

Report to: **Lead Members for Children's Services**

Date: **2015**

By: **Director of Children's Services**

Title of report: **Approval to consult on a review of discretionary SEND transport provision for the 2016/17 academic year**

Purpose of report: **To ask the Lead Member for permission to consult between June and September this year on proposed reductions in support for students with SEND**

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) Lead Member is asked to approve consultation on the options set out in 2.1 of this report in order to reduce spend on the discretionary home to school/college budget from the start of the 2016/17 academic year**
 - 2) To note that if approved, two parallel consultations would take place over summer 2015; the first on reduction in the level of support for students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), and the second on removal of travel support for post-16 students from low income families (LIF) and FE link transport**
 - 3) To note that if agreed, decisions on whether to proceed with these changes following the consultation final report and appropriate Scrutiny meetings, would be taken in the context of wider savings proposals by either the Lead Member or Cabinet in November 2015**
-

1 Background

1.1 It is anticipated that East Sussex County Council will need to reduce expenditure by £70-90 million between 2016/17 and 2018/19 and all areas will need to be considered. The Home to School Transport (HTST) budget was overspent in 2014/15, with expenditure of £10.78m and approximately £1.63m of that used for discretionary transport.

1.2 During the 2012/13 to 2014/15 Medium Term Financial Plan there has been a systematic review of the HTST budget to reduce costs which included:

- the introduction of financial contributions towards their travel costs for Post 16 SEND for families not from a low income household
- the introduction of personal transport budgets for families of Children and Young people (CYP) with SEND, where this provides the most cost effective solution
- recommissioning of the Independent Travel Training service (ITT) so young people with SEND are trained to travel independently to school or college on public transport

1.3 The last remaining areas of discretionary HTST expenditure are pre-school and post-16 SEND transport, post-16 transport for students from low income families (LIF), free link travel for FE students living in highly rural locations to the start of a continuing public transport journey, and a £15k subsidy with Brighton and Hove and West Sussex made to Southern Rail so that they can offer a discount to post-16 learners. This £15k rail subsidy is one of the mitigations for the proposals and will need to be maintained if changes are agreed. The remaining transport provision is statutory and we continue to ensure that delivery is as cost effectively as possible.

1.4 If the consultation is not undertaken from June to September it will be too late to implement, if Lead Member decides to do so, for the 2016/17 academic year.

1.5 If permission to consult is given, Lead Member / Cabinet will be asked to decide whether to go ahead with the changes following the consultation and final report by November 2015.

1.6 Formal consultation on the proposals is planned with sixth forms and colleges during June and July; an initial meeting to raise awareness occurred on 19 May. The Early Years and Transitions teams are also being consulted.

1.7 It is recognised that the options put forward may have a significant negative impact on people's lives, although every effort will be made to mitigate the negative impact where this is possible.

1.8 The Scrutiny Committee will be asked how if and how they wish to become involved in the process at their next meeting on 15th June.

1.9 **Appendix 1** gives SEND estimated savings and cohort numbers.

1.10 Potential savings per year based on current annual cost estimates accumulate to reach £759k of savings across the three financial years 2016/17 - 2018/19; which by 2018/19 or Year 3 (full impact) constitutes 3.2% of the total expected HTST budget, or 20.1% of the total discretionary budget.

1.11 In making the savings estimates for this report, it has been assumed that implementation will start in September 2016, with young people and their families being informed about agreed changes in November 2015.

1.12 **Appendix 2** shows a HTST budget breakdown to provide context.

1.13 A SEND forecasting model for East Sussex is in development and will be available this autumn. Any increase in the number of children with SEND will translate to pressures on the HTST budget. The number of active ESCC SEN statements / EHC Plans in January 2015 compared with the previous 9 years is shown in **Appendix 3**.

2 Supporting information

2.1 The proposed changes are :

- i. Offering support to those demonstrating the 'highest level of need' only by introducing tighter 'exceptions' criteria for post-16 SEND students and offering support which is more cost-effective, eg transport at college start/end times, use of Motability vehicle and increased expectation that parents will help to transport their child to college. This would be via a range of strategies which are set out in **Appendix 4** draft policy for Post-16 SEND travel assistance.
- ii. Increasing the current post-16 SEND transport contribution from £370 to £608, which is the annual cost for a Freedom Pass for bus travel (the average charge made by the 16 county councils which currently require a contribution is £525)
- iii. Introducing a 50% rate of contribution for low income families with post-16 students with SEND (£304 per year). These changes would be for all travelling children.
- iv. Introducing an annual contribution for pre-school SEND travel assistance along the same agreed lines as post-16 travel (£608/£304).

2.2 The outcome of the consultation on the Post-16 transport Statement for 2015/16 has recently been approved by Lead Member and will be published on the Connexions 360 website by the end of May. This is an annual activity and the changes made from the previous year for 2015/16 will apply to the cohort of pupils starting in September 2015. For 2016/17 the Post 16 transport statement will need to be amended to reflect the outcome of the proposed consultation set out in 2.1 above.

2.2 Any changes would be phased in with new starters only being subject to revisions from September 2016. Students awarded transport help in the preceding academic years will continue to receive the same support for the agreed duration of their course; up to 3 years. The exception to this is that all SEND students would be

subject to the increase in the travel contribution (including low income families) if implemented in September 2016.

