offered a school place at either school, the nearest school with available spaces will be considered to be the qualifying school:

Provided that:

- the child remains on the school/s waiting list until a place is offered **and**
- the offer of a place is taken up from a school waiting list. School places are offered for the following half term and at that point transport to the current school would be cancelled

Children remain on school waiting lists for the remainder of the academic year in which a school place has been applied for. Parents will be prompted to apply for a place in each new academic year which they will be expected to do. If parents do not re-apply the home to school transport will be cancelled from the start of the next academic year.

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Post-16 Students – Transport Statement 2016/17

This statement sets out the way in which West Berkshire Council has decided to exercise its powers and duties in relation to the provision of school and college transport for learners aged 16-19 in accordance with Section 508 and 509 of the Education Act 1996, as amended by Section 83 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, and in accordance with the statutory guidance dated February 2014.

The Local Authority only has a statutory duty to provide free home to school transport to eligible pupils of statutory school age. However, the Local Authority also has a statutory duty to formulate a transport policy for young people (over compulsory age) aged 16-18, and those continuing learners who started programmes of learning before their 19th birthday.

The Local Authority has the discretion, under section 5 of the guidance, to determine transport of financial support, and must act reasonably taking into account all relevant matters.

The statement summarises the provision of transport schemes for 16-19 year old learners who live in West Berkshire and study in or outside of West Berkshire and supports learners to access the education and training of their choice.

The **Travel Guide for 16-19 year old students** provides details of all concessionary fares, discounts, subsidies, passes or travel cards available for learners aged 16-19, and who provides them. The Guide covers Colleges, Training providers and 6th form at schools, as well as bus and train discounts. The content is applicable to learners at school 6th form, Colleges, apprenticeships and traineeships.
<http://info.westberks.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=27824>

The **Home to School Transport Policy** outlines the provision for post-16 pupils (including arrangements for post-16 pupils with special educational needs) who wish to access 6th form in school or The Porch Pupil Referral Unit. This includes use of the existing school bus routes provided by West Berkshire Council at a subsidised flat rate.
<http://info.westberks.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=29687>

Students must apply for a place using the Fare Payers Application Form on our website. The details of the Scheme and the application form are available here:
<http://www.westberks.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=28171>

Transport on a school bus is subject to the provisions of the **Behaviour Code**.
<http://info.westberks.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=29687>

The **16-19 Bursary Fund** is provided by the government to support the most financially disadvantaged 16-19 year olds with the cost of staying in education and training. The Fund is administered by schools, colleges and other establishments and students are advised to contact their school or college in cases of financial hardship. Comments from school and Colleges about the 16-19 Bursary and any financial support they offer for transport are included in the Travel Guide.

Exceptional Circumstances

Where a post-16 student requires additional support to be able to access education or training, the Council may take exceptional circumstances into account and could offer support.

There is **no automatic entitlement**, and the phrase “exceptional circumstances” primarily refers to the circumstances of the student rather than those of the parent. However, this could include families on low income (in receipt of maximum working tax credit (i.e. with no deductions due to income) – although most providers hold a bursary to support low income families. Evidence may be requested.

Parental work commitments would not be considered “exceptional”.

A request for support should explain relevant personal and/or family circumstances you believe should be considered and what support you are seeking.

Please send your application to:
pupiltransport@westberks.gov.uk

Or write to:
Service Manager (Access, Planning and Trading),
West Berkshire Council, West St House, Newbury RG14 1BZ

Within 20 working days of the application, a senior Council Officer will review your application and make contact with you about your request.

Feedback

If you believe that the Council's post-16 Transport Statement is not objective, clear and fair, please email or post your comments to the address above.

Complaints

If you believe that the Council's post-16 Transport Statement does not fulfil the Council's statutory duty, this can be raised through the Council's corporate complaints process, using the address above.

If you remain dissatisfied with the outcome of the complaint and believe that the Council has acted unreasonably, you can appeal to the Local Government Ombudsman. Your complaint must have been considered by the Council in the first instance.

Consultation

The Council consults annually on its transport policies for pupils and 16-19 students. The consultation appears on the Council's consultation finder and information is provided to schools to pass onto to its families to make them aware of the consultation. The Transport policy will be available on the Council website. The website also contains a link to www.gov.uk/subsidised-college-transport-16-19.

Fare Payer Scheme for School Travel 2016/17

Introduction

Spare seats on existing school transport contracted by the Council are made available through the Fare Payer Scheme to school pupils and post-16 students. Passes will be valid for journeys to and from school or academy between Monday and Friday only.

Eligible Pupils/Students

This Scheme is open to school pupils/students who are resident in West Berkshire and attend either a West Berkshire maintained school or academy, or their nearest school if the school is outside of West Berkshire. It does not apply to independent schools.

Where places are still available on 24 September each year, these can be made available to non-West Berkshire pupils/students attending West Berkshire schools.

Pupil/Student Guarantee

Where the pupil/student is attending their nearest or catchment school, they are guaranteed a place on an existing school bus route provided by West Berkshire Council. In line with statutory guidance, students aged 16-19 are also guaranteed a place. In order to qualify for the guarantee, the student must apply by 20 June 2016 and pay the relevant fee by 29 August 2016.

The guarantee will not apply to applications made after 20 June 2016 (late applicants).

For other students/pupils, there is not an entitlement to a place or a guarantee that a place would be available.

How to Apply

Applications should be made online - application forms are available on the West Berkshire Council website at www.westberks.gov.uk/schooltransport from 1 June 2016.

If you do not have computer access, please contact us for advice on how to proceed on 01635 519777.

Applicants will receive email confirmation that their application has been received and their unique identification number.

Where there are more applications than available places, successful applications will be drawn at random from those received by midnight on 20 June 2016, using the unique identifiers and a random number generator.

Late Applications (received after midnight on 20 June) will be added to the waiting list, unless spaces remain, in which case a space will be allocated.

Banding/Prices (per academic year)

The Scheme is based on a banding system for all routes:

- | | |
|---|------|
| • Nearest or Catchment school – flat rate | £250 |
| • 6 th form students – flat rate | £250 |
| • Other – up to 6 miles | £450 |
| • Other – over 6 miles | £800 |

Invoices will be raised by West Berkshire Council for the amount owed. Families can pay in up to 6 instalments, on request. Either full payment or the first instalment of an agreed repayment schedule must be made before the pass is issued.

Sibling Discount

Fares will be discounted by 10% for children in Years 7-11 who have an older sibling in the school, including a 6th form sibling. Sibling discount does not apply to 6th form students. Therefore, for example, 6th form twins would both pay the flat rate.

