

## Summary Sheet

### **Name of Committee and Date of Committee Meeting**

Cabinet and Commissioners' Decision Making Meeting – 16 April 2018

### **Report Title:**

Home to School Transport Policy

### **Is this a key decision and has it been included in the Forward Plan?**

Yes

### **Strategic Director approving submission of the report**

Damien Wilson, Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment

### **Report Author(s)**

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### **Ward(s) Affected**

All

## Executive Summary

This report provides the outcome of the consultation on the Home to School Transport Policy for Rotherham, including post-16 students and children with Special Educational Needs or Disability (SEND) and provides recommendations for the service provision.

## Recommendations

1. That the Home to School Transport Policy 2018-19 be approved.
2. That the Home to School Transport Assessment Matrix be approved.
3. That approval be given to the introduction of a formal annual review of transport provision, which includes engagement with families.
4. That an assessment of existing service users be conducted to review their circumstances to enable participation on a voluntary basis ahead of the introduction of the formal annual review;

5. That approval be given to the introduction of a personal travel budget scheme to provide transport support to families of children with special educational needs and disabilities.
6. That post-16 transport travel arrangements be revised to replace direct transport as a first option with personal travel budgets for those students with special educational needs and disabilities.
7. That approval be given to the consideration of alternative methods of support for particular groups or individuals such as walking bus, cycle or moped schemes, when appropriate.
8. That approval be given to 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 and that travel training commence from June 2018 for appropriate young people.
9. That personal travel budgets for all students making new applications for post-16 travel be instigated from 1 July 2018, and existing users of the post-16 service are permitted to apply on a voluntary basis from 1 May 2018.
10. That a transition period to validate the Transport Assessment Matrix be effective from 1 May 2018, with the full implementation of the policy for all new applicants with effect from 1 July 2018.
11. That children and young people in need of home to school transport, and including transport operators, be engaged as part of the transition and implementation process.
12. That any amendments to the Transport Assessment Matrix, resulting from the transition period, to be delegated to the Assistant Director for Community Safety and Street Scene.

### **List of Appendices Included**

- Appendix 1 Home to School Transport Policy
- Appendix 2 Outcome of the consultation
- Appendix 3 Home to School Transport Assessment Matrix
- Appendix 4 Benchmarking analysis
- Appendix 5 Equalities Impact Assessment

### **Background Papers**

None

**Consideration by and other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel**  
Overview and Scrutiny Management Board – 11 April 2018

### **Council Approval Required**

No

**Exempt from the Press and Public**  
No

## **Home to School Transport Policy**

### **1. Recommendations**

- 1.1 That the Home to School Transport Policy 2018-19 be approved.
- 1.2 That the Home to School Transport Assessment Matrix be approved.
- 1.3 That approval be given to the introduction of a formal annual review of transport provision, which includes engagement with families.
- 1.4 That an assessment of existing service users be conducted to review their circumstances to enable participation on a voluntary basis ahead of the introduction of the formal annual review;
- 1.5 That approval be given to the introduction of a personal travel budget scheme to provide transport support to families of children with special educational needs and disabilities.
- 1.6 That post-16 transport travel arrangements be revised to replace direct transport as a first option with personal travel budgets for those students with special educational needs and disabilities.
- 1.7 That approval be given to the consideration of alternative methods of support for particular groups or individuals such as walking bus, cycle or moped schemes, when appropriate.
- 1.8 That approval be given to 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 and that travel training commence from June 2018 for appropriate young people.
- 1.9 That personal travel budgets for all students making new applications for post-16 travel be instigated from 1 July 2018, and existing users of the post-16 service are permitted to apply on a voluntary basis from 1 May 2018.
- 1.10 That a transition period to validate the Transport Assessment Matrix be effective from 1 May 2018, with the full implementation of the policy for all new applicants with effect from 1 July 2018.
- 1.11 That children and young people in need of home to school transport, and including transport operators, be engaged as part of the transition and implementation process.
- 1.12 That any amendments to the Transport Assessment Matrix, resulting from the transition period, to be delegated to the Assistant Director for Community Safety and Street Scene.