2.3 **Appendix 5** details post-16 SEND students receiving travel assistance this academic year.

2.5 Reducing travel support carries with it a number of risks, outlined in a joint document (combined with risks for post-16 LIF students) in **Appendix 6**.

2.6 Although it is regrettable to take this action, the proposed changes are permissible under current legislation and guidance. Comparisons in terms of expected contributions for SEND student travel are set out in **Appendix 7**.

2.7 **Appendix 8** the Equality Impact Assessment will form an essential part of the consultation process as it is likely that these proposals will have a negative impact on pupils with SEND. The consultation process will help us to identify the impacts and look at mitigations.

3. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

3.1 Given the financial constraints set out in this report approval is requested to undertake the consultation.

STUART GALLIMORE **Director of Children's Services**

Contact Officer: [Report author's name]

Tel. No. [Report author's number]

Email: [Author's email address]

LOCAL MEMBERS

A list of County Council Members whose electoral divisions are specifically affected by the report.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Appendix 1	Finance tables and information
Appendix 2	Home to school transport budget breakdown
Appendix 3	SEND pupil population trends
Appendix 4	Draft Post-16 SEND travel assistance strategy
Appendix 5	SEND cohort information
Appendix 6	Risks
Appendix 7	Comparison with other local authorities
Appendix 8	Equality Impact Assessment

1. Breakdown of total savings estimates – summary including cohort numbers

Potential savings per year based on 2014/15 annual cost estimates are summarised below:

Financial Year	2016/17*	2017/18	2018/19	Total (3 year period)
Estimated total savings resulting from reduction in support for post-16 students with SEND student (20% reduction in new starters, contribution of £608/£304** for post-16 and pre-school students)	£118,441	£290,502	£350,524	£759,467
Estimated number of pre-school children and post-16s with SEND impacted (new starters)	94	85 more	42 more	

2. Breakdown of total savings estimates for each proposal – higher detail

Financial Year	2016/17*	2017/18	2018/19	Total (3 year period)
Post-16 SEND				
(i) SEND students (20% reduction for Y12-16 new starters)	£81,630	£240,088	£300,110	£300,110
(ii) Plus charge at £608 (if 20% fewer new starters)**	£11,281	£15,042	£15,042	£41,364
(iii) And £304 charge for LIF (if 20% fewer new starters)	£23,530	£31,373	£31,373	£86,275
Total for (i) - (iii) - post-16	£116,441	£286,502	£346,524	£749,467
(iv) introduce charge for pre-school cases (£608/£304)	£2,000	£4,000	£4,000	£10,000
Total for (i) - (iv) - post-16 + pre-school	£118,441	£290,502	£350,525	£759,464

* adjusted for part-financial year with changes for new starters from September 2016 (68% of full year)

**additional saving on top of expected saving from current £370 charge

- 2.1 The estimated totals for each financial year relate to the potential savings against an estimate for total 2015/16 costs if no changes were made.
- 2.2 Outturn for 2014/15 was £1.5m for 216 students with SEND (2014/15 estimate), including 10 pre-school children at £40k per year.

- 2.3 Changing the SEND travel assistance policy so that transport is offered only at the start and end of a college day is estimated to produce additional savings of between £13k and £25k of savings in 2017/18 assuming a 20% reduction across the budget (with approximately one-third of that in the 2016/17 financial year).
- 2.4 We have been mindful of the fact that the MTFP already includes savings that relate to SEND travel in 2016/17 (£46k saved through an increase in the post-16 SEND charge and a total of £378k via the iMPower recommendations against the entire SEND Travel budget (statutory and discretionary) of which post-16 used approximately 23% in 2013/14. We will be asking finance to ensure that there is not a duplication of savings; and if this does occur we will make a deduction from total savings.

3. Notes and assumptions for savings estimates

- 3.1 It should be noted that these figures are estimated from a December 2014 snapshot which was used to generate total annual costs for the 2014/15 academic year, and then adjusted for the 2015/16 financial year (during which the changes will be implemented with approximately 70% of the school travel days remaining).
- 3.2 It should also be noted that the costs provided per SEND student using hired transport (taxi or minibus) were apportioned, i.e. an appropriate share of the total cost of that particular vehicle run. This has been used to create a total for savings made if that particular person no longer receives a seat and if some runs are ceased completely – however there is a risk that some of these seats may run empty and savings will be less than the estimates shown – these are therefore maximum savings.
- 3.3 If policy changes were introduced from September 2016, it is proposed that only those pupils starting a post-16 course in September 2016 should be affected, based on fairness and the legitimate expectations of young people and parents who would have chosen a school or college based on the Council's admission criteria and transport policy at the time of entry to the school or college. The supported cohort currently ranges from Y12 to Y16, with SEND students supported for courses of up to 3 years.
- 3.4 In addition, changes would be introduced at the start of September (and savings would result from around 130 school travel days from a total of 190 within the 2015/16 financial year). Therefore changes to discretionary provision would not result in full expected savings until the 2018/19 financial year.
- 3.5 There are also potential associated savings in staffing cost in both CSD and CET teams, although this needs further consideration as more time may need to be invested per successful application, particularly at the start of the changes. CET have indicated that they think staff savings are unlikely as they are losing one FTE who deals with LIF in any case, and a 20% reduction in SEND clients would be a negligible reduction in resources as post-16 SEND pupils are the easiest group to manage; they generally stay on existing transport where there is FE provision at the school or transport is arranged for colleges at the end of the summer when normally the bulk of authorisations have been processed.
- 3.6 CSD have identified that possibly a 0.5FTE post may no longer be needed, however some of this may need to be redirected as support for assessments and authorisation of travel applications.