Waiting List

A waiting list will be kept for any unsuccessful applicants. These will be ranked as follows:

- Siblings of successful applicants who are attending their nearest or catchment school (in order of random allocation draw ranking)
- Other applicants (in order of random allocation draw ranking)
- Late applicants

Spaces on Contracted School Transport

Assistance is strictly limited to existing contracted school transport where spaces are available after those pupils eligible for free home to school transport and post-16 students eligible under statutory guidance have been accommodated.

Once the fare payer allocation for an existing school bus route has been filled, no further allocation will be made unless additional provision can be made at zero net cost.

Withdrawal of places on Contracted School Transport

The Council reserves the right to withdraw a place if it is required for a pupil who is entitled to free home to school transport or post-16 transport under the Council's statutory responsibilities. Any places (except post-16 guaranteed seats) which are available can be withdrawn if the seat is required for a pupil entitled to free transport; the contract ceases to operate; the contract is re-routed; or seating capacity is reduced.

The order of withdrawal will be Non-West Berkshire resident pupils/students in order of allocation ("last in, first-out" principle), followed by West Berkshire resident school pupils in order of allocation ("last in, first-out" principle).

A refund will only be made if the Council withdraws a fare payer place. West Berkshire Council operates a 6-term year. The refund will be calculated for the remaining complete terms. Please note: If a pupil is withdrawn for behaviour reasons, no refund will be made.

Subsidised Train Passes are available on some routes, and to apply for a pass, use the online application form. Train passes are charged at the rate determined by the train

company, except post-16 students where, in line with statutory guidance, the Band D flat rate fee will apply.

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SUMMARY OF CHANGES

Clarification and Amendments - 2015/16 Home to School Transport Policy

In response to queries from parents, the Council has amended the wording of the policy to provide more clarity. These changes do not affect entitlement:

- Parent's responsibilities – these are now highlighted throughout the policy for ease of reference.
- The information that is required to allow us to consider applications for transport under the *temporary medical condition* or *parental disability* clauses is now explained (page 5)
- The definition of an *Available route* has been expanded to provide more information on what is considered (section 9)
- In relation to *Appeals* (section 18), the content has been updated to provide a clearer explanation of the grounds for an Appeal and to explain the process where we need to ask for additional evidence.
- In relation to *Complaints* (section 19), the content has been updated to provide a clearer explanation of when a representation from a parent is a complaint and when it is an Appeal.

Amendments have been made:

- In relation to *Pupils attending a Pupil Referral Unit*, the content has been updated to reflect current practice. (Page 6)
- In relation to *Pupils permanently excluded from school*, the content has been updated to reflect current practice. (Page 6)
- In relation to *post-16 students with a statement of Special Educational Needs*, the content has been updated in the light of the SEND reforms. (page 9-10)
- In relation to children with a Statement of Special Education Needs/EHC Plan, the content has been updated in the light of the SEND reforms (pages 6, 9-10, 14-15)

Change of Entitlement - 2016/17 Home to School Transport Policy

The 2016/17 policy is the same as the 2015/16 policy except:

Removal of secondary catchment transport provision

The Council proposes to remove the discretionary criteria to provide transport for secondary students to their catchment school but will continue to provide transport to the nearest school to their home address (subject to meeting the relevant criteria).

This change means that, in the future:

- Where the nearest school and the catchment school are the same school, entitlement will not be affected.
- Students could still qualify for free transport to their *nearest* secondary school (e.g. under the distance or low income criteria, if this applied to their circumstances).
- Students wishing to travel to their catchment school, if this is not their nearest school, could apply for a Fare Payer place on the school bus, under the rules of the Fare Payer Scheme – a fee is payable. The bus may be over-subscribed and a place is not guaranteed.

This change would affect about 400 students out of a total secondary school population of 11500.

In line with national guidance, this change is being phased in from September 2016. This will apply to all new transport applications - new students when they start secondary education or existing students if they change their secondary school route. Current secondary students who receive transport will continue to be entitled to free transport on their existing route until the end of Year 11.

Changes to the Farepayer Scheme

The 2016/17 Scheme is the same as the 2015/16 Scheme except:

- Discount for siblings is reduced from 20% to 10%.

Agenda Item 8.

Title of Report:	Treasury Management Annual Report 2014/15
Report to be considered by:	Executive on 10 September 2015
Forward Plan Ref:	EX3016

Purpose of Report: To inform Members of the treasury management activity and performance of the Council's investments for the financial year 2014/15.

Recommended Action: To note the previous year's treasury management activities and performance of the fund.

Reason for decision to be taken: To ensure compliance with the updated CIPFA Code of Practice for Treasury Management in the Public Services 2009 and in accordance with Best Practice.

Other options considered: N/A

Key background documentation: Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice 2009
Annual Investment Strategy 2014/15
Annual Investment Strategy 2015/16
Capital Strategy and Programme 2014-2019
Capital Strategy and Programme 2015-2020
MTFS 2014-2017
MTFS 2015-2018

The proposals will help achieve the following Council Strategy aim:

- MEC – Become an even more effective Council**
- MEC1 – Become an even more effective Council**

The proposals contained in this report will help to achieve the above Council Strategy principle by:

Detailing the activity of the Treasury management function and the contribution it makes to the Council's annual budget at minimum risk to the security of the monies invested.

Portfolio Member Details	
Name & Telephone No.:	Councillor Roger Croft
E-mail Address:	Rcroft@westberks.gov.uk
Date Portfolio Member agreed report:	4 th August 2015
Contact Officer Details	
Name:	Gabrielle Esplin
Job Title:	Finance Manager
Tel. No.:	01635 519836
E-mail Address:	gesplin@westberks.gov.uk

Implications

Policy:	The Council's cash flow, borrowing and investments are carried out in accordance with the Annual Investment Strategy agreed by Council, March 2015
Financial:	The Treasury function is responsible for the daily cash flow management of the Council. Investment income generated from the Treasury Management contributes to the Council's annual budget.
Personnel:	None
Legal/Procurement:	None
Property:	None
Risk Management:	All investments are undertaken with a view to minimising risk and exposure to loss. The Treasury Management Strategy approved by the Council in March 2015 sets parameters to ensure this.
Corporate Board's Recommendation:	That the report be considered by Management Board.

