

IMPROVING PLACES SELECT COMMISSION

Venue: Town Hall, Moorgate
Street, ROTHERHAM.
S60 2TH

Date: Thursday, 1st November, 2018

Time: 1.30 p.m.

A G E N D A

1. To consider whether the press and public should be excluded from the meeting during consideration of any part of the agenda.
2. To determine any item(s) the Chairman is of the opinion should be considered later in the agenda as a matter of urgency.
3. Apologies for absence
4. Declarations of Interest
5. Questions from members of the public and the press
6. Communications
7. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 20th September, 2018 (Pages 1 - 13)
8. Home to School Transport Policy Implementation Update (Pages 14 - 68)
9. Homelessness Strategy 2019-2022 and Housing Allocation Policy (Pages 69 - 100)
10. Amendments to the Housing Allocation Policy - January 2019 (Pages 101 - 113)
11. Date and time of the next meeting - Thursday, 20th December, 2018 at 1.30 p.m.

Improving Places Select Commission Membership 2018/19:-

Chair – Councillor Mallinder

Vice-Chair – Councillor Sansome

Councillors Atkin, Buckley, B. Cutts, Elliot, Fenwick-Green, Jepson, Jones, Khan, McNeely, Reeder, Sheppard, Julie Turner, Vjestica, Walsh, Whysall and Wyatt.

Co-opted Members:- Mrs. W. Birch and Mrs. L. Shears.

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Present:- Councillor Mallinder (in the Chair); Councillors Atkin, Fenwick-Green, Jepson, Jones, McNeely, Sansome, Sheppard, Julie Turner, Vjestica, Walsh, Whysall and Wyatt, along with Mrs. W. Birch and Mrs. L. Shears (Co-optees).

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Buckley, B. Cutts, Elliot and Khan.

The webcast of the Council Meeting can be viewed at:-

<https://rotherham.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

15. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Sansome declared a personal interest in Minute No. 20 (Thriving Neighbourhoods) on the basis that he was involved in a Neighbourhood Working Group Forum. He would remain in the room, but not participate in the debate.

Councillor Sheppard declared a personal interest in Minute No. 20 (Thriving Neighbourhoods) on the basis that he was involved in a Neighbourhood Working Group Forum. He would remain in the room, but not participate in the debate.

16. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

There were no questions from members of the public or the press.

17. COMMUNICATIONS

The Chair reminded the Commission about the visit to the Crematorium tomorrow at 10.30 a.m. (21st September) following the recent renovations.

The Chair also sought the Commission's agreement to the co-option of Mrs. W. Birch from Rotherfed to take the place of the previous co-optee who retired.

Resolved:- That Mrs. Birch be included on the membership of the Improving Places Select Commission as a co-optee from Rotherfed.

18. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 26 JULY 2018

Consideration was given to the minutes of the previous meeting held on 26th July, 2018.

Reference was made to Minute No. 11 (Dignity Contract) and the positive feedback which would feed into the action plan and performance monitoring process. Further update reports would be provided to the

Improving Places Select Commission in due course.

Resolved:- That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Improving Places Select Commission held on Thursday, 26th July, 2018, be approved as a correct record.

19. ROTHER VALLEY CARAVAN PARK

Consideration was given to the report presented by Phil Gill, Green Spaces Manager, which provided current details on the construction of the new camping and caravan site at Rother Valley Country Park. The development was on track and scheduled for completion and handover in March, 2019, in line with the original project programme. This was an ambitious programme, but would be in operation from Easter, 2019.

Further information was provided on the capital costs of the programme, approval of planning permission in April, 2018 and tenders and the interest and consultation which helped shape the proposals.

The project was being carefully managed and there were odd issues cropping up which were being managed within budget.

Operation and marketing of the site moving forward was being developed, alongside the secure booking system which would be simple to use deliver best possible income. This would be subject to further evaluation and review.

Additionally, a short presentation, using PowerPoint, was provided for the Select Commission and highlighted:-

- Consultation – Elected Members and examples of comments.
- Consultation – Youth Cabinet and examples of comments.
- Consultation – Access4All and examples of comments.
- Consultation - Caravan Users and examples of comments.
- Consultation - Local Residents and examples of comments.
- Recent Progress in photo format – 5th September, 2018.

A discussion and a question and answer session ensued and the following issues were raised and clarified:-

- Site access, disabled pitches, controlled use of showers/toilets and the possibility of caravan storage facilities.

These issues were all being addressed with disabled pitches for reservation nearer the reception and access controls to the toilet blocks. Whilst there was no independent storage space for caravans planned in the longer term consideration will be given to identifying a piece of land specifically for caravan storage to maximise business opportunities.

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- Completion of groundworks and any potential risk to the project not being completed on time.

All the building work and surfaces were complete. There were no areas of concern in relation to groundworks. Work was still ongoing to roadworks to bring them up to level to get surfaced and pitches were now having topsoil, being levelled and planted.

- Page 12 of the report referred to a proposed revised scheme being submitted to Planning Board for a variation to contract and it was not clear if this had been approved.

The planning application to vary the condition had been submitted, but had not yet been considered. There were no concerns outside the main contract works.

- Procurement of the online booking system to go live before end of 2018. Could the Commission have an update on progress at its February, 2019 meeting.

An update on the booking system would be provided in February. It had taken some time to obtain the approvals needed and an order had now been placed to tailor to specific needs.

- Business opportunity for caravan owners to store caravans and then have them placed onto a pitch.

This was a helpful suggestion on a storage service and would be considered in due course.

- Seasonal pitch consideration which may alleviate some concerns for traffic at arrival/departure times.

The provision of seasonal pitches was under review, but some evaluation of demand was required, before branching into other areas. Departure and arrival times were also being closely looked at to minimise disruption on the road network, for visitors to the park and to enable necessary maintenance around pitches.

- Monitoring of shower blocks to prevent accidents and to avoid children using them as playgrounds.

It was important to maintain shower blocks to prevent abuse and any potential risks. These areas would be closely monitored by site staff.

- Had consideration been given to contracts for energy and utilities in order to contribute to the savings targets.

Further information was to be sought regarding energy and utility contracts.

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- Business opportunities for storage and relocation of caravans for owners could be considered, in addition to whether or not local scout groups could use the area out of season and if discounts may be applicable.

The service remained open and enthusiastic about discounts and special deals for local groups, but would still have to be mindful how this may impact on other users.

- Operational signage plan for the whole site and whether this would require specific planning permission.

Liaison was taking place with colleagues in Transportation around signage and more specifically the brown signs which were strictly controlled. These could not be provided too far from the site, but initially would be placed at the junction at Wales Bar. The site was very large and would require internal signage. Colleagues were considering how best this could be achieved.

- Were there any further plans for static caravans, any indoor entertainment and charging points for electric vehicles.

The planning permission did not allow for static caravans nor did it fit with the business model and it was aimed specifically at touring caravans, motorhomes and tents. An indoor activity would be provided within the main block and have space for a café bar, television, separate games room and some recreation.

In the longer term development of the caravan site would be explored further.

Discussion had taken place with regards to electric vehicles with some provision installed in 2019. Further information would be shared in due course.

- What were the plans for recycling within the park and were there any plans to dovetail waste plans with those across the Borough.

There were plans for special bins to be designed for the separation of waste. This would be subject to monitoring by staff and signposting information accordingly to users.

- Contingency plans following handover and the official opening for Easter, 2019.

The caravan site's completion date was 4th March, 2019 and it was hoped to then operate on a trial basis. Progress would be closely monitored should it be found bookings could not be honoured. Information already shared via social media showed that the service

had already received a huge amount of interest.

- Could the Select Commission visit the site for a pre-completion check.

Details regarding a visit would be shared in due course and the appropriate arrangements made.

Resolved:- (1) That the construction of a new camping and caravan site at Rother Valley Country Park, which was on track and scheduled for completion and handover in March, 2019, in line with the original project programme, be noted.

(2) That a report be submitted early in 2019 looking at the procurement on the online booking system and progress once it was live.

(3) That an update report on progress be submitted to the Improving Places Select Commission six months after the official opening and to feedback on the impact on local residents.

20. THRIVING NEIGHBOURHOODS

Consideration was given to the report presented by the Deputy Leader and Assistant Chief Executive which detailed the production of a new Neighbourhood Strategy, which would see the Wards as the building blocks that enabled partners and communities to work together to improve local outcomes.

The Strategy's aim was for the Council and residents to work together to achieve better quality of life and described the key role for Elected Members, both as champions of place and as community leaders, bringing together those who cared about the local neighbourhood. The Strategy also described how the Council would take a strength based approach drawing on existing strengths in the community and valuing the role of voluntary and community groups and assets.

The Head of Performance, Intelligence and Improvement had led on the development of the Thriving Neighbourhoods Strategy and had spoken to a whole range of stakeholders. This good piece of work had identified examples of neighbourhood activity and one of the challenges being faced was consistency rather than pockets of good activity and good practices.

The restructure of Neighbourhood Services had been lengthy, but with the support of the Trades Unions was moving forwards and the outstanding vacancies being filled. During the transitional period there had also been a review of the Neighbourhood Service to align it with the new model. A new Head of Neighbourhoods joined the Council earlier this month.

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Further comments on the Strategy were welcomed as it was still draft prior to receiving formal approval by Cabinet in November, 2018.

As part of the implementation, staff were in place to work across the Council in the delivery of services. The importance of working together with Members was recognised to take the civic leadership model forward.

A discussion and a question and answer session ensued and the following issues were raised and clarified:-

- Page 24 of the report referred to the governance and key priorities and CCTV deployment.

CCTV would be used as part of the Strategy and where this was not working it would be resolved.

- Page 25 also referred to joint working and a co-ordinated review of Housing Panels; had any consideration been given to the pooling of resources or even with the Parish Councils.

This appeared to be the only anomaly arising from the old area assembly footprint, but rather than suggesting change now it would be recommended that this be reconfigured fresh in 2020. The Cabinet Member would be receiving a report shortly.

There could be instances where both the neighbourhood group and Parish Council might have same objective and which may require some collaborative working. Each occasion would be considered on a case by case basis.

- Training on the Strategy moving forward - would this be available for both Members and officers.

Training was scheduled at the beginning of October and Rotherfed were working on more bespoke training for community organisations.

Further discussion would take place on what was available for Members and officers with joint training where appropriate.

- Was there an impact on the Strategy for 2020 with the boundary and Ward profiles changing.

With the boundary changes there would be lead in time. Some Wards may be carrying forward money, but this would not be possible into 2020.

- Could consideration be given to a more dynamic strapline.

This would be fed back to the report authors and the title considered for the report moving forward.

- Page 44 made reference to the casework management system. Whilst the system was good it was not always easily accessible for some users.

The casework management system was developing and evolving. Feedback would be taken on board and eventually link with complaints.

- Page 50 made reference to the statistical analysis and the drawing out of common themes in the north, south and central areas of Rotherham. Unfortunately, whilst parish councils were very prominent in the south there were very few in the south and none in the central areas.

The information was noted. There was a need for better clarity and relevance in reporting as the multi-agency work with the clustering of wards could be confusing.

- Could the flexibility be retained for CLF monies with ward budgets.

The future of CLF and Ward budgets were still to be considered with some concerns expressed about a potential merger.

- Could there be further training in the use of social media.

Training in this area was to be scheduled shortly.

- Had the new post of Senior Communications Officer been appointed to.

Currently this post was still vacant following a recruitment process and the advert was being reissued.

- There was some evidence of good work in Rotherham, but this was not reflected in all Wards with little or no consultation with residents and partners or multi-agency meetings. There was an asset based approach to Ward working, but the Council was just about to demolish an asset without any communication or engagement with residents.

There was some inconsistency across Rotherham, but by working with the Head of Neighbourhoods with Ward Members issues could be addressed. The example of a building being demolished in a Ward without consultation could be used as a case study moving forward.

There was merit in moving forward and whilst some Wards that had not generated work like others, there was evidence of community activity and events taking place. Some of the devolved budget was also being held back for match funding.

- There were some issues with access to community centres, the difficulty in them being hired and accessible along with misunderstandings over asset transfers and the differences between capital and revenue funding streams.

Community centres should be easily accessible for the community.

Due to the cuts from Central Government the Council had low revenue, but was more capital rich. Should the plans for Thriving Neighbourhoods move forward then this should also add to revenue funding.

- Reference was made to disused land and the land ownership map by the Council not being completed.

This was being addressed.

- There was good evidence that this great initiative was working with spending contributing and aligning with the Ward plans with clear linkage. There was little merit in changing good initiatives so the Community Leadership Fund should remain as flexible as possible.

Wards could not keep rolling forward their pooled funding as this would be absorbed into the Council finances in 2020 and the reasons for the money not being spent in Wards should be challenged by residents.

- There were still some inconsistencies or policies in place and Page 47 made reference to the formalisation of Ward meetings. How would this be monitored and by whom.

Ward meetings were not monitored at moment and it was envisaged that a consistent standard would be developed by the Head of Neighbourhoods.

Resolved:- (1) That the review the Annual Report 2017/18 Neighbourhood Working including recommendations for future delivery be noted with the comments made at today's meeting.

(2) That the Thriving Neighbourhoods: The Rotherham Neighbourhood Strategy 2018-2025 document be noted.

(3) That the required training for Members and officers in relation to the working of Thriving Neighbourhoods be undertaken as soon as possible.

(4) That progress in relation to devolved budgets, governance framework (including monitoring of progress on Ward Plans and evaluation of them) be reported back to the Select Commission in six months' time.

21. HOUSING STRATEGY REFRESH - 2019-2022

Consideration was given to the Housing Strategy Refresh 2019-2022 presented by Tom Bell, Assistant Director of Housing, which had also been considered by the Health and Wellbeing Board at its meeting on 19th September, 2018.

Sarah Watts, Strategic Housing Manager, gave a presentation using PowerPoint outlining the details of the early draft and the comments received to date which would help shape the strategy:-

- 2016-19 Strategy – The 5 themes.
- Achievements.
- The New Strategy – a chance to have your say.
- Things that have changed.
- Overview of housing in Rotherham.
- Value of new housing.
- The Vision – Three Year Strategy and Refresh.
- Structure – five key priorities.
- Timetable for refresh – phases.
- Pipeline Projects.

A discussion and a question and answer session ensued and the following issues were raised and clarified:-

- The development of eco housing, but careful use of the term in case this had a negative effect.
- Meetings to consider Ward profiles and focus on the specific property requirements for young and active residents, but also around Adult Social Care, adapted properties and building communities.

Variations across the Wards were recognised and if specific property requirements were not reflected then evidence needed more refining to gain a better understanding of need.

- Gas servicing targets were 100%, but many householders had not yet got their documentation.

There would be investigation into the delay of households not being issued with gas certificates. Rother Living was a brand that was being attached to new housing tenures and houses for sale.

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- From the key priorities how explicitly could some of the issues within Wards be addressed and could a map be made available of land for use within the Wards.

Meetings would take place to understand trends, new housing and demographics and this would be included within the Ward profiles and help to form the evidence base of any projects.

- Priorities for housing associations and working in partnership

There was a big push around home ownership and recognition that there was other tenures for people that needed affordable social housing and this needed to be retained in Rotherham for as long as possible.

Housing providers were accountable for around 5% of housing in the Borough. A forum of key providers would meet to develop projects at a City Region level.

The Service was in the process of mapping out what housing owned land Rotherham had access to and this would feed in the development pipeline. The Service would be working closely with the Council's general asset team to work together on different pieces of land and provide a greater picture of what was available.

Housing in Rotherham had been recognised as one of the top three performing social housing organisations in the country. It was also seen as an innovator in housing delivery, both of which were key to the Government agenda.

There was good consultation about right to buy with a need to feed back on the process. Rotherham was well placed to go and trial new approaches to make it work locally for building and replacing housing.

- Maintenance of existing properties and Ward walk arounds to highlight some of the problems.

A meeting would be set up a meeting with Repairs and Housing to walk around the estates with Ward members and pick up some observations. The Service was investing in more new posts for estate management providing more frontline officers on estate management issues.

- Could further information be provided on Section 106 agreements and update provided on the Community Infrastructure Ley.

Strategic housing acquisition programmes through Section 106 agreements were where the Council negotiated the purchase of properties at a discount usually around 60% of the market value.

Value for money must be demonstrated and if it could not be then acquisitions were not made.

Liaison would take place with Planning and ascertain how a report could be brought back to the Select Commission.

- The Strategy referred to social value and contractors. Was there any appetite for this to include contractors paying the foundation living wage and not the Government's living wage?