4. Post-16 SEND travel assistance contribution

- 4.1 Families of new students receiving SEND travel support from September 2014 have been asked to contribute £370 towards the full costs, unless assessed as low income.
- 4.2 The current annual cost for a Freedom Pass for bus travel is £608, and linking the contribution to this cost appears a logical step to put us in line with other authorities. Table 1 shows the estimated savings made if ESCC increased the full rate from £370 to £608, based on an anticipated 20% reduction in new cases.
- 4.3 Based on current figures, the expected income from the current £370 charge in the 2016/17 financial year for non-LIF only would be £29,230. Table 1 shows both the total income and the additional income above that expected from the £370 charge.

Table 1: Estimated additional income from increase in charge / new charge for LIF

		£608 charge (non-LIF)	£304 charge (LIF)	Total Income £608 / £304
2016/17 financial year	Total income	£37,588	£23,530	£61,118
	Additional savings above £370 charge	£11,281	£23,530	£34,811
2017/18 financial year	Total income	£38,426	£31,373	£69,798
	Additional savings above £370 charge	£15,042	£31,373	£46,414

4.4 The estimated additional savings made by ESCC increasing the charge to £608, and introducing a £304 charge for low income families is £35k in 2016/17 and then £46k in 2017/18 and for subsequent years.

4.5 It has been assumed that the new level of contribution would be expected from the families of all students, including those on low incomes (not just new starters). It would be highly complex to administer parallel payment systems for different years of entry as the new students come through over 3 entry years.

4.6 It has been noted that if families of students who are already travelling prior to September 2016 are to be required to make an increased or new contribution then the Authority must pay due regard to alerting them to this with as much notice as possible; by writing to them with this information.

5. Third Year savings and numbers impacted (based on 2014/15 cohorts)

Table 2: Percentage savings per year due to reduction in support / increased charge for discretionary SEND travel assistance

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Percentage of the total HTST budget plus Travel budgets (£10.9m)	1.1%	2.7%	3.2%
Percentage of the discretionary element of the budgets (1.74m)	6.8%	16.7%	20.1%

So we anticipate 3.2% saving against total budget by third year if proposed changes to support for post-16 students and pre-school children with SEND were to be implemented from September 2016.

Table 3: Approximate numbers impacted by reduction in support by third year (2018/19)

Number of CYP impacted by third year of the changes*	Number of pre-school / post-16 currently transported	Number impacted as % of discretionary SEND cohort	Number of ALL SEND students currently transported	Number impacted as % of total SEND cohort
41	216	19%	1084	3.8%

* estimated using 2014/15 figures

Of the 216 anticipated SEND students (206 post-16 and 10 pre-school), there will be a reduction in number of post-16 approved cases by approximately 20% - therefore impacting 41 students. The final percentage of the discretionary cohort impacted is only 19% as the policy for pre-school children will remain the same (exceptional cases only) and their numbers will therefore not be affected by the changes.

It should be noted that 80% of post-16 SEND students continue to be supported, but that all discretionary SEND travel will be subject to an increase in the contribution towards travel.

Home to School Transport Budget Breakdown

Appendix 2

The Home to School Transport (HTST) budget year end forecast is predicted to be £10.75m in total.

A large proportion of the budget (£6.6m or approximately 61%) is spent on the 1,100 children and young people with SEND who are authorised for SEND travel assistance to get to school or college. Of the £6.6m, £1.5m is used to fund travel for just over 200 post-16 students with SEND, whose support is discretionary and who may therefore be impacted by the proposed changes outlined in this report.

A further breakdown of the 2014/15 budget with percentages of the total budget required for each activity is included below. These are estimated outturns at the time of writing as final year-end figures are not yet available. Due to the complexities of the budget, some minor details have been omitted for simplicity, eg some costs which are later recouped. However, the figures provide a reasonable indication of the budgetary context of the proposed areas for reductions (highlighted):

Description	% of total HTST budget	Estimated cost (rounded)
Hired Transport		
SEND transport statutory age (and £40k nursery)	46.2%	£4,952,000
SEND post-16 students hired transport	13.4%	£1,440,000
Statutory entitled students (due to distance)	13.5%	£1,449,000
FLESS/FLP/College Central	3.1%	£330,000
Unsafe routes (statutory age)	4.3%	£466,00
LAC with SEND funded by HTST	0.5%	£57,000
MEDG students/parent with medical problem	0.5%	£53,000
Pre-16 students from Low Income Families	0.4%	£41,000
Special Needs Outreach (travel between sites)	0.1%	£12,000
Post-16 students from Low Income Families	0.05%	£5,000
FE Link Transport	0.04%	£4,000
Total Hired Transport (estimate for 2014/15)	83.2%	£8,912,000
PTBs / mileage		
SEND Statutory age PTB	1.2%	£126,000
SEND post-16 students PTB	0.6%	£60,000
Total PTBs	1.7%	£186,000
Parental mileage scheme (Statutory students)	0.4%	£42,000
Public Transport (Freedom Pass/B&H bus ID)		
Statutory age students over distance	11.0%	£1,178,000
Post-16 students from Low Income Families	1.2%	£126,000
SEND Post-16 students public transport	0.01%	£1,000
Total public transport	12.2%	£1,305,000
Staffing Costs SLA with CET	2.5%	£271,000
Approximate total HTST budget	100%	£10,716,000