Is this item relevant to equality?	Please tick relevant boxes	Yes	No
Does the policy affect service users, employees or the wider community and:			
• Is it likely to affect people with particular protected characteristics differently?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
• Is it a major policy, significantly affecting how functions are delivered?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
• Will the policy have a significant impact on how other organisations operate in terms of equality?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
• Does the policy relate to functions that engagement has identified as being important to people with particular protected characteristics?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
• Does the policy relate to an area with known inequalities?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Outcome (Where one or more 'Yes' boxes are ticked, the item is relevant to equality)			
Relevant to equality - Complete an EIA available at www.westberks.gov.uk/eia			<input type="checkbox"/>
Not relevant to equality			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Is this item subject to call-in?	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/>	No: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If not subject to call-in please put a cross in the appropriate box:		
The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval		<input type="checkbox"/>
Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council		<input type="checkbox"/>
Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position		<input type="checkbox"/>
Considered or reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission or associated Task Groups within preceding six months		<input type="checkbox"/>
Item is Urgent Key Decision		<input type="checkbox"/>
Report is to note only		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Executive Summary

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The aim of the Council's Treasury Management Strategy is to manage cash flow to ensure sufficient funds are available on a day to day basis for the Council's operations. Any surplus funds are invested to generate the most interest, while minimising the exposure of investments to risk. Investment and borrowing activities in 2014/15, were set against an economic context of slow growth and very low inflation and interest rates.

2 Summary of Findings

- 2.1 The average level of funds invested by the Council in 2014/15 (net of short term borrowing) was £12.7 million. Funds were invested in instant access deposit accounts with Natwest, Bank of Scotland, and the Goldman Sachs Global Liquidity money market fund, which paid rates of interest of up to 0.43%; a deposit account with Santander UK which paid 0.8% in 2014/15 but is now reduced to 0.4%; and fixed term deposits with UK Building Societies for an average period of 42 days and an average rates of 0.55%. The maximum amount invested with any one institution was £5 million. A number of short term loans were also arranged from other Local Authorities to cover our short term cashflow needs. The average length of loan was 12 days and the average rate of interest paid was 0.41%.
- 2.2 The Council earned total interest on its investments (net of interest paid on short term borrowing) of £93,000 or 0.73% of the average fund value. We also received a discount of 3.1% or £298,000 on our contributions to the Berkshire Pension Fund, by paying the contributions in advance. Taking into account this saving, the total net amount earned through cashflow management was £391,000 (compared with the budget for interest on investments of £378,000). If we include the gain on early payment of pension contributions, this would represent a return of around 2.2%.
- 2.3 £17.7 million new longer term loans were also taken from the Public Works and Loans Board (PWLB) to fund capital expenditure in 2014/15 and earlier years. The loans were for between 5 years at 1.5% interest and 40 years at 3.21%, with the length of loan linked to the estimated useful life of the asset funded. £3.4 million repayments were made on existing capital financing loans, bringing the Council's total long term capital financing debt with the PWLB to £115.7 million.

3 Equalities Impact Assessment

- 3.1 This item is not relevant to equality.

4 Conclusion

- 4.1 The Treasury Management Group (including the Portfolio Holder for Finance) will monitor and review the Council's investments and borrowing during 2015/16, to ensure that treasury activities continue in line with the approved Treasury Management Strategy in order to ensure the security and liquidity of and return on the Council's funds. The group will also aim to finance the Council's Capital Programme at the best available rates of interest.

Executive Report

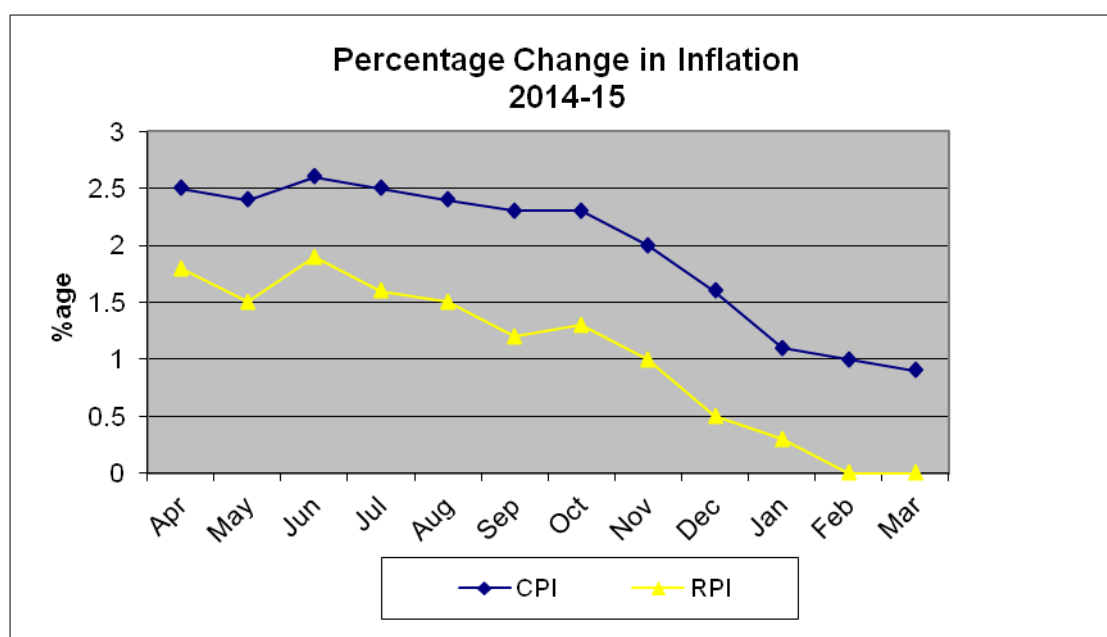
1. Introduction

- 1.1. The CIPFA Code of Practice for Treasury Management in the Public Services, revised in April 2009, requires the Section 151 Officer to provide annual reports to the Executive before the start of the financial year and after the year end. Before the start of the financial year, the strategy and plan to be pursued in the forthcoming year is reported. After the close of the financial year, an annual report reviewing the Treasury Management activity and performance for the previous year is provided.
- 1.2. The aim of the latest investment strategy, which was approved by the Council in March 2015, is to manage the Council's cash flow to ensure sufficient funds are available on a day to day basis for the Council's operations. Any surplus funds are invested to generate the most beneficial interest receipts, while minimising the exposure of investments to risk.
- 1.3. In 2014/15 the Treasury Management Group met three times to review performance and determine the detail of policy. This group consists of the Head of Finance, the Chief Accountant, the Finance Manager for Capital, Assets, VAT and Treasury, the Treasury Accountant, the Portfolio Member for Finance and two other members.