Social value was incredibly important and the best deal would be sought from the investments across the Borough. £66 million was being used from the HRA for new homes.

Work was taking place with the local colleges and local schools and Waites had been appointed who distributed social value on their construction works. This would continue in terms of the thriving neighbourhoods agenda and ward priorities.

- Social mobility and health technology had advanced since implementation of Rothercare. What was the future of the phone line and were there any plans for this to be replaced.

Rothercare was facing a big journey in the digital agenda of assisted technologies to maintain independence in residents' own homes. Technology was moving at a pace and Rotherham had not kept up with this with Rothercare telecare system being thirty years out of date.

A review was being undertaken to explore options good to ensure that housing and adult care moving forward had the improvements as a specific priority in health and wellbeing.

- The vision was to revitalise the town centre and urban community, but there were more than one town centre.

In terms of the town centres it was not possible to do everything at the same time. The Council was trying to improve the residential offer in the town centre and with the resources had three sites identified. It was recognised that the Borough made up of a number of towns.

- Members would appreciate a modern complaints system and for local housing officers being involved in the first instance for people moving into rented properties. The Strategy itself referred to the need to prevent families from exploitation and financial hardship.

There were now more people in low cost home ownership/shared ownership. This could potentially help people with a lesser deposit. Consideration was being given to products around such as try before

you buy rentals and then moving towards home ownership. There were some Government assistance purchase schemes. It was important that the right needs assessment was undertaken in localities where new developments were created to meet local need.

The Council's modern complaints system for housing took more enquires/interactions with customers covering thousands of repairs. Occasionally things did go wrong, but these were put right first time and where possible they would not happen again. It was with this action complaints were starting to reduce and not escalated at stage.

The Councillors' case management system was evolving and a process for making sure tenants' had a voice with involved interaction with the Repairs and Maintenance Service.

- Did the strategy meet the demand for specialist housing.

The Strategy enabled the Council to work on supported housing to meet needs best it could. There was an overwhelming demographic demand for accommodation and an accommodation plan was being used with Adult Care and Children Services so the Council was better informed about their requirements.

- Some insurance rules required a gas servicing certificate and to aid circulation could these be Ward generated and distributed with Ward leaflets.

Following last week's gas awareness week it was reported the Council were now 100% compliant with its gas safety checks. The next steps would be to start thinking about undertaking checks for private landlords.

- Had consideration been given to the installation of solar panels on new properties given the summer weather and savings that could be generated?

Action was already being taken on how to maximise income and minimise spend on areas like fuel. One key issue in the Housing Strategy helped with budgets with heavy investment into insulation and effective methods of keeping properties warm.

There were a number of problems with the Government's feed in tariffs and grants for solar panels. Whilst the use of solar panels would not be discounted in the future and smart investments revisited, consideration also had to be given to access, repairs and what happened with the equipment should tenants move to ensure householders remained safe.

Resolved:- (1) That the information and presentation be noted.

(2) That a copy of the revised slides be circulated to the Improving Places Select Commission.

(3) That consideration be given to a future report on progress of Section 106 Agreements and the Community Infrastructure Levy.

22. DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING

Resolved:- That the next meeting of the Improving Places Select Commission take place on Thursday, 1st November, 2018 at 1.30 p.m.

Improving Places Select Commission, 1st November 2018

Home to School Transport Policy Implementation Update.

Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?

No

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

Strategic Director, Regeneration and Environment

Report Author(s)

Tom Smith, Assistant Director, Community Safety and Street Scene

Ward(s) Affected

All Wards

Summary

This report updates Improving Places Select Commission on the implementation of the new Home to School Transport Policy

Recommendations

That Improving Places Select Commission note the report and comment on progress with the implementation of the New Home to School Transport Policy.

List of Appendices Included

Appendix A. Home to School Transport Policy (2018 – 2019)

Appendix B. Parent & Carers Brochure

Appendix C. Assessment Matrix: Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
(Home to School Transport)

Background Papers

None

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

No

Council Approval Required

No

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

Home to School Policy Implementation Update

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 That Improving Places Select Commission note the report and comment on progress with the implementation of the New Home to School Transport Policy.

2. Background

- 2.1 Changes to the Home to School Transport Policy in Rotherham were approved by the Cabinet and Commissioners' Decision Making Meeting on the 16th April 2018. The changes include:

- Publication of the Home to School Transport Policy 2018-19;
- Introduction of the Home to School Transport Assessment Matrix;
- The introduction of a formal annual review of transport provision which includes engagement with families;
- That an assessment of existing service users is conducted to review their circumstances to enable participation on a voluntary basis ahead of the introduction of the formal annual review;
- The introduction of a personal travel budget scheme to provide transport support to families of children with special educational needs and disabilities;
- That post 16 transport travel arrangements are revised to replace direct transport as a first option with personal travel budgets for those students with special educational needs and disabilities;
- The consideration of alternative methods of support for particular groups or individuals such as walking bus, cycle or moped schemes when appropriate;
- The introduction of independent travel training as a central resource in Rotherham to support arrangements currently delivered by Special Schools for children from the age of 14+ to enable independence. That travel training is commenced from June 2018 for appropriate young people;
- The personal travel budgets for all students making new applications for post 16 travel is instigated from 1st July 2018, and existing users of the post 16 service are permitted to apply on a voluntary basis from 1st May;

- That a transition period to validate the Transport Assessment Matrix will begin from 1st May 2018, with the full implementation of the policy for all new applicants with effect from 1st July 2018;
- That children and young people in need of home to school transport, and including transport operators, are engaged as part of the transition and implementation process;
- Any decisions to amend the Transport Assessment Matrix, resulting from the transition period, to be delegated to the Assistant Director, Community Safety and Street Scene.

3. Key Issues

Policy Change Implementation

3.1 The service implementation is being managed by the Transport Project Group. Updates about each recommendation are as follows:

Publication of the Home to School Transport Policy 2018-19 (Appendix A)

3.2 The approved new Home to School Transport Policy has been published on the Council's web site, on the education and local offer pages. Families already receiving transport have received a brochure explaining the new elements of the policy and the choices that are now available relating to home to school transport. **Appendix B**

Introduction of the Home to School Transport Assessment Matrix (Appendix C)

3.3 Following approval of the new Home to School Transport policy, the transport team has commenced completing the transport matrix for each new transport applicant. This has been further developed following work with Children and Young Peoples Service's (CYPS) Education Health Care Team. Following approval of an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) the team provides a completed Matrix to support the initial transport request. Further work is programmed with special schools to enable completion in future for those who are already being provided with transport.

The introduction of a formal annual review of transport provision which includes engagement with families;

3.4 The annual transport review process is to be undertaken at the same time as EHCP reviews and will assess the suitability of existing transport, and the ability to partake in Independent Travel Training. It is not normal practice for a CYPS or Transport Service representative to attend these reviews, as these are undertaken at schools. This therefore requires the support of individual schools and engagement has commenced. This is ongoing, with attendance at the special schools heads meeting 17th October 2018. Representatives of the transport team will attend to discuss

the annual review process. The service aims to have a robust process for reviews in place in early 2019.

That an assessment of existing service users is conducted to review their circumstances to enable participation on a voluntary basis ahead of the introduction of the formal annual review;

- 3.5 Assessment is being undertaken in two ways: Firstly, all parent/carers of existing transport users have received a brochure detailing the choice available to the family, and asking for expressions of interest in an early assessment. All expressions of interest will then be assessed for Personal Travel Budgets and Independent Travel Training.
- 3.6 Secondly, discussions will continue with individual schools about the delivery of Independent Travel Training. This engagement has commenced with positive discussions at Newman School and Willows, and will be broadened out following engagement with Special School Heads, as above, during October.

The introduction of a personal travel budget scheme to provide transport support to families of children with special educational needs and disabilities, that post 16 transport travel arrangements are revised to replace direct transport as a first option with personal travel budgets for those students with special educational needs and disabilities, that personal travel budgets for all students making new applications for post 16 travel is instigated from 1st July 2018, and existing users of the post 16 service are permitted to apply on a voluntary basis from 1st May;

- 3.7 Further to approval of this addition to the Home to School Transport Policy, all transport applications are now being assessed in line with the matrix. Families are being made aware of the options for transport including Personal Travel Budgets. Following the provision of a brochure in September 2018, detailing the choices for families, a number of families have now expressed an interest in alternative transport options. The Personal Travel Budget is now a key part of options for families; in particularly for post 16 young people, where it forms part of the initial application discussion.
- 3.8 To date the service has received 30 expressions of interest with the following outcomes:
- **17 who already have existing transport:**
 - 2 - have signed up to personal travel budgets
 - 15 - currently under review
 - **13 new post-16 starters:**
 - 8 - have signed up to personal travel budgets
 - 3 - currently under review
 - 2 - not suitable

The consideration of alternative methods of support for particular groups or individuals such as walking bus, cycle or moped schemes when appropriate;

- 3.9 The service has plans in place to discuss this with the parents' forum and special schools, as the policy is implemented further, and will consider opportunities as they arise in particular circumstances.

The introduction of independent travel training as a central resource in Rotherham to support arrangements currently delivered by Special Schools for children from the age of 14+ to enable independence. That travel training is commenced from June 2018 for appropriate young people;

- 3.10 The service has considered a number of approaches, such as contracted delivery, use of the in-house unit, and collaborative working with schools, to deliver training. The approach which is now being adopted is a collaborative approach with special schools, where the Council will deliver training for trainers, and training for young people will then be delivered through school staff.
- 3.11 Delivery of the initial 'train the trainer' training will be with the support of Leeds City Council's Independent Travel Training Team providing refresher training. The initial training is programmed for November and December 2018.

That a transition period to validate the Transport Assessment Matrix will begin from 1st May 2018, with the full implementation of the policy for all new applicants with effect from 1st July 2018;

- 3.12 The new matrix was initially used for assessments within the Transport Team for post-16 applicants, and following that, for all new transport applicants. CYPs colleagues also completed the matrix in tandem with the process, and the matrix was then validated by both services.
- 3.13 A number of recommendations to change the matrix were made and were incorporated into the matrix. For example 'absconding and unpredictability' were added into the behaviour section and 'anxiety' was added into the vulnerability section.

That children and young people in need of home to school transport, and including transport operators, are engaged as part of the transition and implementation process;

- 3.14 A brochure has been circulated to families, support groups, and positive engagement with the parents' forum continues.
- 3.15 Further work is required to engage with transport operators outside of the Council, and this will take place over the months ahead, and in particular when a young person makes the transition into public transport.

Any decisions to amend the Transport Assessment Matrix, resulting from the transition period, to be delegated to the Assistant Director, Community Safety and Street Scene;

3.16 The matrix has been reviewed by both colleagues in Transport and CYPS. This identified some clarifications in terms of the interpretation of the document and minor reference changes to descriptions. The matrix has now been approved by the Assistant Director of Community Safety and Street Scene, and circulated to CYPS colleagues to provide the basis of the assessment following confirmation of an EHCP.

4. Risks Associated with Project

4.1 The delivery of budget savings associated with the project are predicated on families voluntarily taking up the option for Personal Travel Budgets.

4.2 The transport is provided by Regeneration and Environment Directorate. However demand for the service is generated through demographic growth. The current assessment is that demand for the service will increase by around 40% by 2020.

5. Options considered and recommended proposal

5.1 The approach outlined has been considered and agreed by Cabinet, and implementation decisions have been made by the Council's Transport Board.

6. Consultation

6.1 There is no proposed consultation associated with this report.

7. Financial and Procurement Implications

7.1 As part of setting the 2016/17, 2017/18 and 2018/19 revenue budgets the Council agreed budget savings of £793k to be delivered from transport by the end of 2019/20, with a particular emphasis on Home to School transport. £163k of savings were delivered against this requirement in 2017/18 and further savings have been identified in 2018/19. It has been estimated that savings of £162k per annum will be achieved from the changes to the Home to School Transport policy, when they have been fully implemented.

7.2 As stated in 4.2 above, in addition to the agreed budget savings, the Service is under pressure from increased demand for the service. It is estimated that the impact of this increased demand is an increase in costs of £356k per annum from the baseline position as at 1st April 2017. This pressure is being managed within the overall budget monitoring position being reported by the Directorate.

8. Legal Implications

8.1 There are no legal implications of this report.

9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

9.1 There are no implications for Children, Young People or Vulnerable adults from this report.

10. Implications for Partners and Other Directorates

10.1 There are no implications for partners or other Directorates from this report.

11. Risks and Mitigation

11.1 Any risks of this approach are routinely monitored through the Project Team.

12. Accountable Officer(s)

Tom Smith, Assistant Director, Community Safety and Street Scene

Approvals Obtained from:

| | Named Officer | Date |
|---|----------------------|-------------|
| Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services | N/A | |
| Assistant Director of Legal Services | N/A | |
| Head of Procurement (if appropriate) | N/A | |
| Head of Human Resources (if appropriate) | N/A | |

Report Author: Tom Smith, Assistant Director, Community Safety and Street Scene

This report is published on the Council's website or can be found at:-

<http://moderngov.rotherham.gov.uk/ieDocHome.aspx?Categories=>

HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT POLICY

This Policy includes Learners aged 16-19 years in further education and training and continuing learners with a learning difficulty and/or disability (LLDD) aged 19 and over

Academic year 2018-19

Department Responsible: Regeneration & Environment, Corporate Transport Unit, Passenger Services Team, Sandbeck Building, Hellaby Depot, Rotherham S66 8QL
Email: education.transport@rotherham.gov.uk
SMS (Text message Service, incoming only): 078600 18829

You can find further details on the internet at www.rotherhamsendlocaloffer.org or **Rotherham SEND Local Offer** and look at the information about **Policies, Procedures and Guidance**. Here you will find a range of online forms which you can use to make enquires about transport assistance.

“If you or someone you know needs help to understand or read this document, please contact us”:

☐: 01709 822649 ☐: education.transport@rotherham.gov.uk

Slovak

Ak vy alebo niekto koho poznáte potrebuje pomoc pri pochopení alebo čítaní tohto dokumentu, prosím kontaktujte nás na vyššie uvedenom čísle alebo nám pošlite e-mail.

Kurdish Sorani

كووردی سوورانی
نهگهر تو یان كه سئیک كه تو دهیناسی پئویستی بهیارمهتی هه بئیت بۆ نهوهی لهم بهنگهنامه به تئیگات یان بیخوئینتتهوه،
تکایه په یوه ندیمان پئوه بکه له سهه نهو ژماره یه ی سهه وه دا یان بهو نیمه یله.

Arabic

عربي
إذا كنت انت أو اي شخص تعرفه بحاجة إلى مساعدة لفهم أو قراءة هذه الوثيقة، الرجاء الاتصال على الرقم اعلاه، أو مراسلتنا عبر البريد الإلكتروني

Urdu

أردو
اگر آپ یا آپ کے جاننے والے کسی شخص کو اس دستاویز کو سمجھنے یا پڑھنے کیلئے مدد کی ضرورت ہے تو برائے مہربانی مندرجہ بالا نمبر پر ہم سے رابطہ کریں یا ہمیں ای میل کریں۔

Farsi

فارسی
اگر جناب عالی یا شخص دیگری که شما اورا می شناسید برای خواندن یا فهمیدن این مدارک نیاز به کمک دارد لطفاً با ما بوسیله شماره بالا یا ایمیل تماس حاصل فرمایید.

☐ Please note that free internet access is available at all our library sites ☐

June 2018

| | |
|---|---|
| To apply for a new zero fare bus pass or renew an existing one | Search for 'zero fare bus pass' at www.rotherham.gov.uk and use the online enquiry form or renewal form |
| To apply for special educational needs and/or disability transport (ages 0-16) | Search for 'special needs transport' at www.rotherham.gov.uk and use the online enquiry form to request an assessment |
| To apply for special educational needs and/or disability transport (ages 16-19) | Search for Post16/Further Education Students at www.rotherham.gov.uk and use the online enquiry form to request an assessment |
| To request changes, report concerns or cancel existing transport provision | www.rotherhamsendlocaloffer.org and use one of the online forms or email to R&E-PassengerTransport@rotherham.gov.uk or SMS text on 078600 18829 |
| South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive (SYPTTE) Traveline / Enquiries | traveline@sypte.co.uk Tel. 01709 515151 |
| Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub | MASH-referral@rotherham.gcsx.gov.uk Tel. 01709 336080 |
| Other South Yorkshire Local Authorities Barnsley – School Transport Doncaster – Pupil Support and Transport Sheffield – Home to School Transport | schooltransport@barnsley.gov.uk transport&pupilsupport@doncaster.gov.uk customerservicecentre@sheffield.gov.uk |

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1 INTRODUCTION

The Statutory Duty to provide free transport assistance to eligible learners

Section 508B of the Education Act 1996 (amended by the Education & Inspections Act 2006) deals with the duty on Local Authorities to make such travel arrangements as they consider necessary to facilitate attendance at school for “eligible” children to “qualifying schools”. Schedule 35B of the Act defines “eligible” children. The duty applies to home to school travel arrangements at the start of the day and school to home travel arrangements at the end of the day. It does not relate to travel between educational institutions during the school day.