SEND pupil population trends

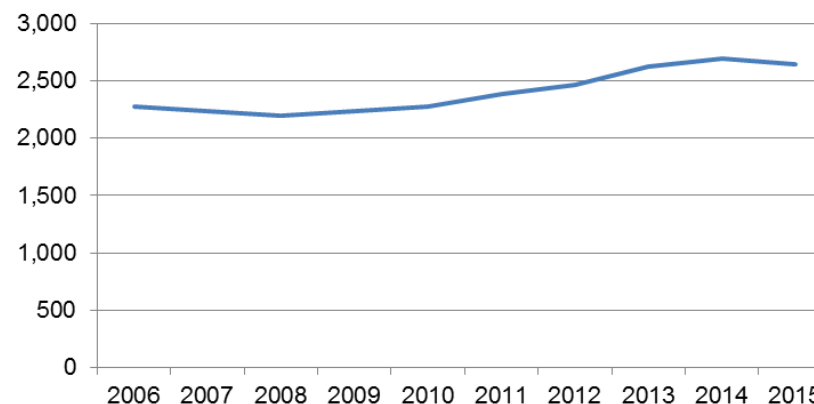
Appendix 3

There was a 13% increase in the number of children and young people with SEN statements or EHC Plans between January 2011 and 2014; however this increasing trend has shown a plateau in 2015. A breakdown by Primary Need category appears to show a rapidly increasing proportion of CYP with ASD; a group which may particularly benefit from Independent Travel Training and other potential cost saving initiatives.

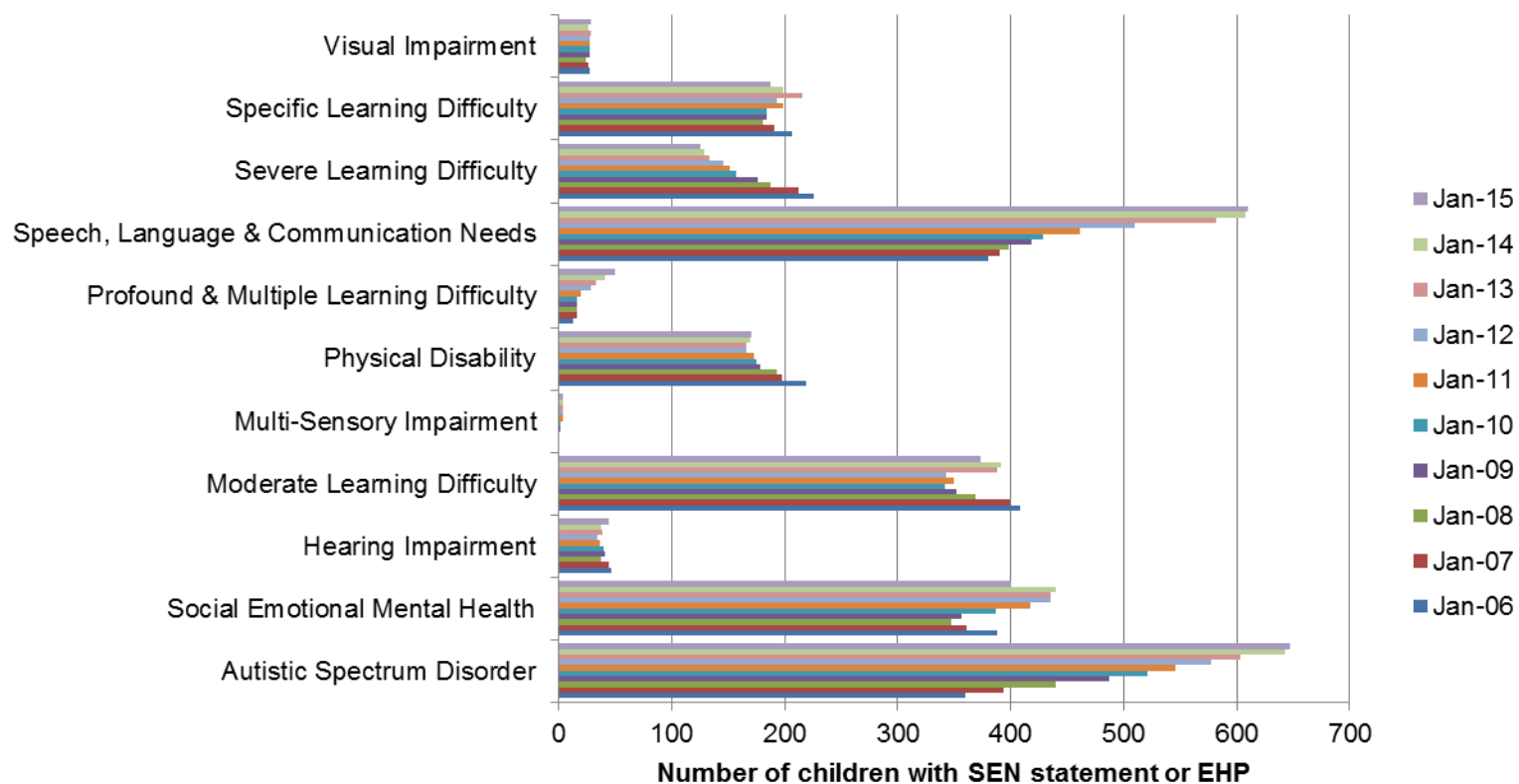
Number of children and young people with SEN statements or EHC Plans by year group

