

AGENDA ITEM 2**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL****CABINET****8 SEPTEMBER 2015****HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT: MAINTAINING THE EXISTING SERVICE BUT REDUCING THE SUBSIDY FOR DISCRETIONARY TRAVEL - RESULTS OF A PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON A PROPOSED NEW POLICY****JOINT REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND GROUP DIRECTOR, CORPORATE AND FRONTLINE SERVICES****AUTHORS: Chris Bradshaw, Chief Executive (01443 744001), Chris Lee, Group Director - Corporate & Frontline Services (01443 424026), and Roger Waters, Service Director - Highways & Streetcare (01443 494702)****1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To report the results of the consultation exercise initiated by Cabinet together with additional information and an Equality Impact Assessment ('EIA') regarding a proposed new Home to School Transport Policy. The proposed policy maintains the existing service provision, but reduces the subsidy provided by the Council, through introducing a new charge to protect the discretionary elements of the service. This report will assist Cabinet in its determination of whether or not it wishes to progress with implementation of the proposed policy and, if so, how. If implemented as consulted upon the proposed policy would produce an overall saving to the Council of £2.048 million per year.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Cabinet: -

- 2.1 Considers the outcome of the Consultation, any potential impact on equalities issues and other matters as outlined in the report (together with its appendices), in respect of the proposed Home to School Transport Policy;
- 2.2 Notes that in officers' opinion the Council would be acting in compliance with its relevant statutory duties as outlined in the report, should Cabinet proceed with implementation of the proposed Home to School Transport Policy;

- 2.3 Decide on whether or not, and if so how, it wishes to proceed with implementation of the proposed Home to School Transport Policy, giving consideration to the following proposals which were consulted upon: -
- 2.3.1 that the Council's current distance eligibility criteria for Home to School Transport continues to apply but all discretionary elements of provision as set out in the table at paragraph 9.5 of the report becomes a chargeable, but still subsidised, service;
 - 2.3.2 that the proposed charge towards the discretionary elements of Home to School Transport provision in respect of the new policy be set at £1.75 per day/£332.50 per year;
 - 2.3.3 that the introduction of an assessment of a parent's ability to pay the proposed charge towards the discretionary elements of Home to School Transport provision be based on a child's receipt of Free School Meals and the proposed reduced level of charge be set at £1.00 per day/£190 per year; and
 - 2.3.4 that as part of the proposed new policy the Council introduce a cap on the proposed charges payable for families with more than two children using Home to School Transport;
- 2.4 Agree that under the proposed Home to School Transport Policy the discretionary elements of Special Educational Needs transport continue as an entirely subsidised, non-charged service;
- 2.5 Note that any revised Home to School Transport policy will need to be published in accordance with statutory requirements by 1st October 2015 in order for it to be able to be implemented for the commencement of the 2016/17 academic year; and
- 2.6 If a decision is taken to proceed with implementation of a revised Home to School Transport Policy agree to receive a further report in respect of the operational policies/guidance deemed necessary for, and incidental to the implementation of the proposed Home to School Transport Policy.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 On the 19th May 2015 Cabinet considered a proposal to introduce a new Home to School Transport Policy which maintains the existing service provision, but reduces the subsidy provided, through introducing a new charge to protect the discretionary elements of the service.
- 3.2 On the 4th March 2015, Council agreed a budget strategy for 2015/16 which balanced an initial budget gap of £21.9M. The strategy included a number of budget reduction measures and used £4.4M of reserves (Medium Term Financial Planning and Service Transformation Reserve). The remaining budget gap projected to 2017/18 was £42.3M (£23.7M for 2016/17).
- 3.3 On the 2nd July 2015, the Group Director, Corporate and Frontline Services provided a presentation to Cabinet in respect of Medium Term Financial & Service Planning. This presentation updated the projected budget gap based

on different settlement levels and showed a gap for 2016/17 of between £23.7m and £30.8m (rising to between £59.8m and £69.7m up to 2018/19).

3.4 Given the size of the budget gap faced and the timescale requirements for any implementation of service changes, Cabinet has agreed to receive reports on potential service change/cut proposals as soon as these become available.

3.5 The Integrated Transport Unit, which manages Home to School Transport, has already been working to achieve efficiencies and improvements across the service. Examples include: -

- Re-routing of school buses and the subsequent re-allocation of pupils to maximise capacity and reduce the number of vehicles required;
- Introduced innovative ways of tendering contracts by linking nearby schools and combining contracts to reduce the number of vehicles required;
- Increased the number of season tickets purchased on the existing local bus service network, helping to improve its sustainability and ensuring the best value for money from expenditure on public passenger transport as a whole;
- Working with neighbouring authorities to enable seasons tickets to be purchased on the existing local bus service network in greater numbers, thereby securing a lower price per pass overall;
- Working with neighbouring authorities to reduce the number of vehicles required on cross boundary school journeys;
- Re-tendered routes to secure more cost effective alternatives;
- Increased back-office administrative efficiencies with the use of technological systems, which have significantly reduced the duplication of effort, enabled the seamless and timely transfer of robust pupil data, eliminated data loss and corruption, and improved service delivery, allowing the natural loss/non-replacement of members of staff.
- Issued “Transport Travel Packs” to each entitled new Year 7 pupil during transition visits to their new secondary schools, reinforcing key messages about safe travel, behaviour on school buses and the importance of carrying the bus pass at all times.
- Introduced “No Pass No Travel” to ensure that learners travel on the correct buses, reducing unnecessary overcrowding and enabling more efficient vehicle scheduling, as well as improving behaviour and reducing the staff time in dealing with incidents.
- Regular meetings with contractors, schools, taxi licensing, safeguarding, education, neighbouring local authorities and other agencies have led to more efficient, partnership and cost effective approach to working.
- Increased proactive monitoring, involving other local authorities and agencies where appropriate, has ensured that school transport contracts are delivered to the required standard and are enforcing the “No Pass No Travel” policy.
- Introduced the Framework Agreement (for the more changeable SEN and LAC Contracts), and secure electronic tendering and auctions, which are more efficient for both the Council and the operator.
- Established the multi agency Gate-keeping Panel and enhanced financial controls that contain service creep and have enabled the service to be delivered consistently within the agreed budget.

- Established long term contracts that allow operators to invest in their fleets with greater certainty of a financial return on their investments and long term cost control and certainty for the Council.
 - Introduced contract indexation where annual contract costs are linked to a range of transport related indices which are used to adjust contract rates, ensuring that rises or falls in fuel costs, for example, are reflected in the amount the Council pays contractors to operate the service.
- 3.6 The Council operates a very generous Home to School Transport Policy which means it is the largest operation of its kind in Wales. The Council currently provides Home to School transport for approximately 11,690 mainstream pupils each day through the provision of more than 230 routes and the issue of public transport season tickets. Approximately 7,000 learners are transported on a discretionary basis.
- 3.7 Many councils have already modified their eligibility criteria. This Council now provides discretionary transport for more learners than almost every other councils entire Home to School Transport operations. In addition the service provides transport for approximately 1,000 Special Educational Need ('SEN') pupils daily. The Home to School Transport budget for 2015/16 is £11.4m.
- 3.8 The outcome of the 19th May 2015 meeting was that Cabinet agreed: -
- To initiate a consultation with interested parties and relevant stakeholders in respect of the proposed new Home to School Transport Policy as outlined within the 19th May 2015 Cabinet report, based on taking the following proposals forward for consultation:-
- The introduction of a charge towards the discretionary elements of Home to School Transport provision, being the main amendment to the existing Home to School Transport Policy.
 - That the proposed charge in respect of the new Home to School Transport Policy be set as £1.75 per day.
 - The introduction of an assessment of a parent's ability to pay the proposed charge towards the discretionary elements of Home to School Transport provision, based on a child's receipt of Free School Meals and agreed that the proposed reduced level of charge should be £1.00.
 - That as part of the proposed new Home to School Transport Policy, a cap on the proposed charges payable for families with more than two children using Home to School Transport be introduced.
 - That the consequent full year savings (income) would be £2.048M (£1.280M part-year effect in 2016/17).
 - That under the proposed Home to School Transport Policy the discretionary elements of Special Educational Needs transport would continue as an entirely subsidised, non-charged service.
- 3.9 This report sets out details of the 19th May 2015 proposals together with the results of the consultation process, further additional information in respect of the proposed new policy and an EIA.

4. **LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK**

- 4.1 The Council has a number of statutory duties which are relevant to this policy which Members must be reminded of, and have in their minds, before taking any final decision(s) in respect of the implementation of any new Home To School Transport Policy. These are set out in detail below.

THE COUNCIL'S DUTIES UNDER THE LEARNER TRAVEL (WALES) MEASURE 2008

- 4.2 The Welsh Government's Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 (the 'Measure') sets out the current statutory duties of Local Authorities with regard to the provision of home to school transport. Statutory guidance is also provided by the Welsh Government in the Learner Travel Statutory Provision and Operational Guidance - June 2014 (the 'Guidance'). Both the Measure and the Guidance are attached in full at Appendix 1A and 1B to this report respectively.
- 4.3 Under the Measure the Council **must**:-
- Assess the travel needs of learners in its area
 - Provide free home to school transport for learners of compulsory school age attending primary school who live 2 miles or further from their nearest suitable school
 - Provide free home to school transport for learners of compulsory school age attending secondary school who live 3 miles or further from their nearest suitable school
 - Assess and meet the needs of "looked after" children in its area
 - Promote access to Welsh medium education
 - Promote sustainable modes of travel
- 4.4 The Council must therefore continue to meet these responsibilities in any future policy it adopts.
- 4.5 The Measure requires the Council to provide learners with free transport to their nearest suitable school if they ordinarily reside beyond a 'safe' walking distance to that school. The term "suitable school" applies to the catchment area English, Welsh or dual-language mainstream school or special school/class as appropriate. Where learners are not entitled to free transport the Council has the power to provide transport on a discretionary basis.
- 4.6 The walking distance is measured by the shortest available route. The Guidance states that, "a route is considered to be 'available' if it is safe (as far as reasonably practicable) for a learner without a disability or learning difficulty to walk the route alone or with an accompanying adult if the learner's age and levels of understanding requires this." If a route is not 'available' then a learner is entitled to free transport to their nearest suitable school even though the distance from home to school is less than the distance limit that applies to his/her age.

- 4.7 The definition of nearest “suitable school” is where the “education or training provided is suitable having regard for the age, ability and aptitudes of the learner and any learning difficulties he or she may have”. Deciding which suitable school is the learners 'nearest' is a matter for the Council to determine in accordance with its own Learner Travel Policy. The Council must set out how the nearest suitable school is identified and publish this information in its Learner Travel Policy
- 4.8 Parents and Learners may express a preference for a particular school, a particular type of language provision or faith school, but the Measure does not confer on those parents and learners any rights to free transport to their preferred school and or location, unless that school is determined by the local authority to be the learner's nearest suitable school and the learner meets the distance criteria.
- 4.9 The Council's current Learner Travel Policy allows parents/learners to select their 'nearest suitable school' in accordance with choice of English or Welsh Medium language or their preferred religious denomination. Members should note the position in relation to Welsh medium education as outlined in paragraphs 4.18 – 4.21 below.
- 4.10 Assessing the travel needs of learners does not mean providing free transport. Learners will only qualify for free transport provision if they meet the entitlement criteria. Whilst the Council is required to assess the travel needs of all learners under the age of 19 there is currently no legal duty to provide free or assisted transport arrangements for non-compulsory school age children (up to the term in which a child turns 5 or post 16 learners).
- 4.11 The Council is also required to have regard to:-
- The needs of disabled learners and learners with learning difficulties.
 - Any particular needs of learners who are 'looked after' or formerly looked after by the Council.
 - The age of a learner.
 - The nature of the route that the learner is expected to take between home and the places where they receive education or training.
- 4.12 In assessing the travel needs of learners the Council must take into account the fact that the travel arrangements they make in light of the assessment must not cause unreasonable levels of stress, take an unreasonable amount of time or be unsafe.
- 4.13 When exercising functions under the Measure the Council is **not** required to take account of extra curricular activities, breakfast or after-school clubs when assessing learner travel needs.
- 4.14 If a learner cannot be admitted to their nearest suitable school which results in the learner having to attend the next available nearest suitable school, the Council has the same duty to provide free transport.

- 4.15 Free transport for learners who attend special schools, pupil referral units and learning support classes is provided in accordance with the Council's agreed policy on walking distance and safe routes (as set out above) and must be supported by appropriate evidence and be confirmed by the Council's Access and Inclusion SEN (Special Education Needs) Panel. Learners with disabilities (as defined by the Equality Act 2010) may be entitled to assistance with transport from home to an appropriate school/college even though the Council's agreed criteria on safe walking distance are not met.
- 4.16 There is no statutory duty for the Council to provide free transport to post 16 learners who continue their studies in mainstream further education or training. There is no statutory duty to provide free transport to a learner with a disability or learning difficulty in post-16 further education or training. Although in assessing learner travel needs the Council "must have regard in particular" to the needs of learners who are disabled or with learning difficulties.

Power To Provide Discretionary Provision

- 4.17 The Measure provides the Council with the power to provide discretionary transport arrangements for non-compulsory school age children.
- 4.18 When deciding which schools are most suitable for learners in its area, the Council and Welsh Ministers have a duty under the Measure to 'promote access to education and training through the medium of Welsh'.
- 4.19 The Council has the power to provide discretionary transport arrangements for learners who are not attending their nearest suitable school because of language preference.
- 4.20 The Council has to make it clear in its Home to School Transport Policy (which is historically contained in the annual Starting School Booklet) its arrangements for providing free or assisted travel to schools teaching through the medium of Welsh or English.
- 4.21 The Guidance states that preference for either language should be treated equally. The Council must also take into account its Welsh Language Scheme and Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2014 - 2017 (WESP). The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 places a duty on the Council to prepare a WESP for its area. The WESP, appended at Appendix 2 to this report, supports the aims and objectives of the Council's Welsh Language Scheme to ensure that the use of the Welsh language is safeguarded and promoted throughout Rhondda Cynon Taf. The WESP sets out the Council's proposals on how it will carry out its education functions to:
- improve the planning of the provision of education through the medium of Welsh in its area; and
 - improve the standards of Welsh medium education and of the teaching of Welsh in its area.

- 4.22 A learner is entitled to free transport to a denominational/Faith school if that school is considered by the Council to be the learner's nearest suitable school. However the Measure also provides the Council with the power to provide discretionary transport arrangements for learners who are not attending their nearest suitable school because of denominational preference.
- 4.23 The Council is also required to make clear in its Home to School Transport Policy its arrangements for providing free or assisted travel to denominational schools.
- 4.24 For Members further reference attached at Appendix 3 to this report is a letter dated 5 August 2014 sent by Edwina Hart AM to all Assembly Members within which the Minister provides background detail to the Measure and information with regards to the Section 10 duty under the Measure to promote access to Welsh Medium education and training.
- 4.25 If the Council does make use of its discretionary powers it must ensure that the policy applies to all learners in similar circumstances living in that Council's area. The Council should ensure that any policy is fair, reasonable and complies with relevant equality legislation to ensure it does not discriminate unlawfully between learners when using its discretionary powers.

Charging for Transport

- 4.26 The Council may not charge for transport arrangements that it is *required* to make for learners of compulsory school age (i.e. the statutory requirement to provide free home to school transport), except in relation to looked after children where the Council makes travel arrangements for a child who is looked after by another authority (where a charge may be made to another authority).
- 4.27 However when the Council uses its powers to provide discretionary travel arrangements for learners not entitled to free transport provision, a charge can be made for these arrangements.
- 4.28 For learners who are not of compulsory school age, there is no restriction on charging. With regard to learners of compulsory school age when transport is provided on a discretionary basis, charging must be made in accordance with Section 455 and 456 of the Education Act 1996 (as amended by Section 22 of the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008).
- 4.29 Disabled learners may have specific transport requirements (or reasonable adjustments required for this) which may result in increased transport costs. The Equality Act 2010 prohibits the Council charging for any reasonable adjustments it has made for disabled learners.
- 4.30 If the cost of providing transport for the disabled learner is higher than it would if the Council were providing transport for a non disabled learner, for example, if the transport provided for the disabled learner includes the need for an escort or the use of a specialised vehicle the Council cannot charge a higher

amount for the use of the specialised vehicle, and/or escort (or any other reasonable adjustment) even though the cost to the Council may be higher.

- 4.31 Legal advice received has indicated that should the Council introduce a charge as part of its discretionary travel arrangements, so as to ensure any such charge is fair and reasonable, there should be an element of means testing built in.

Active Travel

- 4.32 The Council needs to have due regard to the Welsh Government's Active Travel Action Plan for Wales and the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013. The action plan aims to address congestion and encourage people to walk and cycle more often. It is considered to be a world first. The Welsh Government estimates that one in five cars on the road at 8:50am on a weekday is doing the school run. Congestion in towns is therefore a serious issue. The Active Travel Action Plan sets out the actions that the Welsh Government and its partners will take to encourage more people to walk and cycle for more journeys. It is hoped that this will not only improve the health of our young people, but also improve the health and well-being of those who live and work in the area.

5. CONSULTATION EXERCISE

- 5.1 As previously reported to Cabinet it is important that the Council consults fully with the public, staff and other interested stakeholders on the proposed policy. Consultation feedback will need to feed into any decision about the proposed policy.
- 5.2 The financial pressures facing the Council are undoubtedly a very important part of the context. However, as part of the decision making process, Cabinet must take into account not only the Council's budgetary position, but also among other matters the Council's relevant statutory responsibilities and the responses received through consultation.
- 5.3 As noted at paragraph 3.8 of this report, on the 19th May 2015 Cabinet considered a proposed policy and agreed to initiate a public consultation on it.
- 5.4 The comprehensive consultation exercise in respect of the proposed policy ran for eight weeks during the period 2nd June – 5 p.m. 28th July 2015 (the 'Consultation').
- 5.5 The Consultation was conducted in-house. The Consultation process and materials were agreed by the Council's Corporate Management Team. The Consultation materials (including questionnaire) were considered to provide clear information in an appropriate and understandable format.
- 5.6 The Consultation materials were printed in house and the distribution of materials was undertaken by Council couriers. A comprehensive distribution of the Consultation materials was undertaken. In excess of 48,000 copies of

the Consultation booklet were distributed. A copy of the Consultation booklet, together with a covering letter, was sent to each household of every Primary and Secondary School Parent/Carer/Learner. All Year 11 and above learners were each sent individually addressed copies of the booklet. In addition copies of the materials were made available and obtainable from School and College reception areas, doctors surgeries, Council libraries, leisure centres, Communities First offices and One4All centres.