Parents/Carers are responsible for ensuring that their children attend school regularly. Section 444 of the 1996 Act outlines the situations in which a parent/carer may have a defence in law against a prosecution by a Local Authority for their child’s non-attendance at school. Section 444(4) provides a parent/carer with a defence if he or she proves that the Local Authority has not fulfilled its statutory duty to make suitable arrangements for home to school transport for those that are eligible. Further information regarding home to school transport and the statutory duties to which Local Authorities must have regard are contained within the ‘Home to School Travel and Transport Guidance’ 2007 issued by Department for Education to accompany the Education and Inspections Act 2006, and the updated guidance of ‘Home to School Travel and Transport Guidance 2014’ at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/home-to-school-travel-and-transport-guidance>

This Policy also explains what transport arrangements may be available to learners who are over statutory school age and wish to continue their education post 16. Further information regarding Post 16 transport and the guidance to which Local Authorities should regard to are contained within the ‘Post 16 Transport to Education & Training’ 2017 issued by Department for Education

This Policy explains the criteria used in establishing a learner’s eligibility for transport assistance for those living in the Rotherham Local Authority following a request for this to be provided. You can find further details on the internet at **Rotherham SEND Local Offer** and look at the **Policies, Procedures and Guidance** button. Here you will find a range of online forms which you can use about transport assistance.

The Policy is correct at the time of publication. It should not be assumed, however, that there will be no changes to this information before the start of, or during the school year.

Sensitive information submitted for assessments and reviews will be treated in a confidential manner and may be shared with the transport operator/provider.

If there is a change in individual circumstances, such as change of address or change in needs, it is the responsibility of the parent/carer to inform the Passenger Services Team to ensure the necessary review is undertaken.

2 SAFEGUARDING

Safeguarding is everyone's concern. Rotherham Council has developed a safeguarding policy which explains what safeguarding is, different types of abuse and neglect and actions to take regarding any safeguarding concerns to ensure continued safety and welfare. The Rotherham Corporate Safeguarding Policy can be accessed at the following link:-

http://www.rotherham.gov.uk/downloads/file/3100/corporate_safeguarding_policy

2.1 The Council's Safeguarding Policy is applied to all contracts, however the following additional safeguarding requirements will also apply to Home to School Transport contracts:

- Camera equipment, capable of recording both audio and video, must be installed in all vehicles used to transport children as part of any arrangement to which the policy applies. The system must meet or exceed the council's specification for taxi camera systems and must be operational at all times that the vehicle is being used as part of a contracted service.
- Subject to certain exemptions, the driver must not allow a child to be conveyed in the front seat of a vehicle.
- The driver must possess an appropriate BTEC / NVQ level 2 qualification (or equivalent) in a subject relevant to the transport of passengers;
- The driver (and any passenger assistants) must have attended the Council's training course on safeguarding vulnerable passengers;
- The driver and passenger assistant (if relevant) must have ability in English and Maths that meets the required standard.
- The driver must have satisfactorily completed an advance driving skills test to Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) standards (taxi and private hire test);
- Drivers that do not hold a hackney carriage / private hire drivers licence issued by Rotherham MBC are required to obtain an Enhanced Disclosure Certificate from the Disclosure and Barring Service (which must be obtained via Rotherham MBC), and consent to their DVLA driving licence being checked by Rotherham MBC using a third party organisation if required. Any information that is detailed on the Enhanced Disclosure Certificate and / or the DVLA driving licence will be considered in accordance with Appendix C of the council's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire licensing policy – any driver that does not meet the required standard will be prohibited from working as part of this contract. Drivers and passenger assistants are required to notify the Council of their arrest and / or conviction for any offence – this notification must be received within specified timescales.
- Drivers and passenger assistants that do not hold a hackney carriage / private hire drivers licence issued by Rotherham MBC are required to subscribe to the Disclosure and Barring Service Online Update Service. This will allow the Council to verify that a DBS Certificate remains current.

- Drivers and passenger assistants must adhere to the council's Code of Conduct When Working with Vulnerable Passengers (as specified in Appendix G of the council's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire licensing policy).

2.2 The Council will monitor driver / vehicle compliance against these standards and will take swift and robust action should it become apparent that there are areas of non-compliance.

2.3 In addition, the Council will ensure that there are appropriate processes in place to ensure that any concerns regarding any aspect of transport provided as part of Home to School arrangements can be referred to the relevant service / agency so that those concerns can be addressed. The Council will provide details of these processes to all those that are involved in the delivery / receipt of a Home to School Transport Service.

2.4 The implementation of the above requirements will ensure that this policy supports the delivery of the Council's Strategic Plan to keep people safe when using licensed vehicles in Rotherham. Additional requirements may be introduced should circumstances require this – appropriate communication will take place with all those affected by any amendments to the requirements outlined above.

3 TRANSPORT ASSISTANCE AND ELIGIBILITY

Transport assistance may consist of these options:-

- A zero fare bus pass which entitles a pupil to free bus travel between the nearest bus stop to their home address and their registered school base.
- Refunded travelling expenses according to the cheapest available public transport route for those pupils able to access public transport services.
- Personal Travel Budgets are a distance calculation in accordance with the Council's current rate, for pupils requiring special arrangements, provided that the arrangement makes financial sense to the Local Authority. Calculations will be determined for the journeys when the pupil is in the vehicle.
- Independent Travel Training for Learners aged 14+
- Free or subsidised travel on a coach, minibus, taxi or specially adapted vehicle if the pupil is unable to travel by public transport due to the distance, their mobility, or effect of their complex special educational needs (see section 3.09).

Eligibility to Free Transport Assistance – Mainstream

3.01 Pupils under the age of 5 years

There is no statutory duty to provide transport assistance to children under the age of 5 years. Parents/Carers are expected to accompany children under the age of 5 years to their early year's provider and on public transport.

Currently, there is no charge for children under the age of 5 years to travel by public transport if accompanied by a parent/carer paying full fare. Financial assistance is not given to parents/carers for their personal transport costs when they accompany their

child to early year's provision. The bus operator may charge the concessionary fare to a child under the age of 5 years if they are travelling with an older child paying a concessionary fare.

3.02 Pupils aged 5-7 years

For pupils aged 5, but less than 8 (on 1st September) attending their nearest appropriate qualifying school* or any alternative catchment school determined by the Local Authority, free transport assistance (usually a zero fare bus pass) will be provided where the distance between home and school is more than 2 miles (otherwise referred to as the lower statutory qualifying distance). For pupils with a zero fare bus pass parents/carers are responsible for ensuring their child's safety by making appropriate arrangements for their child to be accompanied to and from the nearest bus stop and during the journey.

3.03 Pupils aged 8-16 years

For pupils aged 8-16 (on 1st September) attending their nearest appropriate qualifying school* or any alternative catchment school determined by the Local Authority, free transport assistance (usually a zero fare bus pass) will be provided where the distance between home and school is more than 3 miles (otherwise referred to as the upper statutory qualifying distance). For pupils with a zero fare bus pass parents/carers are responsible for ensuring their child's safety by making appropriate arrangements for their child to be accompanied to and from the nearest bus stops and during the journey.

- * The nearest appropriate qualifying school is one with places available that provides education appropriate to the age, ability and aptitude of the child.

The distances of 'more than 2 miles' or 'more than 3 miles' referred to above are measured using a computerised mapping system. This is from the front door of the home address to the nearest designated school entrance by the nearest available walking route (see section 3.07v for more details).

3.04 Pupils aged 16-19 years

For pupils aged 16-19 (on 1st September) who wish to continue their education please refer to Section 7, Transport Policy Statement for Learners aged 16-19 years in further education, for details.

3.05 Pupils attending denominational (faith) schools

Free transport assistance to denominational (faith) schools was historically provided on a discretionary basis to pupils meeting the distance criteria. However, there is no statutory duty to provide it except for eligible secondary aged pupils from low income families. Changes to Policy were made in September 2013. From this date only new applications for secondary aged denominational (faith) pupils who qualify under low income criteria will receive free transport assistance (see section 3.08).

Pupils already attending such schools prior to this date who are in receipt of free

transport assistance will continue to receive this; for primary aged pupils up until the end of Y6, and for secondary aged pupils up until the end of Y11. If individual circumstances change, e.g. a change of address or school, pupils will need to be re-assessed for entitlement and free transport assistance may be withdrawn for those pupils no longer qualifying.

3.06 Pupils not attending their nearest appropriate qualifying school* or any alternative catchment school determined by the Local Authority

The Local Authority recognises its obligations under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, as amended by the Education Act 2002, to comply with parental preferences regarding choice of school. In order to ensure the efficient use of its resources the Local Authority will only provide free transport assistance where the school attended is the nearest appropriate qualifying school*, or any alternative catchment school determined by the Local Authority, from the pupil's main home address.

Parents/Carers who apply for a place in a school for their child/children which is not the nearest appropriate qualifying school*, or any alternative catchment school determined by the Local Authority, will not be provided with free transport assistance, regardless of the distance involved, unless the low income criteria applies (see section 3.08).

*The nearest appropriate qualifying school is one with places available that provides education appropriate to the age, ability and aptitude of the child.

Please note that the ultimate responsibility for the safety and conduct of any pupil during the journey to or from school rests with parents/carers.

3.07 Exceptions

Exceptions to this policy may be made in the following circumstances:-

- i) A zero fare bus pass may be given to pupils who attend a school outside Rotherham Local Authority, providing that it is the nearest appropriate qualifying school* to the home address, beyond the statutory walking distance and is within South Yorkshire.
- ii) If a pupil is permanently excluded from their school and attends an alternative base of educational provision (which is located beyond the appropriate qualifying distance from the home address), travel assistance may be allocated.
- iii) Pupils from low income families (see Section 3.08).
- iv) A pupil attending their nearest appropriate qualifying school*, or any alternative catchment school determined by the Local Authority, who has a temporary medical condition affecting their mobility may be provided with free transport assistance. Parents/Carers who wish to request such assistance should apply online, along with supporting formal medical evidence, to: education.transport@rotherham.gov.uk
- v) Consideration for providing a zero fare bus pass for pupils attending their nearest appropriate qualifying school*, or any alternative catchment school determined by the Local Authority, will be made if the route is not considered available to walk. When

assessing the safety of an “available route”, only the potential risk created by traffic, the highway and topographical conditions will be considered. Set criteria have been established by Road Safety Great Britain in the ‘Assessment of Walked Routes to School’ guidelines. These criteria and assessments are common to all the South Yorkshire Authorities. A zero fare bus pass will not be issued where an assessed available walking route to school (determined by the Local Authority in accordance with the above guidelines) exists. Further details at www.roadsafetygb.org

- vi) Transport assistance may be available for some pupils whose parents/carers have disabilities. These disabilities may include dual sensory impairment or physical difficulties. Where it is a condition of the availability of the walking route that they are accompanied, but their parents/carers disabilities prevent this, alternative arrangements will be considered.

3.08 Pupils from low income families

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 introduced free transport assistance for qualifying pupils from low income families. Those who qualify are pupils entitled to **Free School Meals** or from families in receipt of **Maximum Working Tax Credit**. Pupils from ‘low income’ families meeting these criteria will receive free transport assistance (usually a zero fare bus pass) on condition that:

- i) Pupils aged 8 to 10 years attending their nearest appropriate qualifying school* (unless an alternative appropriate school has been determined by the Local Authority) where the distance between home and school is more than 2 miles.
- ii) Pupils aged 11 to 16 years attending any 1 of their 3 nearest appropriate qualifying schools*, where the distance between home and school is more than 2 miles, but not more than 6 miles.
- iii) Pupils aged 11 to 16 years attending their nearest appropriate denominational (faith) school on grounds of religion or belief, where the distance between home and school is more than 2 miles but not more than 15 miles.

The distances referred to in Section 3.08 are measured as:

- Up to 2 miles – as per the statutory walking distance, along the nearest available walking route.
- From 2 miles up to the 6 mile or the 15 mile upper limits – along road routes passable by suitable motorised transport.

* The nearest appropriate qualifying school is one with places available that provides education appropriate to the age, ability and aptitude of the child.

To make an application for free school meals please see the Council’s website at www.rotherham.gov.uk/info/200008/benefits

To make an application for Working Tax Credit, please contact the Tax Credit Helpline on Tel. 0845 300 3900.

3.09 Eligibility to free transport assistance – Pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or a Statement of Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND)

Pupils under the age of 5 years

Parents/Carers are usually required to take children under the age of 5 to their early year's provider. If, however, a child is assessed as requiring specialist transport, parents/carers will be requested to make subsidised contributions towards this transport, for those attending non statutory education. The cost is currently 80p per journey but if families qualify under low income criteria (see section 3.08) then no charges will be applied.

Pupils aged 5 to 16 years

Pupils with an EHCP or SEND will have their individual transport needs assessed against the Home to School Assessment Matrix criteria taking into account the distance, their age, mobility and the effect of their complex needs on their ability to travel. This may include:-

- Mobility
- Medical
- Behavioural
- Vulnerability
- Practicality and:
- Training

Under the provisions of paragraph 3 of Schedule 27 to the Education Act 1996, parents/carers may express a preference for a child with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or Statement of SEN to attend a school which is not the nearest suitable school identified by the Local Authority.

The parents' or young person's preferred school or college might be further away from their home than the nearest school or college that can meet the child or young person's SEN. In such a case, the local authority can name the nearer school or college if it considers it to be appropriate for meeting the child or young person's SEN. If the parents prefer the school or college that is further away, the local authority may agree to this but is able to ask the parents to provide some or all of the transport funding (paragraph 9.214 of the SEND Code of Practice).

3.10 Disabled Person's Pass

A Disabled Person's Pass may be available to some Rotherham residents following assessment of qualification and allows free travel on buses, trams and trains within South Yorkshire and some cross boundary services. Severely disabled children who cannot travel alone may qualify for a disability pass and a care giver may also qualify for one so they can travel with them free of charge. More details are available on the Council's website www.rotherham.gov.uk search for **Disabled Person's Pass**. Applications may be made at any library or contact service centre. Further details are also available on the Travel South Yorkshire website www.travelsouthyorkshire.com

SEND Pupils attending Respite Care

There is no statutory duty within national Home to School Transport guidance to provide free transport assistance to respite care placements.

SEND Pupils in Public Care

When a young person becomes a Looked After Child (LAC) by Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council (RMBC) they may become eligible for transport assistance. This may also include transport to other destinations as appropriate. We would expect the young person to use public transport unless they are too young to travel alone or there are specific risks or concerns. When age or risk prohibits independent travel there is an expectation that the carers or known professionals transport them.

Young people in the care of RMBC under the age of 16, who have an EHCP or Statement of SEN, may continue to receive transport assistance provided, as specified in Section 8. This will be subjected to assessment and approval.

A LAC who is the financial responsibility of another Local Authority needs to contact their Authority for their transport requirements.

4. PARENTS/CARERS GUIDELINES - MAINSTREAM TRANSPORT

The majority of Rotherham pupils assessed as entitled to free transport assistance are issued with a zero fare pass allowing them to travel free by public transport to and from school. Where specific buses are provided for mainstream home to school transport, these may be run commercially by the operators or on a contract with the Council. In both instances, these may be registered services available to the general public and parents/carers should consider the need to accompany the pupil as necessary.

- 4.01 A pupil's home address is considered to be the one that is in receipt of Child Benefit and based within the Rotherham Borough. Pupils in receipt of free transport assistance will have their eligibility re-assessed following a move of address, or circumstances, as this may affect both the identity of the qualifying school and the distance.
- 4.02 The distance between the pupil's home and school is measured using a computerised mapping system. This is from the front door of the home address to the nearest designated school entrance by the nearest available walking route.
- 4.03 Pupils who have qualified for a zero fare bus pass (see section 3) will continue to be assessed and reviewed each school year.
- 4.05 Where it is not possible for pupils to travel by public transport, the Local Authority may consider other arrangements.
- 4.06 Secondary aged pupils who do not qualify free for transport assistance need to obtain a concessionary fare pass issued by South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive (SYPTTE). The MegaTravel Pass (proof of age) allows the holder to travel at the concessionary fare on buses trams and trains in South Yorkshire. Further information

and application forms are available from the Travel South Yorkshire website www.travelsouthyorkshire.com or the Rotherham or Meadowhall Interchanges, or contact Traveline on Tel. 01709 515151.