## **2. Background**

- 2.1 The Cabinet and Commissioners Decision Making meeting on 11 September 2017 approved the proposal to carry out a consultation on all aspects of home to school transport in Rotherham and to receive a further report on the outcome of the consultation exercise and proposed changes to the policy which this report addresses.
- 2.2 The transport service is provided by the Regeneration and Environment Directorate, however, the requirement for the service is generated by the Children and Young People Service. This service is experiencing an increased intake of students who have been assessed and have an Education, Health and Care Plan which requires transport to support attendance for educational provision. Whilst this is variable and not easy to predict, Children and Young People Service have some information relating to potential future years' service requests. This is based on increasing school populations and the provision of Education, Health and Care Plans, of which up to 40% may require transport assistance by 2020. This raises the possibility of potential increased transport costs for future years.
- 2.3 The revised Home to School Transport Policy (Appendix 1) provides advice and guidance for families regarding the support available to them relating to a range of transport options for young people in Rotherham. Any changes proposed to these services must ensure the continuation of suitable, safe, home to school travel assistance for eligible children in accordance with the Council's statutory duties, taking into account individual's assessed needs. The policy must also contribute to the Council's priority of ensuring every child has the best start in life.
- 2.4 In addition, the following key principles of any new Home to School Transport Policy are considered to be of priority for the Council:
- Safeguarding (including the setting of the standards required from those companies / individuals that are involved in the transport of children under the terms of this policy)
  - Promoting independence
  - Choice
  - Maximising attendance at school and arriving at school ready to learn
  - Promoting healthy lifestyles
  - Value for money and sustainability
- 2.5 The Council has undertaken benchmarking with a range of comparable Unitary and City Councils of some key areas of home to school transport delivery, information from which was included in the consultation report of 11<sup>th</sup> September and identified the following:
- The current average cost of transporting children with special educational needs and disability and looked after children in Rotherham is £4,260.

The lowest cost comparator Council within the benchmarking sample was £1,800. The highest cost comparator Council was £5,100 per student.

Rotherham is within the upper quartile of this comparator.

- The current average number of children with special educational needs and disability and looked after children transported in Rotherham is 2.95 per route.

The lowest occupancy comparator Council transports 1.40 pupils per route.

The highest occupancy comparator Council transports 3.63 pupils per route.

Rotherham is within the median to upper quartile of this comparator.

- 48% of children with special educational needs and disability and looked after children currently have single occupancy journeys (travel alone).

The lowest single occupancy journey comparator Council has 15% of single person journeys.

The highest single occupancy comparator Council has 48% of single person journeys.

Rotherham is the top of this comparator.

- 2.6 The outcome of this benchmarking (Appendix 4) exercise illustrated that Rotherham's transportation costs are generally higher than other comparator authorities and in addition to the proposals contained in this report, more work needs to be undertaken to determine how costs can be reduced further.

### **3. Consultation and engagement**

- 3.1 Officers have undertaken a full public consultation on the proposed changes to the Home to School Policy in line with the statutory guidance, which commenced on 25 September 2017 and closed on 10 November 2017. The areas for consultation included the following:

- General eligibility for children and young people;
- the provision of independent travel training;
- the provision of personal travel budgets;
- changes to post 16 transport policies;
- Welfare benefits related to mobility.

- 3.2 The consultation was publicised using various mechanisms including online, social media and traditional media. Rother FM, the Rotherham Advertiser and the Rotherham Record were amongst those who featured the consultation. Feedback was invited primarily through the Council's website as well as inviting feedback in the form of a questionnaire, written comment forms from meetings and drop-in sessions.

3.3 The Home to School Transport Team also undertook a range of additional activities in order to capture as many views as possible. These activities included:

- A member's seminar held in September;
- Attendance at the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Management Board;
- Letters to parent/carers using the services and stakeholders;
- Six informal drop in sessions at the customer service centres in Maltby, Aston, Swinton, and three sessions at Riverside House. There were a total of forty six attendees at these sessions;
- Attendance at the Rotherham Parents/Carer Forum Centre;
- Four meetings at Special Schools, Willows, Kelford, Hilltop, and Abbey School attended by 58 parents and carers.

#### **4. Consultation Responses and Feedback**

4.1 The online survey attracted 244 respondents, of which 201 were parent/carers of transported pupils and 43 were non parent/carers.