- 5.7 The Consultation was widely promoted in the press and via social media, including the Council's Twitter account. The Leader of the Council also took over the Council's Twitter account for an hour long session on 24th July. During that session residents and consultees were given the opportunity to ask the Leader any questions they had with regard to the proposed policy and give any feedback.
- 5.8 The Council held 17 engagement sessions in Schools across the County Borough affording the opportunity for consultees to discuss and share views on the proposed new policy. 3 sessions were also held at Colleges within the County Borough. Representatives from the Council's Integrated Transport Unit, Education, Consultation and Finance Departments were present at each session. Cabinet Members attended many of these events. School Councils, headteachers and school and college governors were also invited to submit their views on the proposed policy.
- 5.9 Three 'young persons' versions of the Consultation booklet were developed for primary and secondary schools. These were emailed to schools and the School Council leader/staff member asked to distribute amongst the School Council members so that the proposed policy could be discussed at their meetings and feedback forms completed. In total 16 School Council feedback forms were received.
- 5.10 Consultees were able to respond to the Consultation through various channels, including a dedicated Consultation email address, a freepost postal address, via a questionnaire/survey and providing feedback at the local engagement sessions.
- 5.11 Over 1500 responses to the Consultation were received in addition to several petitions and 'pre-completed' forms. A detailed report outlining the methodology used in analysing the responses and the results of the extensive Consultation is attached at Appendix 4. Attached as an appendix to that report Members will find a copy of the Consultation materials produced and which were available to consultees in respect of this proposed policy. The Consultation materials provided the detail of the alternative options that were considered as part of developing the preferred option and provided commentary on those alternatives to consultees.
- 5.12 Both the Council's Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee and Overview and Scrutiny Committee held special meetings during the Consultation period where Committee Members were given the opportunity to provide their views and feedback on the proposed policy. The minutes of

those meetings form an appendix to the Consultation report attached at Appendix 4.

- 5.13 As part of the Consultation specific feedback was requested from consultees in order to understand the potential impact of any decision(s) made with regard to the proposed policy and proposals, which had already been consulted upon, relating to changes to re-organise school (including sixth-form) provision in the Rhondda Valleys and Tonyrefail. On 19th May 2015 the results of the consultation initiated in relation to those proposals were reported to Cabinet and Cabinet took the decision to progress the proposals to the next stage of the review processes by issuing appropriate statutory notices.
- 5.14 Prior to this Cabinet meeting a facility was made available for Cabinet Members to view all responses received through the various channels as a result of the Consultation. This was done to ensure Cabinet gives due regard and conscientious consideration to all elements of the Consultation feedback and responses received. This approach also ensures Cabinet gains a comprehensive and genuine understanding of the wide range of views and opinions expressed by the consultees prior to making any decision.

6. DIVERSITY AND EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Prior to Cabinet initiating the Consultation an equality impact assessment 'pre-screening' exercise was undertaken in respect of the proposed new Home to School Transport Policy. This indicated that a full equality impact assessment should be completed and considered by Cabinet prior to any final decision being made in relation to the proposed policy, alongside and supported by the Consultation.
- 6.2 Cabinet Members will be fully aware and mindful of the general equality duty introduced by the Equality Act 2010 (the 'Equality Act') and the specific public sector equality duties applicable to the Council as a local authority in Wales.
- 6.3 Section 149 of the Equality Act (the Public Sector Equality Duty) requires public authorities to demonstrate in decision making that they have paid 'due regard' to the need to:
- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
 - advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and
 - foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 6.4 The relevant protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation. The Council must have due regard to the impact of the proposed policy on those with a protected characteristic. The Council has a specific duty to publish information to demonstrate how they have paid due regard to the aims above as part of their decision making. Undertaking an Equality Impact Assessment would be

evidence that the Council has considered its legal obligations in making any decision(s) on the recommendations in this report.

6.5 The Equality Act outlines that having due regard for advancing equality involves:

- removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics;
- taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people; or
- encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

6.6 In addition to the general duty the Council must:

- assess the likely impact of proposed policies and practices on its ability to comply with the general duty;
- assess the impact of any policy which is being reviewed and of any proposed revision;
- publish reports of the assessments where they show a substantial impact (or likely impact) on an authority's ability to meet the general duty; and
- monitor the impact of policies and practices on its ability to meet that duty.

6.7 In accordance with the Council's duties the EIA in respect of the proposed new Home to School Transport Policy, attached at Appendix 5 to this report, has been prepared alongside and supported by the Consultation responses.

6.8 The EIA and this report considers the potential impact of the policy in respect of the designated protected groups and the Welsh language and identifies any potential mitigation either in place or which could be put in place to limit any impact.

6.9 Members will be aware that the Welsh language has official status in Wales which means that the Welsh language should not be treated less favourably than the English language in Wales. This report and the EIA considers the potential impact of the proposed new policy on the Welsh language. Members should also have regard to the Council's WESP as annexed at Appendix 2.

6.10 Under the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010 the Council must: -

- (a) prepare and publish a strategy for contributing to the eradication of child poverty which the Council has done through the adoption of the Single Integrated Plan. Cabinet Members will, of course, be familiar with the content of this plan; and
- (b) take all reasonable steps to perform the actions and functions set out in the strategy for the eradication of child poverty. The actions and functions, and the steps the Council has taken and will take to perform them, are again set out in the Single Integrated Plan.

- 6.11 It is a priority of the Council, and its partner organisations of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Service Board, to engage with families who have any additional needs as early as possible to support them to make the most of family life and reach their full potential.
- 6.12 Consideration of the effect of the proposed policy as regards issues of child poverty and social deprivation are explored in this report and as part of the EIA.
- 6.13 The Council has also used as a basis for developing its priority of ensuring that the future generations of Rhondda Cynon Taf live in a safe, healthy and prosperous County Borough the shared set of rights for children and young people set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child. A link to a summary of these rights is provided below: -

[Summary of United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child](#)

- 6.14 In order to further assist Members and ensure compliance with the Council's duty the rights of children have been specifically considered in respect of the proposed new policy and this assessment forms part of the EIA.

7. CURRENT HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT POLICY

- 7.1 The Council currently provides Home to School transport for approximately 11,690 mainstream pupils¹ each day through the provision of more than 230 routes and the issue of public transport season tickets. Approximately 7,000 learners are transported on a discretionary basis. In addition the service provides transport for approximately 1,000 Special Educational Need ('SEN') pupils daily. The home to school transport budget for 2015/16 is £11.4m.
- 7.2 The Council's Learner Travel Policy is currently published in its annual Starting School Booklet.
- 7.3 The Council is currently exercising its discretionary powers (referred to in paragraphs 4.17 - 4.25 above) under the provisions of the Measure to make a more generous provision to learners. The comparison to the statutory requirements is shown below: -

Age during Academic Year	User	Statutory Requirement to Provide Free Transport	RCT Provision (as at August 2015)
3 – End of term in which child turns 5 ¹	Non-compulsory school age	No statutory provision (although duty to assess needs)	Free transport for pupils attending full time in line with the Council's admission arrangements if reside 1.5 miles or further safe walking distance to their catchment or nearest suitable school.

¹ As at September 2014

Age during Academic Year	User	Statutory Requirement to Provide Free Transport	RCT Provision (as at August 2015)
Term following 5 th Birthday – 11	Learner receiving compulsory primary education (English or Welsh Medium & SEN)	Reside 2 miles or further safe walking distance to their nearest suitable school	Free transport if reside 1.5 miles or further safe walking distance to their catchment or nearest suitable school.
12 – 16	Learner receiving compulsory secondary education (English or Welsh Medium & SEN)	Reside 3 miles or further safe walking distance to their nearest suitable school	Free transport if reside 2 miles or further safe walking distance to their catchment or nearest suitable school.
16+	Post-16 learners	No statutory provision (although duty to assess needs)	Free transport if reside 2 miles or further safe walking distance to their nearest suitable school or college at which the approved course of study they wish to follow is offered (full time attendance) – for 2 years after the end of compulsory education (or 3 years for those who have reached 19 but started a course when under 19 and continue to attend that course).
3 – 19	Learners selecting a school in accordance with their preferred religious denomination	No statutory provision – Measure does not require provision where learner selects a school that is not the nearest 'suitable school' (as the definition does not include voluntary aided (Faith) mainstream schools).	Allows learner to select their nearest 'suitable school' in accordance with their preferred religious denomination. Therefore distance provisions above apply.
3 – 19	Learners selecting a Welsh Medium School	Statutory provision is an issue of interpretation– Measure does not require provision where learner selects a school that is not the nearest 'suitable school'. However, WG interpretation is that transport should be provided in order to promote access to Welsh medium education.	Allows learner to select their nearest 'suitable school' in accordance with choice of English or Welsh Medium language. Therefore distance provisions above apply.

- 7.4 Based on a 'snapshot' review of other Welsh local authorities, the provision at Rhondda Cynon Taf compares favorably, and is in many cases, more generous than in other parts of Wales. The table below summarises an analysis of Home to School Transport provision using available information contained in each authority's starting school booklets for 2015/16 (note policies may have been subsequently updated and relevant information has been provided in this regard where possible):

Analysis of Free Home to School Provision in Other Welsh Local Authorities						
Authority	Nursery/ Reception (Age 3 - 5)	Primary Provision (Age 5 – 11)	Secondary Provision (Age 11–16)	Post-16 (Age 16+)	Faith School Provision (Age 3 – 19)	Welsh Medium Provision (Age 3 – 19)
RCT – Current Provision	>1.5 miles	>1.5 miles	>2 miles	>2 miles	Same as Primary & Secondary	Same as Primary & Secondary
Blaenau Gwent	>1.5 miles No provision for Nursery	>1.5 miles for Infants >2 miles for Primary	>2 miles	No direct provision but £150 grant provided. College subsidises local bus route for pupils at £2 per day (plus £150)	Same as Primary & Secondary. Post 16 allowed to travel at no cost if continuing education at same school	Same as Primary & Secondary. Post 16 allowed to travel at no cost if continuing education at same school
Bridgend - Current	>1.5 miles to local catchment area school.	>1.5 miles to local catchment area school.	>2 miles to local catchment area school.	>2 miles to local catchment area school.	Same distances as Primary & Secondary	Same distances as Primary & Secondary
Bridgend – Proposed Option Consulted Sep – Dec 2014	>2 miles to local catchment area school. Current pupils protected.	>2 miles to local catchment area school. Current pupils protected.	>3 miles to local catchment area school. Current pupils protected.	No free provision. £30k hardship fund set up.	Same distances as Primary & Secondary.	Same distances as Primary & Secondary.
Sale of surplus seats at full cost recovery. Estimated at £756.41 per primary school pupils and £646.98 per secondary school pupil.						
Caerphilly	No Provision	>1.5 miles to catchment area school or the nearest school.	>2 miles to catchment area school or the nearest school.	>2 Miles to catchment estab. / college or nearest place providing course.	Same distances as Primary & Secondary.	Same distances as Primary & Secondary.
Cardiff – Current	No Provision	>2 miles to nearest appropriate catchment area school.	>3 miles to nearest appropriate catchment area school.	>3 miles from nearest appropriate place of study and in receipt of full EMA.	Same distances as Primary & Secondary.	Same distances as Primary & Secondary.

Cardiff – Proposed Option to be consulted upon				Phased withdrawal of all free post-16 home to school transport with effect from 2016/17 academic year.		
Flintshire	>2 miles No provision for Nursery	>2 miles	>3 miles	>3 miles Only to nearest named place of education	Same as Primary & Secondary. Must prove faith to qualify	Same as Primary & Secondary
Merthyr Tydfil (revised policy with effect 1/09/15)	>2 miles to nearest or designated catchment area school.	>2 miles to nearest or designated catchment area school.	>3 miles to nearest or designated catchment area school.	>3 miles to nearest or designated catchment area school.	Same distances as Primary & Secondary	Same distances as Primary & Secondary
Monmouthshire	>1.5 miles No provision for Nursery	>1.5 miles	>2 miles	From September 2015 charge of £380. Means tested – could half	Same as Primary & Secondary	Same as Primary & Secondary
Neath Port Talbot	No Provision	>2 miles to nearest suitable or designated primary school.	>3 miles to nearest suitable or designated primary school.	Provided for students >3 miles at a charge of £100 pa.	No provision, unless school is nearest suitable school.	Same distances as Primary & Secondary.
Newport	No provision	>2 miles	>3 miles	No transport provided but £150 grant provided. Will sell seats on contracted bus for £497	Same as Primary & Secondary	Same as Primary & Secondary
Powys	>2 miles If in full time education	>2 miles	>3 miles	>3 miles	Same as Primary & Secondary	Same as Primary & Secondary
Swansea	No provision	>2 miles Escorts only provided where risk assessment requires	>3 miles	>3 miles	As a result of JR judgement same as Primary/ Secondary	Same as Primary & Secondary

Torfaen – New policy introduced for all new applications from 2015/16 academic year. Pupils given entitlement under old policy are protected.	>1.5 miles to catchment school. >2 miles from 2015/16.	> 1.5 miles (under 8) to catchment school >2 miles (8 and over). >2 miles from 2015/16.	>2 miles to catchment school >3 miles from 2015/16.	>2 miles and in receipt of certain benefits, else if >2 miles £146 grant is given. >3 miles and in receipt of certain benefits, else if >3 miles £146 grant is given from 2015/16.	Same distances as Primary & Secondary if child adheres to faith of school in question.	Same distances as Primary & Secondary.
Vale of Glamorgan	No Provision.	>2 miles to nearest or designated catchment area school.	>3 miles to nearest or designated catchment area school.	>3 miles	Same distances as Primary & Secondary.	Same distances as Primary & Secondary.
Wrexham	No provision	>2 miles	>3 miles	No provision from September 2016	Same as Primary & Secondary	Same as Primary & Secondary
Current provision information taken from the 'Starting School Booklet' for each Authority for the 2015-16 academic year or their current Home to School Transport policies.						

8. REVIEW OF SERVICE PROVISION - OPTIONS CONSIDERED

8.1 A number of options have been considered as part of this review². Details of each option were provided to consultees as part of the Consultation.

- A. **Status Quo** i.e. Retain the current level of provision – savings £nil.
- B. **Provide mainstream English, Welsh and Faith primary school transport above statutory distance only (>2 miles)** – savings £0.2m

Transport for all primary school pupils living between current discretionary distance of 1.5 miles and statutory distance of 2 miles would no longer be provided. Free transport for pupils living further than 2 miles away would continue, including where pupils attend Welsh or Faith schools as a result of parental/carer/learner preference.

² Savings figures based on pupil numbers and service usage as at September 2014

- C. **Provide mainstream English, Welsh and Faith secondary school and college transport above statutory distance only (>3 miles) – savings £0.8m**

Transport for all secondary school pupils living between current discretionary distance of 2 miles and statutory distance of 3 miles would no longer be provided. Free transport for pupils living further than 3 miles away would continue, including where pupils attend Welsh or Faith schools as a result of parental/carer/learner preference.

- D. **Removal of all pre-compulsory school age transport – savings £nil**

Transport would not be provided for any pupils younger than compulsory school age, regardless of distance travelled.

- E. **Removal of all mainstream English, Welsh and Faith school post-16 transport - savings £0.8m**

Transport would not be provided for any students older than compulsory school age, regardless of distance travelled.

- F. **Removal of all transport to primary Voluntary Aided (Faith) schools (where not closest suitable school) – savings £0.4m**

Transport would not be provided for any primary school pupils attending a Faith school as a result of parental/carer/learner choice, except where it is the nearest suitable school and is more than 2 miles safe walking distance away.

- G. **Removal of all transport to secondary Voluntary Aided (Faith) schools (where not closest suitable school) - savings £.0.7m**

Transport would not be provided for any secondary school pupils attending a Faith school as a result of parental/carer/learner choice, except where it is the nearest suitable school and is more than 3 miles safe walking distance away.

- H. **Removal of all transport to primary Welsh medium schools (where not closest suitable school) - savings £0.8m**

Transport would not be provided for any primary school pupils attending a Welsh school as a result of parental/carer/learner choice, except where it is the nearest suitable school and is more than 2 miles safe walking distance away.

- I. **Removal of all transport to secondary Welsh medium schools (where not closest suitable school) – savings £1.0m**

Transport would not be provided for any secondary school pupils attending a Welsh school as a result of parental/carer/learner choice,

except where it is the nearest suitable school and is more than 3 miles safe walking distance away.

J. Removal of all discretionary provision – savings £4.2m

In this option transport would no longer be provided for:

- i. Primary school pupils of compulsory school age attending an English medium school living between current discretionary distance of 1.5 miles and statutory distance of 2 miles;
- ii. Secondary school pupils of compulsory school age attending an English medium school living between current discretionary distance of 2 miles and statutory distance of 3 miles;
- iii. Pupils below compulsory school age;
- iv. Post 16 pupils;
- v. All Primary and Secondary school pupils attending a Welsh Medium or Faith school, except where it is the nearest suitable school and is more than the statutory safe walking distance away.