2. Economic conditions

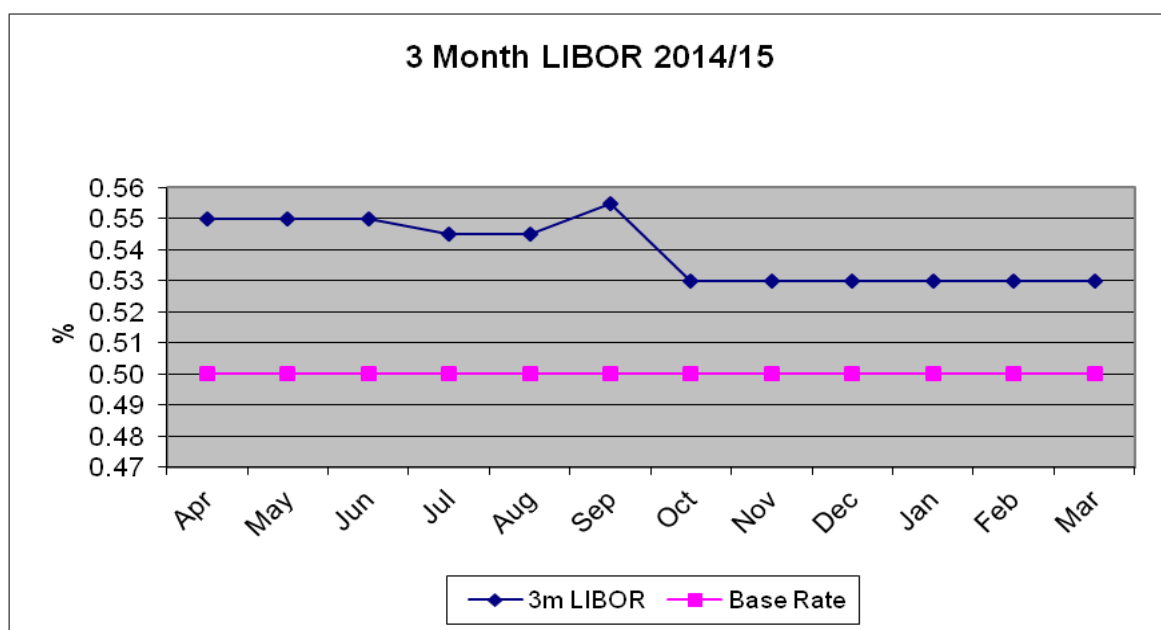
- 2.1 The government's main measure of inflation, which the Bank of England Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) uses to inform its interest rate decisions, is the Consumer Price Index (CPI). Annual CPI fell below the Bank of England 2% target during 2014/15 (Chart 1) and reached 0% at the end of March. The main factors driving down CPI were reduced food and energy prices. The MPC's current policy aim is for inflation to return to the 2% target within 2 years.

Chart 1



- 2.2 The latest Bank of England inflation report (May 2015) states that the GDP growth was robust in 2014, moderating in the second half of the year. Despite the weakness in the first quarter of 2015, the outlook for growth remains solid. Household real incomes have been boosted by the fall in food, energy and imported goods prices. The absorption of remaining slack and a pickup in productivity growth are expected to support wage growth in the period ahead. Along with the low cost of finance, that will help maintain domestic demand growth.
- 2.3 A combination of very weak pay rises and inflation above the rate of pay rises meant that consumer disposable income was still being eroded and expectations for the first increase in Bank Rate therefore started to recede as growth was still heavily dependent on better consumer demand.
- 2.4 Official interest rates in the United Kingdom remained at historically low levels with the Bank of England base rate at 0.50% for the sixth consecutive year. The European Central Bank announced details of an expanded asset purchase programme. Short and long-term interest rates fell across many advanced economies.
- 2.5 During the second half of 2014 financial markets were caught out by a halving of the oil prices. The Bank and HM Treasury announced an amendment to the Funding for lending Scheme (FLS) on 2 December 2014 which allows participants to borrow from the FLS until January 2016, with incentives to boost lending to small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs).
- 2.6 The rates available to the Council reflect the three month sterling London Inter-Bank Offer Rate or LIBOR (this is the rate at which the banks are prepared to lend to each other). LIBOR (see Chart 2) has remained fairly flat throughout the year starting year at 0.55% with a slight improvement to nearly 0.56% in September before levelling down to 0.53% for the latter part of year. The overall level is still an improvement on the average level of 2013/14 0.51%.

Chart2



- 2.7 Interest rates offered by banks and building societies continue to be low for Local Authorities. WBC received notifications of reductions in deposit rates from its NatWest and Santander UK call accounts.
- 2.8 Despite these pressures, there was a slight improvement in the interest rates earned by the Council over the course of 2014/15 with reasonable returns on investments made for 3 months or more although with the base rate and economy static there were no sudden surges in rates.

3 Overview of Cash Flow and Treasury Management Strategy

- 3.1 Guidance on Local Government Investments in England gives priority to security and liquidity. The Council's Treasury Management Strategy therefore aims to maximise the return on its investments without compromising these principles. The Council manages all its investments and borrowing in house.
- 3.2 The amount of cash held by the Council fluctuates throughout the year and within each month, depending on the dates on which major government grants are received and when large payments are made - in particular, weekly creditors payments and monthly salaries. In general terms, funds are high on the first working day of the month when a large proportion of Council tax and government grant is received and low on the last working day of the month when the majority of staff salaries are paid. The Council's overall funds are lower at the end of the financial year, because most Council Tax is paid over ten months from April to January.
- 3.3 It should be borne in mind that the amount of cash held by the Council does not equate to the total usable reserves shown on the Council's balance sheet. This is because we have chosen to minimise the amount borrowed to fund capital expenditure, by offsetting our borrowing needs against our reserves. This is in order to minimise the revenue cost of borrowing and to avoid the risks associated with investing large balances.