4.2 For each of the consultation areas, responders were asked to consider whether young people with lower levels of special educational needs should be provided with the appropriate level of support for their individual needs, this may include independent travel training, bus passes and personal transport budgets and whether continuation of transport assistance should be reviewed and regularly re-assessed jointly between Children and Young People Service and the Corporate Transport Team. A full breakdown of responses to the consultation is provided in the attached Appendix 2 (approximately 25% of service users).

#### **General Eligibility for Children and Young People**

4.3 Young people with lower levels of special educational needs are provided with the appropriate levels of support for their individual needs, this may include independent travel training, bus passes and personal transport budgets. Ideally, continuation of transport assistance should be reviewed and regularly re-assessed jointly between Children and Young People Service and the Corporate Transport Team.

4.4 Responders were asked to consider whether they felt their child's transport needs should be reviewed annually in conjunction with their Education, Health and Care Plan. The response was:

- 55% of parent / carers either strongly agreed / agree, and 18% neither agree nor disagree with the proposal;
- 74% of responders who are non-parents or carers either strongly agree or agree with the proposal.

4.5 Overall, the majority of respondents support the proposal to review individual's transport needs particularly at transition stages which would be a positive change as transport has previously only been discussed when an issue arises.

## **Independent Travel Training**

- 4.6 The proposal is to develop and promote independent travel training as a central service in Rotherham and apply it particularly at transitional stages. Consideration was also given to whether the Council should offer and promote alternative options to complement transport arrangements, such as bicycle loans or grants, walking buses and bus passes is an important consideration. Respondents were asked to consider whether:

Supporting their child to develop the necessary skills to travel independently would be something they might consider, if the child was given the right support and training?

- 73% of parent / carers either strongly disagree, or disagree with the proposal;
- 71% of responders who are non-parents or carers either strongly agree or agree with the proposal.

Respondents were also asked what age or stage they felt independent travel training should be accessible to their child.

- 86 % of parent / carers felt age 14+ was appropriate for independent travel training to be provided to a young person;
- 62% of responders who are non-parents or carers felt Age 14+ was an appropriate age for independent travel training to be accessible for parents.

- 4.7 Parent / carers have responded very strongly about the travel training proposal with the vast majority being opposed to the proposals, whilst respondents who are non-parents or carers have expressed support for the proposal. It is clear from the responses and feedback received, that concern remains about how this proposal would be administered.

- 4.8 Families would be seeking assurances from the Council that a child's participation would be appropriately assessed and that those children with severe and complex needs, both physical and medical, would not be expected to take part. The implementation of the proposal would need to be structured and communicated appropriately to families.

## **Personal Travel Budget**

- 4.9 The personal travel budget scheme is another option that can be offered to provide transport support for families of children with special educational needs and disabilities in Rotherham.

Responders were asked to consider:

Whether parents and carers with children travelling on high cost single occupancy taxis should be offered a personal travel budget for their child or children to travel from school to college?

- 63% of parent / carers either strongly disagree, or disagree with the proposal;
- 54% of responders who are non-parents or carers either strongly agree, or agree with the proposal.

In response to the following question:

If you opted for a personal travel budget, if approved, how would you like the cost to be determined?

- 44 % of parent / carers felt a distance calculation was appropriate for calculating a personal travel budget;
- 44% of responders who are non-parents or carers felt a distance calculation was appropriate for calculating a personal travel budget.

With regard to making a calculation of the budget, respondents were asked to suggest what other options/barriers should be considered and factored into formulating a budget?

Responses received included:

- Families to be given the actual cost of a taxi;
- Being able to choose transport provider but want the actual cost being reimbursed rather than a part sum of money;
- The Council should monitor and audit the spending on personal travel budgets to prevent any abuse of these resources;
- Children were being educated out of area because schools in Rotherham are full they have to travel further and this would mean a higher cost for the family;
- Increased traffic around schools if more families opted for personal travel budgets;
- Lack of parking facilities at schools;
- Families should not be out of pocket.

4.10 Overall parent / carers expressed disagreement with this proposal, however, the majority of responders who are non-parents or carers supported it. Parent / carers also expressed concern that the proposal would have a financial impact on them and that if they accepted a personal budget they would be unable to change back to the traditional service if it was not working for them.