K. Removal of all discretionary provision except to Welsh schools – savings £2.6m

In this option transport would no longer be provided for:

- i. Primary school pupils of compulsory school age attending an English or Welsh medium school living between current discretionary distance of 1.5 miles and statutory distance of 2 miles;
- ii. Secondary school pupils of compulsory school age attending an English or Welsh medium school living between current discretionary distance of 2 miles and statutory distance of 3 miles;
- iii. Pupils below compulsory school age;
- iv. Post 16 pupils;
- v. All Primary and Secondary school pupils attending a Faith school, except where it is the nearest suitable school and is more than the statutory safe walking distance away.

L. Introduce a charge towards the discretionary elements of the Council's Home to School Transport provision – savings £2.3m.

In this option, transport would continue to be provided at current levels, but a charge would be made towards the discretionary elements identified in option K.

Note: - Combining options would not necessarily deliver the sum of the individual savings due to the potential for double counting e.g. a Faith School Student, living 2-3 miles from school and undertaking post 16 studies may appear in three different options.

- 8.2 An analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of each option, including the impact on pupil numbers as at September 2014, is shown at Appendix 6 to this report.
- 8.3 The proposed preferred option is L being the introduction of a charge towards the discretionary elements of the Council's Home to School Transport provision. The proposed charge would be £1.75 per day. It is considered that this level of charge would be fair and reasonable for the reasons outlined below. It is this option which Cabinet initiated the Consultation upon.
- 8.4 The proposed preferred option would deliver savings (income) to the Council relative to the level of charging. It is anticipated that a charge equivalent to £1.75 per day (£8.75 per week or £332.50 per year) would reduce the council's subsidy by £2.3m.
- 8.5 Option L would continue to offer transport in excess of the statutory minimum and would provide a continued service to pupils and students within the current discretionary limits. Whereas with removal of discretionary transport full annual savings would not be achievable until 2023/24, charging £1.75 per day towards discretionary provision would achieve a similar level of savings, and these would be realised in a much shorter timescale. The Council would still be subsidising the service at this level.
- 8.6 Furthermore, Option L meets the requirements of the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 including the promotion of access to Welsh medium education and training. This is discussed in further detail below.
- 8.7 If implemented this option would deliver savings (income) of £2.3m per year, which would be fully realised by the 2017/18 financial year. The part-year savings for 2016/17 would be £1.4m.
- 8.8 **Implementation of Option L would mean there would not be any removal of the discretionary elements of the Council's current Home to School Transport provision. This would not be the case should any of the other options B – K above (or combination of them) be preferred.**

9. PROPOSED NEW HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT POLICY

- 9.1 Whilst the Council has chosen to make use of its powers to provide discretionary transport arrangements, it also has the power to remove or make a charge for this provision at a later date.
- 9.2 In doing so the Council should follow the correct procedures in line with its relevant policy protocols.
- 9.3 If the Council does decide to change or remove the discretionary transport provision it provides, it must publish the information before 1 October of the year preceding the academic year in which the changes would come into force.

- 9.4 Therefore, subject to the outcome of the Consultation and Cabinet approval, it is proposed that the new policy would be **implemented from the start of the 2016 - 2017 academic year** and published prior to 1st October 2015.

Proposed New Policy – Statutory Distances, Post 16 & Faith/Welsh Medium Education Schools

- 9.5 The Council's **current distance eligibility criteria** for Home to School Transport as set out in the table at paragraph 7.3 above **would continue to apply** and the Council would therefore provide discretionary transport provision in excess of the current minimum statutory requirement. However **discretionary elements of provision would become a chargeable but still subsidised service** as set out in the table below:-

Age during Academic Year	User	Statutory Requirement to Provide Free Transport	Proposed changes to RCT Mainstream Transport Provision from September 2016
3 – End of term in which child turns 5 ¹	Non-compulsory school age, learner selecting education through English or Welsh medium.	No statutory provision (although duty to assess needs)	Continue to provide transport at current discretionary distances for pupils at the beginning and end of the normal school day, and not at lunchtimes but introduce a charge for all pupils choosing to travel on Council funded school transport who reside 1.5 - 2 miles safe walking distance to their catchment or nearest suitable school.
Term following 5 th Birthday – 11	Learner receiving compulsory primary education, learner selecting education through English or Welsh medium.	Reside 2 miles or further safe walking distance to their nearest suitable school	Continue to provide transport at current discretionary distances but introduce a charge for all pupils choosing to travel on Council funded school transport who reside 1.5 – 2 miles safe walking distance to their catchment or nearest suitable school.
12 – 16	Learner receiving compulsory secondary education, learner selecting education through English or Welsh medium.	Reside 3 miles or further safe walking distance to their nearest suitable school	Continue to provide transport at current discretionary distances but introduce a charge for all pupils choosing to travel on Council funded school transport who reside 2 - 3 miles safe walking distance to their catchment or nearest suitable school.
16+	Post-16 learners, learner selecting education through English or Welsh medium.	No statutory provision (although duty to assess needs)	Continue to provide transport at current discretionary distances but introduce a charge for all pupils choosing to travel on Council funded

Age during Academic Year	User	Statutory Requirement to Provide Transport	to Free Provision from September 2016
			school transport who reside 2 miles or further safe walking distance to their catchment or nearest suitable school or college.
3 - 19 ¹	Learners selecting a school in accordance with their preferred religious denomination	No statutory provision – Measure does not require provision where learner selects a school that is not the nearest 'suitable school' (as the definition does not include voluntary aided (Faith) mainstream schools).	Continue to provide transport at current discretionary distances but introduce a charge for all pupils choosing to travel on Council funded school transport who reside beyond ² ; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.5 miles for 3-11 year olds (primary) attending full time in line with the Council's admission arrangements. • 2 miles for 11-19 year olds (secondary).

¹ Members should note that the Cabinet decision of February 2015 to amend funding for nursery provision confirmed that eligible pupils would be transported in line with the Council's current Learner Travel Policy i.e. at the beginning and end of the school day and not at lunchtimes.

² Where the voluntary aided (Faith) school is the nearest suitable school then the Council's policy for non-denominational schools would apply.

9.6 Learners would continue to be able to select their nearest 'suitable school' in accordance with choice of English or Welsh Medium language or preferred religious denomination. In respect of Welsh Medium education schools it is considered the proposed policy would continue to assist the Council in achieving the outcomes set out in its WESP as appended at Appendix 2. This is discussed in further detail below.

9.7 The same age and distance criteria apply to 'looked after' children as to children who are not looked after. If the Council determines that a looked after child should attend a school other than the nearest suitable school then transport would be provided upon request by the child's social worker in accordance with the Council's agreed policy on walking distance and safe routes.

9.8 Pupils of compulsory school age and living beyond statutory distances attending their nearest or catchment school by choice of language would continue to have the benefit of free transport.

9.9 Whilst pupils with statements of SEN are assessed by distance criteria, in practice SEN pupils would not be affected by this proposed policy change as their transport is based upon their individual need. The discretionary elements

of SEN transport (pre-school, post 16, etc.) would continue as an entirely subsidised, non-charged service.

- 9.10 Pupils who do not qualify for free or subsidised transport would have the opportunity to purchase spare seats on school transport, subject to availability, charged at the equivalent rate to those having the benefit of discretionary transport provision.

DETAILS OF PROPOSED CHARGE

- 9.11 It is proposed to introduce a **subsidised charge** towards the discretionary elements of Home to School transport provision as set out in paragraph 9.5 above. This charge would be £1.75 per day per pupil, which equates to £8.75 per week (**approximately £111 per term and £332.50 per year**).
- 9.12 The proposed £1.75 charge would be applied consistently across the County Borough, regardless of the distance travelled to school, and would ensure that pupils who are currently receiving discretionary transport and who are travelling longer distances are not treated differently from those who live just over the discretionary mileage threshold. Its level has been determined having taken into account the following:-
- The cost of the alternative, available, public transport service. Due to the range of distances travelled by pupils across the County Borough, particularly by pupils attending Faith schools, the cost of alternative provision can vary significantly. An analysis of a number of possible routes has shown that ticket prices on public transport could range from £1.20 to £5.00 per day. Note – Public transport may not provide direct routes and may require pupils to walk for part of the journey and/or use more than one transport link. Weekly ticket prices, where available, would be lower.
 - The cost of transporting pupils by car. The AA publish an annual estimate of the costs of owning a car. In 2014 the average running cost, excluding standing charges such as tax, insurance etc., was estimated to be around 21p per mile. For primary age pupils living just under the 2 mile statutory distance the daily running cost would be £1.67 (assuming 2 return journeys per day). For secondary school pupils living just under the 3 mile statutory distance it would be £2.52. Pupils not attending their nearest suitable school can travel far in excess of these distances, meaning that the daily cost would be much higher.
 - The ongoing provision of a subsidy. The Council is not seeking to recover the full cost of the transport provided under the charging option. Based on estimates of the on-going costs, the discretionary service would continue to be operated with a subsidy of approximately £0.3m per year.
- 9.13 Some of the implementation issues associated with this proposed policy include:-

- Transport requirements would need to be determined in advance of the next academic year by parents. That is, parents would need to decide whether or not they wish to pay the required charge to enable their child to use Home to School Transport in advance of the relevant academic year;
 - Payment would be monthly, termly or annually (no ability to pay on the day/on the bus/through the school);
 - Subject to the above, transport would be guaranteed for all existing pupils and any of the new intake who wish to take advantage of the proposed discretionary chargeable provision.
- 9.14 Legal advice received has indicated that should the Council introduce a charge as part of its discretionary travel arrangements in order to ensure that any such charge is fair and reasonable there should be an element of means testing built in.
- 9.15 Officers consider that the introduction of an assessment of a parent's ability to pay the proposed charge towards the discretionary elements of Home to School Transport provision should therefore be introduced and be based on Free School Meal entitlement and subsequent 'take up'.
- 9.16 In overall terms, 24% of primary and secondary school pupils receive Free School Meals which would equate to approximately 987 pupils up to Year 11 and 753 post 16 students travelling on discretionary transport as at September 2014. Allowing pupils in receipt of Free School Meals (excluding post 16 pupils who receive assistance, where appropriate, through the Education Maintenance Allowance) to travel by way of a further subsidy would however reduce the savings (income) generated. Based on this assessment there are a number of charging options available if those children in receipt of Free School Meals were provided with free or reduced price travel. These options are detailed in the table set out in paragraph 9.17 below.
- 9.17 The first table shows the range of possible daily charges that could be introduced (assuming no allowance for Free School Meals) alongside annual income, and a second table showing the range of possible charges but including an adjustment for Free School Meals Pupils at various rates.

Daily Charge	Annual Income £'000
1.00	1,289
1.25	1,611
1.50	1,933
1.75	2,256
2.00	2,578
2.25	2,900
2.50	3,223

Full Daily Charge	Total Income (£'000) at FSM Charge of:										
	£0.00	£0.25	£0.50	£0.75	£1.00	£1.25	£1.50	£1.75	£2.00	£2.25	£2.50
£1.00	1,111	1,155	1,200	1,244	1,289	-	-	-	-	-	-
£1.25	1,388	1,433	1,478	1,522	1,567	1,611	-	-	-	-	-
£1.50	1,666	1,711	1,755	1,800	1,844	1,889	1,933	-	-	-	-
£1.75	1,944	1,988	2,033	2,077	2,122	2,167	2,211	2,256	-	-	-
£2.00	2,221	2,266	2,311	2,355	2,400	2,444	2,489	2,533	2,578	-	-
£2.25	2,499	2,544	2,588	2,633	2,677	2,722	2,766	2,811	2,856	2,900	-
£2.50	2,777	2,821	2,866	2,910	2,955	3,000	3,044	3,089	3,133	3,178	3,223

9.18 Members took the decision to initiate the Consultation on the basis of a proposed daily charge of £1.75 per day or £1.00 per day for Free School Meal pupils. A further concession could be made to cap the charges for families with more than one child travelling on school transport and Cabinet agreed to consult on the basis of a cap on the proposed charges payable for families with more than two children using Home to School Transport be introduced.

9.19 The table below, repeated from the May Cabinet report, sets out an estimate of the family sizes of pupils entitled to discretionary Home to School transport as at September 2014. It is based on the family size profile of all pupils transported (statutory and discretionary), and therefore does not reflect the actual number of families affected. A cap on charges would be granted to families following an application by the parent/guardian, and therefore the numbers eligible would only be known following implementation of any new policy.

Number of Children in Family	Number of Families
1	3,927
2	1,244
3	208
4	23
5	2

9.20 An estimate of the impact on income as a result of this concession is given below:

Max Children Charged	Income @ £1.75 Per Pupil £'000	Reduction to Uncapped Income £'000
No Cap	2,256	0
4	2,255	1
3	2,247	9
2	2,174	82
1	1,707	549

The table above assumes no reduction in the charge as a result of means-testing. The total income receivable would depend upon the level of concession given. For illustrative purposes, a standard charge of £1.75 per pupil per day and £1.25 per Free School Meal pupil with a cap of not charging families for more than 2 children travelling on a discretionary service would give total income of £2.09m.

- 9.21 For Members' further consideration attached at Appendix 8 to this report are two additional tables. The first table shows a range of possible daily charges that could be introduced (assuming no allowance for Free School Meals) in increments of 5 pence rather than 25 pence (up to the proposed daily charge of £1.75 consulted upon), and a second table showing the same range of possible charges alongside annual income but including an adjustment for pupils in receipt of Free School Meals.

Post-16 Transport

- 9.22 The Council's current policy is that learners who meet the 2-mile distance eligibility criterion in respect of secondary education learners of statutory school age, and who enroll for approved study courses within the appropriate 14-19 area timetabled provision, are eligible for free transport. The area timetabled provision excludes higher education courses.
- 9.23 The policy covers school 6th form and college further education courses only and does not extend to higher education courses funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW). (The one year Foundation Art & Design course at the University of South Wales is not funded by HEFCW and transport may be provided to learners pursuing this course subject to the age and distance criteria set out above).
- 9.24 Transport provision may be made for learners pursuing approved full time educational programmes out of county, primarily in Bridgend, Merthyr Tydfil, Neath Port Talbot and Caerphilly.
- 9.25 Learners within the 2-mile distance are expected to make their own travel arrangements.
- 9.26 Learners who wish to pursue a study course other than within their area timetabled provision are responsible for their own transport arrangements, except where the location at which the course is available is closer to the learner's home than the school or college offering the area timetabled provision.
- 9.27 No transport is provided for mainstream learners beyond the second academic year after the end of compulsory education (or 3 years for those who have reached 19 but started a course when under 19 and continue to attend that course).

- 9.28 If the Council uses its discretionary travel arrangements for learners not entitled to free transport provision, a charge can be made towards these arrangements.
- 9.29 The proposed policy introduces a charge for all post 16 students eligible through the existing distance eligibility criteria to the nearest appropriate school except for those students who still have a statement of special educational needs. This proposal would apply to English medium, Welsh medium and Voluntary Aided (Faith) provision.
- 9.30 **The proposed charge would be £1.75 per day per pupil.**
- 9.31 The proposed policy would help towards keeping post 16 students in education (as opposed to a removal of transport altogether).
- 9.32 The consequent full-year savings (income) of introducing the proposed policy as consulted upon would be £2.048M (£1.280M part-year effect in 2016/17).

10. ANALYSIS OF KEY THEMES ARISING FROM THE CONSULTATION AND ISSUES TO BE CONSIDERED PRIOR TO ANY FINAL DECISION BEING MADE IN RESPECT OF THE PROPOSED NEW HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT POLICY

- 10.1 In the May Cabinet report officers identified a non-exhaustive, list of issues that could arise as a result of the proposed policy being implemented. These have been investigated in parallel with, and supported by the results of, the Consultation. This section and section 11 of the report also highlights to Members the key themes and feedback that arose from the Consultation and must be read in conjunction with the Consultation report and EIA found at Appendices 4 and 5 respectively. It is designed to assist Cabinet with any decision it may subsequently take with regards to implementation of the proposed new Home to School Transport Policy.
- 10.2 The key themes identified through the Consultation included:-
- **Financial Impact i.e.**
 - There should be no charge as school transport is a right and should be provided by the Local Authority.
 - Families will suffer financially / an additional cost to parents.
 - The proposed charge is too high / unreasonable.
 - Cannot afford the charge.
 - Impact on working families.
 - Working families adversely affected.
 - The poorest would suffer the most.
 - Financial circumstances may change during the year.
 - There would be an issue committing to transport for a full school year.
 - Would affect ability to work.

- **School Attendance / Achievement Impact i.e.**
 - School attendance would suffer.
 - Pupil / parent choice would be restricted.
 - Would discourage people from continuing education.
 - Educational achievement would suffer.
 - Would have to change schools.
- **Discrimination i.e.**
 - The proposal is discriminatory against Faith Schools.
 - Could impact long term viability of Faith schools.
 - All discretionary transport school be treated the same.
 - Could no longer go to Faith/Welsh school.
 - The proposal is discriminatory against Welsh Schools.
 - Could impact long term viability of Welsh schools.
 - The policy discriminates on racial grounds.
- **Impact on Welsh Language/Welsh Education standards**
- **Other main themes i.e.**
 - Safety issues.
 - The Council should find cuts elsewhere.