NC Year	Jan-11	Jan-12	Jan-13	Jan-14	Jan-15
-2	0	0	0	1	1
-1	3	2	1	0	2
R	79	93	111	110	94
1	116	98	127	139	121
2	126	142	129	152	151
3	134	156	186	152	163
4	149	161	195	201	158
5	160	181	211	221	221
6	210	191	216	247	235
7	237	247	231	241	258
8	216	248	255	242	246
9	250	243	264	271	258
10	253	257	252	273	269
11	272	258	268	250	268
12	78	86	73	81	82
13	55	61	66	63	70
14	48	40	43	46	47
Total	2386	2464	2628	2690	2644

Number of ESCC maintained SEND statements / EHC Plans based on January census



Changes in number of children and young people by Primary Need between 2006 and 2015 census



Travel assistance for post-16 young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)



Last updated: Xxx 2015

This document details the ESCC policy regarding assistance with travel for post-16 students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) who are continuing in education. This policy takes effect from September 2016.

1. Background information

Local authorities do not have a statutory duty to provide free transport to school or college for students who are above compulsory school age; however ESCC remains committed to providing support for young people with SEND who demonstrate exceptional circumstances regarding the journey to a suitable placement. It is very important that students and their parents or carers consider the journey when making decisions about post-16 options, as the majority of cases will have to arrange and pay for transport themselves. Student support services at schools and colleges will be able to provide information on other sources of funding for young people.

This policy applies to all students with SEND aged 16 or over (Year 12 upwards) who are making a new application for travel assistance from September 2016. All Year 11 students moving into a post-16 placement are required to apply to be considered for continuing support in Year 12, even if they are staying in the same school. Those continuing on a post-16 course starting pre-September 2016 who are already in receipt of travel assistance will be supported under existing arrangements for the duration of their course if their circumstances remain unchanged.

All students who are assessed as eligible for travel assistance are required to pay an annual contribution (adjusted annually) to the County Council towards the cost of their provision, unless they are assessed as being from a low income family, in which case the proposal is currently that half the full contribution will be required, though this too will be reviewed annually. By receiving a contribution, the Council is able to support a greater number of young people to access post-16 education. The contribution is the same amount regardless of the type or frequency of travel assistance provided.

2. Eligibility for SEND travel assistance

The Council recognises that some students with learning difficulties or disabilities may not be able to travel to school or college independently or may not yet be ready to do so. The council expects that where possible in these circumstances parents or carers should be responsible for making travel arrangements.

In exceptional cases, students with learning difficulties or disabilities, or their parents or carers may apply for travel assistance. Each case will be considered by the council's Post 16 Travel Panel, and travel support will usually only be considered further if all the following criteria are satisfied:

1. The student must be attending an appropriate funded, full time course at the nearest school or college to their home. If an alternative suitable course is offered by an FE provider nearer to their home, the student will not be eligible for support.
2. The Council will fund transport to a college placement up to the academic year in which a young person reaches a maximum of 21 years of age.
3. The student must be travelling over three miles to their nearest appropriate provider, unless their learning difficulties or disability means they are unable to travel this distance either walking or on public transport (specific and up to date evidence from relevant health and/or educational appropriate professionals supporting the student will be required to assist the decision) and a parent is not available to take them.

If a student is able to be considered for travel assistance, factors the Council will take into account when determining whether a student is eligible for assistance may include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. The student is unable to travel to their placement by public transport, either unaccompanied or accompanied by a responsible adult (specific and up to date evidence from relevant health and/or educational appropriate professionals supporting the student will be required).
2. The family does not have a Motability or other suitable vehicle for their transportation to school or college. If a family has a Motability vehicle provided for the benefit of the young person, there is an expectation that this will be used to get them to their post-16 placement.
3. The length or complexity of the journey and whether parents or carers could reasonably be expected to provide transport or act as a chaperone themselves. If parents/carers or other family members are not available this should be fully explained in the application.
4. The student has been assessed by the Authority as requiring an escort, or as a 'high needs' case.
5. Other circumstances relevant to each case.

3. Annual contribution

In all cases where assistance is agreed, a contribution towards the cost of travel is required. The charge in 2016/2017 is £608 and payment can be made in instalments. Transport will not be arranged until payment in advance is made. If subsequent payments are late, transport will be suspended or even cancelled.

Low income families will be asked to contribute £304 per academic year. Low income is defined as families in receipt of one of the following:

- Income Support*
- Income-based Job Seekers Allowance*
- Income related Employment and Support Allowance*
- Support received under part six of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.
- Guarantee element of State Pension Credit*
- Child Tax Credit (but not also Working Tax Credit unless in receipt of the maximum level) based on an income of £16,190 or less*

*Correct at the time of consultation

The annual contribution level will be reviewed on an annual basis.