4 Short Term Investments and Borrowing in 2014/15

- 4.1 In order to ensure that the Council's day to day cash flow requirements can be met a sum of between approximately £1 million and £20 million is held in instant access accounts. Table 1 shows the institutions and interest rates for these accounts:

Table 1

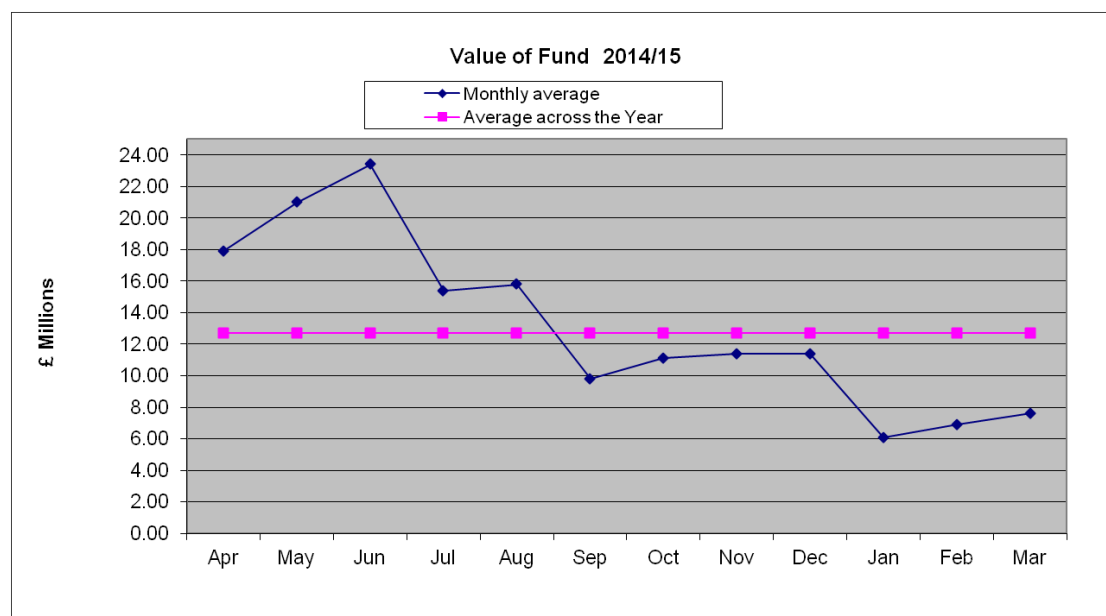
Institution:	Interest Rate:	Changing to:
Bank of Scotland	0.40%	No change
NatWest	0.25% < £500K/0.40% > £500K	0.25% overall from May 2015
Santander UK	0.80%	0.40% from July 2015
Goldman Sachs Money Market Fund	Variable averaging 0.40%	Latest rates 0.43%

- 4.2 In accordance with the Council's Treasury Management Strategy, the deposit accounts are held with banks rated A by the Fitch Credit Ratings Agency, while the money market fund is rated AAA by Fitch (these ratings indicate a very low risk of default on investments). The maximum held in each account at any one time was £5 million.
- 4.3 At various points in the year the Council had surplus funds which it placed in fixed term, fixed rate investments until they were needed to cover outgoings. The longer the term of the investment, the higher the rate of interest earned. During the year, 28 fixed term investments were made for periods of between 1 day and 364 days. All these investments were placed with the top 20 British Building Societies. The maximum invested with any one institution was £5 million, with lower limits on the amounts invested with the smaller building societies. The average length of investment was 41 days and the average interest earned on these investments was 0.77%.
- 4.4 The majority of the Council's investments are arranged through one of five firms of financial brokers, which have ready access to the most competitive interest rates on the market each day.
- 4.5 It was also necessary from time to time for the Council to take out short term loans to cover its cash flow requirements. 32 short term loans were taken out during the financial year, all from other local authorities, for periods of between 1 day and 62 days, at rates of interest between 0.27% and 0.50%. 23 of these loans were for 15 days or less. The average length of loan was 9 days and the average interest paid on these loans was 0.41%.
- 4.6 In addition, some short term borrowing was undertaken to finance capital expenditure on an interim basis, in order to take advantage of cheap short term borrowing rates. The Council had loans of £6 million from Derbyshire County Council for this purpose between April and October 2014 at an average rate of 0.51%.. This was refinanced through a longer term loan from the Public Works and Loans Board (PWLB) in October 2014. We also took at a loan of £2 million from Oxford City Council from December 2014 to September 2015 at a rate of 0.62% which we also plan to refinance through a longer term PWLB loan in 2015/16.

5 Overall Performance of the Treasury Fund

- 5.1 The average value of the fund during the year (i.e. the total of temporary investments less temporary borrowing) was £12.7 million (see Chart 3). The net value of the fund at 31st March 2015 was -£2.4 million on the 31st March 2015 because of the need to borrow to cover payroll and creditors on the last day of the year.

Chart 3



- 5.2 The net amount of interest earned from the Council's investment and short term borrowing activities in 2014/15 was £93,000 compared with £97,000 in 2013/14. This represents a net rate of return of 0.73% as compared with the average bank base rate for the year of 0.50%.
- 5.3 In addition, the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, who manage the Berkshire pension fund, offered West Berkshire a discount of 3.10% on its total pension contributions due for the year in exchange for paying the contributions in advance in April 2014 instead of in monthly instalments. In this way, the Council achieved a saving of £298,000, by, in effect, making a temporary investment of approximately £10.7 million with the Berkshire Pension Fund at a rate of return of 3.10%. This was achieved because the Pension Fund is much bigger than the West Berkshire treasury fund and is able to invest over longer periods and therefore to earn a higher rate of return. Taking into account this saving, therefore, the total net investment income earned was £391,000. This compares favourably with the 2014/15 budget for interest on investments of £378,000.
- 5.4 If the average fund balance is adjusted to include the average level prepaid pension contributions (approximately £5.2m across the year), and if the saving achieved through this arrangement is included in our return on investments, the overall rate of return would equate to 2.2%.

5.5 Table 2 (below) shows that investment and borrowing activities in 2014/15 were largely in line with the Treasury Management Strategy approved by Council in March and with the more detailed Treasury Management Policies, which underpin the Strategy. There were a few exceptional circumstances when unexpected payments were received into or paid out of the Council's main bank account. In these cases the account was returned to its approved limit on the next working day.

Table 2

Policy	Target	Actual	Explanation
Credit limit with counterparties not exceeded	100%	96.05%	Late clearing of receipts into the Council's main bank account meant that on 10 out of 253 working days the £5 million counterparty limit with Natwest was exceeded. On all occasions, this was corrected the next working day.
All counterparties on approved lending list	100%	100%	
All investments are approved investments	100%	100%	
Segregation of duties complied with	100%	100%	
Current account daily balance within +/- £100k of estimate	100%	99.9%	Natwest SIBA automatically ensures a credit £10K balance unless we overdraw. The normal maximum overdraft of £100,000 was exceeded on 1 occasion when the Treasury team were not informed in time of large urgent payments to be made.
Target for short term debt of £15m not exceeded	100%	100%	There were no occasions where this target was breached

6 Long Term Borrowing in 2014/15

- 6.1 With the exception of debt embedded in the PFI contract, all the Council's long term debt is with the Public Works and Loans Board (PWLB). The level of long term borrowing in 2014/15 was in line with the prudential borrowing limits set out in the Annual Investment Strategy 2014/15 and the Capital Strategy 2014-2019, which were both approved by the Council in March 2014. Borrowing needs were also reviewed during the year by the Treasury Management Group.
- 6.2 At 1 April 2014 the Council had long term PWLB loans of £101.4 million (including £20.6 million remaining from the loans inherited from the former Berkshire County Council). During 2015/16 new PWLB loans of £17.7 million were taken out as follows:

Table 3

New PWLB Loans 2014/15	Amount	Type	Rate
To fund capital expenditure prior to 2010 previously offset against internal balances (including refinancing of interim loan from Derbyshire County Council – see paragraph 4.6)	£8,000,000	Annuity	3.80%
Capital spend in 2015/16 on assets with 5 year life (including highways maintenance)	£600,000	Annuity	1.50%
Capital spend in 2015/16 on assets with 10 year life (including highways maintenance)	£3,400,000	Annuity	1.99%
Capital spend in 2015/16 on assets with 25 year life (including highways improvements and building maintenance)	£2,200,000	Annuity	2.81%
Capital spend in 2015/16 assets with 40 year life (mainly new buildings, including schools)	£3,500,000	Annuity	3.21%

- 6.3 £3.4 million loan repayments were made in 2014/15, leaving the balance of long term debt with the PWLB at 31st March 2015 at £115.7million.
- 6.4 In the current financial year (2015/16) we anticipate that the Council's total long term PWLB debt will increase by approximately £9.3 million, to £125.0m to allow for the financing of planned capital expenditure in 2015/16 and previous years less principal repayments due to be made this year on existing loans. Over the next six years, the level of the Council's long term debt is expected to reach a peak of approximately £145 million. This debt level is in line with the capital strategy and MTFS approved by Council in March 2015. From 2021/22 onwards, the Council's long term debt is expected to start to decrease at a rate of about £1.5m per year.
- 6.5 These figures do not include the debt embedded in the Waste PFI contract to finance the cost of building the Padworth Waste Management facility. This debt, which is included in the total borrowing shown on the Council's balance sheet, stood at £16 million at the 31st March 2015. (Repayments of this debt are included in the monthly waste contract charges, which are paid from the revenue budget for waste management).
- 6.6 As explained in paragraph 3.3 (above), the Council has avoided borrowing more than is necessary in the past, by offsetting some capital expenditure against its useable reserves. This means that, if the Council wishes to spend any significant amount from its reserves, it is likely to be necessary to undertake more borrowing to refinance previous years' capital expenditure, so increasing the revenue cost of financing capital spend. However, the forecast future level of borrowing and the cost of debt repayments included in the MTFS both allow for the amount expected to be borrowed to refinance previous year's capital expenditure.
- 6.7 The council also aims to minimise borrowing by making use of capital receipts wherever possible to fund capital investment.

Appendices

There are no Appendices to this report.

Consultees

Local Stakeholders: Treasury Management Group

Officers Consulted: None

Trade Union: None

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Agenda Item 10.

Title of Report:	Implementing The Living Wage
Report to be considered by:	Executive on 10 September 2015
Forward Plan Ref:	EX3038

Purpose of Report: To ensure that no employee directly employed by the Council (excluding schools) is paid less than "The Living Wage" set by The Living Wage Foundation each November.

Recommended Action: That the Council adds a West Berkshire Council "Living Wage Supplement" to the pay of all employees who would otherwise receive an hourly rate below The Living Wage with effect from 1st October 2015.
That schools are encouraged to use the "Living Wage Supplement" for their employees who would otherwise receive an hourly rate below The Living Wage.

Reason for decision to be taken: To meet a manifesto commitment to raise low pay thresholds

Other options considered: Formally sign up to the Living Wage Foundation -rejected because that would also mean forcing contractors to pay The Living Wage to the contracted workforce.

To abolish the use of spinal column points below The Living Wage- rejected because schools not following the Council's example will still need these spinal column points.

Key background documentation: The Living Wage website
<http://www.livingwage.org.uk/how-become-living-wage-employer>

Published Works:

The proposals will help achieve the following Council Strategy aim: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MEC – Become an even more effective Council
The proposals contained in this report will help to achieve the following Council Strategy priority: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MEC1 – Become an even more effective Council
The proposals contained in this report will help to achieve the above Council Strategy aims and priorities by: raising low pay thresholds

Portfolio Member Details	
Name & Telephone No.:	Councillor Roger Croft - Tel 07765 224249
E-mail Address:	rcroft@westberks.gov.uk
Date Portfolio Member agreed report:	01 August 2015

Contact Officer Details

Name:	Robert O'Reilly
Job Title:	Head of HR
Tel. No.:	01635 519358
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Implications

Policy: The introduction of a "Living Wage Supplement" would be a change to the Council's Pay Policy. It would be subject to annual review by the Personnel Committee as part of the Pay Policy review.

Financial: The cost to the Council excluding on-costs is as follows:
 In 2015/16 if implemented on 1st October the cost is £5,590 at current rate of £7.85 per hour. The Living Wage rate will increase on 1st November 2015. If the rate increases by 2% the 2015/16 cost will be £9,430. If the rate increases by 3% the 2015/16 cost will be £11,580.

In 2016/17 the cost is £6,567 at current rate of £7.85 per hour. The Living Wage rate will increase on 1st November 2015. If the rate increases by 2% the 2016/17 cost will be £11,568. If the rate increases by 3% the 2016/17 cost will be £14,931 (excluding the effect of the November 2016 increase in the rate)

Note: the cost in 2016/17 is influenced by the fact that a number of the affected corporate employees are currently on spinal column point 10 and their incremental increase on 1st April 2016 will take them above £7.85 per hour.

Apprentices are excluded because their age related National Minimum Wage rate is not included in this proposal.

Personnel: The "Living Wage Supplement", if approved, would be a discretionary payment made by the Council to relevant employees. It would not form part of the employees' contract of employment and could be withdrawn or reduced when it is annually reviewed by the Personnel Committee.

Legal/Procurement: If some maintained schools implement the "Living Wage Supplement" and some do not, there is a slight risk of an equal pay challenge (the risk is slight because almost all the school employees concerned are female so it is unlikely that a male comparator will be found)

Property: None

Risk Management: There is a risk that the Living Wage will be increased annually at a much higher rate than expected which would increase costs.