Financial Impact/Affordability

- 10.3 One of the main themes arising from the Consultation in relation to parents and carers was around the affordability of the proposed charge which equates to £8.75 per week and approximately £111 per term and £332.50 per year or £190 per year for pupils receiving Free School Meals.
- 10.4 The affordability of public transport was also raised during the Consultation. This was in the context that, for young people entering further education, public transport may be the better option as many learners would not be required to attend school/college every day for the purposes of their course. Therefore, paying for Home to School Transport for a whole year was seen as prohibitive. These respondents felt that public transport costs were very high, and therefore, this might prove unaffordable and discourage learners from attending further education and the number of children and young people not in education, employment or training could increase.
- 10.5 As noted earlier in the report in proposing this level of charge, officers tried to mitigate the impact of the proposed policy by taking into account public transport costs, the cost of transporting pupils by car and the ongoing provision of a subsidy provided by the Council. An analysis of possible routes has shown that tickets prices on public transport could range from £1.20 to £5.00 per day (weekly tickets, where available, were more cost effective). The public transport routes are also not always direct and could require learners to walk for part of their journey or use more than one service.
- 10.6 Learners over the age of 16 can also apply to receive Education Maintenance Allowance (or EMA). In 2013/14, 2,446 students received EMA in Rhondda

Cynon Taf. This is an income-assessed payment of £30 per week to help students with the cost of further education. It aims to provide young people with an incentive to earn reward through good attendance and agreed objectives. Students could use part of their EMA to pay for public transport or Home to School Transport provision. As suggested by a recent evaluation of the scheme, learners use the allowance to cover personal expenses such as food, equipment, clothing, transport and college trips or educational visits. The evaluation suggests that up to 50% of learners in Wales are eligible.

- 10.7 Recently Welsh Government announced the Welsh Young Persons Discounted Travel Scheme. This scheme is funded by the Welsh Government and has been developed in partnership with the bus industry and the local authorities. It seeks to help 16-18 year olds to travel more cheaply on public transport journeys to and from training and employment. Those who apply to join the new scheme will be able to receive one third discount on adult fares on all local buses throughout Wales from 1 September 2015. The discount does not apply to travel on contracted schools transport or such transport organised by Councils for post 16 education.
- 10.8 All passes purchased by the Council for use by its post 16 entitled students on the public bus routes in lieu of contracted transport are already secured at a discounted rate of one third or better and would continue to be so. The proposed charge for discretionary transport has been determined having taking into account the cost of the alternative, available, public transport service for 5 to 15 year olds. It should also be noted that the proposed charges for post 16 transport are already lower than 16-18 year olds may pay for a similar public transport journey via the new young persons discounted travel scheme. For those post 16 students who only attend education establishments for part of the week this initiative would reduce daily public transport costs by one third.
- 10.9 There is also an element of the proposed policy that includes an assessment of a parent's ability to pay the proposed charge, based on their child(ren) being in receipt of Free School Meals. Young people who receive the benefits/support payments in their own right may also be eligible. It is important that pupils who may receive transport through payment of a reduced/means-tested charge are not identified or stigmatised as such, for example, through being eligible to receive Free School Meals. Officers would therefore introduce a method of issuing bus passes which would avoid this situation arising.
- 10.10 Greater take up of Free School Meals whilst helping those families in greatest need would also generate additional income from the Welsh Government under the Revenue Support Grant formula. This could further assist in improving provision for children. Officers would therefore propose clearly signposting within any revised policy links to information about Free School Meals, and where parents can apply, in order to encourage greater take up.
- 10.11 Many of the parents/carers consulted felt that the proposed £1.75 per day charge was too high/unreasonable. Whereas others felt that they would not be able to afford a charge at all. Many of the respondents put forward that a

£1.00 charge for parents/carers whose child(ren) do receive Free School Meals would also be unaffordable for those families on low incomes/benefit support.

- 10.12 Conversely, many people responded to the Consultation that families should be treated equally, regardless of whether children receive Free School Meals. This was a recurring theme within the Consultation results around levels of charging and the impact on 'working families', who currently do not qualify for Free School Meals but have a low income. Several responses stated that any charging policy would force these families into poverty, due to the household being ineligible for any other help.
- 10.13 The EIA found it is also likely that any charges introduced would impact on groups of the population who are generally more likely to be in poverty, such as families with disabled parents/carers. For instance, 21% of children in families with at least one disabled member are in poverty, a significantly higher proportion than the 16% of children in families with no disabled member. In Wales, 26% of people living in a household with at least one disabled adult have a low income, compared to 21% of people living in a household with no disabled adult. Other minority groups, such as Black and Ethnic Minority households, are also more likely to be in poverty (with an income of less than 60 per cent of the median household income) than white British people.
- 10.14 The proposed policy includes mitigation around affordability, with the assessment of affordability proposed for those families where the child(ren) is in receipt of Free School Meals and a proposed cap on families with more than two children in receipt of Home to School Transport. However, should the proposed policy be agreed, the EIA suggests officers should continue to monitor the complaints and appeals process around any Home to School Transport charging policy to mitigate any potential negative impact on families.
- 10.15 Other local authorities have introduced 'hardship funds' e.g. Leicestershire County Council and Cumbria County Council, which aim to support low income families in meeting the costs of home to school transport. Cabinet could consider the introduction of such a scheme, which could be used in exceptional circumstances.
- 10.16 Cabinet should consider how parents/carers will be charged and will be able to pay for the provision, which could help some families in budgeting for expenditure. Appropriate signposting should also be in place, such as to the local Credit Union (who are a non-profit making organisation and can assist in setting up bank accounts and saving plans).
- 10.17 Cabinet should also take into account the cumulative impact of service change proposals on particular groups of the population. Parents/carers were impacted by changes to nursery admissions, approved by Cabinet on the 12th February 2015. The relevant Equality Impact Assessment found that the proposals (as they then were) on nursery admissions could have a negative

impact on parents' ability to work full-time and the affordability of childcare was raised as a potential issue.

Other Operational Issues relating to charging

10.18 Payment arrangements for learners accessing discretionary transport services;

Learners would be invited to apply for discretionary transport services via online applications which would be tailored to facilitate and encourage direct debit payments in order to minimise cash handling. The Council offers a range of payment channels for the various services it delivers. It is acknowledged that it would not be appropriate to restrict potential methods of payment solely for school transport and therefore established payment channels would be available.

10.19 There are practical considerations regarding Free School Meals entitlement and charging. Recipients of Free School Meals would be eligible for reduced charges for school transport. However, of the order of 120 changes to entitlement for Free School Meals arises every day. It is therefore anticipated that entitlement would be checked to inform the initial charge and this would be adjusted on a termly basis to reflect entitlement across the term based on the number of days of actual entitlement.

10.20 Changes of Circumstances (e.g. house moves/school moves); the Integrated Transport Unit is advised of such changes by the schools and transport provision is adjusted to accommodate changes. Charging would also be adjusted to reflect changes in eligibility and discretionary arrangements.

10.21 Consultation responses highlighted a potential demand for pupils to be able to travel and pay for transport one-way only rather than a return journey – either to school in the morning or home in the afternoon, or for part of the week. Officers would propose that it is not practicable to accommodate this option in any changes to discretionary provision for the following reasons;

- Additional administrative costs
- Necessary savings would not be achieved and would lead to other service changes
- Complexity and inefficiency of transport arrangements
- Difficulty in matching transport provision with demand
- Difficulty in managing access to vehicles creating potential overcrowding and safety issues.

10.22 In the case where inclement weather results in sustained periods where it is not possible to provide school transport, Officers would propose that periods of greater than 3 days consecutive cancellations would be refundable as a credit against future bills.

10.23 In the case where Year 11 and Year 13 pupils are sitting exams and attendance in the summer term is minimal and for part of the day, Officers

would propose that pupils would have the flexibility to apply for transport for two terms only and opt out of transport for the summer term.

Potential impact on attendance and achievement

- 10.24 Through the Consultation, many parents/carers expressed concern that the proposed policy could discourage or inhibit some children and young people from attending school, due to their parents/carers being unable to afford the charge or refusing to pay for transport within the discretionary distances. This would mean pupils affected would need to find an alternative way to get to school, such as on foot/cycling, in a car or on public transport. Consultation respondents felt that children and young people could not be expected to walk the distances outlined in the proposed policy and/or could not be relied upon to attend school without the provision of free transport.
- 10.25 It was also stated that some parents/carers may find it difficult to transport children and young people by car, because they may not own a vehicle or have work commitments during the school drop-off and pick-up times.
- 10.26 In addition, Consultation respondents felt that the public transport provision and cost was prohibitive to pupils travelling to school on a public bus.
- 10.27 Therefore, overall, parents/carers disagreed with the proposed policy on the grounds that it could have a negative impact on the attendance of children and young people, which would be likely to have a negative affect on pupil achievement.
- 10.28 Parents, or anyone with parental responsibility, have a legal duty to ensure their child of compulsory school age attends school. Failure to do so can result in penalty notices and even prosecution. However, Consultation respondents stated that the proposed policy made it more likely that some children and young people not using the Home to School Transport provision would be expected to walk or cycle to school independently of their parents and, therefore, would be more likely to truant.
- 10.29 In assessing the possible impact of the proposed changes on attendance, the attendance data for other Local Authorities, with differing Home to School Transport arrangements, has been studied.
- 10.30 The most recent data (2013/14) states that average attendance in both primary and secondary schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf has been improving since 2011/12. The most recent data states that the average attendance in primary schools was 93% and the average attendance in secondary schools was 92%.
- 10.31 In Newport, pupils of compulsory school age in primary school receive free transport if they live over 2 miles away from their nearest suitable school (in comparison to the current arrangement in Rhondda Cynon Taf of 1.5 miles). The average attendance rate in primary schools in Newport is 93%; the same as Rhondda Cynon Taf.

- 10.32 Similarly, in Neath Port Talbot, pupils of compulsory school age in secondary school receive free transport if they live over 3 miles away from their nearest suitable school (in comparison to the current arrangement in Rhondda Cynon Taf of 2 miles). The average attendance rate in secondary schools in Neath Port Talbot is 93% for 2013/14, slightly better than in Rhondda Cynon Taf.
- 10.33 Although no comparison can be made to other Local Authorities that charge for discretionary transport provision, the attendance data would suggest that provision of free transport within 1.5-2 miles for primary schools and 2-3 miles for secondary schools (as is currently the case in Rhondda Cynon Taf) has little impact on attendance.
- 10.34 However, it should be noted that every Local Authority is different, with varying levels of public transport provision and car ownership, perhaps enabling children and young people to be transported to school by other means. Overall, car ownership in Rhondda Cynon Taf is relatively low: 27.1% of households do not own a car or van. This is in comparison to 27.9% in Newport and 25.5% in Neath Port Talbot.
- 10.35 During the Consultation in Rhondda Cynon Taf on the proposed policy, 45% of respondents said they would stop using the service if a charge of £1.75 per day was introduced. Of the respondents who said they would stop using the service, 52% said that they/their child would travel to school by car in future and 23% said they/their child would walk. 13% said they would travel by public bus.
- 10.36 Under the Welsh Government Active Travel (Wales) Act (2013), the Local Authority has a duty to promote walking and cycling. The aim of the legislation is to reduce congestion and the impact on the environment, as well as improve the health and wellbeing of the population. This proposed policy complements such legislation, as it could lead to more children and young people walking/cycling the distance (or part-way) to school which could have a positive impact on health and wellbeing. It has been raised that children and young people travelling to a Faith School or a sixth form provision would find it more difficult to walk, cycle or take public transport as an alternative to Home to School Transport, as the school/college they attend is likely to be further away than if they attended their nearest suitable school. Although the area is well served by public transport, this does not account for the distance from a learner's home to a bus stop or the bus changes that some learners would need to take if the proposed policy is agreed and they did not wish to take up Home to School transport provision.
- 10.37 Public transport provision could provide an alternative to Home to School Transport provision or transportation by car, walking or cycling. Many of the secondary schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf are situated in close proximity to a bus stop, with regular bus services. Should the proposed policy be agreed, commercial bus providers may also respond to possible increased demand for public transport and provide more regular services and alternative routes.

- 10.38 Although raised as a concern, this assessment would suggest that the likely impact on attendance rates due to the proposed policy is quite low. The EIA identified that as a mitigating action if the proposed policy be implemented, officers should continue to monitor attendance on a school level to ensure that any potential negative affect of the proposed policy is identified and arrangements put in place to improve the pupil's attendance.
- 10.39 It is also considered that the reduction in the proposed charge payable by Free School Meal pupils and/or introduction of suitable payment arrangements and/or the creation of and access to a Hardship Fund, as described above, would assist those parents/learners with payment of the charge and consequently help mitigate against any impact on attendance levels.

Potential impact on children and young people that are absent from school.

- 10.40 A group has been identified through Consultation that would potentially be negatively impacted by the proposed policy are those children and young people who do not attend school full-time. This did not relate to pre-compulsory school age children, such as those children in nursery provision; but to the group of pupils that may need to take authorised absence for reasons such as being a young carer or attending regular hospital appointments for a long-term health condition.
- 10.41 Young carers are young people under the age of 25 years old that take responsibility for someone who is ill, disabled, elderly, experiencing mental distress or affected by substance use, or has *substantial* responsibility for caring for a sibling. They may be providing all of the care or helping someone else provide care. According to the Census (2011), there are 2,509 young carers in Rhondda Cynon Taf. However, the true figure is likely to be higher due to young people not identifying themselves as a 'carer'.
- 10.42 Consultation respondents identified this group as being impacted, due to the proposed policy that parents/carers will need to state at the beginning of the school year whether they would like to take up Home to School Transport provision, and would be charged for the provision for the whole year. Respondents felt that this was unfair, given that some pupils have authorised reasons why they cannot attend school on certain days.
- 10.43 The EIA suggests in order to alleviate this, the introduction of an application process could be considered that would allow households in exceptional circumstances to provide evidence as to why they needed further support with the proposed charge of Home to School Transport provision.

Potential impact on further education and future job prospects.

- 10.44 Consultation respondents raised concerns that 16-19 year olds, in particular, could be negatively impacted by the proposed policy due to the potential introduction of a charge for young people attending further education travelling

on Home to School Transport. The proposed policy would impact on all young people using home to school transport provision that lived 2 or more miles from their nearest suitable school or college. Using current figures, this would be approximately 3,000 young people.

- 10.45 It was felt that the proposed policy could discourage learners from progressing to further education and this could, in turn, impact on their future job prospects. Respondents raised that, as the population of Rhondda Cynon Taf has a lower level of qualifications than in other areas, this would have a detrimental impact on the economic growth of the area.
- 10.46 In addition, the Consultation evidence suggests that less learners would choose to attend a Welsh language sixth form provision, as they may be able to walk to their nearest English language sixth form provision, whereas Welsh medium schools are more geographically dispersed across the County Borough. Respondents suggest that this would mean more pupils would either transfer to an English medium school (nearer their home) or drop out of further education.
- 10.47 However, there is no statutory duty to provide transport to learners over the age of 16 years old to English or Welsh schools or colleges. Therefore, in this sense, the proposed policy would partly mitigate against this as it is above the minimum requirement by continuing to provide a service with a proposed charge of £1.75 per day. If learners choose to use Home to School Transport provision to get to sixth form, the charge would be the same whether they are attending an English medium school, Welsh medium school or Further Education institution, regardless of distance travelled. This demonstrates the Council would be promoting education through the medium of Welsh and promoting learner choice.
- 10.48 Some learners over the age of 16 are entitled to Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA), an income-assessed payment of £30 per week to help students with the cost of further education. It aims to provide young people with an incentive to earn reward through good attendance and agreed objectives. Although the EMA scheme does not make any allowances for the cost of travel to school or college, a recent evaluation of the EMA scheme found that many students use their allowance to fund their transport. In 2013/14, 2,446 students received EMA in Rhondda Cynon Taf and, in some areas of the County Borough, up to 75% of learners are eligible. Students could, therefore, use part of their EMA to pay for public transport or Home to School Transport provision.
- 10.49 The Welsh Government have recently launched a 'Welsh Young Persons Discounted Travel' scheme to help young people, aged 16-18 years old, to afford travel on local buses and 'TrawsCymru' journeys from 1st September. Should young people attending college or school choose not to use Council Home to School Transport provision, this scheme will help 16-18 year olds afford public transport provision.

- 10.50 Although there is no data available, it can also be assumed that a number of learners in further education would use a personal vehicle to get to school or college. Anecdotally, a number of learners in post-16 education use mopeds or cars to travel to school or college.
- 10.51 With regards to the impact on Welsh language provision: if the full age range of the school population is taken into account (3-18 years old), under the proposed policy 12.5% (852) of the Welsh medium pupils would be charged compared to 8.9% (2,478) of the English medium pupils (excluding pupils in Faith Schools). Of those pupils that would be eligible for free home to school transport, 2,762 (40.7%) of the Welsh medium pupils would have free transport compared to 1,997 (8.6%) of the English medium pupils (excluding pupils in Faith Schools).

Note: the figures for English medium education above also exclude the 1,680 pupils in Further Education institutions who would also have to make a contribution to the travel costs.

- 10.52 If the proposed policy is agreed, the EIA suggests that officers should continue to monitor the number of young people progressing to further education and investigate any decline in figures.

Potential impact on pupil choice

- 10.53 With particular reference to parents/carers of pupils attending schools because of denominational preference (Faith Schools) or because of preference for the Welsh language, there was opposition to the proposed policy on the grounds of pupil (and parental) choice. As this potential impact relates to other protected characteristic groups, it is explored further below.
- 10.54 Respondents stated that pupil choice could also be adversely impacted where a young person was deciding to attend their nearest suitable school or a sixth form/college to continue their education post 16.
- 10.55 Another common theme was around the impact and affordability of the proposed policy in a situation where a child or children are living in dual households i.e. splitting their week between each parent/carer's household.
- 10.56 Section 19 of the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure (2008) sets out the Local Authority's duties around 'ordinary residence' of a child. The term 'dual residence' is used to describe a learner whose parents are not living together, with the learner living partly with each parent, or with a parent and other carer, foster placement or other arrangement. Where a learner lives at more than two such places, the two places nearest to their school would qualify.
- 10.57 This translates in practice to the Local Authority having a duty to provide free transport for learners (of dual residence) to their nearest suitable school if the learner is of compulsory school age and the residence(s) meet the statutory distance criteria. If the statutory distance criteria is not met, then the Local Authority still has the option of providing discretionary transport.