- 4.07 Pupils attending a school in Rotherham, but who live outside the Rotherham Authority's boundary, must apply to their home Local Authority for advice and guidance.
- 4.08 It is the responsibility of parents/carers to meet other transport needs including travel to and from work placements, breakfast and after-school clubs, extra-curricular activities, transitional travel or any other arrangements they make with the school.
- 4.09 The ultimate responsibility for the safety and conduct of any pupil during the journey to and from school rests with parents/carers. Some pupils may need to be taken to the bus stop and supervised until the bus arrives. Similarly, these pupils may need to be met on their return journey.
- 4.10 Parents/Carers are expected to explain to their child that it is important to maintain positive behaviour while they are travelling on transport. Parents/Carers who have a zero fare pass sign to accept the Code of Conduct that the pupil will follow. If a pupil persistently endangers their own safety, or that of others, by not following this Code of Conduct, transport assistance will be withdrawn. Further details at: www.travelsouthyorkshire.com
- 4.11 In the event of a pupil exhibiting persistent, deliberate, disruptive or dangerous behaviours (including physical and verbal abuse), the Local Authority may exclude your child from using school transport or withdraw a zero fare bus fare. Additionally, the bus operator can refuse entry to the vehicle for such pupils and in some circumstances the Police may be involved. Parents/Carers will be expected to make their own arrangements to ensure their child attends school.

Guidance on 'Promoting Positive Behaviour by Pupils on Public Transport in South Yorkshire' has been developed by Local Authority Education Transport Officers, SYPTE, South Yorkshire Police and Transport Operators. Further details can be found at: <http://www.travelsouthyorkshire.com/onboard/teachersbehaviour>

5 PARENTS/CARERS GUIDELINES - PUPILS WITH AN EDUCATION, HEALTH AND CARE PLAN (EHCP) OR A STATEMENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND/OR DISABILITIES (SEND) TRANSPORT

Pupils who have been assessed as requiring transport assistance, other than a zero fare bus pass, may receive support for independence and mobility training. The aim is to reduce their reliance on individual transport and to develop independent travel skills.

- 5.01 Pupils in receipt of transport assistance will have their eligibility re-assessed following a change of address or circumstances, as this may affect both the identity of the qualifying school and the distance. Dual residence or parents/carers work and family commitments will not be regarded as valid reasons for determining entitlement to transport assistance. A pupil's home address is considered to be the one that is in receipt of the Child Benefit.

5.02 It is the responsibility of parents/carers to meet other transport needs such as travel to and from work placements, breakfast and after-school clubs, extra-curricular activities, transitional transport or any other arrangements they make with a school.

5.03 Transport assistance will be reviewed on an annual basis. Any recommended changes to a pupil's transport arrangements will be considered by the Council. Changes, for various reasons, may be necessary during the school term and you will be informed of these as soon as possible. Where individual transport is ceased, pupils may be eligible for a zero fare bus pass or a disabled person's pass.

- 5.04 Pupils issued with such a pass will access free transport which will operate from and to the bus stops nearest to the pupil's home. Parents/Carers should ensure the pupil's safety by making appropriate arrangements for them to be accompanied to and from the nearest bus stops as appropriate.
- 5.05 Pupils who are assessed as requiring transport on a coach, minibus or taxi will be collected and returned at named points near their home address. If the pupil is not at the boarding point at the agreed time in the morning, the transport will continue its journey to avoid late arrival at schools. If the pupil is collected from home please ensure they are supervised to board the vehicle at the agreed time.
- 5.06 Pupils who attend a residential school (e.g. a term-by-term basis) outside Rotherham named in their EHCP or Statement of SEN will be allocated a maximum of 6 return journeys to/from their place of education. No additional journeys will be funded by the Council.
- 5.07 Some parents/carers may choose to use their own vehicle to transport their child/children to and from schools. They may be entitled to a personal budget e.g. when no spaces are available on existing transport, or where no contracted transport provision exists. This will only be paid for the journeys **when the eligible child is travelling in the vehicle**. Further information can be obtained from education.transport@rotherham.gov.uk
- 5.08 Any extra transport equipment, seating, restraints, or training required due to the pupil's physical, medical or behavioural needs which require supervision during travel will usually be arranged by the Council. In some circumstances, an agreed written individual transport care plan will be required to be signed by the parent/carer, before the pupil can travel on any contracted vehicle.
- 5.09 Where a vehicle collects a child from the home address, drivers will not usually leave the vehicle to bring the child from the house. It is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure their child's safety with appropriate arrangements to accompany their child to and from the designated points, and to supervise them safely onto and off the vehicle. In exceptional circumstances, when agreed by the Council, a passenger assistant/driver may assist with movement of the pupil if they are specifically trained to do so.
- 5.10 If your child will be absent from school for any reason, such as illness or holiday, you must inform the Passenger Services Team (PST) as soon as possible to prevent unnecessary charges being made (especially if your child travels alone). You must inform the PST in advance when you need the transport to start again (**please note that 24 hours voicemail is available on 01709 334325**) or you can contact PST online at: R&E-PassengerTransport@rotherham.gov.uk.
- 5.11 If your child is due to receive medical treatment which affects their mobility and fitness to travel, you must inform the Passenger Services Team at: R&E-PassengerTransport@rotherham.gov.uk at least 10 working days in advance so that an updated transport assessment can be undertaken. Your child may be refused transport provision until this assessment has taken place and it is deemed safe for them to travel again.

- 5.12 If a pupil is transported in a wheelchair, it is the parents/carers responsibility to ensure that this is in good condition and free of defects, including any wheelchair harness. Any defects should be reported and rectified urgently to ensure the safety of the child by contacting Wheelchair Services at Rotherham.wheelchairs@rothgen.nhs.uk Defective equipment will result in transport being stopped as **all** drivers are instructed to refuse to transport pupils with defective wheelchairs.
- 5.13 If your child is due to change a wheelchair or buggy, including seating system, you must inform the Contract Monitoring Officer at least 10 working days in advance at R&E-PassengerTransport@rotherham.gov.uk. It is important that the correct restraints are used to secure the wheelchair into the vehicle. All drivers are instructed to refuse transport provision for pupils if changes are made until it is confirmed safe for the pupil to travel again.
- 5.14 If your child has a medical care plan for transport, where treatment or equipment is essential for the child's health (e.g. epipen, inhaler, vagal nerve stimulator magnet, suction machine etc.), it is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure this is sent with the child. This should always be in date and in good working order otherwise your child will be refused transport by the driver or passenger assistant.
- 5.15 Transport staff will **not** administer medicines unless these are part of the transport care plan and staff have received appropriate training. It is important that such medicines are in date, clearly identified with the pupil's name, date of birth and the dosage prescribed.
- 5.16 Parents/Carers are advised to contact their child's school, to discuss the transfer of items such as letters, money or common medicines. Transport staff may be able to agree to carry these but cannot accept responsibility.
- 5.17 As a parent/carer you must ensure that a responsible adult meets the child when they are dropped off by the transport provider. If an emergency occurs which prevents this, the Passenger Services Team should be informed urgently (Tel. 01709 **334322 or 334325**). In the event of a responsible adult not being available, the transport operator will contact the Passenger Services Team. If the issue cannot be resolved the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) (Tel. 01709 336080) will be informed and the child may be taken to a place of safety until they are collected by a responsible adult.
- 5.18 In the event of a pupil exhibiting persistent, deliberate, disruptive or dangerous behaviours (including physical and verbal abuse), the Local Authority may withdraw their transport provision. Parents/Carers will be expected to make their own arrangements to ensure their child attends school.

Please visit www.rotherhamsendlocaloffer.org for further information and a range of online forms.

6. PERSONAL BUDGETS

A personal transport budget (PTB) can be provided where requested, to parents/carers for children/young people who are eligible for transport assistance. This will enable families to make their own flexible arrangements to achieve the best travel arrangements for their child/young person instead of the traditional services that are currently provided. Parents / Carers will need to ensure that the child/young person can travel to and from educational

establishment on time and that does not negatively affect their ability to access educational provision.

7. INDEPENDENT TRAVEL TRAINING

Pupils aged 14+ and who have been assessed as requiring transport assistance may receive support for independent travel training to enable them to travel independently. Each personalised programme will ensure that young people will be fully trained to carry out their journey from home to their place of education. It will also improve their ability to access social and leisure activities and reduce their reliance on individual transport which is not available during weekends, evenings and school holidays.

8. TRANSPORT POLICY STATEMENT FOR LEARNERS AGED 16-19 YEARS IN FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING AND CONTINUING LEARNERS WITH A LEARNING DIFFICULTY AND/OR DISABILITY (LLDD) AGED 19 AND OVER

Summary of policy statements and main objectives

- 8.1 There is no automatic entitlement to free home to school or college transport once a learner is over 16 years and beyond statutory school age. Responsibility for making appropriate transport arrangements rests with the learner and/or parents/carers.
- 8.2 Providing assisted transport (e.g. taxis, specially adapted vehicles) will only be given for learners with special educational needs and disabilities who have had their needs assessed against set criteria including distance, age, mobility and the effect of their complex needs on their ability to travel, compared to their peer group. This may include:
 - Communication and Interaction Difficulties
 - Cognition and Learning Difficulties
 - Specific Learning Difficulties
 - Social, Emotional and Mental Health Difficulties
 - Sensory and/or Physical Needs which severely restricts mobility
- 8.3 Learners with special educational needs, and disabilities, who have received transport assistance and are moving from statutory education (Y11) to further education, will need to have their transport needs reassessed when they apply for transport provision. This is to ensure that any assistance offered is suitable to meet those needs. Continuing post 16 learners will also have their transport needs reviewed at least on an annual basis.
- 8.4 Learners must be permanently resident within the Rotherham Borough.
- 8.5 This policy outlines what transport support is available when starting a full time (over 12 guided learning hours per week) further education course up to the age of 19 and those learners aged 19 and over with a learning difficulty and/or disability.
- 8.6 This policy covers the statutory duties of the Local Authority under Section 509AA of the Education Act 1996 and subsequent amendments. It only applies to residents of the Rotherham Borough area. Further information can be obtained by visiting www.gov.uk

9 CONCESSIONARY FARES, DISCOUNTS, SUBSIDIES, PASSES OR TRAVEL CARDS AVAILABLE FOR POST 16 LEARNERS IN COLLEGES, SIXTH FORMS AND AT SOME TRAINING PROVIDERS

The following passes and tickets are the most appropriate for those using public transport to access education and training:

- **16-18 Student Pass**

This pass is available to all South Yorkshire residents attending full time courses at all Colleges and Sixth Forms, within Rotherham, aged between 16 and less than 18 (on 1st September). It entitles the learner to travel, from the first day of the academic year, for the concessionary fare of 80p per journey on all buses and trams and for half adult fare on trains within South Yorkshire. Application forms and the verification code (UVC) are available from your learning provider or they may also be downloaded from <http://www.travelsouthyorkshire.com> A MyTSY account should be created in advance at <https://mytsy.travelsouthyorkshire.com/signup/>.

Individual enquires can be made by contacting the **Transport Executive Traveline on 01709 515151**.

- **Travelmaster18**

This ticket is available to anyone aged 16, 17 or 18 and allows unlimited travel on all buses, trams and trains within South Yorkshire. Your learning provider may be able to assist with funding towards the cost of this ticket. Please contact **Traveline on 01709 515151** to make an enquiry.

- **Travelmaster20**

This ticket is available to anyone aged 19 or 20 and allows unlimited travel on all buses, trams and trains within South Yorkshire. Your learning provider may be able to assist with funding towards the cost of this ticket. Please contact **Traveline on 01709 515151** to make an enquiry.

- **Student Term Travelmaster**

This ticket is available to any individual undertaking full time study at a college of further education in South Yorkshire at the discretion of the college. In Rotherham, these are Dearne Valley College, Rotherham College of Arts & Technology and Thomas Rotherham College. This ticket allows unlimited travel on all buses, trams and trains within South Yorkshire. Your learning provider must supply you with authorisation to buy this product. Your learning provider may also be able to assist with funding towards the cost of this ticket. Further details on all of the above passes and tickets, including operators' tickets are available on the Travel South Yorkshire website www.travelsouthyorkshire.com.

- **Zero Fare Bus Passes**

These may be available to some learners attending Dearne Valley College, Rotherham College of Arts & Technology and Thomas Rotherham College and are allocated at their discretion. Contact student services at the college for details. Further details are available on the Travel South Yorkshire website www.travelsouthyorkshire.com.

10 SUPPORT FOR POST 16 LEARNERS WITH EDUCATION, HEALTH & CARE PLANS (EHCP) OR SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OR DISABILITIES (SEND)

A Disabled Person's Pass may be available to some Rotherham residents who are over the age of 16 following assessment. Please refer to Section 2.10 of this policy

Those unable to take advantage of the above Disabled Person's Pass should contact student services at their chosen college or school sixth form.

All learners with an Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP) or Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND) should have their transport needs reassessed when they move from compulsory schooling to post 16 education. This is in accordance with the Post 16 Transport to Education and Training Statutory Guidance for Local authorities:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/post-16-transport-to-education-and-training

10.1 Post 16 learners will be aged between 16 and 18 years at the start of the academic year (i.e. September) and those continuing learners who started their programme of learning before their 19th birthday.

10.2 Post 16 learners are expected to take advantage of the concessionary fare schemes so they can access public transport for their daily travel to and from school/college in and around the Rotherham Borough. The following learners will, however, be considered for transport assistance under this policy:

- Consideration will be given to learners who have communication and interaction difficulties, cognition and learning difficulties, specific learning difficulties, social, emotional and mental health difficulties, sensory and/or physical needs which affect their ability to travel.
- The distance between home and school or college, offering a suitable course, must exceed 3 miles by the shortest available route. This may be disregarded where learners require assisted transport as a result of their learning difficulty and/or disability.

10.3 Young people will be engaged in learning or training at:

- A school (including academies)
- A further education institution
- An Authority maintained or assisted institution providing further education
- An establishment funded directly by the Education Funding Agency (EFA) e.g. independent specialist providers for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- A learning provider that is funded by the local authority to deliver accredited programmes of learning (this could include colleges, charities and private learning providers)

10.4 Learners are encouraged to attend courses within the Rotherham Borough. Specific details of the course and reasons for choice will need to be given in order that an assessment can be made, having due regard to the efficient and effective use of resources.

10.5 The Council supports the principle of young people having a reasonable opportunity to choose between the courses available to learners at post 16 and be supported to access their choices.

10.6 Reasonable choice will include enabling young people to choose courses outside the Rotherham boundaries if it makes sense for them to do so. The Council will be mindful of our neighbouring local authorities transport policies and consider how this transport policy can support movement across boundaries (i.e. South Yorkshire).

10.7 Reasonable choice will also include enabling young people to choose an establishment of education that is not the closest to where they live, if it makes sense to do so.

10.8 The following information will also be required to support the learner's application for assistance:

- Recent medical evidence from a GP, Consultant, specialist service or other qualified person, which is no more than 3 months old.
- Supporting evidence/recommendation from Education, Health and Care Assessment Team.

Please be aware that failure to provide all the evidence may result in a delay in your application being processed or your application being refused.

11 How will Post 16 learners be assessed for assistance?

11.1 Learners are expected to take advantage of the concessionary travel arrangements available. However, if a learner can demonstrate they have exceptional circumstances as to why other assistance may be required, then the appropriate transport enquiry form should be completed. This form is available online on the Council Website: https://www.rotherham.gov.uk/forms/form/548/en/further_education_transport_enquiry

11.2 Completion of the transport enquiry form does not mean learners are eligible for transport assistance. The form is an expression of interest in order that the Council can undertake an assessment.

11.3 The Council will consider the enquiry and make a determination of whether the learner qualifies for transport and what this provision should be. Each case will be assessed individually and will depend upon their particular needs and circumstances. Please see section 8.2 for qualifying categories. Those learners with an EHCP who are vulnerable to becoming not in education, employment or training (NEET) at the age of 16 or 17 or who have already become NEET; these young people should be offered a suitable course of education or training and may be provided with any transport support that is necessary to enable them to participate.