4.11 The Council therefore needs to include the above within the transport policy and ensure they can be mitigated. This would ensure families who wished to participate had the flexibility in how transport would be delivered and provide continuity of arrangement, this needs to be supported by Children and Young People Service's programme of providing more educational places in the borough.

### **Post 16 Transport Policies**

4.12 An alternative approach to existing post 16 transport arrangements is to replace direct transport arrangements (e.g. single person taxi journeys) for those students over the age of 16 with special educational needs and disabilities, with personal transport budgets as a first option, and to promote independent travel training and use of bus passes to complement the use of personal transport budgets.

Responders were asked:

Whether young people in further education (college, sixth form) should only have access to personal transport budgets? This could include bus passes or cycle / moped grant scheme.

- 51% of parent / carers either strongly disagree, or disagree with the proposal;
- 55% of responders who are non-parents or carers either strongly agree, or agree with the proposal.

4.13 The responses received for this area of the consultation is fairly balanced with similar views from parents / carers and non-parent carers. Parent / carers expressed concern that there would be a financial impact on them should these proposals be implemented.

4.14 For those learners in post 16 education, the new Department for Education statutory guidance (October 2017 edition) states that local authorities have to provide financial assistance to facilitate attendance and give specific consideration of learners with special educational needs and disabilities. The financial assistance can be awarded as a personal transport budget or a reasonable financial contribution towards transport for families. To aid transparency, the guidance indicates it is helpful for local authorities to set out the average cost per young person of post 16 transport in their area before any subsidies are deducted. The guidance also includes suitable and appropriate alternatives such as cycle schemes, moped schemes and travel training schemes to enable young people to travel on public transport independently.

### **Benefits Related to Mobility**

4.15 Consulted on whether families who are in receipt of Disability Living Allowance, Personal Independence Payment or a 16-19 Student Bursary, a contribution from this should be made towards any travel assistance.

Responders were asked to consider the following:

When calculating travel assistance contribution costs, do you think the Council should consider whether families receive the following benefits?

- Disability Living Allowance
- Personal Independence Payment
- 16-19 Student Bursary

The following responses were received to the question on whether the Council should take these payments into consideration?

- 65% of parent / carers either strongly disagree, or disagree with the proposal;
- 53% of responders who are non-parents or carers either strongly disagree or disagree with the proposal.

4.16 The Council cannot legally take Disability Living Allowance into account within current statutory guidance for those aged 5-16 years old. However, for those learners in post-16 education, the new Department for Education statutory guidance clarifies that local authorities may ask learners and their parents for a contribution to transport costs. In exercising this discretion, the Council must ensure that any contribution is affordable for learners and their parents and ensure that there are arrangements in place to support those families on low income. Local authorities may take receipt of 16-19 student bursary funding into account in assessing an individual's need for financial help with transport.

## **5. Options Considered and Recommended Proposal**

5.1 The recommended option is to incorporate the proposals which were consulted on into the Home to School Transport Policy. This will continue to provide transportation options for families whilst fulfilling the Councils statutory obligations and ensuring best value. Consultation has been considered and the revised policy is attached, which from the consultation includes:

- The introduction of a formal annual review of transport provision which includes engagement with families;
- 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 introduction of a personal travel budget scheme to provide transport support to families of children with special educational needs and disabilities in Rotherham which meets the assessed needs of the child or young person;
- The personal travel budgets for all students making new applications for post 16 travel is instigated from 1 July 2018, and allow existing users of the post 16 service to apply on a voluntary basis;

- 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;
- Do nothing (This option is not recommended).

## **6. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision**

6.1 The policy has been developed in conjunction with Children's and Young People Services and Rotherham Parents Forum. It is proposed to implement changes to the transport policy from 1 July 2018 and a detailed implementation plan will be developed which will cover communications and delivery.

## **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. £160k of savings have already been delivered against this requirement in 2017/18 and the recommended option will contribute another circa £181k towards the required saving.