- 10.58 Therefore, under the proposed policy, learners of dual residence would be assessed for their eligibility in accordance with both residences nearest to their school. In this instance, Consultation respondents felt that it was unfair if one residence was within the proposed chargeable distance for parents / carers to have to pay the full amount towards home to school transport provision when their child(ren) would not be using the bus for one or more day per school week. It was felt that this would disproportionately impact on lone parents, who often have a lower than average income, as outlined above.
- 10.59 In order to mitigate concerns raised in the EIA and to reflect the intent of the Measure a pro-rata charge (part week) would be applied to any charge for transport arising from the proposed policy changes for learners with dual residence.

Impact on Welsh Language and Welsh Education standards

- 10.60 The Consultation responses suggest that Welsh schools, the Welsh language and the Welsh language skills of children and young children will be disproportionately impacted upon by the proposed policy.
- 10.61 The main theme arising from Consultation was that, due to their being less Welsh medium schools in the County Borough, the schools are more geographically dispersed and more pupils attending Welsh medium schools will be affected. This was seen as being an issue for children attending Welsh medium primary school or Welsh medium sixth form provision. Consultation respondents felt that this would cause parents/carers to send their child to the nearest suitable primary school, which would be more likely to be an English medium primary school, threatening the Welsh language skills within the area and the viability of Welsh medium primary and secondary schools.
- 10.62 Using current pupil numbers:
- 333 pupils of primary school age live between 1.5 and 2 miles from their Welsh medium school.
 - 22 pupils of primary school age attend a school with a Welsh language unit, and live between 1.5 and 2 miles away.
 - 2 pupils live between 1.5 and 2 miles away from their English medium primary school.

This demonstrates the fact that Welsh language medium primary schools are more dispersed geographically than English medium primary schools.

- 10.63 Consultation respondents were concerned that this was discriminatory against the Welsh language as, under the proposed policy, parents will need to make a choice between sending their child(ren) to the local English medium primary school, which is likely to be within walking distance; or sending their child/ren to a Welsh medium school, which is more likely to be in excess of 1.5 miles away. If the child(ren) live between 1.5 and 2 miles away from the Welsh medium primary school, then they would be subject to the charge of £1.75 per day to use Home to School Transport provision under the proposed policy.

10.64 It is fair to say that the majority of pupils do not transfer between English and Welsh medium education during the course of their education. But if the full age range of the school population is taken into account (3-18 years old), under the proposed policy 12.5% (852) of the Welsh medium pupils would be charged compared to 8.9% (2,478) of the English medium pupils (excluding pupils in Faith Schools). Of those pupils that would be eligible for free home to school transport, 2,762 (40.7%) of the Welsh medium pupils would have free transport compared to 1,997 (8.6%) of the English medium pupils (excluding pupils in Faith Schools).

Note: the figures for English medium education above also exclude the 1,680 pupils in Further Education institutions who would also have to make a contribution to the travel costs.

10.65 The Council has a duty to 'promote access to education and training through the medium of Welsh' and discharges this duty by treating preference for either language equally. This would also be the case under the proposed policy, as the Council has proposed to continue to provide discretionary transport, so pupils would continue to receive free transport if they live further than the statutory distances of 2 miles (for primary school pupils) and 3 miles (for secondary school pupils) from a Welsh medium school.

10.66 Therefore, although the proposed policy is to introduce a charge for primary school pupils living between 1.5 and 2 miles from primary school (currently 333 primary school pupils that attend Welsh medium education), the pupils living more than 2 miles away (currently 1,249 pupils) would continue to receive free transport.

10.67 With regards to secondary school, a much higher proportion of children attending English medium schools are affected. This is, again, because there are less Welsh medium schools in the County Borough. Using current pupil numbers:

- There are 4,365 pupils travelling on Home to School Transport to an English Medium secondary school
- 2,097 secondary school pupils live between 2 and 3 miles from their English medium school and would, therefore, be charged under this proposed policy. Therefore the pupils of statutory school age living more than 3 miles away (currently 1,619 pupils) would not be affected.
- Out of the 2,032 secondary school pupils currently receiving Home to School Transport provision to Welsh medium schools, only 183 pupils live between 2 and 3 miles from the school and would be affected by the proposed charge.
- Therefore, the majority of pupils transported live more than 3 miles away and, therefore, would continue to receive free provision.

10.68 The Consultation results suggest that people disagree with this element of the proposed policy as it will cause less parents/carers to send their children to a Welsh medium primary school, due to the proposed associated costs of transport. It was felt that this could threaten the viability of the Welsh medium

primary schools in RCT and create a decline in young people learning the Welsh language.

- 10.69 In this way, consultation respondents made reference to the proposed policy being in direct contrast to the Council's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (2014-17), which aims to ensure Welsh medium education is available to children whose parents/carers want them to receive their education through the medium of Welsh. The Plan contains targets for the numbers of pupils taught in Welsh to increase over the medium term. However, the overall impact of pupils affected by the proposed policy throughout their time in school is minimal.
- 10.70 Due to charges being introduced for learners of non-compulsory school age, Consultation respondents were also concerned that young people aged 16-18 years old would be less likely to attend a Welsh medium sixth form. This is due to the school being further than 2 miles away from their home and, therefore, they would be subject to charges under the proposed policy. Much of this potential impact is explored above, but the EIA suggests officers should continue to monitor admission rates to Welsh sixth form provision and investigate any decline in figures.
- 10.71 The EIA states that with regards to the potential impact of this proposed policy on the Welsh language, the Council should introduce measures to monitor the effects of the proposed policy on Welsh medium provision - particularly on pupil admission rates to Welsh medium primary schools and sixth forms.

Potential impact on safety

- 10.72 The safety of children and young people was raised during the Consultation on the proposed policy as a negative impact. Respondents stated that walking or cycling to school posed a risk to children and young people due to road traffic and lighting.
- 10.73 As set out earlier in this report the Local Authority has a duty to assess walking routes. The distance is measured by the shortest available route and the guidance states that "a route is available if it is safe (as far as reasonably practicable) for a learner with a disability or learning difficulty to walk the route alone or with an accompanying adult if the learner's age and levels of understanding requires this." If the route is not 'available', a learner is entitled to free transport to their nearest suitable school even though the distance from home to school is less than the distance limit applied to his/her age.
- 10.74 Consultation feedback suggested that the proposed policy is likely to result in more people driving their children to school which it was claimed would significantly increase the risk of accidents, car congestion and related pollution. Others were concerned about the safety of some of the walking routes to school. There was also a particular concern if the proposals to reorganise Rhondda Schools goes ahead with regard to safety and the volume of traffic at Porth and Tonypany.

- 10.75 The Council has a programme of assessing routes for availability, taking into account the factors defined by Welsh Government, such as learner concerns, traffic levels, crossing points and lighting. Assessments would continue following any agreement of a change to provision. In light of new requirements of the Welsh Government Guidance (as attached at Appendix 1B) related to social danger on routes, the Council has established an assessment protocol which has been endorsed by the Cwm Taf Safeguarding Children Board and an agreed set of actions with South Wales Police.
- 10.76 Whilst the issues associated with the reorganisation of Rhondda schools will be considered on their own merits in light of any policy change related to transport, consideration has been given to potential safety issues.
- 10.77 Whilst the proposed policy seeks to retain the opportunity for pupils to continue to access school transport, it is recognised that the introduction of changes to transport policy may give rise to parents deciding to discontinue use of school transport; approximately 43.1% of respondents to this issue stated that they would be likely to chose not to use school transport. Of those expressing a view, 52% indicated they would use a car. Therefore from the Consultation responses, it appears there is potential for more cars to be attracted to schools at the start and end of the school day.
- 10.78 Some initial work has been undertaken to identify which schools may be most significantly impacted and to review the current situation at such schools. Further work would be undertaken during the 15/16 academic year to inform and refine anticipated impacts and mitigation in light of any decision taken regarding policy change.
- 10.79 The basic premise of any mitigation should be to favour sustainable modes of travel and not to encourage or promote car use. Therefore mitigation measures would be based around managing and containing issues rather than providing additional parking opportunities. Such measures may include parking restrictions and keep clear areas in the vicinity of schools and targeted parking enforcement activity by the Council's Civil Enforcement Officers to encourage appropriate and considerate parking.

11. COMMENTARY ON INDIRECT DISCRIMINATION FEEDBACK IN CONSULTATION

Indirect discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief

- 11.1 Consultation respondents felt that the proposed new policy discriminated against children, young people and families on the grounds of their religion or belief.
- 11.2 The argument that the proposed policy is discriminatory against Faith Schools was one of the most prominent views put across by Consultation respondents, with strong opposition to the perception that Faith Schools would be treated differently under the proposed policy.

- 11.3 As set out earlier in this report Local Authorities do not have a duty under the Measure to provide transport for learners to a school selected due to their preferred religious denomination (unless it is a learner's nearest suitable school, as determined by this Council, and they live more than 2 miles (primary) or 3 miles (secondary) away). Although the Council do not have a duty to provide transport, the proposed new policy being consulted upon is that transport to Faith Schools for pupils living beyond 1.5 miles (for primary school pupils) and 2 miles (for secondary school pupils) would continue to be provided, but at the proposed charge of £1.75 (or £1.00 for pupils receiving Free School Meals).
- 11.4 Consultation respondents disagreed with the proposed new policy, because this element of the proposed policy could affect a higher proportion of pupils due to Faith Schools being dispersed geographically across the County Borough i.e. pupils are more likely to live further away from a Faith School and, therefore, be subject to the proposed charge. Furthermore, there are no statutory distances imposed i.e. the proposed charge is not capped at those pupils living more than 2 miles away for primary school and more than 3 miles away for secondary school (as it is with mainstream English/Welsh medium provision for compulsory school age pupils). Concerns were raised through the Consultation that this could force families to send their child(ren) to the nearest suitable school, thereby avoiding the proposed charge for Home to School Transport provision and causing a decline in numbers of pupils attending Faith Schools.
- 11.5 Consultation respondents also stated that many of the pupils in Faith Schools come from families suffering financial difficulties and deprivation, linked to the high number of Black and Ethnic Minority (BME) pupils who choose to attend Faith Schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf and out of county. BME families are more likely to be in poverty. Therefore, it is argued that even fewer families with child(ren) in Faith Schools would be able to afford the charging as those who had child(ren) in Welsh or English medium schools that would be affected by the proposed charge.
- 11.6 Using data from June 2015, 1,227 pupils used Home to School Transport provision to travel to a Faith primary or Secondary School within Rhondda Cynon Taf. This represents approximately 49% of the total primary and secondary Faith School pupils in Rhondda Cynon Taf.
- 11.7 Using data from June 2015, 330 pupils were transported on Home to School Transport to out of county Faith Schools.
- 11.8 Under the proposed policy, all of these 1,557 pupils would be charged for Home to School Transport provision. Consultation respondents felt that this would threaten the viability of Faith Schools. both within and outside of the County Borough, as parents/carers would choose, or be forced, to send their child(ren) to the nearest suitable school, avoiding the proposed charges for Home to School Transport provision.

- 11.9 Transport provision provided to Faith Schools is subsidised at a higher level by the Council due to the geographical location of the schools and the distance travelled by some learners. However should the proposed policy be implemented, there would be an equal charge of £1.75 per day for all learners affected (or £1.00 per day for pupils receiving Free School Meals).
- 11.10 It must be noted that the Equality Act, so far as it relates to religion or belief-related discrimination, does not apply in relation to anything done in connection with transport to or from school and therefore precludes a claim (challenge) that the proposed policy indirectly discriminates against some individuals on the grounds of the protected characteristic religion or belief.
- 11.11 In view of this some Local Authorities have therefore been challenged on the basis that their Home To School Transport Policy amounted to indirect discrimination on the ground of faith or belief under the European Convention on Human Rights.
- 11.12 Article 14 of the Convention provides:-
- “The enjoyment of the rights and freedoms set forth in this Convention shall be secured without discrimination on any ground such as sex, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status.”
- Article 2 of the First Protocol to the Convention provides:-
- “No person shall be denied the right to education. In the exercise of any functions which it assumes in relation to education and teaching, the state shall respect the right of parents to ensure such education and teaching in conformity with their own religious and philosophical convictions”
- 11.13 The UK, however, has entered a reservation (*a qualification*) as to how it applies Article 2 of the First Protocol. It says:-
- “in view of certain provisions of the Education Acts in the United Kingdom, the principle affirmed in the second sentence of Article 2 is accepted by the United Kingdom only so far as it compatible with the provision of efficient instruction and training, and the avoidance of unreasonable public expenditure.”
- 11.14 Section 9 of the Education Act 1996 provides that in exercising or performing all of their respective powers and duties under the Education Acts local authorities shall have regard to the general principle that pupils are to be educated in accordance with the wishes of their parents, so far as that is compatible with the provision of efficient instruction and training and the avoidance of unreasonable public expenditure.
- 11.15 In *R v Leeds City Council* the Judge found that Article 2 First Protocol was neither engaged nor infringed. In that case it was found Section 9 of the Education Act 1996 was concerned with access to the educational institutions which the state makes available and places no greater obligation on the state than to acknowledge or take into account religious convictions. In the *Leeds*

case there was no suggestion *Leeds* had sought to deny the claimants access to any of the educational institutions which were within its control. Nor had it failed to respect the right of the claimants' parents to ensure such education and teaching in conformity with their religious convictions. The right had been taken into account and the parents of the claimants exercised it, in that they sent their children to Jewish schools in Manchester rather than a school in Leeds. Even if it were found Article 2 was engaged the Judge in that case found that the decision in question falls within the terms of the explicit reservation entered by the UK to this particular Article and so the claimant had no claim in this respect. For the same reasons Article 14 was also found not to have been engaged.

- 11.16 *R v (Diocese of Menevia and others) v City and County of Swansea Council* is a case concerning Swansea's decision to withdraw the provision of discretionary free transport from pupils attending voluntary-aided faith schools in Swansea, whilst continuing to provide free transport for pupils who attend Welsh language schools. The challenge brought against this decision was successful on some of the grounds upon which it was brought.
- 11.17 The Claimants in the *Swansea* case submitted that the *Leeds* case could be distinguished since there was evidence which suggested that if the amended policy was implemented children will be precluded from attending faith schools of their choice by reason of the inability of their parents to pay for transportation. Similar arguments have been advanced by consultees in this Consultation.
- 11.18 The Judge in the *Swansea* case commented that it was not open to him to doubt that possibility in relation to some children but, in any event, he did not regard it as a true distinguishing feature. He found the obligation under Article 2 First Protocol is to respect the right of the parent to ensure education in accordance with his/her religious aims. It did not seem to him that this obligation extended to subsidising and/or paying the whole cost for transportation between home and school.
- 11.19 Oral submissions in Court on behalf of the *Swansea* claimants also came close to submitting that the Judge should decline to follow the *Leeds* case on the basis that the judgment in that case was wrong. Whilst the Judge in the *Swansea* case was not bound strictly by the *Leeds* judgment he said he should follow it unless he considered it to be wrong. Far from believing it to be wrong the Judge accepted the reasoning used in the *Leeds* case. The challenge on this ground in the *Swansea* case therefore failed.
- 11.20 It can be therefore be argued that Article 2 of the First Protocol and Article 14 to the Convention, does not apply to transport arrangements to and from school.
- 11.21 Whilst it has been shown that the Equality Act, so far as it relates to religion or belief-related discrimination, does not apply in relation to anything done in connection with transport to or from school and that a challenge brought under the grounds of religion or belief-related discrimination under the Human Rights Act is likely to fail in light of existing case law, in view of the particular

feedback received through the Consultation in relation to the impact on this group the EIA suggests that the Council should introduce measures to monitor the effects of the proposed policy on Faith School provision if implemented.

- 11.22 Despite the above however if a Court was to determine that the proposed policy did amount to indirect discrimination on the ground of faith or belief under the European Convention on Human Rights then the Council would need to demonstrate that the difference in treatment is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. This concept is explored in further detail in paragraphs 11.44 -11.52 below.

Indirect discrimination on the ground of race

- 11.23 For the reasons outlined in paragraphs 11.4 – 11.5 above Consultation respondents also felt that this proposed policy would have a negative impact on the protected characteristic group of 'race' due to the potential difference in the number of black and ethnic minority ('BME') learners that attend Faith Schools as opposed to English/Welsh medium schools and who would be disproportionately impacted by the Home to School Transport proposed policy.

- 11.24 The Equality Act defines indirect discrimination. It says that:-

The Council would discriminate against X if it applied to X a provision, criterion or practice (*such as the proposed new Home to School Transport policy*) which is discriminatory in relation to a relevant protected characteristic (*e.g. Race*) of X's. In this case X would be a BME learner.

The proposed new Home to School Transport policy would be discriminatory in relation to race, being a relevant protected characteristic of X's, if –

- (a) The Council applies, or would apply, it to persons with whom X does not share the characteristic,
- (b) it puts, or would put, persons with whom X shares the characteristic at a particular disadvantage when compared with persons with whom X does not share it,
- (c) it puts, or would put, X at that disadvantage, and
- (d) the Council cannot show it to be a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.”

- 11.25 If the proposed new Home to School Transport Policy puts (or would put) people sharing the protected characteristic of race at a particular disadvantage, then the next stage the Council must consider is a comparison between the pool of service users with the protected characteristic of race i.e. in this case all BME learners, and those without it.

11.26 This approach involves asking the following series of questions:-

- “What proportion of the pool has the particular protected characteristic of race?
- Within the pool, does the proposed new policy affect service users without the protected characteristic?
- How many of these service users are (or would be) disadvantaged by it? How is this expressed as a proportion ('x')?
- Within the pool, how does the proposed new policy affect service users who share the protected characteristic?
- How many of these service users are (or would be) put at a disadvantage by it? How is this expressed as a proportion ('y')?”

The task of a Court answering these questions is to compare 'x' with 'y'. It can then decide whether the group with the protected characteristic experiences a particular disadvantage in comparison with others. Whether a difference is significant will depend upon the context, such as the size of the pool and the numbers behind the proportion. It is not necessary to show that the majority of those within the pool who share the protected characteristic are placed at a disadvantage.