4. Provision

Each applicant who is determined as requiring assistance will be risk-assessed for their immediate needs and the most cost-effective suitable mode of travel support will be arranged. At the same time, each will be assessed for suitability for our intensive Independent Travel Training (ITT) programme, which can provide a young person the skills and confidence for greater independence in their adult life. A young person who is ready for travel training may be offered temporary travel assistance until they have 'graduated' as independent travellers on their journey to school or college, at which point they will be given free bus or train travel for a limited fixed period. For students who can access public transport, a journey time of up to 75 minutes each way is considered reasonable according to national guidance for best practice.

Where an applicant is determined as eligible for SEND travel assistance, the type of travel assistance provided will be the most cost-effective available to the Council at the time, appropriate to the student's needs. This may be one of the following:

- a) A free place on a contract or school bus
- b) A Personal Travel Budget (PTB)
- c) A taxi
- d) Another type of transport / assistance to be determined on individual circumstance; for example, a parent may be expected to transport their child part of the journey in order to get to a suitable pick up point (this might be a bus stop or a taxi pick up point)

Please note that taxis will usually only be provided in the most exceptional cases, and for students with severe disabilities and/or the most complex health needs.

Limitations for travel assistance

- Students will usually only be transported to and from a school or college at their published school start and school finish times. This may therefore require the student to arrive earlier than the start of their first session or wait at the end of their timetabled day until other young people are ready for shared transport.
- The Council does not provide travel assistance to work experience placements, medical appointments or other off-site visits; responsibility for this remains with the parents or carers, or school or college as appropriate.
- Reimbursements for travel costs incurred before application cannot be made.

5. Review of eligibility

1. Any applicant for whom travel assistance has been agreed by the travel panel must apply again each academic year. It should not be assumed that the same form of travel assistance will be agreed for a further period.
2. In every case, travel assistance will be reviewed following a house move, change in placement or course, or a change in the student's needs (condition, medication or equipment) or any other change in circumstances which may be relevant.
3. Following an incident on school or college transport, it may be necessary to stop provision until a further risk assessment has been carried out to make sure that the student can be transported safely. If this occurs, parents or carers remain responsible for transport and costs until the situation has been resolved.
4. Appeals against a decision to refuse transport can be made to the Transport and Student Support Panel. This is a small panel of elected members who will decide whether, in the circumstances of the individual case, to exercise their discretion and allow support either in whole or in part. For a transport appeal form and further information, please contact the Principal Admissions and Transport Officer on 0300 330 9472

These summaries are for the cohort of SEND students travelling in ESCC-funded transport in December 2014; they represent a snapshot of our provision. Tables of information prepared as analysis of the cohort have not been included in this appendix due to data protection issues – but we have analysed the current cohort by home town and destination, distance travelled and specific needs.

Year 12 – Year 14 (16-19 year olds) – these have a different profile to the older students

The average annual cost per head for transport of the 145 Y12-Year 14 students currently supported is £7,453. There are 3 residential placements with distances of 176, 183 and 184 miles. Of the remaining 142 students, the average distance to their placement is 10.9 miles (range 0.2 -47 miles, median 9.5 miles, only 26 have a journey of 5 miles or less).

24 of these students live less than 3 miles from their placement, with travel support still granted due to the severity of their needs.

The 2014/15 cohort have been categorised according to their primary presenting special needs or disabilities relating to travel to their placement as this may be helpful in consideration of how the Authority can or cannot reduce costs for transport. A total of 52% of this group have Autism Spectrum as their key SEND – although it should be noted that this basic label covers a very wide range of need.

Many of the young people with SEND in Year 12-14 are suitable for Independent Travel Training (ITT) and an increasing number are being referred to our commissioned service, which now has funding until August 2016. The Council are able to offer temporary transport on condition that the family cooperate with an assessment for and provision of ITT should this be appropriate.

Year 15 and Year 16 (19-21 year olds)

The average annual cost per head for transport of the 40 Y12-Year 14 students currently supported is £7,269. This cohort are transported to a range of FE providers and Independent Specialist Providers (ISPs) which have been specified as being the most suitable institution to meet their needs.

There are two residential placements with distances of 144 and 62 miles. Of the remaining 38 students, the average distance to their placement is 11.1 miles (range 1.4 -38.3 miles, median 11.7 miles, only 11 have a journey of 5 miles or less).

The vast majority of this cohort (36 of 40) are currently on Level 1 (or below) foundation courses due to their learning disabilities, eg Supported Education, Personal Progress. A small number have received some ITT and this has either not worked as they were not deemed safe, or they still require transport part-way, eg to the bus stop.

Post-16 students with non-standard timetables and additional costs

A number of students at FE colleges (12 students attending SDC Eastbourne and Lewes, Sussex Coast and K College) have non-standard timetables, which means that a number of additional taxi runs need to be laid on. Some of these differences in timing are only a matter of 15-30 minutes, with about half being under 90 minutes. The total estimated saving should the Authority insist that only start and end of day travel is provided has been estimated at £32,000 per year. Part of mitigation for this is continuing negotiation with the FE colleges to encourage standardised timetables.