Corporate Board's Recommendation: Approved by CB on 4th August 2015

Is this item relevant to equality?	Please tick relevant boxes		Yes	No
Does the policy affect service users, employees or the wider community and:				
• Is it likely to affect people with particular protected characteristics differently?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
• Is it a major policy, significantly affecting how functions are delivered?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
• Will the policy have a significant impact on how other organisations operate in terms of equality?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
• Does the policy relate to functions that engagement has identified as being important to people with particular protected characteristics?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
• Does the policy relate to an area with known inequalities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Outcome (Where one or more 'Yes' boxes are ticked, the item is relevant to equality)	
Relevant to equality - Complete an EIA available at http://intranet/EqIA				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Not relevant to equality				<input type="checkbox"/>

Is this item subject to call-in?	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No: <input type="checkbox"/>
If not subject to call-in please put a cross in the appropriate box:		
The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Considered or reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission or associated Task Groups within preceding six months	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Item is Urgent Key Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Report is to note only	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Executive Summary

1. Introduction

- 1.1 There are 17 corporate employees currently paid below the Living Wage rate of £7.85 ph. Many more employees are paid below the Living Wage rate in schools.
- 1.2 There is a political will to ensure that no Council employees are paid less than the Living Wage.
- 1.3 This report explains the current situation; the case for change; sets out three options; and makes a proposal.
- 1.4 The proposal would see the Council shadow the Living Wage (not to be confused with the government's new "national living wage") by using a West Berkshire Council "Living Wage Supplement" which will increase each 1st November.
- 1.5 The report looks at the higher costs for schools and sets out a proposed approach to schools.

2. Proposals

- 2.1 To introduce a West Berkshire Council "Living Wage Supplement". This would vary depending on the spinal column point of the employee but would take all relevant corporate employees up to £7.85 per hour on 1st October 2015.
- 2.2 The "Living Wage Supplement" would need to change when the Living Wage Foundation increases the Living Wage hourly pay rate each November.
- 2.3 The cost increase will be absorbed by services affected.
- 2.4 It is recommended that the Council commends the introduction of the "Living Wage Supplement" to schools. It will be up to individual governing bodies to decide if their school can afford to implement the "Living Wage Supplement".

3. Equalities Impact Assessment Outcomes

- 3.1 There is no equalities impact which affects one or more group with a protected characteristic under the Equalities Act.
- 3.2 There is a slight risk of an equal pay challenge from an employee (male or female) in a maintained school which does not pay the "Living Wage Supplement"; using an employee of the opposite sex in a maintained school which does pay the "Living Wage Supplement" as the comparator.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 This report recommends implementing a West Berkshire Council "Living Wage Supplement" for corporate employees with effect from 1st October 2015.
- 4.2 This report recommends that "Living Wage Supplement" is commended to schools.

Executive Report

1. Introduction

- 1.1 There has been a national campaign to pay workers 'The Living Wage' since 2001. This campaign seeks to persuade organisations to sign up to a commitment to pay The Living Wage to its employees and contractors to provide a decent standard of living. The rate is currently £7.85 per hour outside London and £9.15 for London. Boris Johnson is a keen supporter of the Living Wage campaign which is run by a charity (The Living Wage Foundation) using research provided by Loughborough University.
- 1.2 If an organisation formally commits to the Living Wage it signs a 'pledge' and receives positive publicity from the campaign group. IKEA recently benefited from such publicity. The campaign argues that the national minimum wage (NMW) is not high enough to provide for a decent standard of living without the need for a second job. The Living Wage Foundation increases the hourly rate for the Living Wage outside London annually on 1st November. For organisations signing the pledge, The Living Wage is payable to all employees aged over 18.
- 1.3 Employers who formally pledge to be a Living Wage Employer must insist that their contractors also pay the Living Wage (albeit only from the date of renewal of existing contracts or the letting of new contracts).
- 1.4 Confusing the terminology somewhat, the Chancellor introduced a 'National Living Wage' in his recent emergency budget. The National Living Wage (NLW) will be set at £7.20 per hour from 1 April 2016 outside London and rise to £9.00 per hour by 2020. Only those aged 25 and over will be entitled to the NLW. For those under 25, the current age-banded levels of the National Minimum Wage (NMW) will continue to apply. This means that the NLW can be seen to simply insert a further age-banded level into the NMW so that the current adults' rate becomes the preserve of 21-24 year olds only.
- 1.5 Although the NLW will rise to £9.00 per hour by 2020 it is likely that the voluntary Living Wage set by the Living Wage Foundation will always be higher than the compulsory NLW set by the government.
- 1.6 The NLW itself has caused concern in local authorities because many care providers funded by LAs pay the NMW and the introduction of the NLW will inject costs into the system that will need to be met by either the providers or the LAs or a combination of both. Steve Duffin has modelled the effect on WBC for ASC costs and estimates that the NLW will increase costs in the system by £2m per year from 2016/17 to 2020. These costs would be even higher if the Council formally pledged to become a Living Wage Employer and would affect other contractors outside ASC.
- 1.7 There are 17 corporate employees currently paid below the Living Wage rate of £7.85 ph. Many more employees are paid below the Living Wage rate in schools. The suggested approach to schools is set out at section 5 below.

- 1.8 This report recommends that WBC 'shadows' the Living Wage using a "Living Wage Supplement" to ensure that no corporate employee is paid below the hourly rate set by the Living Wage Foundation each November.
- 1.9 This report recommends that the Council does not formally pledge with the Living Wage Foundation to pay the Living Wage because to do so would mean that the Council's contractors must also pay the Living Wage.
- 1.10 The Council does not know the percentage increase to be made by the Living Wage Foundation each November. The government has signalled that it expects a 1% pay increase in the public sector for each of the next four years. The increase in the Living Wage is almost certainly going to be more than 1% each year. This means there is the possibility that, over time, an increasing number of employees in the Council will come within the orbit of the "Living Wage Supplement".

2. The case for change

2.1 The local election Conservative manifesto states:

- (1) "It's important that we invest in leadership development and work to up-skill all Council staff. Over time, that up-skilling will be demonstrated by raising low pay thresholds and tying that to increased staff accountability and rewards for performance".

2.2 There is a political will to raise low pay thresholds which means that that no corporate Council employees will be paid less than the Living Wage. The up-skilling and rewards for performance mentioned in the manifesto will be achieved by line managers discussing these issues with the relevant employees as part of their performance management.

2.3 An independent study examining the business benefits of implementing a Living Wage policy in London found that more than 80% of employers believe that the Living Wage had enhanced the quality of the work of their staff, while absenteeism had fallen by approximately 25%.

3. Options for change

3.1 Option One: the Council can formally adopt the Living Wage for corporate employees and urge schools to do the same.

- (1) The advantage with Option One is that this will provide positive publicity for the Council which is directly linked to the manifesto pledge. An example of the type of press statement that might follow is provided by Boris Johnson in his role as Mayor of London: "Paying the London Living Wage ensures hard-working Londoners are helped to make ends meet, providing a boost not only for their personal quality of life but delivering indisputable economic dividends to employers too".
- (2) A further advantage is that pledging to pay the Living Wage will lead to a reduction in wage inequality and would be popular with the local trade unions.