11.27 If after undertaking this exercise the proposed new Home to School Transport is found to be discriminatory on the ground of race then a challenge under this ground would succeed unless the Council can demonstrate that the proposed new policy is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

11.28 In the *Swansea* case outlined above a challenge was also brought on the grounds Swansea's amended policy amounted to indirect discrimination on the grounds of race. Swansea did not address this aspect when it reached its decision. This is because at that point in time Swansea did not consider that its decision and its amended policy were in any way discriminatory. They also failed to address this point adequately when challenged in Court.

11.29 Ultimately it is for a Court to decide whether the Council's proposed new Home to School Transport policy is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim, by doing so on the basis of the evidence which is available to it but clearly if discrimination is established the Council must address this issue in order for it to robustly defend any challenge which may be brought. It must also be emphasised that the saving of costs alone cannot be regarded as a legitimate aim.

11.30 If the Council does consider that the proposed policy seeks to achieve a legitimate aim then the final issue is to establish that the provision is "proportionate".

- 11.31 A three-stage test has been devised by the Courts to determine whether or not the provision in question was proportionate. First, is the objective sufficiently important to justify limiting a fundamental right? Secondly, is the measure rationally connected to the objective? Thirdly, are the means chosen no more than is necessary to accomplish the objective?”
- 11.32 Consequently it will be for the Council to demonstrate that the particular disadvantage which the proposed policy would cause to BME children is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

Comparison Exercise

- 11.33 Data on ethnic groups is collected by schools and submitted to the Local Education Authority under the Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC). (Note: the validity of this data is dependent on parents disclosing the details of their child's ethnicity and the school correctly inputting this into their systems. Therefore, please note that the data may not be entirely representative of the true ethnic population.)

Bearing this caveat in mind, current figures show that, of the 16,072 primary school pupils (aged 5 years and over) in Rhondda Cynon Taf:

- 15,548 (96.74%) are White and 524 (3.37%) are Black and Ethnic Minority (BME);
- 12,545 pupils attend English medium primary schools. 391 (3.12%) of those pupils are BME.
- 2,802 pupils attend Welsh medium primary schools. 52 (1.86%) of those pupils are BME.
- 725 pupils attend Faith Schools. 81 (11.17%) of those pupils BME.

- 11.34 Therefore, overall, the majority of BME pupils in Rhondda Cynon Taf do not attend a Faith School; i.e. 15% (81 pupils) of the 524 Black and Ethnic Minority pupils attend Faith primary schools, so 85% (443 pupils) BME pupils attend non-Faith primary schools.

- 11.35 However, the proportion of BME pupils attending Faith primary Schools is higher in overall terms at 11.17% compared to 3.12% and 1.86% for English and Welsh primary schools respectively.

- 11.36 Current figures show that, of the 15,990 secondary school pupils (aged 11-18 years old) in Rhondda Cynon Taf:

- 15,548 (97.24%) are White and 442 (2.76%) are BME pupils.
- 11,275 pupils attend an English medium secondary school. 320 (2.84%) of those pupils are BME.
- 2,994 pupils attend a Welsh medium secondary school. 29 (0.99%) of those pupils are BME.
- 1,771 pupils attend Faith secondary schools. 93 (5.25%) of those pupils are BME.

- 11.37 In a similar way to the ethnic population of primary schools in Rhonda Cynon Taf, the majority of BME pupils do not attend a Faith School. Of the 442 secondary school BME pupils, 93 (21.04%) attend a Faith School, so 349 (78.96%) attend a non-Faith secondary school.
- 11.38 However, the proportion of BME pupils attending a Faith secondary School is higher in overall terms, at 5.25%, compared to 2.84% and 0.99% in English and Welsh medium secondary schools respectively.
- 11.39 Further analysis was undertaken in order to understand the impact of the proposed policy on this particular group.

(Please note the following caveats on data: the validity of the data is dependent on schools entering the information and doing so correctly. Some assumptions in analysis have been made, due to volume of data but overall impact on the figures should be minimal. Data on ethnic group is also not held for schools outside of the County or Further Education Institutions, therefore, total numbers affected could exceed the figures quoted below. Figures are correct as at June 2015.)

11.40 This has shown that:

- Of the pupils recorded on the pupil data system, 1,381 were identified as BME.
- 10,952 pupils in total were transported by Home to School Transport in June 2015. 333 of those pupils were identified as BME. (This does not include 'out of county' pupils).
- 150 (45%) of the BME pupils transported by Home to School Transport attend Faith primary or secondary schools.
- Of the 333 pupils transported identified as BME:
 - 121 lived between the discretionary and statutory distances (i.e. between 1.5 and 2 miles for primary school pupils and between 2 and 3 miles for secondary school pupils).
 - Therefore, 212 lived above the statutory distances relevant to their school year, of which 107 attended Faith primary or secondary schools.
- Therefore, in total, 228 BME pupils would be charged under the current proposed policy (i.e. 121 + 107).
- 150 (66%) of these 228 pupils who would be charged attend a Faith School; 78 (34%) attend English or Welsh medium education.

11.41 Using data from September 2014 and not including pupils travelling to colleges:

- 9,896 pupils in total were transported by Home to School Transport.
- 2,909 pupils lived between the discretionary and statutory distances imposed by the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure (i.e. between 1.5 and 2 miles for primary school pupils and between 2 and 3 miles for secondary school pupils).

Therefore, although the data above is from different times during the 2014/15 academic year, this would indicate that, of the 2,909 total pupils living between discretionary and statutory distances, 2,788 of the pupils are White British and 121 (4%) are BME.

- 11.42 The EIA suggests that Cabinet should consider the potential impact on pupils of Black and Ethnic Minorities particularly in the context of the proposal around Home to School Transport to Faith Schools and the financial impact the proposed policy could have on BME households, who are more likely to be in poverty than White British families. Furthermore Cabinet should investigate whether the proposed policy is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim in view of the EIA findings.
- 11.43 If BME children would suffer a particular disadvantage as a consequence of implementation of the proposed policy then it will be for the Council to demonstrate that the particular disadvantage which the proposed policy may cause to BME children is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

Is the proposed Home to School Transport Policy a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim?

- 11.44 During proceedings in the *Swansea* case, Swansea relied upon the “costs plus principle”. As has been already highlighted Section 10 of the Measure imposes a duty upon local authorities in Wales to promote access to education and training through the medium of the Welsh language when exercising its functions under the Measure. Swansea argued that the saving of costs taken in conjunction with the duty to promote access to education through the medium of the Welsh language constituted the legitimate aim and that its amended policy (withdrawing the provision of discretionary free transport from pupils attending voluntary-aided faith schools) was a proportionate means of achieving that aim.
- 11.45 Whilst cost savings alone cannot be regarded as a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim case law has established a “costs plus” principle. Accordingly, the first issue was whether the promotion of access to education through the medium of the Welsh language was capable of being a legitimate aim. The stance taken by the Claimants in the *Swansea* case was that even if it were Swansea had not demonstrated that the amended policy was a proportionate means of achieving the legitimate aim.
- 11.46 At the point of making the decision Swansea had not addressed its mind to the issue of justifying the discriminatory nature of its amended policy. Swansea did not consider that its amended policy was discriminatory and its starting point was that no change of any kind would be made to the current policy as it related to the provision of free transport to pupils attending Welsh medium schools. Whilst there appears to have been some assessment of whether means testing in relation to the provision of free transport, generally, was a viable option it did not seem to the Judge that Swansea ever addressed the issue of means testing in the context of justifying a provision which was discriminatory, albeit indirectly.

- 11.47 Following the decision Swansea had the opportunity to investigate whether steps could be taken to mitigate the discriminatory impact of its amended policy which were, nonetheless, consistent with achieving the legitimate aim identified in that case. The Judge found that Swansea had not undertaken any investigative steps to assess whether there were measures open to it which could mitigate the effects of the amended policy yet respect Swansea's aims of promoting access to education through the medium of Welsh and saving costs.
- 11.48 The Claimants submitted that there were obvious measures which Swansea could have investigated. It could have investigated means testing so that the burden of making payment for transport to Faith schools for those least able to afford it was removed or alleviated; it could also have investigated whether the introduction of charging for pupils attending both Faith schools and Welsh medium schools could have been pitched at such a rate that it was generally affordable.
- 11.49 In the *Swansea* case the Judge concluded that the twin objectives of costs saving and promoting access to education through the medium of Welsh was sufficiently important to justify limiting a fundamental right. Second, the provision under consideration – the amended policy – was rationally connected to the objective. But he was not satisfied that the evidence established that the means chosen by Swansea were no more than was necessary to accomplish the objective. He was not satisfied that the amended policy was a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. The Judge found that Swansea should have demonstrated that its amended policy was reasonably necessary and in the absence of a clear appraisal of alternatives (such as introducing a reasonable, means tested charge) it did not seem to him to be possible in that case.
- 11.50 The Claimants in the *Swansea* case were therefore successful in their challenge on this ground and Swansea's decision was quashed.
- 11.51 As regards the proposed new Home to School Transport Policy which Cabinet initiated the Consultation upon then officers having undertaken the comparison exercise detailed above, consider that if implementation of the proposed policy would have the consequential effect of creating indirect race discrimination in respect of BME children, the proposed policy is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim based on the following: -
- i) The proposed policy aims to maintain the service but to introduce a charge towards the discretionary elements of provision - i.e. there is no withdrawal of the service;
 - ii) Transport to faith/voluntary aided schools is not a statutory obligation under the Measure;
 - iii) The proposed charge is reasonable, generally affordable and would be means-tested (on basis of FSM eligibility);
 - iv) Achieve savings to the Council of £2.048 million per year (the Council acknowledges costs savings alone is not sufficient);
 - v) There is still a greater per head subsidy for faith than non faith provision;

- vi) The difference in treatment between Welsh Medium and voluntary aided (faith) Home to School Transport provision is because the Council is choosing to exercise its duty under Section 10 of the Measure (to promote access to Welsh medium education and training) by allowing parents to choose their nearest suitable school by preference to Welsh/English medium education and still providing free transport to pupils living beyond 2 miles (primary) and 3 miles (secondary) from school (for pupils aged 5-16) .
- 11.52 The EIA has suggested other mitigating actions the Cabinet may wish to consider (such as the introduction of a hardship fund) as part of implementing any new policy which could further assist the Council in demonstrating that implementation of the proposed policy is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.
- 11.53 Consultation feedback has suggested a number of proposed alternatives in respect of implementing the proposed policy. Whilst reducing the overall savings achieved clearly any amendments made with regard to implementation of the proposed new policy in view of these suggestions may help to mitigate further the impact of any disproportionate impact on any protected group be it on race, faith/belief grounds or otherwise as well as help mitigate against other issues highlighted in this report and its appendices.
- 11.54 For example, Consultees suggested that the level of the proposed charge (and proposed charge for FSM pupils) should be reduced further and/or phased in and/or that the implementation of the policy should be delayed until the 2017/18 academic year. Other feedback suggested savings should be made elsewhere (i.e. no change to existing Home to School Transport provision at all- existing Option A in the Consultation).
- 11.55 Consultees also suggested that one means of avoiding potential race and/or faith discrimination would be to continue to provide transport to both Welsh language schools and faith schools, but do so for all of their pupils on a subsidised rather than a wholly free basis. Clearly however with any amended Home to School Transport policy the Council needs to comply with the provisions of the Measure and the legal duties it has which are set out in this report.
- 11.56 Where possible officers have undertaken an appraisal of proposed reasonable alternative options suggested through the Consultation feedback. This appraisal outlining the advantages and disadvantages of the proposed alternative options is attached at Appendix 7. Members should consider this Appendix keeping in mind the results of the EIA and Consultation feedback as well as other factors highlighted in the report before taking any decision(s) with regard to implementation of a new Home to School Transport policy.
- 11.57 With reference to paragraph 11.51 above and noting officers' comments in relation to the preferred option consulted upon Cabinet will need to consider whether implementation of any amended policy which may be taken forward,

and which may have a disproportionate impact on BME pupils, is still a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

12. OPERATIONAL ISSUES

- 12.1 Any new Home to School Transport Policy will need to be supported by detailed Operational Guidance to be used by officers involved in the assessment of entitlement and procurement of Home to School Transport. It would therefore be proposed that if Cabinet does implement a new Home to School Transport Policy that it agrees to receive a further report in respect of the operational policies/guidance deemed necessary for, and incidental to the implementation of that policy.

13. THE COUNCIL'S DUTY IN RESPECT OF CHILDREN IN NEED

- 13.1 It is the duty of the Council under section 17 of the Children Act 1989 ('the 1989 Act') to (a) safeguard and promote the welfare of children within their area who are in need; and (b) so far as is consistent with that duty, to promote the upbringing of such children by their families, by providing a range and level of services appropriate to those children's needs.

- 13.2 For the purposes of the 1989 Act "children in need" are defined as follows:

"A child shall be taken to be in need if-

- (a) He/She is unlikely to achieve or maintain, or to have the opportunity of achieving or maintaining, a reasonable standard of health or development without the provision for him of services by a local Council;
- (b) His/Her health or development is likely to be significantly impaired, or further impaired, without the provision for him of such services, or
- (c) He/She is disabled."

- 13.3 As previously noted the proposed new Home to School Transport Policy maintains and protects existing SEN transport provision. The policy also proposes a means tested charge based on Free School Meal entitlement. Further mitigation which would assist the Council meet its duties in relation to children in need, and suggested through the EIA, includes the introduction of a Hardship Fund following implementation of the proposed policy.

- 13.4 Most importantly however the care needs of individual families with children in need will inevitably be affected by their particular circumstances at any given point in time and by the particular local services available to them at that point. The Council works with these individual families to identify the specific needs of any child determined to be in need at that point in time.

Looked After Children

- 13.5 As indicated earlier in the report the Council must have regard to, and assess and meet the needs of, “looked after” children and those formally looked after in its area.
- 13.6 The definition of a ‘looked after’ child is the term used within the Children Act 1989 to describe a person (under the age of 18) who is in the care of the Council, or who is provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours by it in the exercise of its social services functions. This could be a placement with foster carers; in residential homes or with parents or other relatives (‘kinship care’).’
- 13.7 Under the Measure, the same age and distance criteria apply to ‘looked after’ children (learners) as to those who are not looked after. But the provision that the learner must attend their nearest suitable school to their home does not apply to ‘looked after’ learners (in the same way it applies to learners who are not looked after). It is for the Council to determine where the looked after child should go to school. The school decided upon might be a school other than the nearest suitable school due to the need to maintain continuity in education or contact with siblings or friends to promote wellbeing. If that is the case, transport would be provided.
- 13.8 As previously stated the Council may not charge for transport arrangements that it is required to make for learners of compulsory school age under the Measure, except in relation to looked after children where the authority making the travel arrangements for a child who is looked after by another authority. In these cases it can recoup costs from the placing local authority.
- 13.9 If the Council determines that a looked after child should attend a school other than the nearest suitable school then transport would be provided upon request by the child’s social worker in accordance with the Council’s agreed policy on walking distance and safe routes.

14. CONCLUSION

- 14.1 Section 9 of the Education Act 1996 places a general duty on local authorities to have regard to the general principle that pupils are to be educated in accordance with the wishes of their parent, however this is ‘in so far as that is compatible with the provision of efficient instruction and training and with the avoidance of unreasonable public expenditure’.
- 14.2 Due to the financial pressures the Council is currently facing it is considered that changes to current Home to School Transport Policy to align transport provision more closely with Welsh Government statutory transport requirements are necessary for the Council to: -
- maintain affordability within future financial constraints;
 - continue to be able to meet its statutory requirements; and

- maintain discretionary transport for its most vulnerable users (i.e. SEN pupils).
- 14.3 A proposed new Home to School Transport Policy has been developed and consulted upon. The proposed changes to existing policy are outlined in this report.
- 14.4 The proposed new policy has taken into account current budget pressures. The Council is not alone in facing these challenges, nor in having to consider such reviews of discretionary areas of current provision.
- 14.5 If the Cabinet does determine to implement a new Home to School Transport Policy the Council would need to monitor its affects, particularly in relation to those groups highlighted in the EIA and this report, in order to continue to meet the Council's duties under the Equality Act.
- 14.6 In order for a fully informed decision to be taken on the proposed new policy it is now for Cabinet to review all the available information in respect of it particularly that information contained in this report, its appendices and the Consultation itself, including the Consultation responses Members have reviewed and decide on whether or not, and if so how, it wishes to proceed with implementation of the proposed new Home to School Transport Policy and which would become effective from September 2016.

APPENDIX 1A

PLEASE NOTE THIS APPENDIX (PAGES 57 - 128) HAS BEEN REMOVED DUE
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A PUBLICALLY ACCESSIBLE VERSION OF THE LEARNER TRAVEL (WALES)
MEASURE 2008 IS AVAILABLE BY CLICKING ON THE FOLLOWING LINK:-

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/mwa/2008/2/contents>

APPENDIX 1B

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Learner Travel

Statutory Provision and Operational Guidance

June 2014

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Section 1: Statutory Provisions.

Summary

In 2004, the Welsh Government adopted the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)¹ as a basis of all policy making for children and young people in Wales. In 2011 Welsh Ministers passed the Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011² which provides that Welsh Ministers must have due regard to the requirements of the Convention when exercising any of their functions.

The safety of children is of paramount importance and the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008³ (“the 2008 Measure”) requires local authorities to assess the suitability of travel for learners between home and places of education and training.

It is also important to secure the views of children and young people in accordance with the Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011. The views and perceptions of children can inform the local authority officers who have responsibility for assessing home to school travel provision. Working collaboratively with partners, such as governing bodies, head teachers, schools, Local Safeguarding Children’s Boards, operators, parents and other agencies to share information and best practice can assist safeguarding of children travelling to and from school.