11.4 Where assisted transport has been recommended, this may be provided as any of the following (including personal travel budgets):

- A zero fare bus pass which entitles a pupil to free bus travel between the nearest bus stop to their home address and their registered school base.
- Refunded travelling expenses according to the cheapest available public transport route for those pupils able to access public transport services.
- Personal Travel Budgets are a distance calculation in accordance with the Council's current rate, for pupils requiring special arrangements, provided that the arrangement makes financial sense to the Local Authority. Calculations will only be determined for the journeys when the pupil is in the vehicle.
- Independent Travel Training

- Free or subsidised travel on a coach, minibus, taxi or specially adapted vehicle if the pupil is unable to travel by public transport due to their mobility, or effect of their complex special educational needs.

Parents/carers will be required to make a financial contribution towards the cost of the transport provided. See section 13 for further details.

- 11.5 Approval for transport assistance will usually be for the academic year only. Each case should be reviewed annually in time for the start of the next academic year to ensure the arrangements are still appropriate. If there are any changes to individual circumstances prior to this, such as change of address, change in needs as referred to in section 8.2 of this policy, or if the learner is able to walk, cycle or drive to school/college, it is the responsibility of the learner and/or parents/carers to inform the Council to ensure the necessary review is undertaken.
- 11.6 Transport is usually only provided at the beginning and end of the school/college day. The Council will not fund additional transport during the day, inter-site transport, work placement transport or induction visits and enrolment days. Transport support will not usually be provided for any learners during the first week (induction) of the new academic year. It is expected that families will make their own transport arrangements until the learner's timetable has been finalised.
- 11.7 Where transport support is provided, no variation can be made to the journey without the prior consent of the Council.
- 11.8 Learners who are in receipt of transport support and subsequently fail to attend school or college, without a valid reason, may have their transport support suspended or withdrawn.

12. APPRENTICESHIPS/TRAINEESHIPS

Transport assistance is not provided to learners undertaking work placements, apprenticeships or traineeships. In these circumstances learners are advised to contact their employer or learning provider for advice.

13. CHARGES FOR TRANSPORT ASSISTANCE

- 13.1 Charges apply to all post 16 learners where they require help in travelling to school or college regardless of whether they are living in the parental home or sheltered/residential accommodation.
- 13.2 Learners and/or parents/carers will be notified of the charges in advance of the travel arrangements and usually invoiced as soon as possible before the start of each term. These charges **must** be paid immediately so that transport arrangements can be made. Every opportunity will, however, be given for learners and/or parents/carers to pay the charges by smaller, more manageable, payments suitable to the learner and/or parent/carer if requested.
- 13.3 Where it has been agreed to provide transport assistance within the Rotherham Borough, learners and/or their parents/carers will be charged on a termly basis (i.e. 3 invoices per year will be sent, usually before the start of each term) based on the current cost of the concessionary student fare of 80p per journey, and school term dates. The approximate costs per school terms 2018-19 are as follows:

Autumn term 2018 (Sep – Dec) 14 weeks @ £8.00* per week = £112.00
 Spring term 2019 (Jan-Mar) 13 weeks @ £8.00* per week = £104.00
 Summer term 2019 (Apr-July) 13 weeks @ £8.00* per week = £104.00
Charges are based on one return bus journey per day at £1.60

**This can be subject to change. Charges will depend on school/college actual term dates, actual number of days per week students attend school/college and the cost of the concessionary bus fare.*

13.4 Where it has been agreed to provide transport assistance to provision outside the Rotherham Borough, learners and/or parents/carers will be charged with 3 invoices per year usually before the start of each term based on the current cost of the concessionary student fare of 80p per journey, and school term dates. The approximate costs per school terms 2018-19 are as follows:

Autumn term 2018 (Sep-Dec) 14 weeks @ £16.00* per week = £224.00
 Spring term 2019 (Jan-Mar) 13 weeks @ £16.00* per week = £208.00
 Summer term 2019 (Apr-July) 13 weeks @ £16.00* per week = £208.00
Charges are based on four bus journeys (2 return journeys) per day at £3.20**

**This can be subject to change. Charges will depend on school/college actual term dates, actual number of days per week students attend school/college and the cost of the concessionary bus fare.*

***The journey to some learning providers may require more than one bus journey each way.*

13.5 Refunds of transport costs cannot be made for occasional day's absence. If, however, the learner is absent for a full week (e.g. due to illness/holiday) then refunds will be considered upon receipt of confirmation of attendance details from the school/college.

13.6 Where the learner and/or parents/carers during the course of the academic year fail to make payments or make a reasonable contribution towards their assisted transport, engage with the Council's Sundry Accounts Team to secure a manageable payment plan, or submit an appeal, then the learner may have their assisted transport withdrawn. This action will only be taken as a last resort after all other options have been explored.

14. FINANCIAL HARDSHIP

16 to 19 Student Bursary Fund

The 16-19 Student Bursary Fund is designed to help support those young people who face the greatest barriers to continuing in education or training post 16. If the learner is aged between 16 and 19 years, and think they may struggle with the costs for full-time education or training, they may be eligible for a bursary. This can be used to assist with transport costs.

Students in the following groups may receive the maximum bursary of £1,200 a year:

- young people in care
- care leavers
- young people claiming income support in their own name
- disabled young people who receive both Employment Support Allowance and Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment in their own name.

To receive the maximum bursary the course must last for 30 weeks or more. If the course is shorter than 30 weeks, the student may receive less funds.

Other students facing genuine financial difficulties may be awarded a bursary at the discretion of their school, college or training provider.

Further information can be obtained directly from the learner's school or college on how to apply for a bursary.

Full details of the bursary scheme are available on the Directgov website at:

www.gov.uk/1619-bursary-fund.

- 14.1 Families experiencing financial hardship (low income families or learners) can apply to have the transport charges waived. Consideration will be given as to whether or not the learner has applied for, or is in receipt of, an allocation from the 16-19 bursary fund from the learning provider.
- 14.2 Eligibility for help with transport to school/college is not dependent on means testing, but a means test will be used to determine whether the contribution towards the transport costs should be waived for low income families. The Transport Policy Statement for Learners aged 16-19 years in Further Education, uses the low income eligibility criteria as set out in the Education and Inspections Act 2006, e.g.: Free School Meals eligibility in Y11 or being in receipt of the maximum level of Working Tax Credit. Written evidence of these benefits will be requested by the Council and where evidence has not been provided (or is not relevant to the period in which transport is being provided) charges will be made.

15. RAISING THE PARTICIPATION AGE

From 2015, all young people up until the end of the academic year in which they turn 18 are required to participate in education or training. There is no change to the statutory school age which remains at 5 to 16 years.

This change did not extend the entitlement for the provision of free transport assistance beyond Y11, as it does not mean that the learner has to stay at school. They may choose to work full time and study part time, continue full time study at school or college, be involved in part time training whilst volunteering or follow an apprenticeship.

More information about Raising the Participation Age can be obtained from the Department of Education website at:-

<http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/youngpeople/participation/rpa>.

This continues to mean that transport will only be allocated to learners who qualify under the criteria as set out in Section 8.2.

16. 19 – 25 LEARNERS

Learners who are aged 19-25 and have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) should contact their education provider to discuss the possibility of transport assistance.

17. APPEALS PROCESS AGAINST THE LOCAL AUTHORITY'S REFUSAL TO PROVIDE TRANSPORT ASSISTANCE

The decision regarding refusal of free home to school transport assistance is based upon information available to officers at the time of the assessment. Parents/Carers have the right to appeal against the Local Authority's decision not to provide transport assistance if they feel that an error has been made in the assessment of the entitlement, distance measurement, route safety or there are **exceptional circumstances** that breach this Policy.

17.1 Appeal Timings

The Home to School Travel and Transport Guidance - July 2014 issued by the Department of Education, recommends the timings of Appeals procedures. These are recommended timings and not compulsory but every effort will be made to meet these.

Stage 1 Appeal Review

Parents/Carers must, in writing, within 20 working days of the original decision, request a review of the original decision which will be undertaken by a Senior Officer (**Stage 1 Review**). Requests to appeal should be made in writing to education.transport@rotherham.gov.uk Parents/Carers will be provided with a notice of appeal form, which must be completed and returned within 20 working days. This should be accompanied by any other relevant evidence or medical reports that the parent/carer intends to rely upon. All evidence provided, together with a statement of appeal explaining the reasons for the original decision will be submitted to the Senior Officer for consideration.

Following the Stage 1 review the Senior Officer will respond in writing, within 20 working days of receipt of the parental request and receipt of the completed Notice of Appeal, either upholding or overturning the original decision. This will explain the reasons for the review decision and unless the original decision is overturned, offer the parent/carer the opportunity to escalate their appeal to be heard by an independent panel (**Stage 2 Appeal Review**).

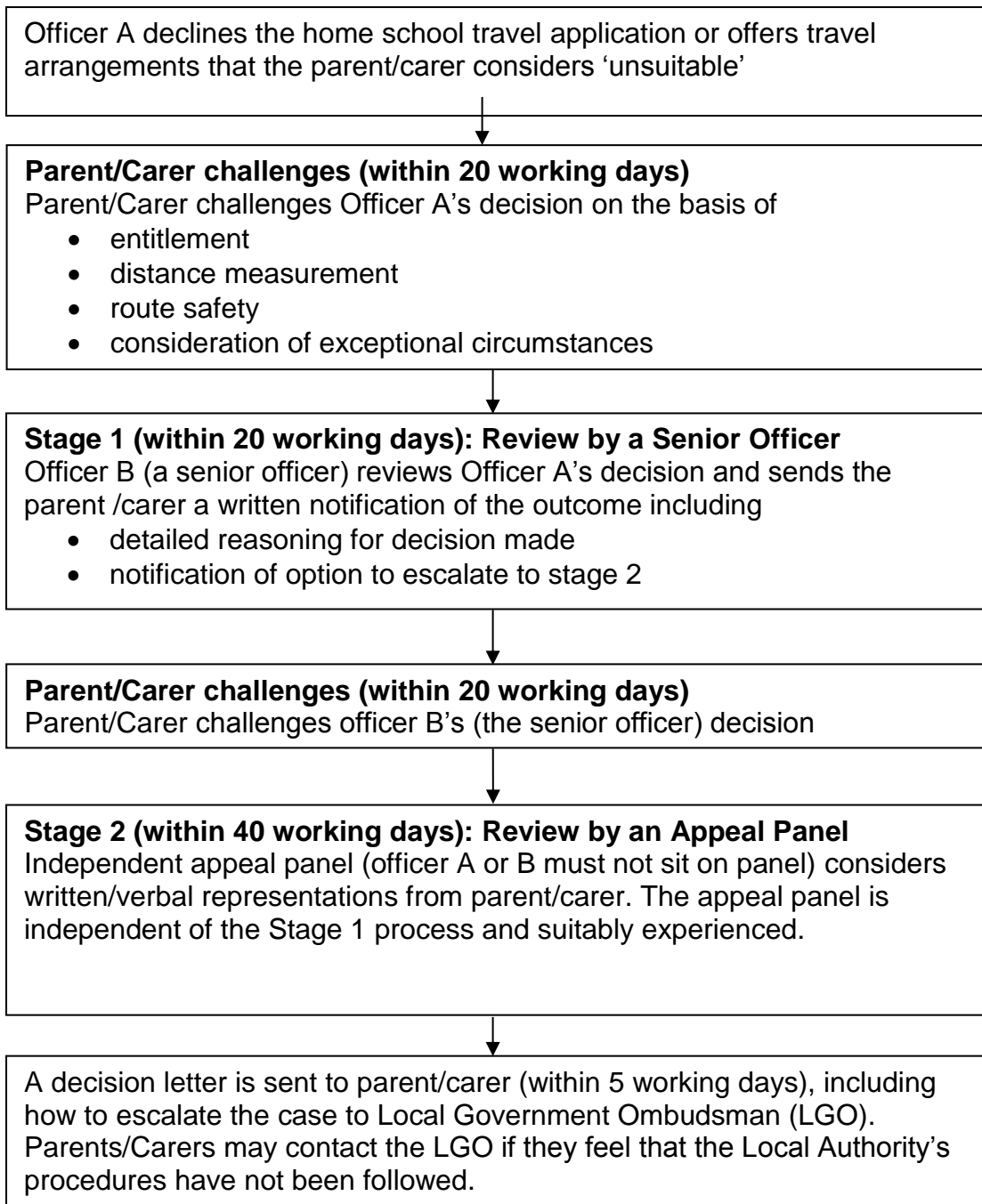
Stage 2 Appeal Review

Parents/Carers must confirm in writing their request for the appeal review to progress to Stage 2 within 20 working days of the letter confirming the outcome of the Stage 1 Appeal Review. Upon receipt, a statement of appeal will be prepared and all evidence submitted to an independent panel which has had no involvement in either of the previous decisions. The independent panel will review the previous decisions and the parental grounds for appeal within 40 working days. The outcome will be communicated to the parent/carer in writing within 5 working days of the panel hearing by the Council.

A Stage 1 or Stage 2 decision will be effective for the complete academic year following which entitlement will be reviewed for the next academic year. You will then again have the right to appeal this decision if necessary.

If there is a change in individual circumstances during the academic year, such as change of address or mobility needs, it is the responsibility of the parent/carer to inform the Passenger Services Team to ensure a review is undertaken by e-mailing: education.transport@rotherham.gov.uk.

Flowchart of the Appeals Process



More Choices for Supporting Your Child or Young Person to Travel to School/College

Transport assistance for children with special education, health and care plans or mobility issues



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Introduction

We know that getting children and young people to school/college on time and safely can be a challenge, but that we also want our children to grow up to be as independent as possible, and to have the best start in life.

Rotherham Council is now helping parents and carers to support their children or young people by giving them more choice about how their child or young person gets to school/college.

Although parents/carers are responsible for ensuring their child/young person attends school or college, in some cases, the Council can provide support for your child or young person's travel between home and school/college.

The options will depend on qualifying criteria, as well as whether the transport options are suitable for the needs of your child or young person.

If your child or young person has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or mobility problem, the Council will work with parents/carers to agree the child/young person's individual transport needs.

This booklet sets out everything you need to know about the new options available.

More Choice – Personal Transport Budgets

In the future, we will be providing families whose child/young person are eligible for home to school/college transport with more choice.

Personal Transport Budgets are an alternative to offering transport for a child/young person, giving you control of your own transport.

If they meet the criteria for transport and wish to make your own travel arrangements, this is a great option for many families.

Families can choose how they spend the money, and may wish to join with a family member, friends, or groups of families to provide transport to children or young people in their group.

Why choose a personal budget?

- Freedom to make your own arrangements – to suit your family
- Control over how the money is spent
- The child/young person may be more secure and relaxed at school/college
- You can share the cost and save money by joining up with other parents/carers
- You could use the money to help your child/young person become more independent





How much is on offer?

Your personal payment will depend on the number of days your child/young person is travelling, and the distance from home to school/college using the Council's measuring software.



Example 1:

You currently live **five miles from school/college**. You would receive £0.45 per mile for two trips per day. Based on 192 days in the academic year your payment could be **£864.00 each year**.

Where more than one child/young person is in the vehicle the payment will relate to each eligible child/young person.

Example 2:

You currently live **10 miles from school/college**. You would receive £0.45 per mile for two trips per day. Based on 192 days in the academic year your payment could be **£1728.00 each year**.

How much will it cost?

There is no cost to the young people or parents/carers who are eligible for this type of option.

Independent Travel Training

Independent Travel Training is a programme designed to run in a school/college. We will mainly be working with students from the ages of 14 plus, and it is available to young people who it is considered appropriate following consultation with children and their families. The training aims to equip young people with the skills needed to travel by themselves on public transport to and from school/college.

The ability to travel independently is of fundamental importance to all aspects of life, whether a person has a disability or otherwise. A lack of independent travel could ultimately create one of the most significant barriers to personal success and satisfaction. Independent Travel Training will be offered in the form of practical support and aims to provide a life skill to young people who then can take this skill to further education or employment.

Personal gains for young people can include personalised support, increased self-esteem, self-confidence and social skills, as well as increased potential to access education, employment and leisure opportunities.

Young people will be matched with their own travel trainer, who will work through a training plan with the young person. The plan is specifically tailored to the young person and aims to develop their independence.

Annual Review – Your opportunity to understand the options

As your child/young person has an Education, Health and Care plan, at least once a year you and your child/young person will meet with all the professionals involved in your child's education, health and care. The meeting about travel training will be held at the same time as the Education, Health and Care plan is reviewed.