Risks for post-16 SEND and LIF students combined

Appendix 6

Risk	Impact	Initial risk score (5 is high, 1 is low)			Proposed mitigation	Score following action to mitigate		
		Impact	Likelihood	Result		Impact	Likelihood	Result
1. Withdrawal of free transport for students from low income families, and increasing restrictions and travel charges for students with SEND, may deter or prevent them from continuing in post-16 education	Negative impact on driving economic growth, in particular increasing the numbers of NEETs, and lowering educational aspirations for young people. Economic gains (particularly via removal of free transport for over 470 post-16 students from low income families) may not be worthwhile in a context of increased costs elsewhere.	5	4	20	Hardship fund to support the most needy LIF students in continuing in education. Rolling communications plan to reach young people approaching the transition in good time to allow sensible post-16 choices without the assumption that transport will be provided. Provision of Independent Travel Training for students with SEND.	4	4	16
2. Charges impact on families with pre-school children with SEND	Some families do not take up placements due to cost (£608 or £304 per year)	3	2	6	Alert families to potential benefits they may be entitled to, eg DLA	3	1	3
3. Changes have a negative impact on the wider family and welfare of the child or young person	Some families could fall into crisis and in the most extreme cases this could result in a child needing to become looked after	5	1	5	Oversight by Governance Panel, close liaison with SEND practitioners and colleges	3	1	3
4. Colleges with the most LIF students are adversely affected regarding the demand for bursary support	Demand for financial support outstrips resources	3	3	6	5 colleges with high numbers of LIF students receive a proportionate share of the hardship fund	2	2	4

Risk	Impact	Initial risk score (5 is high, 1 is low)			Proposed mitigation	Score following action to mitigate		
5. Reduction in enrolment numbers on certain courses	Impact on the viability of some colleges and sixth form courses. Likely to be greater impact on Plumpton College given their cohort and their rural location	3	3	9	We will monitor the impact of any changes in provision over time, with close monitoring of impact on Plumpton College in particular (see Appendix 7)	3	2	6
6. Policy changes in SEND travel, e.g. pick up at start or end of day only, cause issues with safety	The safety of vulnerable pupils could be impacted	4	2	4	Thorough risk assessments are undertaken, discussion and negotiation with colleges to clarify the terms of their provision	2	1	2
7. Parents of SEND students may produce a strong case for Independent provision if they feel that travel support to the named provider is limited	Increase in placement provision costs	2	3	6	Good communication with practitioners and parents regarding the revised offer, and potential for independent travel training if appropriate	2	2	4
8. A number of those affected by proposed changes are ESCC looked after children or care leavers	ESCC do not meet our duty as corporate parents / transport costs are met via another budget (cost shunting)	4	2	8	The budget for LAC and care leaver transport (SEND students) to be managed via a LAC budget in order to ensure efficiency	2	1	2
9. Some parents may use legal processes to challenge decisions as well as the robustness of the consultation process	Negative impact on staff time and ESCC costs	4	3	12	Robust legal advice, communications and consultation plan. Introduction of a specific and well-signposted post-16 SEND travel assistance policy	3	2	6

Post-16 travel assistance: Survey of other local authority practice Appendix 7

Web-based and networking research on post-16 transport offers resulted in comprehensive information for all 26 other county councils for SEND students. The information predominantly came from their webpages, but was also frequently hidden away in policy documents and is often relatively difficult to find for families or professionals.

The following issues were investigated:

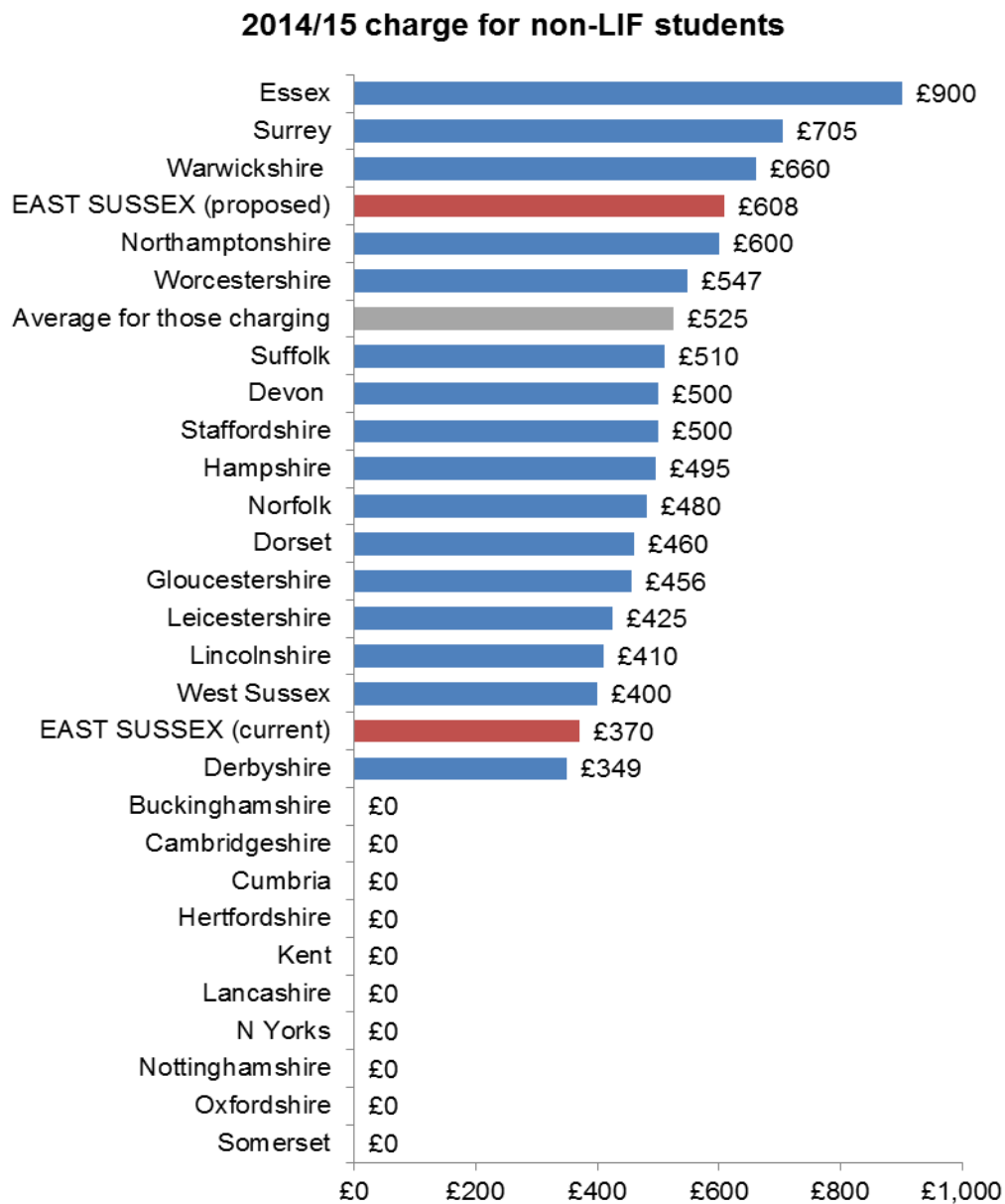
1. How much is being charged in 2014/15 as a contribution towards post-16 SEND travel
2. Whether this charge is also applied to SEND students from low income families