7.2 The Streetscene service has plans in place to deliver the remaining savings from a range of activities in 2018/19 and 2019/20. These include the following; Corporate Transport review of current spot hire and lease arrangements; Vehicle fleet reductions; Review of Home to School transport provision and reduction in single occupancy taxis; and the delivery of an integrated transport unit and retendering of existing transport provision. The implementation of these savings activities will be monitored on a monthly basis through the Corporate Transport Board and the Council's budget monitoring processes.

## **8. Legal Implications**

8.1 The Council has a number of statutory duties pursuant to the Education Act 1996 (the Act) in relation to home to school transport. Sections 508B and 508C of the Act make provision for local authorities to ensure that suitable travel arrangements are made, where necessary, to facilitate a child's attendance at school.

8.2 Section 508B of the Act deals with the duty on local authorities to make such travel arrangements as they consider necessary to facilitate attendance at school for eligible children. Schedule 35B of the Act defines eligible children – those categories of children of compulsory school age (5-16) in an authority's area for whom free travel arrangements will be required, local authorities are required to:

- provide free transport for all pupils of compulsory school age (5-16) if their nearest suitable school is:

- beyond 2 miles (if below the age of 8); or
- beyond 3 miles (if aged between 8 and 16)

as these are the statutory walking distances eligibility criteria.

### 8.3 Special educational needs and disability or mobility problems eligibility:

make transport arrangements for all children who cannot reasonably be expected to walk to school because of their mobility problems or because of associated health and safety issues related to their special educational needs or disability.

### 8.4 Eligibility for such children should be assessed on an individual basis to identify their particular transport requirements.

### 8.5 Section 509AA of the Act sets out the age 16 – 18 transport duty. The duty applies to all local authorities in England in respect of arrangements for young people (over compulsory school age) aged 16-18 and those continuing learners who started their programme of learning before their 19th birthday.

### 8.6 Subsection (4) of 508B and 508C of the Act list some of the travel and transport arrangements that may be made. As referred to above, these include provision of a seat on a bus or minibus provided by the local authority; provision of a seat in a taxi where more individualised arrangements are necessary; and provision of a pass for a public service bus, or other means of public transport.

### 8.7 Subsection (4) of 508B and 508C of the Act further states that in relation to children of compulsory school age, on condition that the relevant parental consent has been obtained (annually or, if a child moves school, at that point too) by the local authority, a number of alternative arrangements might be considered to meet the local authority duty relating to travel arrangements. Examples include:

- a mileage allowance paid to a parent driving their eligible child to school in lieu of the local authority making arrangements for a taxi to transport the child (Personal Travel Budget referred to above)
- a cycling allowance paid by the local authority where the parent agreed for their child to cycle to and from school instead of catching a bus for, say a three mile journey; and
- local authority provision of a suitable escort to enable an eligible child with a disability to walk a short distance to school in safety, instead of making arrangements for a taxi to take them to and from school.

### 8.8 This report sets out proposed changes to the way in which the Council meets the above duties. Further, the proposed changes are in compliance with the relevant statutory guidance.

## **9. Human Resources Implications**

9.1 There are no immediate human resource implications arising from this report.

## **10. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults**

10.1 The proposals would support children and young people with all levels of special educational needs and disability to access transport through a personalised approach, if appropriate levels of support promoting their independence and preparedness for transition through the educational phases and into adulthood is available. This will also allow children and young people to have a greater voice in relation to their travel arrangements.

10.2 Individuals and companies that provide transport on behalf of the Council are responsible for transporting some of the most vulnerable people in our communities. The vast majority of these transport contracts are delivered by drivers who are licensed by the Council and therefore these drivers will already meet the high standards set. However, there are a number of drivers working on Council contracts that are not licensed by the Council, these may be drivers of public service vehicles or vehicles licensed by other local authorities.

10.3 It is unlawful to limit the awarding of contracts to individuals licensed only by Rotherham Council. However, through the contract documentation, the Council is able to mandate that all those that work on the contracts to meet the relevant standards set out in the Council's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy.

10.4 There are specific safeguarding requirements that are contained within the Home to School Transport Policy, these are in addition to general requirements that are applied to all contracts in accordance with the Council's Safeguarding Policy.