How the child/young person travels to school/college is an important part of this process so, in the future, this will be discussed as part of this meeting. This will allow you and your child/young person to be fully involved in the decision-making process for transport options.

The review will provide an opportunity to review the child/young person transport needs, consider the options available

to you, and discuss whether independent travel training would be a suitable option for the child/young person.

However, you can make an expression of interest for Independent Travel Training and personal budgets at any time by completing the form on the back page.



Further information on the Home to School Policy is available at www.rotherham.gov.uk/schools



To make an application for a personal transport budget or to express an interest in Independent Travel Training visit:

www.rotherham.gov.uk/schools to fill in the online form.

Alternatively you can photograph your completed form and send as an attachment to education.transport@rotherham.gov.uk

- 1) Name:
- 2) Full address including postcode:
- 3) Email address:
- 4) Telephone number:
- 5) Mobile telephone number:
- 6) How do you prefer to be contacted? (*multiple tick boxes*)
Email Telephone Mobile
- 7) What is your relationship to the Child and Young Person:
- 8) Name of Child and Young Person:
- 9) Name of the school the Child and Young Person is attending:
- 10) If you have any further comments please enter below:

Please tick below if you are interested in the following:

Personal budgets

Independent travel training

Home to School Transport.

Assessment Matrix: Special Educational Needs
and Disabilities

Published: 7th August 2018 Reviewed: 7th August 2018 Next Review: 1st July 2018

National Guidance

The duty for Local Authorities to provide transport to and from school is imposed by the Education Act 1996 (hereafter referred to as 'the Act'). In the case of an 'eligibleChild', Section 508B of the Act states that: "the local authority must make such travel arrangements as they consider necessary for facilitating the child's

attendance at school”.

Schedule 35B of the Act defines an ‘eligible child’. The Council must exercise this duty in a manner which is legal, rational and procedurally proper.

The guidance in this document relates to the recommendation for children to be assessed on an individual basis to identify their particular transport requirements, in accordance with section 3.09 of the Home to School Transport Policy; Children with an Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP) or a Statement of Educational Needs and/or Disabilities. This document will not be used to assess Children applying for free transport assistance, in the form of a zero fare bus pass, under distance criteria stated in sections 3.02 and 3.03 of the Home to School Transport Policy

Section 508A of the Act also places a general duty on Local Authorities to promote the use of sustainable travel and transport. The duty applies to all children and young people of compulsory school age and sixth-form age, who travel to receive education or training within a local authority’s area.

The duty relates to journeys to and from all institutions where education or training is delivered.

Children with Special Educational Needs or Disability

Children and Young People with a Statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN) or an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) may receive transport help under Section 324 of the Act depending on their individual circumstances.

Local Authorities are empowered to make any non-educational provision specified in the statement or plan, including transport. Guidance for transport for pupils with Special Educational Needs is clear that provision should be based on an individual child's needs and if a child's needs are such that transport is not necessary, then the remaining criteria should be applied as default.

For SEN pupils, transport assistance will not be provided where parents have expressed a preference for a school which is further than the closest suitable school identified with the Education, Health and Care Plan, or Statement of Special Educational Needs plan where this has not yet transitioned to the new EHCP. This is in accordance with the Council's Home to School Transport Policy.

Any transport provided will be subject to ongoing review with the aim of moving the child or young person towards independent travel wherever appropriate. This assessment matrix enables this review to be undertaken by the Council's approved Independent Travel Assessor.

Further information on the Home to School Transport policy can be accessed via the following link:

Added link:

http://www.rotherham.gov.uk/info/200086/schools_and_colleges/319/a_guide_to_school_transport

Transport Assessment

The transport assessment is created at the point of either a new referral, or during key transitional stages such as a change of school or educational establishment. This currently coincides with the transfer of a statement of SEN to an Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP).

The information required to complete the assessment is gathered through various sources, by the Council's approved independent travel assessor

This allows for a personalised, individual assessment. The information gathered includes, but is not exclusive to:

- previous statements of special educational needs,
- medical reports,
- educational health care plans,
- school reports,
- information from social services,
- school Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO),
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS),
- attendance officers,
- other school professionals and;
- parents.

The transport assessment is based under 6 key headings which look into all the needs of the child.

These 6 headings are:

- Mobility,
- Medical,
- Behavioural,
- Vulnerability,
- Practicality and;
- Training.

Each of the 6 assessment headings are explained in greater detail in this document. Following the gathering of information, each of the 6 assessment headings are then assessed through a matrix. This is to ensure that the process is fair and consistent.

Matrix scoring

The matrix follows a scale of 1-5, corresponding Need (impact) against Likelihood (frequency). The greater the score, the higher the risk.

The Need score:

1. To be noted/aware of
2. Minor
3. Moderate
4. Major
5. Severe

Likelihood score

1. Rare
2. Unlikely
3. Possible
4. Likely
5. Certain

The score is then placed on a gradient template as show below

| | | Need | | | | |
|------------|---|------|----|----|----|----|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Likelihood | 1 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| | 2 | 2 | 4 | 6 | 8 | 10 |
| | 3 | 3 | 6 | 9 | 12 | 15 |
| | 4 | 4 | 8 | 12 | 16 | 20 |
| | 5 | 5 | 10 | 15 | 20 | 25 |

A single category score of 25 highlights a high need/risk and transport should be provided on these grounds

As the matrix is spilt into 6 areas, Mobility, Medical, Vulnerability, Behaviour, Practical and Training, a singular area may not be sufficient to mean transport should be provided. However, a combination of 2 or more areas may increase the risk to the young person and for this reason a total score will also indicate level of support.

This scale is based on the maximum of 150 points:

0 - 25 Points

This shows the young person has the ability and support to travel independently and therefore the following should be applied. New applicants would not be eligible for transport. For existing (pre-assessment) service users, transport would be removed at the earliest / most convenient stage, with a 14 day notice period.

26-60 points

The young person has the ability to travel independently but may need support or guidance. This can be through the offer of Independent Travel Training or a journey plan. The person is likely to only require a few sessions.

60 – 96 points

The young person will likely require a blend of transport assistance and travel training. The transport assistance should be short-term, while a programme of Independent Travel Training is scheduled and undertaken. The training will likely to be greater than ten sessions.

96 - 115 points

Transport assistance would be provided. This indicates that the person has multiple concerns and would need support to use sustainable methods of transport. However, a person scoring in this range may, in the future, be able to undertake Independent Travel Training and develop the skills for independence once other interventions have been completed.

115 – 150 points

Transport assistance with support required. A person scoring in this range will have reached a maximum score in two more than two areas. This indicates a high level of support both within the school and home settings, which should be continued during transport. If using transport provision through the Council a Passenger Assistant may be provided.

This Matrix ensures that all the young person's needs are recognised as an individual need, but ensures that a young person with multiple, minor needs is not excluded from support.

Assessment of each criteria against other processes,

In ascertaining a current level of need, the process of the 6 key areas of assessment highlights and corresponds with other single assessments made by the Directorate for Children and Young People's Services, and the application process for disability related benefits, such as the application for Personal Independence Payments.

It should be noted that the agreement to provide transport is not an entitlement to the above benefits. Neither should the above benefit entitle the person to transport by default. It is stipulated as guidance only. If no evidence is provided or available to conduct an assessment, then the default assessment will be made on the grounds of distance to the nearest school.

1 - Mobility

The guidance from the Department of Work and Pensions in relation to mobility, highlights that there is no consensus across the health and social care community of the perfect measure of mobility. However, distance is often used as it is clear and easy to understand and apply.

While there is no clear evidence for one particular distance, 20 metres was introduced with Personal Independence Payments in relation to mobility related benefits. This distance was to distinguish those whose mobility is significantly more limited than others and who face even greater barriers on a day-to-day basis.

When reviewing mobility in relation to home to school transport, this guidance is considered. Therefore, using the criteria from this guidance as the highest need score, the matrix is graduated down as follows:

Need score:

1. A singular note of mobility concerns, however no recent notation or comments (last 2 years) not currently under monitoring for this, demonstrates physically fit and health within school;
2. Some note of mobility but evidence of physical activity, e.g. football, cycling, rugby;
3. Reduced mobility, but can walk short distance, with or without aids, tires easily, adapted physical education within school;
4. Requires mobility aids at all times, mobility is likely to be less than 200 metres;
5. Unable to walk 20 metres or are a full-time wheelchair user.

Likelihood score:

1. No support;
2. Seasonal (e.g. worse in winter);
3. Intermittent;
4. Daily;
5. No other means.

It must also be recorded in this assessment if the person requires a wheelchair adapted vehicle and if the person can transfer from mobility equipment.

2 - Medical

Often the young person has been assessed with the ability to walk. However, their medical need increases the risk of them coming to harm, or requiring medical intervention while completing the journey from home to school.

Medical needs are complex in nature and therefore the need score is based on the most common conditions.

Need score:

1. Allergies, Asthma, Eczema;
2. Microcephaly, ADHD, Reynard's, Back Pain, Hearing Impaired;
3. Cystic Fibrosis, COPD, Controlled Diabetes, Slight Visual Impairment, ME, Hypermobility, Down Syndrome;
4. Uncontrolled Epilepsy /Regular Seizures, Cerebral Palsy, Uncontrolled Diabetes, Cancers, Di George Syndrome, Muscular Dystrophy, Moderate Visual Impairment;
5. Spine Bifida, MS, Edwards Syndrome, Peg/Tube Feed, Suction/Breathing apparatus needed.

Please note: this list is not exclusive and will be subject to change. Advice on each condition is taken from NHS guidance and notes in the young person's records.

Likelihood score:

1. To be noted / aware of;
2. Minor – requires monitoring by a medical professional such as a specialist nurse and can have some impact on the young person's ability, but not on a daily basis;
3. Moderate - monitored by a paediatrician or GP, impacts on a daily basis with good and bad days frequency ;
4. Major – under the care of multiple professionals with involvement from health / social care teams;
5. Requires 1-1 support at all times, will have an emergency care plan in place.

Please note: that although a number of conditions named are also linked to learning disabilities, this section only looks at the level of medical intervention – a learning disability is covered in more depth under the Vulnerability section.

3 - Behaviour

With some known conditions and in the case of some specialist provision, the subject of a young person's behaviour can impact on their ability to keep those around them safe.

Outbursts and aggression can be triggered by fear, frustration or the ability to tolerate a stimulus environment. These triggers need careful management to ensure the young person, and those supporting the young person, have the ability and skills to reduce the risk of harm.

For this reason, the young person is scored on the following behaviour against the frequency of the occurrences:

Need score:

1. Verbal aggression only;
2. Verbal aggression with anger management concerns, including absconding and unpredictability;
3. Damage to property;
4. Physical assault of either a young person, adult and/or self;
5. Violent and aggressive – unable to be transported with other students.

Likelihood score:

1. Not happened in the last year;
2. Not happened in the last term;
3. Happened in the last month;
4. Regular occurrence;
5. Constant and cause for major concern.

This scale can be utilised for attendance and exclusion purposes and will also influence the ability to accept support from another person.

4 - Vulnerability

This area covers the social interaction element of the assessment and is focused on the ability for the young person to keep themselves safe.

This includes:

- Significant social and / or emotional immaturity in comparison with other children of their age.
- Links with cognitive ability or be as a result of a specific developmental disorder.
- Some children with moderate to severe learning difficulties, who may be vulnerable in social settings due to their lack of independence and social skills.
- Young people identified as being at risk of exploitation as recognised under the Prevent Programme.
- A significant sensory or communication impairment such as blindness or Autistic Spectrum Disorder.

The matrix will also consider age appropriateness to expected ability when reviewing the evidence.

Need score:

1. Anxious / nervous / bullying;
2. Autism/ Asperger's (without an LD);
3. Mild learning disability;
4. Moderate learning disability / limited communication, significant anxiety;
5. Severe learning disability / no communication ability / total visual impairment.

Likelihood score:

As this category is often a life condition and impacts on a daily basis, the frequency matrix is based on the likelihood for the young person to come to harm:

1. Rare;
2. Unlikely;
3. Possible – lack of risk but aware of danger;
4. Likely – can do some simple activities but no sense of danger or risk;
5. Significant – cannot be left alone for risk of harm.

A score of 25 in this group will often indicate that the young person cannot be left unsupervised and therefore requires support whilst in transport to reduce the risk of coming to harm.

5 – Practicality

This category incorporates the Education Act, Paragraphs 4 & 5 of schedule 35B, which states;

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

Where Rotherham Council assesses that a route is not safe for a child to walk, accompanied as necessary, transport assistance may be provided where the route is below the minimum distance, as detailed in the Home to School Transport Policy.

When looking at a safe route, common factors such as exposed walking areas, street lighting and pedestrian crossings make up the basis of the assessment. Following the safe route assessment, other factors are then introduced including;

- Is it a direct route?
- Does it require multiple changes?
- Is the time excessive?

Combining all these variants, the following criteria applies;

Need score:

1. Safe route to school with a note or comment to be aware of;
2. Safe route with a number of concerns;
3. Two or more changes in transport;
4. Safe route takes longer than 90 minutes or requires three or more changes;
5. No safe route available.

Likelihood score:

The likelihood criteria is slightly different in the multiplier matrix:

1. Only applies occasionally;
3. Short term arrangement;
5. Long term arrangement;

6 – Training

The training matrix is an additional complementary grading as this helps prioritise the level of training required. This grade can only be completed once the other five headings have been addressed and a profile has been created of the individual.

Need score:

This grade highlights if the person is ready for travel training and is graded by need in the following scale;

1. No barriers to training, the young person has indicated or demonstrated some ability (e.g. going to the local shop along, or travelled on a bus with support);
2. Young person will need up to 10 sessions – willing to participate, with some level of capability demonstrated;
3. Young person will need a high number of sessions – no previous experience of independence – some avoidance management, parents concerned about ability;
4. Specialist training required (V.I / guide dog or BSL communicator);
5. Even with training, the young person would be unable to be independent.

Likelihood score:

To complement the training programme, the likelihood score is reflective of the timescale to indicate a realistic referral to the Independent Travel Trainers:

1. The person would be ready for travel training
3. The person would be expected to undertake travel training at the next key stage.
5. The person will not be suitable for travel training.

Example 1

- Jess is 14 and starting year 9, she has been in home to school transport since she was 5.
- Jess has a statement which is changing into an EHCP.
- Jess' SEN is due to ASD, with mild LD, she attended a mainstream school but is accessing 1-1 support in a couple of lessons.
- Jess enjoys dancing and reading, she wants to go to college and university. She would like to become an engineer.
- Her friendships are limited to 3 / 4 individuals.
- Jess doesn't like loud noises and baby crying. She can get aggressive to avoid the situation and is more likely to flight than fight
- Home to school for Jess is 1.4 miles on a safe route and her friends use this route also;

Matrix Score

| | | | |
|---------------|-----|-----|----------|
| Mobility | N 0 | F 1 | SCORE 1 |
| Medical | N 2 | F 2 | SCORE 4 |
| Behaviour | N 2 | F 3 | SCORE 6 |
| Vulnerability | N 3 | F 4 | SCORE 12 |
| Practical | N 2 | F 5 | SCORE 10 |
| Training | N 3 | F 1 | SCORE 3 |

TOTAL SCORE 36

Outcome

None of the scores presented a 25, therefore a combined score matrix is used.

The score indicated that the young person would be suitable for travel training and likely to need up to 10 sessions with majority of the work based on anxiety management strategies.

Example 2

- Ewan is 10 and is starting year 6, he has been in home to school transport since he was 3.
- Ewan has a statement which is changing into an EHCP.
- Ewan's SEN is due to Cerebral Palsy with Severe Learning Disabilities, he has Gastro-Oesophageal Reflux Disease, which results in him being tube (peg) feed. Ewan also recently developed Epilepsy and this is uncontrolled, with seizures occurring on a daily basis.
- Ewan enjoys music and audio stimulation and he used to enjoy the lights in the sensory room. However, due to his epilepsy this is been restricted. He is unable to verbally communicate and attends a specialist school. He is now wheelchair dependent.
- Ewan doesn't like lots of people around him and can get aggressive with thrashing his arms around. He doesn't mean to hurt anyone, it's his way of showing discomfort.
- Home to school for Ewan is 3.5 miles on a safe route and he is expected to remain at the school provision for his secondary education.