(a) Post-16 charge for SEND travel assistance for non-LIF / LIF students (2014/15) by county council

Local Authority	Students from Non-LIF	Students from Low Income Families
Buckinghamshire	zero	zero
Cambridgeshire	zero	zero
Cumbria	zero	zero
Derbyshire	£349	£233
Devon	£500	£250
Dorset	£460	£230
Essex	£900	£450
Gloucestershire	£456	£456
Hampshire	£495	zero
Hertfordshire	zero	zero
Kent	zero	zero
Lancashire	zero	zero
Leicestershire	£425	zero
Lincolnshire	£410	£410
Norfolk	£480	£360
N Yorks	zero	zero
Northamptonshire	£600	zero
Nottinghamshire	zero	zero
Oxfordshire	zero	zero

Somerset	zero	zero
Staffordshire	£500	£380
Suffolk	£510	£510
Surrey	£705	£705
Warwickshire	£660	£330
West Sussex	£400	zero
Worcestershire	£547	£547

(b) Comparison chart by county council



Proposal	Cohort affected	Potential negative impact on young people and families	Mitigation	Accepted Risks
<p>Proposals to make savings on current post-16 SEND travel assistance.</p> <p>(i) Offering support to those demonstrating the 'highest level of need' only by introducing tighter 'exceptions' criteria for SEND students and offering support which is more cost-effective, e.g. transport at college start/end times, use of Motability vehicle.</p> <p>(ii) increasing the current post-16 transport contribution from £370 to £608.</p> <p>(iii) Introducing a 50% rate of contribution for low income families set at £304.</p>	<p>Post-16 SEND who do not demonstrate the highest level of need under the tighter exceptions criteria.</p> <p>SEND young people aged 16-25 and their families.</p> <p>Low income families with post-16 children with SEND, who require SEND transport assistance.</p>	<p>Not able to achieve aspirations set out in their EHC plan</p> <p>Increased risk of becoming NEET</p> <p>Increased negative impact on the wider family and welfare of the young person.</p> <p>Increased risk of not fulfilling their potential as they cannot attend the college/6th form.</p>	<p>Introduction of a specific and well-signposted post-16 SEND travel assistance policy.</p> <p>Rolling communications plan to reach young people approaching the transition in good time to allow sensible post-16 choices without the assumption that transport will be provided.</p> <p>Governance framework / well-defined process for all post-16 SEND travel applications (not just for young people going onto an FE course), with a new online application form and process removes the assumption that funded SEND travel will be provided post-16.</p> <p>Increased use of Personal Travel Budgets and Independent Travel Training (ITT) for post-16 SEND students (as well as ITT for younger students from Year 7) as appropriate.</p> <p>Robust assessment in place to establish those with the highest level of need receive assistance.</p>	<p>Young people may not be able to achieve the aspirations set out in EHC plan which covers an age span of 16-25.</p> <p>Fewer young people with SEND will receive travel assistance.</p>
<p>Proposal to continue to fund pre-school SEND travel on an exceptional basis, but to (iv) introduce a contribution along the same lines as for post-16 travel (£608/304).</p>	<p>Families / low income families of pre-school children with SEND who are granted travel assistance will be asked to contribute 608 / £304 towards travel arrangements.</p>	<p>Increased financial burden on the family.</p>	<p>Communicate clearly to all stakeholders, particularly Early Years staff.</p> <p>Clear financial assessment process in place.</p>	