10.5 Specific requirements introduced by the Home to School Transport Policy include:

- 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 the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency standards (taxi and private hire test);
- Drivers that do not hold a hackney carriage / private hire drivers licence issued by Rotherham Council are required to obtain an Enhanced Disclosure Certificate from the Disclosure and Barring Service (which must be obtained by the Council), and consent to their Driver and Vehicle License Agency driving licence being checked by the Council using a third party organisation if required. Any information that is detailed on the Enhanced Disclosure Certificate and / or the driving licence will be considered in accordance with Appendix C of the Council's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire licensing policy. Drivers that do 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 the Council are required to subscribe to the Disclosure and Barring Service Online Update Service. This will allow the Council to verify that a Disclosure and Barring Service 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).

10.6 All contract and tendering documentation will be drafted in a way that makes it clear that all those working on Home to School Transport contracts must meet the required standards. 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.

10.7 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.

10.8 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.

## **11. Equalities and Human Rights Implications**

11.1 Ensuring that the Council meets its equalities and human rights duties and obligations is central to how it manages its performance, sets its priorities and delivers services across the board. This new policy aims to set out these duties and obligations within a single corporate document and it will be important to ensure an ongoing focus on the adherence of services to the policy, as part of embedding a more strategic approach to equalities and diversity. A full equalities impact assessment has been undertaken and is attached as Appendix 5.

## **12. Implications for Partners and Other Directorates**

12.1 Issues for partners, in particular transport providers, school and colleges will be assessed and addressed as part of the full analysis of the consultation and implementation plans following final approval of any policy changes.

## **13. Risks and Mitigation**

13.1 Any revision of the Home to School Transport Policy is likely to be very sensitive as it will impact on individuals and families. Whilst, this in itself should not prevent a review of the policy taking place, the consultation exercise has not indicated universal support for the proposals. Therefore, the Council will undertake an assessment of every family and young person against the eligibility criteria which is contained within the Home to School Transport Assessment Matrix (Appendix 3) when determining entitlement and provision of transportation. When the Council considers the use of personal budgets, for example, consideration will be given to determine whether it provides value for money to the Council as well as greater choice and flexibility for families.

13.2 The initial assessment criteria will be based on whether assistance is to be provided in accordance with the following hierarchy of travel provision:

- Bus pass;
- Independent travel training;
- Personal travel budget (which maybe a mileage claim or a personal allowance for particular circumstances for those with less complex needs);
- Transport provision (Council arranged transport when other options are not assessed appropriate);
- Personal travel budget (Assessed to travel with complex physical medical social and emotional needs). ;
- Supported Transport Provision (Council arranged transport when other options are not assessed appropriate).

13.3 The assessment for post 16 transport will be based on whether assistance is to be provided using the following hierarchy:

- Bus Pass;
- Personal travel budget (which maybe a mileage claim or a personal allowance for particular assessed circumstances);

- Transport provision (Council arranged transport when other options are not assessed to be appropriate).

13.4 These proposals exclude the provision for out of borough transport when this is due to educational resources not being available within Rotherham. In those circumstances, transport would continue to be provided by the Council, however voluntary requests would be considered on an individual basis for a personal travel budget and the hierarchy would apply when a request is parental preference based on the Education Health Care Plan.

13.5 The proposals are likely to affect a small number of families and young people from the existing cohort of users of the Home to School Transport service. However, all new users will be affected by the proposed changes. Key to the successful implementation of the new policy will be to ensure families are given support and advice and the policy changes communicated using appropriate publicity channels. The Policy will be a public document and available via the Council's website.

## 14. Conclusion

14.1 The proposals contained in this report provide the opportunity for savings to be delivered as outlined above, whilst also providing a choice for families to take up an option that suits their needs. The consultation revealed that the options were not universally acceptable to parents and carers and will need to be introduced on a basis, the success of which will depend on extensive communication.

## 15. Accountable Officers

Tom Smith, Assistant Director – Community Safety and Street Scene

Approvals obtained on behalf of:-

	<b>Named Officer</b>	<b>Date</b>
Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services	Graham Saxton	26.03.2018
Assistant Director of Legal Services	Dermot Pearson	05.03.2018
Head of Procurement (if appropriate)	Louise Hayter	16.02.2018
Head of Human Resources (if appropriate)	John Crutchley	26.02.2018

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