Matrix score

| | | | |
|---------------|-----|-----|----------|
| Mobility | N 5 | F 5 | SCORE 25 |
| Medical | N 5 | F 5 | SCORE 25 |
| Behaviour | N 4 | F 3 | SCORE 12 |
| Vulnerability | N 5 | F 5 | SCORE 25 |
| Practical | N 2 | F 5 | SCORE 10 |
| Training | N 5 | F 5 | SCORE 25 |

TOTAL SCORE 122

Outcome

Ewan needs transport with a passenger assistant provision. The escort will need to be epilepsy trained and be aware of his seizures. Ewan is able to be transported with others, but in a small group setting.

Appendix 1 – Assessment form

Home to School Transport Assessment – SEN

Name: _____ DOB: _____
 Address: _____
 Current Setting: _____ Current transport: _____
 Future Setting _____

Does the child have a Statement/EHCP Yes/No Is this a base place Yes/No

Distance from home to school:

| Assessment | Comments | Risk score |
|--|----------|------------|
| <p>Mobility</p> <p>Does the child have a mobility concern or physical disability that impacts on their ability to get to education</p> | | |
| <p>Vulnerability</p> <p>Do the child's levels of vulnerability prevent them from being able to travel safely on school transport, public transport, or as a pedestrian/cyclist?</p> | | |
| <p>Behaviour</p> <p>Does the child display challenging behaviour, which may put him/her or another member of the public at risk should they become an independent traveller?</p> | | |
| <p>Medical</p> <p>Is there a medical reason as to why the child cannot independently use public transport, walk or cycle? (for example uncontrolled epilepsy)</p> | | |
| <p>Practical</p> <p>Is there a safe route or other transport provisions available?</p> | | |
| <p>Training</p> <p>Would the child, if given travel training, be able to get to school independently? (Using public transport, walking or cycling)</p> | | |
| <p>Additional notes</p> | | |
| <p>Decision and recommendations</p> | | |

Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019-2022 and Housing Allocation Policy

Sandra Tolley, Head of Housing Options

Jill Jones, Homelessness Manager

Sandra Wardle, Housing Advice and Assessment Manager

The Homelessness Reduction Act

Shifts local authority approach to homelessness from less crisis intervention to more prevention, ensuring more people are entitled to help

Background

- **Housing Act 1996 Part 7** remains the primary legislation
- **Prior to April 2018** the principal duty was to secure accommodation for applicants who were eligible, homeless or threatened with homelessness within 28 days and who had a 'priority need' for housing and were homeless unintentionally
- **Homelessness Reduction Act 2017** amended the 1996 Act, introducing new statutory duties to act to **prevent and relieve** homelessness for all eligible applicants who are homeless or threatened with homelessness **within 56 days**

Before 3 April 2018

- **Single people** with no clear priority need were entitled to 'advice and assistance', but their needs were often not assessed
- **Prevention activity** was 'good practice', but not compulsory – crisis response at the point of homelessness was commonplace
- **The process** involved an application, officers undertaking inquiries, assessing an applicant against the statutory tests and making a decision, without needing to involve the applicant in finding possible solutions

Now

- **All eligible applicants** have a full assessment of their housing and support needs.
- Local connection, intentionality and priority need are not a barrier to accessing support.
- **Applicants and authorities work together** to prevent or relieve homelessness.

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The Homelessness Reduction Act

The Act placed a number of new duties on local housing authorities

Expanded advice and information duty: Available to all residents regardless of eligibility. Advice must be designed to meet the needs of particular groups: care leavers, former members of the armed forces, people leaving custody, victims of domestic abuse, people leaving hospital and people with mental health issues.

Prevention duty : Owed to all eligible applicants threatened with homelessness in the next 56 days irrespective of 'local connection', 'priority need' or 'intentional homelessness'. Includes tenants served with a valid Section 21 notice (no fault eviction) which expires within 56 days.

Relief duty : Owed to people who are actually homeless and lasts for 56 days, irrespective of 'priority need' or 'intentional homelessness'. The local authority may refer to another authority if the applicant has no local connection to their authority

Homelessness Reduction Act – DUTY TO REFER

The duty applies to:

- Prisons and youth offender institutions;
- Secure training centres and Secure colleges;
- Youth offending teams;
- Probation services (including community rehabilitation companies);
- Jobcentre Plus;
- Social service authorities;
- Emergency departments and Urgent treatment centres;
- Hospitals in their function of providing inpatient care;
- Secretary of State for defence in relation to members of the armed forces.

Consent is needed prior to a referral being made.

It will help ensure that people who face the threat of homelessness are identified earlier through their contacts with public authorities and get referred for help

Preparation for the Act

- Structure changes
- Allocation Policy Review
- Personal Housing Plans developed
- Upgraded ICT Systems
- New Homelessness Contact Card
- Extensive training
- Implemented the Homelessness Code of Guidance

The Impact

- Same picture nationally
- Temporary accommodation target 32 – 39 currently plus hotels
- As of 12/10/2018 = case load increased from 132 in April 2018 to 354 cases
 - 54 in intervention stage
 - 149 prevention stage
 - 143 relief stage
 - 8 Main Duty stage

Rough Sleeping

- Official numbers are low
- The Count
- Reporting a rough sleeper
- Framework 0800 0665358

The New Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeper Strategy

- Homelessness Act 2002 (2003-2008)
- Five yearly since
- Currently reviewing 2014 -2018
- New strategy 2019 – 2023
- Review annually

Achievements

- 7 Priorities - all actions met

Examples

- 16/17 Year old protocol implemented
- Sub Regional Funding attained for Rough Sleepers
- Restructure of Housing Options service
- Reviewed provision of temporary accommodation

Consultation

- Improving Places Select Commission
- Side by Side Homelessness Forum
- Rotherham Show
- Staff

The New Strategy

7 key priorities

- Supporting People with Complex Needs
- Rapid Housing - getting everyone housed quicker
- Preventing and supporting young people from becoming homeless
- Ending rough sleeping
- Preventing homelessness to reduce the impact on health
- Reduce the time spent in temporary accommodation
- Sustaining Tenancies

Timetable

**July 2018 –
October 2018**
Consultation
period

**November
2018**
First Draft

January 2019
Final Draft

February 2019
Cabinet for
approval

March 2019
Publish new
strategy

Amendments to the Housing Allocation Policy

Overview of the Housing Register

| | |
|---------------|--------------|
| Band 1 | 246 |
| Band 2 | 1,668 |
| Band 3 | 1,783 |
| Band 4 | 1,755 |
| Transfers | 1,336 |
| Total | 6,788 |

Overview of the Housing Register

| Band 2 Reason | Number of applications |
|---|------------------------|
| Statutory Homeless | 19 |
| Medical priority | 1,280 |
| Statutory overcrowded | 19 |
| Not ready for independent living held in suspension | 147 |
| Leaving supported housing ready to live independently | 67 |
| Requiring extra care housing | 5 |
| Offender, not a high risk to the community | 4 |
| Applicants living in private rented who cannot afford the rent but are employed | 24 |
| Victim of domestic violence | 96 |
| Looked after child ready to live independently | 7 |
| TOTAL | 1668 |

The 5 recommendations

- 1) The current banding related to homelessness households is enhanced to award a higher band following a full homelessness assessment
- 2) Review the downsizing policy to award Band 2 status to Council or Housing Association tenants who are under occupying their home to move to a property with at least 1 less bedroom, a flat or a bungalow (a medical assessment will be required for bungalows)
- 3) Increase the quota of advertised properties in Band 2 from 50% to 60%, reduce the quota of advertised properties in Band 3 from 40% to 30%, and retain the 10% quota for Transfers.
- 4) Single people who are Council or Housing Association tenants living in a flat who are expecting their first child to be eligible for family accommodation on the production of the MATB1 form.
- 5) A person has local connection if their Grandparents live in Rotherham and have done so for the last 3 years. There will be a validation process asking the applicant to provide proof of the grandparent's address and confirmation that they are in contact with them.

Recommendation 1

The current banding related to homelessness households is enhanced to award a higher banding following a full homelessness assessment.

Rational

- Legislative changes which aim to prevent homelessness earlier
- The Allocation Policy must adhere to a legal framework outlined in Part VI and Part VII of the 1996 Housing Act
- Meeting demand

The Demand

| Homelessness category | Total number of applications in each Band | Number of homelessness applications | Percentage of homelessness applications as a percentage of the total in that Band |
|--|---|-------------------------------------|---|
| Band 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Homeless households who are both homeless and also have a medical need | 246 | 61 | 24.80% |
| Band 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unintentionally homeless households who are in priority need | 1668 | 19 | 1.14% |
| Band 3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unintentionally homeless but not in priority need | 1783 | 280 | 15.70% |
| Band 4 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Threatened with homelessness awaiting assessment | 1755 | 217 | 12.36% |
| TOTAL | 5452 | 577 | 10.58% |

The proposed policy

- Applicants in priority need who actually become homeless and a relief duty is owed or when a full housing duty is owed are placed into Band 1.
- Applicants in priority need who are faced with homelessness and a prevention duty is owed are placed into Band 2.
- Non-priority homeless applicants, who are owed a prevention or relief duty, be placed into Band 3.
- Applicants awaiting a homelessness assessment are placed into Band 3

Recommendation 2

Review the downsizing policy to award Band 2 status to Council or Housing Association tenants who are under occupying their home to move to a property with at least 1 less bedroom, a flat or a bungalow (a medical assessment will be required for bungalows)

The Rational

- Current policy confusing
- Impacts on waiting time for applicants who have been assessed for a bungalow

Recommendation 2

Review the downsizing policy to award Band 2 status to Council or Housing Association tenants who are under occupying their home to move to a property with at least 1 less bedroom, a flat or a bungalow (a medical assessment will be required for bungalows)

The Rational

- Current policy confusing
- Impacts on waiting time for applicants who have been assessed for a bungalow

Recommendation 2

Current Policy

- Tenants under occupying a 4 bedroom house can move to a 2 bedroom house.
- Tenants who are affected by the bedroom tax can move to any type of property with 1 less bedroom.
- Tenants who are not affected financially can only move to a flat or a bungalow.

Recommendation 2

New Proposed Policy

- Review the downsizing policy to award Band 2 status to Council or Housing Association tenants who are under occupying their home to move to a property with at least 1 less bedroom, a flat or a bungalow (a medical assessment will be required for bungalows)

Recommendation 3

Increase the quota of advertised properties in Band 2 from 50% to 60%, reduce the quota of advertised properties in Band 3 from 40% to 30%, and retain the 10% quota for Transfers.

Rational

- Reduce waiting time for applicants in urgent housing need
- Table 3.4.2 – shows typical waiting times

Recommendation 3

New proposed policy

| | Old Quota | Proposed New Quota |
|---------------|-----------|--------------------|
| Band 2 | 50 % | 60% |
| Band 3 | 40% | 30% |
| Transfer Band | 10% | 10% |

Recommendation 4

Single people who are Council or Housing Association tenants living in a flat who are expecting their first child to be eligible for family accommodation on the production of the MATB1 form.

Rational

- To ensure that there is equality and fairness

Recommendation 4

The current policy:

- Council or Housing Association single tenants living in a flat who are expecting their first child
- Living with parents or in private rented accommodation.

Recommendation 4

New proposed policy

Single people who are Council or Housing Association tenants living in a flat who are expecting their first child to be eligible for family accommodation on the production of the MATB1 form.

Recommendation 5

A person has local connection if their Grandparents live in Rotherham and have done so for the last 3 years. There will be a validation process asking the applicant to provide proof of the grandparent's address and confirmation that they are in contact with them.

Rational

- To ensure that there is equality and fairness

Recommendation 5

Current Policy

- Lived for the last 3 years in Rotherham through their own choice.
- Currently employed in Rotherham and have been for the last 3 years
- Have direct family who live in Rotherham and they have done so for the last three years. Direct family members include spouses, civil partners, parents, sons, daughters, brother and sisters.

Recommendation 5

Proposed new policy

- Add grandparents as a direct family members.

There will be a validation process asking the applicant to provide proof of the grandparent's address and confirmation that they are in contact with them.

Any questions?

Summary Sheet

Council Report

Improving Places Selection Commission

Title

Amendments to the Housing Allocation Policy - January 2019

Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?

Yes

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

Anne Marie Lubanski, Strategic Director Adult Care and Housing

Report Author(s)

Name and Job Title: Sandra Tolley, Head of Housing Options

Ward(s) Affected

All

Executive Summary

The Council is required to allocate Social Housing according to a published Allocations Policy which has been drawn up according to the Housing Act 1996, Part VI and Part VII as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002, the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and the Localism Act 2011.

Rotherham Council's Housing Allocation Policy was last fully reviewed in February 2017. The policy outlines who can seek rehousing through the local authority, the properties they can apply for and how people are prioritised for available homes.

There are certain circumstances when the Allocation Policy needs to be adjusted. These include when there are legislative changes, if there are changes in supply and demand or when equality data informs us that we need to change the way we allocate properties. The 5 proposed amendments address some of these issues and will also help to prevent homelessness earlier, reduce waiting time for households with a medical need and apply consistent approaches within the policy for people who wish to move to a smaller home.

Recommendations:

That:

The five proposed amendments to the Allocation Policy detailed below are approved:

- 1) The current banding related to homelessness households is enhanced to award a higher band following a full homelessness assessment as detailed in section 3.2.6 of the report.
- 2) Review the downsizing policy to award Band 2 status to Council or Housing Association tenants who are under occupying their home to move to a property with at least 1 less bedroom, a flat or a bungalow (a medical assessment will be required for bungalows)
- 3) Increase the quota of advertised properties in Band 2 from 50% to 60%, reduce the quota of advertised properties in Band 3 from 40% to 30%, and retain the 10% quota for Transfers.
- 4) Single people who are Council or Housing Association tenants living in a flat who are expecting their first child to be eligible for family accommodation on the production of the MATB1 form.
- 5) A person has local connection if their Grandparents live in Rotherham and have done so for the last 3 years. There will be a validation process asking the applicant to provide proof of the grandparent's address and confirmation that they are in contact with them.

List of Appendices

None

Background Papers

Housing Allocation Policy (May 2017)

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

| | |
|------------------------------------|---------------|
| Informal Cabinet | October 2018 |
| Improving Places Select Commission | November 2018 |
| OSMB (pre-Cabinet) | December 2018 |
| Cabinet | January 2019 |

Council Approval Required

No

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

Recommendations

That the five proposed amendments to the Allocation Policy detailed below are approved:

- 1) The current band related to homelessness households is enhanced to award a higher band following a full homelessness assessment as detailed in section 3.2.6 of the report.
- 2) Review the downsizing policy to award Band 2 status to Council or Housing Association tenants who are under occupying their home to move to a property

- with at least 1 less bedroom, a flat or a bungalow (a medical assessment will be required for bungalows)
- 3) Increase the quota of advertised properties in Band 2 from 50% to 60%, reduce the quota of advertised properties in Band 3 from 40% to 30%, and retain the 10% quota for Transfers.
 - 4) Single people who are Council or Housing Association tenants living in a flat who are expecting their first child to be eligible for family accommodation on the production of the MATB1 form.
 - 5) A person has local connection if their Grandparents live in Rotherham and have done so for the last 3 years. There will be a validation process asking the applicant to provide proof of the grandparent's address and confirmation that they are in contact with them.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Council's Housing Allocation Policy had been in place since 29 October 2014. A significant change was made during 2014 to ensure that only those in housing need were eligible to join the Register, resulting in a reduction of households from over 30,000 to 6,677 applicants by 1 August 2018. There have been various revisions and the latest was on 13th February 2017. Further amendments to the Allocation Policy are set out below in Sections 3.2 to 3.5.

3. Key Issues

3.1 The Housing Register

- 3.1.1 As at 1st August 2018 there are 6788 applicants on the housing register and the numbers of applicants in each band is:

| Band | Reason | Numbers in each band |
|--------------|---|-----------------------------|
| Band 1 | Households who require immediate housing and are considered for all vacant Council properties | 246 |
| Band 2 | People who experience urgent housing need and require moving due to specific circumstances | 1,668 |
| Band 3 | Applicants who are entitled to reasonable preference on a non-urgent basis | 1,783 |
| Band 4 | Applicants who have no reasonable preference entitlement/priority need | 1,755 |
| Transfer | Council or Housing Association tenants with no housing need | 1,336 |
| Total | | 6,788 |

3.1.2 The reasons and number of applicants in Band 2 are:

| Band 2 Reason | Number of applications |
|---|-------------------------------|
| Statutory Homeless | 19 |
| Medical priority | 1,280 |
| Statutory overcrowded | 19 |
| Not ready for independent living held in suspension | 147 |
| Leaving supported housing ready to live independently | 67 |
| Requiring extra care housing | 5 |
| Offender, not a high risk to the community | 4 |
| Applicants living in private rented who cannot afford the rent but are employed | 24 |
| Victim of domestic violence | 96 |
| Looked after child ready to live independently | 7 |
| Total in Band 2 | 1668 |

3.2 Legislative changes which aim to prevent homelessness earlier

Recommendation 1 - The current banding related to homelessness households is enhanced to award a higher banding following a full homelessness assessment.