The Welsh Government has adopted the social model of disability however, much of the legislation is not written to reflect this model. Consequently this document contains non social model terminology.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/creating-a-fairer-and-more-equal-society/supporting-pages/the-united-nations-convention-on-the-rights-of-the-child-uncrc>

² 2011 nawm 2. <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/mwa/2011/2/contents>

³ 2008 nawm 2. <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/mwa/2008/2/contents>

Section 1: Statutory Provisions.

Chapter 1: The Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008.

Overview

- 1.1 The Education Act 1996 (as amended) sets out the law in Wales and England for the **attendance** of pupils at school and the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 (as amended) ('the Measure') sets out the legal framework specifically related to **travel and transport** provisions for learners⁴ travelling from home to school⁵ in Wales.
- 1.2 This Statutory Guidance ("the Guidance") is published by Welsh Ministers under section 15 of the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008.
- 1.3 Under section 15 of the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008, Welsh Ministers have the power to issue statutory guidance. Where guidance is statutory, local authorities are required to have regard to the guidance and will only be able to depart from such guidance where they can provide justification for doing so.
- 1.4 The Guidance has no special authority in regards to matters of legal interpretation. Where there appear to be differences between the Measure and the Guidance, the Measure always takes precedence.
- 1.5 Where the Guidance says that something **must** be done, this means that it is a requirement in either primary or secondary legislation and a footnote gives the appropriate provision.
- 1.6 Section 1 of this guidance document outlines the statutory provisions, specific duties and key responsibilities for Welsh Ministers, local authorities, governing bodies of maintained schools, head teachers, learners, parents and any other relevant body as appropriate.
- 1.7 The Measure sets out specific requirements for home to school transport in Wales. Its main provisions are :-
- 1.8 Legal Duties of the Welsh Ministers.

The Welsh Ministers **must**:

- Make an All-Wales Travel Behaviour Code ('Travel Code'⁶)

⁴ Definition of 'learner' is provided in the glossary (Section 2).

⁵ For the purposes of this document the term 'school' has the same meaning as the term "relevant places" defined in Section 1(4) of the Measure. For ease of reference, the definition of 'relevant places' is provided in the glossary (Section 2).

⁶ Section 12 of the Measure

- Promote access to Welsh Medium education⁷ and training
- Promote sustainable modes of travel⁸
- Welsh Ministers may also issue direction and/or make statutory guidance⁹.

1.9 Legal Duties of the local authority.

Local authorities¹⁰ **must:**

- Assess the travel needs of learners in their authority area¹¹
- Provide free home to school transport for learners of compulsory school age attending primary school who live 2 miles or further from their nearest suitable school¹²
- Provide free home to school transport for learners of compulsory school age attending secondary school who live 3 miles or further from their nearest suitable school¹³
- Assess and meet the needs of “looked after”¹⁴ children in their authority area¹⁵
- Promote access to Welsh medium education¹⁶
- Promote sustainable modes of travel¹⁷

Under section 32 of the Education Act 2002¹⁸ (which was amended by section 21 of the Measure), local authorities have the power to change school session times¹⁹, **if the change is considered necessary or expedient to promote the use of sustainable modes of travel, or to make travel arrangements more effective or efficient²⁰**. The Welsh Government has made regulations setting out the appropriate procedure.²¹

⁷ Section 10 of the Measure

⁸ Section 11 of the Measure

⁹ Section 15 of the Measure

¹⁰ Local authority means all relevant departments within the authority and is not limited to learner travel teams

¹¹ Section 2 of the Measure

¹² Section 3 of the Measure

¹³ Section 3 of the Measure

¹⁴ Definition of ‘looked after’ children is provided in Chapter 1 paragraph 1.49

¹⁵ Sections 2 and 3 of the Measure

¹⁶ Section 10 of the Measure

¹⁷ Section 11 of the Measure

¹⁸ 2002 c.32. <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/section/32>

¹⁹ This provision applies to community special schools, maintained nursery schools, foundation schools, voluntary aided schools and foundation special schools.

²⁰ Change can only be made if it meets these criteria

²¹ The Changing of School Session Times (Wales) Regulations 2009 (S.I. 2009/572). <http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-guide-docs-pub/bus-business-documents/bus-business-documents-doc-laid.htm?act=dis&id=119939&ds=4/2009>

Where learners are not entitled to free transport, local authorities have the power to provide transport on a discretionary basis²².

1.10 Legal Duties of Head-teachers.

They **must**:

- Ensure compliance with the Travel Code²³

Head Teachers should also:

- Promote knowledge and awareness of the Travel Code²⁴
- Incorporate the Travel Code into the school's overarching school behaviour policy²⁵

Assessing Needs

1.11 Section 2 of the Measure places a duty on a local authority to assess the travel needs of learners under the age of 19. This includes those who have reached 19 but started a course when under 19 and continue to attend that course who receive education or training and who are ordinarily resident in the authority's area²⁶.

1.12 Assessing the travel needs of learners does not mean providing free transport. Learners will only qualify for free transport provision if they meet the entitlement criteria outlined in Chapter 1 paragraphs 1.21 – 1.26 and 1.51 of this document.

1.13 Learner travel needs are the specific needs of learners in terms of the travel arrangements between home and school each day. Those learners whose travel needs are assessed by the local authority also include those whose nearest suitable schools are in other local authority areas.

1.14 It is recommended that in assessing the travel needs of learners, local authorities should consider:-

- Who the learners are in their area
- Where those learners currently attend or are due to attend school
- Which learners they are under a legal duty to provide with transport under Sections 3 and 4 of the Measure

²² Section 6 of the Measure

²³ Section 89(2A) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 states that in determining a behaviour policy for a school the head teacher must require pupils to comply with the travel behaviour code. <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/40/section/89>

²⁴ <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/transport/integrated/learnertravel/travelcode/?lang=en>

²⁵ Section 89 Education and Inspections Act 2006
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/40/section/89>

²⁶ Local authorities are required to assess the travel needs of learners under the age of 5 (nursery age) and aged 16-19, but there is currently no legal duty to provide free or assisted transport arrangements for nursery or post-16 learners.

- Which learners they want to provide with travel on a discretionary basis under Section 6 of the Measure
- What other arrangements already exist / will exist for those for whom they do not provide transport (e.g. does the further education college provide transport for 16-18 year olds?)

1.15 The local authority is also required to have regard to:-

- The needs of disabled learners²⁷ and learners with learning difficulties²⁸
- Any particular needs of learners who are 'looked after' or formerly looked after by a local authority²⁹
- The age of a learner
- The nature of the route that the learner is expected to take between home and the places where they receive education or training.

1.16 In assessing the travel needs of learners, local authorities must³⁰ take into account the fact that the travel arrangements they make in light of the assessment must not cause unreasonable levels of stress; take an unreasonable amount of time or be unsafe.

1.17 The assessment will give a local authority an overview of the travel needs of learners in their area. This will allow them to make travel arrangements for learners in an efficient and effective manner and enable them to provide information to others about the travel arrangements available. Local authorities must also promote sustainable modes of travel³¹ when exercising their functions under the Measure as far as reasonably practicable.

1.18 The assessment is only required to take into account travel to and from the learner's home to the nearest suitable school and not the learner's travel needs during the day between different places of education or training, including:

- residential trips or day trips organised by schools.
- travel between schools or between different sites of the same school (i.e. travel incurred by learners during the school day to access courses in relation to the learning pathways programme)

1.19 When exercising functions under the Measure the local authority is not required to take account of extra curricular activities, breakfast or after-school clubs when assessing learner travel needs.

²⁷ Section 24(1) of the Measure. The definition of disability can be read as that from the Equality Act 2010, which is explained in the glossary (see Section 2)

²⁸ Section 24(1) of the Measure

²⁹ The statutory definition of 'looked after' children is defined in section 22(1) Children Act 1989 and is provided in Chapter 1 paragraph 1.49.

³⁰ Sections 3(5) (transport arrangements) and 4(6) of the Measure (travel arrangements)

³¹ Definition of 'sustainable modes of travel' is outlined in Section 11 of the Measure and is provided in the glossary (Section 2)

- 1.20 In each academic year, the local authority must assess the learner travel needs for the following academic year³².

Entitlement

- 1.21 Section 3 of the Measure places a duty on a local authority to make transport arrangements for learners of compulsory school age in specified circumstances and subject to specified conditions. The section makes provision for free transport defined by whether children receive primary or secondary education and whether they live further than set distances from the schools at which they receive education or training.
- 1.22 Learners receiving primary education will be entitled to free transport if they live two miles or more from their nearest suitable maintained school; pupil referral unit; or non-maintained special school. The exception is if the authority has arranged for the learner to board at or near the school.
- 1.23 Where a learner receiving primary education has a statement of special educational needs (SEN), which names an independent school, then should that school be two miles or more from the learner's home, a local authority will have to provide free transport. The exception is if the authority has arranged for the learner to board at or near the school.
- 1.24 A similar entitlement is provided for learners receiving secondary education, but in this case if they live three miles or more from their nearest suitable maintained school; pupil referral unit; non-maintained special school or independent school named in a statement of special educational needs. Where the local authority has arranged for the learner to board at or near the school, the duty to provide free transport does not apply.
- 1.25 The entitlement includes transport for any learners of compulsory school age who attend their nearest suitable further education institution as a full time student if it is three miles or more from the learner's home and the local authority has not arranged for the learner to attend a suitable institution closer than three miles from the learner's home.
- 1.26 The entitlement also includes travel between home and school, where a learner is registered at more than one school and needs to attend different schools on different days of the week. For example this would cover travel at the beginning and/or end of the day to a different school. Transition may include when a learner is moving from a special needs unit into mainstream education.

³² Section 2(2) of the Measure

Making Suitable Transport Arrangements

1.27 The local authority must³³ make suitable transport arrangements to facilitate the attendance of the learner each day at their nearest suitable school where they receive education and training. Under Sections 3(5) and 4(6) of the Measure Transport arrangements are not suitable if:

- they cause unreasonable levels of stress for the learner
- they take an unreasonable amount of time
- they are unsafe

1.28 Unreasonable Levels of Stress

Local authorities must provide suitable transport arrangements to ensure that, as far as reasonably practicable they do not cause unreasonable levels of stress to the learner³⁴. There is no legal definition of 'stress', nor is there a definitive list of what criteria local authorities should take into account to determine if the journey causes an unreasonable level of stress. It is for local authorities to determine how stress assessments are carried out, in accordance with their own learner travel policy.

1.29 Journey Times

The Measure does not specify a time limit for journeys, however, local authorities are required to assess the individual needs of learners when considering if a journey time is reasonable. An assessment should take into account the nature, purpose and circumstances of each journey. It is recommended that local authorities consider the following whilst assessing learner journey times³⁵ :-

- the learner's age
- whether the learner has any disability or learning difficulties that need to be accounted for³⁶
- for the purposes of this document the locality of the learner's home in relation to available schools in the vicinity³⁷

1.30 Safe Travel

For the purpose of this document 'safe travel' is defined as 'providing appropriate travel arrangements to ensure that as far as reasonably

³³ Section 3 of the Measure.

³⁴ Section 3(5) of the Measure.

³⁵ Information on what might be considered suitable journey times is provided in Section 3 (Question 4)

³⁶ Both the journey time and the suitability of the school (which the learner may need access to) need to be accounted for – especially if a named specialist school is specified in the learner's statement of special education needs.

³⁷ 'Vicinity' refers to suitable schools both within and outside the authority's area.

practicable a learner is not placed at risk³⁸, whether known or foreseen, which might result in them or other persons sustaining a trauma and or serious physical injury’.

- 1.31 Further information on safe travel with regards to available walking routes is provided in Chapter 1 paragraphs 1.60- 1.64 and Chapter 5 of this document..
- 1.32 It is recommended that local authorities ensure that appropriate health and safety checks and risk assessments on learner transport are carried out. The assessment should take into account stress factors; appropriate journey times and safe travel arrangements³⁹ when determining what transport provisions are suitable for learners.
- 1.33 Local authorities should satisfy themselves that contracted arrangements for learner transport are safe. This is an ongoing duty so local authorities should ensure that processes are in place to monitor contracts and that prompt action is taken to remedy problems. There is no legal specification of when assessments should be carried out therefore local authorities have discretion in deciding how to meet this requirement. Further information on risk assessment best practice is provided in Section 3 (Questions 1 and 2) of this document.

1.34 Making Other Travel Arrangements

Section 3 of the Measure is about dedicated transport provision, where this provision does not apply or it is an inappropriate transport arrangement, local authorities are under a duty to make other travel arrangements.

- 1.35 Section 4 of the Measure places a duty on a local authority to make other travel arrangements for children of compulsory school age if the authority thinks that it is necessary to facilitate a child’s attendance at school. These travel arrangements only apply to travel to and from the learner’s nearest suitable school at the start and/ or finish of the school day and does not include travel during the day.
- 1.36 Section 4 provides the basis for local authorities to support travel for learners if they have specific needs whether arising from a learning difficulty, a disability or any other factor which makes particular travel arrangements necessary to facilitate the child’s attendance.
- 1.37 In considering whether travel arrangements are suitable, the local authority must⁴⁰ have regard to:

³⁸ For the purposes of this document the definition of ‘risk’ is provided in the glossary (Section

2)

³⁹ Section 3(5) of the Measure

⁴⁰ Section 4(5) of the Measure.

- the needs assessment undertaken under Section 2 of the Measure (outlined in Chapter 1 paragraphs 1.11 -1.20 of this document)
- the transport arrangements it is duty bound to make under Section 3 of the Measure
- the age of the learner
- any disability or learning difficulty⁴¹
- the nature of the route a learner is expected to take.

Nearest Suitable School.

- 1.38 The definition of nearest “suitable school” is where the “education or training provided is suitable having regard for the age, ability and aptitudes of the learner and any learning difficulties he or she may have⁴²”.
- 1.39 Local authorities need to consider the suitability of the school when deciding if the placement is appropriate for the learner. Deciding which suitable school is the learners ‘nearest’ is a matter for the local authority to determine in accordance with their own learner travel and education policy. Local authorities need to set out how the nearest suitable school is identified and publish this information in their learner travel policy in accordance with provisions outlined in the Learner Travel Information (Wales) Regulations 2009⁴³
- 1.40 Parents and learners may express a preference for a particular school, a particular type of language provision or faith school, but the Measure does not confer on those parents and learners any rights to free transport to their preferred school and or location, unless that school is determined by the local authority to be the learners nearest suitable school and the learner meets the distance criteria. Further information regarding parental and learner preference is provided in Chapter 1 paragraphs 1.44 – 1.47 and Chapter 6 paragraphs 6.6 – 6.9.
- 1.41 Transport must be provided free of charge⁴⁴ to a school outside a local authority’s area if that establishment is deemed (under provisions outlined in Chapter 1 paragraphs 1.38 and 1.41) to be the learner’s nearest suitable school and if the learner lives:
- further than the statutory distances specified for their age (see Chapter 1 paragraph 1.9 (bullet points 1 and 2)); or
 - under the statutory distance specified for their age where the prescribed route the learner is expected to travel has been classified unavailable by the relevant authority

⁴¹ This includes taking into account a learner’s disability and / or a learner’s parent’s disability. See Chapter 1 paragraphs 1.83- 1.97 for further information on this provision

⁴² Section 4(9) of the Measure

⁴³ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2009/569/regulation/4/made>

⁴⁴ This relates to learners of compulsory school age only.

1.42 Admission to School

If a learner cannot be admitted to their nearest suitable school which results in the learner having to attend the next available nearest suitable school, the local authority has the same duty to provide free transport.

- 1.43 The School Admissions Code 2013⁴⁵ (the '2013 Code') outlines in more detail the statutory requirements governing school admissions. The 2013 Code came into force on 8 July 2013 and applies to admission arrangements for intakes from September 2014/15 onwards. Paragraphs 2.48 – 2.55 of the 2013 Code outline how distance between home and school can be used as a determinant for entitlement to admission at a school where demand for places means that the oversubscription criteria applies⁴⁶.

1.44 Parental Preference

Section 86 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998⁴⁷ requires a local authority to enable a parent to express a preference for the school they wish their child to attend. For the purpose of this document this is defined as 'enacting parental preference'.

- 1.45 Parental preference does not give a right to a place in their chosen school. If there are places available at the parents' preferred school, the admission authority's decision should usually be to accept an application for admission. This can mean that some learners do not attend their nearest suitable school and live some distance away from the school they attend.
- 1.46 If a parent exercises their parental preference when determining which school their child attends and the chosen school is not the nearest suitable school agreed by the local authority, the learner is not entitled to free transport provision – even if the learner meets the distance or age criteria usually entitling them to free transport provision. In these circumstances a local authority may provide discretionary transport provision under section 6 of the Measure. If the local authority decides to use this power in accordance with section 9 of the Measure, which outlines that transport arrangements must not favour certain types of education or training, they must ensure that they provide the same provision to all learners in the same circumstance within their authority. Further information regarding this provision is provided in Chapters 5 – Risk Assessing Walked Routes to School paragraph 5.54 and 5.56 and Chapter 6 – 'Parental Responsibilities' paragraphs 6.1 - 6.9 and 6.11 - 6.12.

⁴⁵ 005/2013.

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/publications/guidance/schooladmission/?lang=en>

⁴⁶ Further information regarding the oversubscription criteria is outlined in Section 3 (Question 44) of this document

⁴⁷ 1998 c. 31. <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/31/section/86>

Children's Preference

Local authorities should also bear in mind the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child ("UNCRC")⁴⁸ and any commitments made in relation to it.

- 1.47 When a child exercises their preference for a school they would like to attend, if it is not their nearest suitable school the learner is not entitled to free transport provision. Even if they meet the distance and age criteria usually applied to receive free transport provision. Further information regarding this provision is provided in Chapter 6 – 'Parental Responsibilities' paragraphs 6.1– 6.9 and 6.11– 6.12.