- (3) However Option One has the disadvantage of being publically tied to the Living Wage campaign and its pay increases each 1st November which may be unaffordable at some time in the future
- (4) A further disadvantage, if the Council formally pledged to adopt the Living Wage, is that it would have to insist that its contractors also pay the Living Wage when contracts are let or come up for renewal.

3.2 Option Two: the Council could stop using spinal column points which are below the Living Wage (currently £7.85 ph).

- (1) Option Two would mean that the minimum spinal column point (SCP) used for corporate employees would be SCP11 which is currently £7.88 per hour.
- (2) This has the advantage of less work for Payroll than paying a supplement.
- (3) A disadvantage is that the lower spinal column points would still have to be used by the schools not following the Council's lead, which could lead to some confusion.
- (4) Option Two would be more expensive than paying a "Living Wage Supplement" to take the hourly rate up to the Living Wage. The current difference is only £0.03 per hour (between £7.85 and £7.88 per hour). Although this difference is small it would make the task of persuading schools to follow the lead of the Council a bit harder than Option Three below.

3.3 Option Three

The least expensive and most direct way of meeting the aspiration of paying no corporate Council employee below the Living Wage is to introduce a West Berkshire Council "Living Wage Supplement". This would vary depending on the spinal column point of the employee and would take all relevant employees up to £7.85 ph on 1st October 2015 and match the Living Wage hourly rate thereafter.

4. Proposal

- 4.1 To choose Option Three and introduce a West Berkshire Council "Living Wage Supplement". This would vary depending on the spinal column point of the employee but would take all relevant employees up to £7.85 per hour on 1st October 2015.
- 4.2 The "Living Wage Supplement" would need to change when the Living Wage Foundation increases the Living Wage rate each November.
- 4.3 The "Living Wage Supplement", if approved, would be a discretionary payment made by the Council to relevant employees. It would not form part of the employees' contract of employment and could be withdrawn or reduced when the Council's Pay Policy is annually reviewed by the Personnel Committee.

- 4.4 Organisations who have formally pledged to pay the Living Wage have up to six months to introduce the increase announced on 1st November each year. It is therefore possible to increase the rate on any date between 1st November and 30th April each year.
- 4.5 It is recommended that the increase in WBC is implemented on 1st November each year because otherwise some corporate employees will be paid below the Living wage for part of each year.
- 4.6 The cost increase will be absorbed by the services affected and build into the base budget going forward. The costs for services are relatively modest.
- 4.7 Apprentices are paid on the age related National Minimum Wage (NMW). They are excluded from this proposal.
- 4.8 Employees on 'old' Newbury District or Berkshire County Council contracts of employment (i.e. employees who have declined the opportunity to transfer to the West Berkshire contract of employment) who are paid below £7.85 per hour are included in this proposal.

5. Schools

- 5.1 Schools which are not maintained by West Berkshire Council are free to pay whatever rates of pay they wish to support staff (e.g. academies, aided schools, foundation schools). However, schools which are maintained by WBC must use the Council's pay and grading structure to pay their support staff.
- 5.2 Schools have more employees paid on spinal column point 10 or below (Grade A or B) than the corporate services. It is recommended that school are commended to join the Council in paying the West Berkshire Council "Living Wage Supplement" to bring all these employees up to the Living Wage of £7.85 per hour.
- 5.3 The total cost (excluding on-costs) if all schools were to pay the "Living Wage Supplement" would be as follows:
- (1) In 2015/16 if implemented on 1st October the cost to schools would be £87,501 at current rate of £7.85 per hour. The Living Wage rate will increase on 1st November 2015. If the rate increases by 2% the 2015/16 cost to schools would be £164,301. If the rate increases by 3% the 2015/16 cost to schools would be £119,554 (excluding the effect of the November 2016 increase in the rate)
 - (2) In 2016/17 the cost to schools would be is £175,001 at current rate of £7.85 per hour. The Living Wage rate will increase on 1st November 2015. If the rate increases by 2% the 2016/17 cost will be £259,075. If the rate increases by 3% the 2016/17 cost will be £326,204 (excluding the effect of the November 2016 increase in the rate).
- 5.4 The proposed "Living Wage Supplement" is a non contractual supplement that will be paid at the discretion of the governing body (GB) and may be withdrawn or reduced by the GB at its annual review of the school's pay policy. This distinction will be helpful in maintaining the pay differential between Teaching Assistant Level 1 (grade B) and Teaching Assistant Level 2 (grade C). Although the rate of pay will be

the same for new TAs Level 1 and new TAs Level 2, the terms of the payment will be different (secure for TA Level 2 under contract; discretionary for TA level 1)

5.5 If some maintained schools implement the "Living Wage Supplement" and some do not, there is a slight risk of an equal pay challenge (the risk is slight because almost all the school employees concerned are female so it is unlikely that a male comparator will be found).

5.6 It is recommended that the Council commends the introduction of the "Living Wage Supplement" to schools. It will be up to individual governing bodies to decide if their school want to, or can afford to, implement the "Living Wage Supplement".

6. Costs

6.1 The cost to the Council (excluding on-costs) is as follows:

6.2 In 2015/16 if implemented on 1st October 2015 the cost is £5,590 at current rate of £7.85 per hour. The Living Wage rate will increase on 1st November 2015. If the rate increases by 2% the 2015/16 cost will be £9,430. If the rate increases by 3% the 2015/16 cost will be £11,580.

6.3 In 2016/17 the cost is £6,567 at current rate of £7.85 per hour. The Living Wage rate will increase on 1st November 2015. If the rate increases by 2% the 2016/17 cost will be £11,568. If the rate increases by 3% the 2016/17 cost will be £14,931 (excluding the effect of the November 2016 increase in the rate)

6.4 The cost in 2016/17 is influenced by the fact that a number of the affected corporate employees are currently on spinal column point 10 and their incremental increase on 1st April 2016 will take them above £7.85 per hour.

7. Conclusion

7.1 It is recommended that the "Living Wage Supplement" which will take all corporate employees up to £7.85 per hour is introduced on 1st October 2015 and increased in line with the increase in the Living Wage rate per hour each 1st November.

7.2 It is recommended that the above approach is commended to schools.

Appendices

There are no Appendices to this report.

Consultees

Local Stakeholders: *

Officers Consulted: Steve Duffin, Gemma McNamara and Corporate Board

Trade Union: To be consulted after CB.

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