3.2.1 On 5th February 2018, the Homelessness Advice and Support Team, from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government visited the Homelessness team to hear about the work Rotherham is doing in preparation for the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

The feedback was very positive and there was recognition that the team have a preventative approach in operation. The Allocations Policy supports Rotherham's homelessness prevention work but it was recommended that the policy should be reviewed in light of the Homelessness Reduction Act; ensuring reasonable preference is given to those under the prevention and relief duties.

3.2.2 The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 is one of the biggest changes to the rights of homeless people in England for 15 years. It effectively bolts two new duties onto the original statutory rehousing duty. These are the Homelessness Prevention Duty and the Homelessness Relief Duty.

3.2.3 The Allocation Policy must adhere to a legal framework outlined in Part VI and Part VII of the 1996 Housing Act, an element of which mandates that certain groups of applicants must be given 'reasonable' preference in determining who is allocated properties. This already applies to people who are homeless in priority need and some who face losing their accommodation within 28 days, but the 2017 Homelessness Reduction Act, which came into effect from April 2018, means preference needs to be given to all applicants who are threatened with homelessness within 56 days. This report recommends the extension of rehousing preference to applicants meeting this criterion, ensuring legal compliance and offering greater assistance to those at risk of losing accommodation.

3.2.4 An applicant who is homeless and has lost their accommodation through no fault of their own and have a priority need for accommodation is currently placed into Band 2. In accordance with legislation the following categories are deemed to have priority need:

- (a) a pregnant woman
- (b) a person with whom dependent children reside or might reasonably be expected to reside
- (c) a person who is vulnerable as a result of old age, mental illness, learning disability or physical disability or other special reason, or with whom such a person resides
- (d) a person aged 16 or 17 who is not a 'relevant child' or a child in need to whom a local authority owes a duty under section 20 of the Children Act 1989
- (e) a person under 21 who was (but is no longer) looked after, accommodated or fostered between the ages of 16 and 18 (except a person who is a 'relevant student')
- (f) a person aged 21 or more who is vulnerable as a result of having been looked after, accommodated or fostered (except a person who is a 'relevant student')
- (g) a person who is vulnerable as a result of having been a member of Her Majesty's regular naval, military or air forces
- (h) a person who is vulnerable as a result of having served a custodial sentence
- (i) a person who is vulnerable as a result of ceasing to occupy accommodation because of violence from another person or threats of violence from another person which are likely to be carried out
- (j) a person who is homeless, or threatened with homelessness, as a result of an emergency such as flood, fire or other disaster.

3.2.5 The Council's Allocation Policy is afforded by a Banding approach for different types of need, for homeless households the current policy is as follows:

- Band 2 for households who are unintentionally homeless in priority need (as detailed in section 3.2.4)
- Band 3 for households who are unintentionally homeless but not in priority
- Band 4 for households who are awaiting an assessment.

3.2.6 As the new Homelessness Reduction Act is aimed to intervene at earlier stages to prevent homelessness it is proposed that the current banding related to homelessness households be enhanced to award a higher banding but this would only be applicable following a full assessment. It is therefore proposed that:

- Applicants in priority need who actually become homeless and a relief duty is owed or when a full housing duty is owed are placed into Band 1.
- Applicants in priority need who are faced with homelessness and a prevention duty is owed are placed into Band 2.
- Non-priority homeless applicants, who are owed a prevention or relief duty, be placed into Band 3.
- Applicants awaiting a homelessness assessment are placed into Band 3

3.2.7 The Allocation Policy rules regarding applicants who are excluded from joining the housing register will remain in place. This includes applicants who have previously been evicted from a Council or Housing Association secure tenancy in the last 5 years due to breaches of their tenancy conditions will remain ineligible to join the housing register. However, individual cases for vulnerable homeless applicants will continue be considered by the Housing Assessment Panel or under delegated powers of the Head of Housing Options.

3.2.8 With the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act, the number of people who present to the local authority due to being faced with homelessness is rising. In April 2018, the Homelessness team's case load was 132 cases, this increased to 321 on 31st August 2018 and 354 cases as at 30 September 2018.

3.2.9 There are currently 577 households who are actually homeless or faced with homelessness on the housing register. These policy changes will help to prevent homelessness sooner as the applicants will receive a higher banding status, which in turn means that there will be less people progressing to actually becoming homeless. The impact would however be monitored on an ongoing basis to ensure the balance is met between assisting those facing homelessness, and not dominating the allocation scheme at the expense of all other types of housing need such as overcrowding or medical and welfare need.

3.2.10 **The table below shows the total numbers of applications in each band (excluding the Transfer band) and the number of homeless applicants in each band as at 1st August 2018.**

| Homelessness category | Total number of applications in each Band | Number of homeless applications | Percentage of homelessness applications as a percentage of the total in that Band |
|---|--|--|--|
| Band 1 • Homeless households who are both homeless and also have a medical need | 246 | 61 | 24.80% |
| Band 2 • Unintentionally homeless households who are in priority need | 1668 | 19 | 1.14% |
| Band 3 • Unintentionally homeless but not in priority need | 1783 | 280 | 15.70% |

| | | | |
|---|-------------|------------|---------------|
| Band 4 • Threatened with homelessness awaiting assessment | 1755 | 217 | 12.36% |
| TOTAL | 5452 | 577 | 10.58% |

3.3 Changes to ensure that there is equality and fairness

Recommendations 2 - Review the Downsizing Policy to award Band 2 status to Council or Housing Association tenants who are under occupying their home to move to a property with at least 1 less bedroom, a flat or a bungalow (a medical assessment will be required for bungalows)

3.3.1 It is proposed to review the Downsizing Policy so that all tenants wishing to move to a smaller home are offered the same options. The issue is that the current policy for tenants wishing to downsize offers inconsistent choices. Applicants who are under occupying their home are all currently awarded Band 1 status, but are offered different choices as follows:

- Tenants under occupying a 4 bedroom house can move to a 2 bedroom house.
- Tenants who are affected by the bedroom tax can move to any type of property with 1 less bedroom.
- Tenants who are not affected financially can only move to a flat or a bungalow.

3.3.2 The proposed option is to award Band 2 status to Council or Housing association tenants who are under occupying their home to move to a property with at least 1 less bedroom, a flat or a bungalow (a medical assessment will be required for bungalows.) The current policy is confusing, but moreover by offering bungalows to under occupied tenants with no medical need via a Band 1 status impacts on the waiting time for applicants who have been assessed for a bungalow due to their health. This is because properties are offered to Band 1 applicants ahead of other bands.

3.3.3 If this recommendation is agreed it is proposed that all under occupied housing applications will be reviewed to apply this approach. Existing applicants will retain their banding date and remain in Band 1 but any new applications from the policy implementation date will be placed into Band 2.

3.4 Changes to reduce the waiting time for applicants in urgent housing need.

Recommendations 3 - Increase the quota of advertised properties in Band 2 from 50% to 60%, reduce the quota of advertised properties in Band 3 from 40% to 30%, and retain the 10% quota for Transfers.

3.4.1 There are currently 1280 households who have been assessed for Band 2 status due to living in unsuitable housing due to a medical reason. The waiting time is extremely long, especially for ground floor accommodation.

3.4.2 The table below shows a sample of lettings and the waiting times for households living in unsuitable housing due to medical reasons.

| Property type | Date of the advert | Number of requests made for the property | Date of the application of the successful applicant | Successful applicant reason for the band status |
|---|--------------------|--|---|---|
| 2 bedroom bungalow with a level access shower. | 16/03/2018 | 42 | 29/11/2016 | Band 2 medical reasons |
| 2 Bed Bungalow with ramped access and an over bath shower | 11/04/2018 | 88 | 04/12/2017 | Band 1 terminally ill |
| 1 Bed Bungalow with over bath shower | 25/05/2017 | 45 | 23/03/2006 | Band 2 medical reasons |
| 2 Bed Bungalow with over bath shower | 13/12/2017 | 81 | 18/05/2007 | Band 2 medical reasons |
| 2 bedroom bungalow with over bath shower | 15/01/2018 | 76 | 12/03/2010 | Band 2 medical reasons |

3.4.3 It is proposed to increase the quota of advertised properties in Band 2 from 50% to 60%, reduce the quota of advertised properties in Band 3 from 40% to 30% and retain the 10% quota for Transfers.

3.4.4 The proposed change would increase the number of properties that are advertised to people in Band 2 in urgent housing need. The reason why this quota has been increased is that Band 2 contains an extremely high volume of applications in urgent housing need and the waiting times are very lengthy.

| | Old Quota | Proposed New Quota |
|----------|-----------|--------------------|
| Band 2 | 50 % | 60% |
| Band 3 | 40% | 30% |
| Transfer | 10% | 10% |

3.4.5 Properties are initially offered to the Band 1, and then to the advertised group, where there are no suitable bidders from the advertised band the next band in the sequence is selected and so on. All applicants can bid for any advertised group but as Band 4 applicants have no housing need they will always come at the bottom of the shortlist. Properties will be advertised and the shortlist will be sorted as follows:

- **Advertised to Band 2 (60%):** Offered to Band 1, then Band 2, then Band 3, then Transfers, then Band 4
- **Advertised to Band Three (30%):** Offered to Band 1, then Band 3, Transfer Band, Band 2 and Band 4
- **Advertised to Transfer (10%):** Offered to Band 1, then Transfers, Band 2, then Band 3 and then Band 4

3.4.6 The letting results for 1st April 2017 to 31st March 2018 detailed below show how many Council properties have been let to each Band. As mentioned above although the advert might prioritise a certain band if they don't make requests another banded applicant maybe successful.

| Band 1 | Band 2 | Band 3 | Band 4 | Transfer Band |
|--------|--------|--------|--------|---------------|
| 267 | 570 | 479 | 108 | 90 |

3.4.7 The table below shows all properties which were let between 1st April 2017 and 31st March 2018. All of these properties were advertised in the Key Choices letting scheme.

| Council Houses | Council Bungalows | Council Flats | Council Bedsits |
|----------------|-------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| 531 | 355 | 616 | 12 |

3.5 Changes to ensure that there is equality and fairness

Recommendation 4 - Single people who are Council or Housing Association tenants living in a flat who are expecting their first child to be eligible for family accommodation on the production of the MATB1 form.

3.5.1 The current policy is that Council or Housing Association single tenants living in a flat who are expecting their first child become eligible for family housing when their baby is born. An applicant who is in the same situation living with parents or in private rented accommodation becomes eligible for family accommodation whilst they are pregnant when a MATB1 form has been provided. It is proposed that all single applicants become eligible for family accommodation when the MATB1 form has been produced. This will reduce the waiting time for Council tenants wanting to move into more suitable family accommodation.

3.6 Changes to ensure that there is equality and fairness

Recommendation 5 - A person has local connection if their Grandparents live in Rotherham and have done so for the last 3 years. (There will be a validation process asking the applicant to provide proof of the grandparents address and confirmation that they are in contact with them)

3.6.1 A revised Allocation Policy was adopted in December 2013 which incorporated a Local Connection Criteria so that a person qualifies to go on the Housing Register if they have a local connection to Rotherham for a minimum of 3 years. A person has a local connection where:

- They have lived for the last 3 years in Rotherham through their own choice.
- They are currently employed in Rotherham and have been for the last 3 years
- They have direct family who live in Rotherham and they have done so for the Last three years. Direct family members include spouses, civil partners, parents, sons, daughters, brother and sisters.

3.6.2 There are applicants who have no parents and have been brought up by their grandparents. It is therefore proposed that grandparents are included as direct family members. There will be a validation process asking the applicant to provide proof of the grandparent's address and confirmation that they are in contact with them.

4. Summary of options considered and recommended proposals

4.1 There are no alternative options being considered and the recommendation is that the proposed changes to the Allocation Policy are implemented to meet the statutory requirements of the Housing Act 1996 Part VI and VII.

5. Consultation

5.1 Extensive consultation has taken place via an online survey, at the Tenant Conference, at the Tenant Involvement Panel, with Rotherham Federation, the Quality Standards and Challenge Group and at the Rotherham Show.

5.2 We recognise that elected members are always interested in the way we allocate properties therefore any changes will also be consulted upon via the Improving Places Select Commission who will formally receive the report in November 2018.

5.3 If the proposals are agreed, the Housing Allocation Policy and Summary Guide will be updated to reflect the changes. The cost of printing is a minimum as all policy documents are available electronically. Any postage costs for the housing register reviews will be contained within existing budgets.

5.6 If the recommendations are approved, existing tenants will also be informed of the policy changes through articles published in "Home Matters" which is the Council's Tenants Newsletter.

6. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

| | |
|------------------------------------|----------------|
| 6.1. SMT | September 2018 |
| DLT | September 2018 |
| SLT | October 2018 |
| Informal Cabinet | October 2018 |
| Improving Places Select Commission | November 2018 |
| OSMB (pre-Cabinet) | December 2018 |
| Cabinet | January 2019 |

6.2 If Cabinet approves these recommendations the policy will be implemented from the 1st day of the following month. (1st February 2019) The Council's Housing Allocation Policy will be formally amended to reflect the changes, the new version published on the website.

6.3 There will be a timetable of staff training and briefing sessions for Members.

6.4 A progress report to monitor the impact of the policy changes will be presented back to Cabinet in 12 months' time.

7. Financial and Procurement Implications

7.1 Implementation of the changes proposed in this report will help us to house homeless people more expediently and therefore reduce the cost to the Council by reducing the usage of temporary accommodation.

7.2 Following the completion of the revised Allocation Policy, a summary booklet will be amended and issued to existing and new applicants. This will incur no printing or postage costs as the document is electronic.

7.4 Most of the changes needed to the ICT system can be undertaken in-house at no extra cost, however there may be some more complex changes required which will incur a cost of £140 per day. There is a budget in place to cover this cost and the work is envisaged to take no more than 5 days. The costs will cover amendments to the Housing Register and choice based letting module rules which ensure applicants are placed in the correct bidding queue position.

7.5 Changes to the Allocations Policy will need to be effectively communicated to staff. This training will be undertaken in-house by the Housing Options Manager.

8. Legal Implications

8.1 The proposed changes to the Allocations Policy covered by this report are in keeping with the overall aims and purpose of housing allocation policies and are lawful.

9. Human Resources Implications

9.1. If the recommendations are agreed the policy will be delivered within existing resources.

10. Implications for Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults

10.1 The recommendation will help to prevent homelessness and will help people to secure and sustain a home. This is of paramount importance to ensuring a stable home for families, the best start in life for children, and vulnerable adults. Good quality, stable homes also help people to avoid financial hardship and can have a significant impact on people's health and wellbeing.

11. Equalities and Human Rights Implications

11.1 The policy will ensure that as far as possible tenants are able to sustain independent living in their homes. The Allocation Policy helps to prevent homelessness across the borough, but especially helps those households on low incomes.

12. Implications for Partners and Other Directorates

12.1 The proposals in the report have been produced in conjunction with officers engaged in Allocations, Housing Management and Tenancy Support. The Council is working with partner agencies, specifically around homelessness prevention, and proposals have been developed in conjunction with these organisations.

12.2 The proposals are likely to bring indirect benefits for other directorates and partners, particularly in reducing homelessness for families with children and contributing to local targets on homelessness prevention and financial inclusion / capability.

13. Risks and Mitigation

13.1 There are no anticipated risks associated with approving the recommendations in this report.

13.2 The main risks associated with not approving the report are that:

- New vulnerable applicants will be waiting for a property longer.
- Homeless households will remain living longer in temporary accommodation

14. Accountable Officers

Anne Marie Lubanski, Strategic Director of Adult Care and Housing
Tom Bell, Assistant Director of Housing Services

Approvals obtained on behalf of:-

| | Named Officer | Date |
|---|-------------------------------|--|
| Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services | Mark Scarrott Kath Andrews | 17 September 2018 |
| Assistant Director of Legal Services | Neil Concannon | 17 September 2018 25 September 2018 |
| Head of Procurement (if appropriate) | Not applicable | N/A |

| | | |
|--|----------------|-----|
| Head of Human Resources (if appropriate) | Not applicable | n/A |
|--|----------------|-----|

Report Author: Sandra Tolley, Head of Housing Options
01709 522619 or sandra.tolley@rotherham.gov.uk