Attendance of Pupils at School

- 1.48 Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 creates the offence on the part of a parent of failing to secure the regular attendance at school of a registered pupil. Section 20 of the Measure amends section 444⁴⁹ to provide that a parent will have a defence to a prosecution if a local authority has failed to discharge, where required, their statutory duties under this Measure to make travel arrangements to facilitate the attendance of their child at school.

Looked After Children

- 1.49 The Definition of a 'looked after' child is the term used within the Children Act 1989 to describe a person (under the age of 18) who is in the care of the local authority, or who is provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours by a local authority⁵⁰ in the exercise of its social services functions⁵¹ This could be a placement with foster carers; in residential homes or with parents or other relatives ('kinship care').
- 1.50 A learner who is classified as a 'looked after child' is different to a child (learner) with dual residency⁵².

⁴⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/creating-a-fairer-and-more-equal-society/supporting-pages/the-united-nations-convention-on-the-rights-of-the-child-uncrc>

⁴⁹ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/56/section/444>

⁵⁰ As defined by Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/section/22>

⁵¹ These are social service functions within the meaning of the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970 (apart from functions under Section 17, 23B and 24B of the Children Act 1989). From the commencement of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, "looked after" child will be defined in the Act to refer to a child who is in the care of the local authority or who is provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours by a local authority in the exercise of its social services functions as described in Schedule 2 to the Act (apart from functions under section 15, Part 4 or section 109, 114 or 115 of the Act).

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/part/III>

⁵² Further information on looked after children is provided in Section 3 (Questions 5 and 6) of this document. Further information of what transport entitlement is given to learners in dual residency is outlined in Chapter 1 paragraphs 1.54 – 1.59

- 1.51 Under Section 3 and 4 of the Measure, the same age and distance criteria apply to 'looked after' children (learners) as to those who are not looked after. But the provision that the learner must attend their nearest suitable school to their home does not apply to 'looked after' learners (in the same way it applies to learners who are not looked after). Further information explaining the justification for this difference in provision is provided in Section 3 (Question 6) of this document.

Ordinary Residence

- 1.52 Section 19 of the Measure sets out the provisions for determining a person's ordinary residence in particular circumstances. There is no statutory definition of the term 'ordinary residence'. However for the purposes of this document 'ordinary residence is defined as 'where a learner usually lives, or if under 16, where those with parental responsibility for the learner live.'
- 1.53 'Living' means more than occasionally visiting. If a learner has no ordinary residence they should be treated as being ordinarily resident at the place at which they are for the time being resident⁵³.
- 1.54 Dual residency
- Dual residency means a learner who has more than one home (ordinary place of residence). This provision applies to learners whose parents are not living together with the learner living partly with each parent⁵⁴, or with a parent and other carer, foster placement etc.
- 1.55 Where a learner has dual residence both places of residence should be regarded as the learner's ordinary residence. If a learner lives at more than two such places then only those two places nearest to their school will qualify⁵⁵.
- 1.56 Sections 3 and 19 of the Measure place a duty on a local authority to provide free transport for learners (of dual residence) to their nearest suitable school if the learner is of compulsory school age and the residence(s) meet the statutory distance criteria (see paragraphs 1.21–1.26 and 1.51). If the statutory criteria is not met local authorities still have the option of providing discretionary transport under section 6 powers. Further advice regarding this provision is provided in Section 3 (Questions 7 and 8) of this document.

⁵³ Section 19(1) of the Measure.

⁵⁴ 'Parent' means a parent within the meaning of section 576(1) of the Education Act 1996 who is an individual and includes any person who is not a parent but who has parental responsibility, or who has care for the child.

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/56/section/576>

⁵⁵ Section 19(6) of the Measure.

- 1.57 Section 9 of the Education Act 1996⁵⁶ states that local authorities must have regard to the general principle that learners are to be educated in accordance with the wishes of their parents so far as reasonably practicable. So far as that is compatible with the provision of efficient instruction and training and the avoidance of unreasonable public expenditure.
- 1.58 Where a learner has two places of ordinary residence which are located in two different local authorities, each of those local authorities will be responsible for the learner's travel arrangements when the learner is residing in its area.
- 1.59 Further information regarding dual residency is provided in, Chapter 6 – 'Parental Responsibilities' – paragraph 6.11 and Section 3, Questions 7 and 8.

Walking Distances and Available Walking Routes

- 1.60 Section 3 of the Measure sets out the distance criteria whereby learners are entitled to free transport to and from their nearest suitable school. Distances below these thresholds for the purpose of this document are referred to as 'walking distances'.
- 1.61 Under section 3(7) of the Measure the walking distance should be measured by the 'shortest available route'. A route is considered to be available if it is safe (as far as reasonably practicable) for a learner without a disability or learning difficulty to walk the route alone or with an accompanying adult if the learners age and levels of understanding requires this.
- 1.62 If a route is not 'available' and there is no alternative 'available' walking route within the respective distance threshold applicable to the learner's age, which can be used instead, as prescribed within section 3 of the Measure, the learner cannot be expected to walk to their nearest suitable school. Even though the distance from home to school is less than the distance limit that applies to the learner's age.
- 1.63 In such cases the local authority has a duty to provide the learner with free transport to and from their nearest suitable school, but only if the learner is attending their nearest suitable school. If a learner does not attend their nearest suitable school and if the walking route is not 'available' the local authority is not required to provide free transport.
- 1.64 It is recommended that assessment of walking distances and routes to school be carried out by local authorities in accordance with:
- the risk assessment procedure outlined in Chapter 5 of this document

⁵⁶ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/56/section/9>

- the Health and Safety Executive guidance and other relevant legislation governing health and safety provision⁵⁷

Further advice on when risk assessments should be undertaken is provided in Section 3 (Question 2) of this document.

Transport for Learners Not in Compulsory Education or Training

Post-16 Learners

- 1.65 Section 2 of the Measure requires local authorities to assess, the travel needs of all learners under the age of 19 who receive education or training and who are ordinarily resident in the authority's area. This includes those who have reached 19 but started a course when under 19 and continue to attend that course.
- 1.66 There is no statutory duty for a local authority to provide free transport to post 16 learners who continue their studies in mainstream further education or training.
- 1.67 There is no statutory duty on a local authority to provide free transport to a learner with a disability or learning difficulty in post-16 further education or training. Although in assessing learner travel needs under section 2(4) of the Measure, a local authority "must have regard in particular" to the needs of learners who are disabled or with learning difficulties. Further information on transport costs for children with statements is provided at 8.87 to 8.90 of the SEN Code of Practice for Wales⁵⁸.
- 1.68 Section 6 of the Measure provides local authorities with the power to provide discretionary transport arrangements for post-16 learners. Further information on discretionary transport provisions is provided in Chapter 1 paragraphs 1.98 – 1.105.
- 1.69 The Measure repeals Section 509AA of the Education Act 1996 so local authorities in Wales are no longer required to publish a separate transport policy statement for learners of sixth form age. However, under the Learner Travel Information (Wales) Regulations 2009⁵⁹, local authorities are required to include information on post-16 learners' travel provisions within the information they publish about general arrangements and policies in respect of home to school learner travel. Further information on the Learner Travel Information (Wales) Regulations 2009 is provided in Chapter 3 paragraphs 3.1 -3.6.

⁵⁷ <http://www.hse.gov.uk/workplacetransport/separating.htm>

⁵⁸ <http://learning.wales.gov.uk/resources/special-education-needs-code-of-practice/?lang=en>

⁵⁹ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2009/569/contents/made>

1.70 Children Under 5 Years of Age (Nursery).

Section 2(1) of the Measure requires local authorities to assess the travel needs of learners who are under the compulsory school age (under five years of age), attending nursery education⁶⁰ and who are ordinarily resident in the authority's area.

- 1.71 There is no statutory duty for a local authority to provide free transport to any nursery learner who is under five years of age.
- 1.72 Section 6 of the Measure provides local authorities with the power to provide discretionary transport arrangements for learners under the age of five who attend nursery. Further information on discretionary transport provisions are provided in Chapter 1 paragraphs 1.98 – 1.105.
- 1.73 Under the Learner Travel Information (Wales) Regulations 2009, local authorities are required to include information about nursery learners' travel provisions within the information they publish on general arrangements and policies in respect of home to school learner travel. Further information on the Learner Travel Information (Wales) Regulations 2009 is provided in Chapter 3 paragraphs 3.1 -3.6)

Welsh Medium / English Medium Education

- 1.74 When deciding which schools are most suitable for learners in their area, local authorities and Welsh Ministers have a duty under Section 10 of the Measure to 'promote access to education and training through the medium of Welsh'.
- 1.75 Section 6 of the Measure provides local authorities with the power to provide discretionary transport arrangements for learners who are not attending their nearest suitable school because of language preference. Further information regarding discretionary transport provision is provided in Chapter 1 paragraphs 1.98– 1.105.
- 1.76 Authorities should make clear in their school admissions documents their policy on providing free or assisted travel to schools teaching through the medium of Welsh or English. Preference for either language should be treated equally. Authorities should also take into

⁶⁰ This provision covers all children aged under 5 (those aged 3 and 4) who receive education in any school or nursery setting whether the learning establishment is maintained or non-maintained.

account the authority's Welsh Language Scheme⁶¹ and Welsh in Education Strategy Plan (WESP)⁶²

- 1.77 Under the Learner Travel Information (Wales) Regulations 2009, local authorities are required to include information about learners' travel provisions with regard to accessing Welsh and English medium schools. This information must be included within the information they publish about general arrangements and policies in respect of home to school travel. Information on the Learner Travel Information (Wales) Regulations 2009 is provided in Chapter 3 paragraphs 3.1 -3.6.
- 1.78 The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 places a duty on local authorities in Wales⁶³ to prepare a Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) for their area. A WESP sets out a local authority's proposals on how it will carry out its education functions to:
- improve the planning of the provision of education through the medium of Welsh ("Welsh medium education") in its area
 - improve the standards of Welsh medium education and of the teaching of Welsh in its area
- 1.79 In setting out how this will be delivered travel of learners to access this provision may need to be taken into account and incorporated into the plan.

Transport to Denominational Schools

- 1.80 Under current school transport legislation, a learner is entitled to free transport to a denominational school if that school is considered by the local authority to be the learner's nearest suitable school, Section 6 of the Measure provides local authorities with the power to provide discretionary transport arrangements for learners who are not attending their nearest suitable school because of denominational preference. Further information regarding discretionary transport provision is provided in Chapter 1 paragraphs 1.98 – 1.105.
- 1.81 Paragraph 1 of the Schedule to the Learner Travel Information (Wales) Regulations 2009 (SI 2009/569)⁶⁴ requires local authorities to make clear in their school admissions documents their policy on providing free or assisted travel to denominational schools.

⁶¹ From November 2014 Welsh Language Schemes will be replaced by Welsh Language Standards. In accordance with the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.
<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/publications/guidance/welshmededstrat/?lang=en>

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⁶²

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/publications/guidance/welshmededstrat/?lang=en>

ⁿ
⁶³

Section 84 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/anaw/2013/1/section/84/enacted>

⁶⁴ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2009/569/contents/made>

- 1.82 Under the Learner Travel Information (Wales) Regulations 2009, local authorities are required to include information about learners' travel provisions to denominational schools. This information should be included within the information they publish about general arrangements and policies in respect of home to school travel. Information on the Learner Travel Information (Wales) Regulations 2009 is provided in Chapter 3 paragraphs 3.1 -3.6.

Special Educational Needs (SEN), Disabilities and Learning Difficulties

- 1.83 Under Sections 2 (4) (a) and (4) (b) of the Measure a local authority must consider a learner's disabilities and learning difficulties when assessing the travel needs of learners in their area.
- 1.84 With regard to the provision of learner transport, when determining whether a child is attending their nearest suitable school, a local authority must take into account the suitability of that school by having regard to (amongst other things) any learning difficulties the learner may have, irrespective of whether the learner has a SEN statement⁶⁵. The definition of "learning difficulty" within the Measure⁶⁶ includes reference to any disability the learner may have which either prevents or hinders that person from using facilities provided at a school or other educational establishment.
- 1.85 Under Section 3 of the Measure if an independent school named in a statement for a child⁶⁷ or a non-maintained special school is determined to be a learner's nearest suitable school and the learner meets the eligibility criteria for free transport a local authority is required to provide free home to school transport provision for the learner.
- 1.86 The transport arrangements for a learner with SEN will depend on their individual circumstances and the route they must travel. Under Section 4 of the Measure, if a learner of compulsory school age cannot walk (accompanied or unaccompanied) to their nearest suitable school, because of a disability or learning difficulty which they have, even if the distance to their nearest suitable school is less than the statutory limit for their age group, section 4 of the Measure places a duty on local authorities to make suitable travel arrangements for that child. The local authority will need to consider what arrangements are appropriate to facilitate the learners attendance at school in accordance with their learner travel policy.

⁶⁵ Section 3(6) of the Measure

⁶⁶ Section 24(1) of the Measure

⁶⁷ Under section 324 of the Education Act 1996.

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/56/section/324>

- 1.87 The Equality Act 2010⁶⁸ contains a number of duties which are relevant when local authorities are complying with their duties under the Measure.
- 1.88 The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010⁶⁹ places a duty on local authorities, when carrying out their powers and duties, *to have due regard* to the need to promote equality and opportunity for people with protected characteristics and to eliminate unlawful discrimination. The Measure specifically requires local authorities to have regard to any disability or learning difficulty of learners in making various assessments and decisions under it. However, this does not replace the need to also comply with the PSED in making assessments and decisions under the Measure. Therefore, local authorities should always consider whether there are any wider adverse impacts on protected groups of the assessments and decisions which they make under the Measure and, if there are, whether it would be appropriate to take steps to mitigate the effects of those.
- 1.89 Separately from the PSED, section 29(7) of the Equality Act 2010⁷⁰ places a duty on local authorities to make certain reasonable adjustments in relation to disability when providing services or carrying out public functions. An authority cannot charge for any reasonable adjustments it makes under this duty.
- 1.90 Section 4 of the Measure in effect creates a specific requirement for local authorities to adjust their travel arrangement provision so that if a child with a disability or learning difficulty lives closer to their nearest suitable school than the distances specified in section 3, but travel arrangements are necessary to facilitate the child's attendance at that school, the authority has a duty to make those arrangements.
- 1.91 However, the reasonable adjustments duty is still relevant to the nature of transport or travel arrangements which the local authority make under the Measure. The local authority should ensure that the arrangements they make allow disabled learners to benefit in the same way as those who are not disabled – for example, by ensuring that the transport provided is accessible and safe for the particular disabled learner.
- 1.92 Local Authorities have a duty to assess the travel needs of all learners under the age of 19 who receive education or training within their area⁷¹. Local authorities do not have a duty to provide free or subsidised school transport arrangements for learners over the age of 16, regardless of any additional learning needs they may have. Local authorities may use their discretionary powers in section 6 of the Measure to provide assistance if they wish. Section 9 of the Measure

⁶⁸ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>

⁶⁹ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/149>

⁷⁰ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/29>

⁷¹ Section 2(2) of the Measure.

places a duty on local authorities to ensure that transport arrangements must not favour certain types of education or training. Therefore if a local authority provides discretionary transport this provision should apply to all learners in similar circumstances within their authority area.

- 1.93 'The Special Educational Needs Code of Practice for Wales'⁷² sets out the issues to be considered by authorities when providing transport for learners with a SEN statement. An authority should review a learner's entitlement and transport needs on a regular basis, irrespective of whether or not the statement specifically includes transport provision.
- 1.94 It is recommended that local authorities have a clear and consistent policy on transport provision for pupils with SEN. Further information on this provision is provided in Section 3 (Questions 14 to 16).
- 1.95 As part of the procurement procedures for tendering, including where they are procuring transport which may be used for disabled learners, local authorities need to bear in mind their duties under the Data Protection Act 1998⁷³ in relation to personal data, including sensitive personal data⁷⁴. Tender documents should not identify learners to be transported or information that could be used to identify the learner.
- 1.96 It is recommended that local authorities work with schools and operators appropriately to ensure that the only information which is made available to operators about learners is that which it is necessary for the operators to have to ensure that appropriate transport provision for the learner can be made.
- 1.97 Further information on the provision of disclosure and barring of information is provided in Chapter 1 paragraphs 1.106 – 1.116 and Section 3 (Questions 19 – 22).

Discretionary Transport Arrangements

- 1.98 Section 6 of the Measure gives local authorities the power to make any arrangement they think fit to facilitate the travel of learners to and from a place where they receive education or training. The power applies in relation to a learner living or studying in the authority's area.
- 1.99 Discretionary travel provisions are not the same as statutory transport provisions⁷⁵. A local authority does not have to use their discretionary powers to provide free or assisted travel, if they do not think the provision is appropriate to facilitate the transport of learners within their authority.

⁷² Reprinted in January 2004 (ISBN 0 7504 2757 4) (paragraphs 8:87 to 8:90) [SEN code of practice].

⁷³ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/29/contents>

⁷⁴ http://www.ico.gov.uk/upload/documents/library/data_protection/practical_application/guidance_on_data_security_breach_management.pdf

⁷⁵ Statutory provisions are those which a local authority must provide to specific learners who meet the eligibility criteria entitling those learners to free transport.

- 1.100 Examples of when discretionary transport provision might be used include:
- Transport for learners who are not of compulsory school age (i.e. under the age of five attending nursery school or in post 16 education or training)
 - Transport for learners who are not attending their nearest suitable school
 - Transport for learners who live below the statutory distance limit relevant to the learner's age
- 1.101 If a local authority does make use of their Section 6 powers, in accordance with section 9 of the Measure, the authority must ensure that the policy applies to all learners in similar circumstances living in that authority's area. The local authority should ensure that any policy is fair, reasonable and complies with relevant equality legislation to ensure that they do not discriminate unlawfully between learners when using their section 6 powers.
- 1.102 Travel arrangements made by a local authority cannot discriminate between different categories of learners. Learners of compulsory school age, at establishments that are not maintained schools but do fall within Section 1(4) of the Measure as "other relevant places", must not be treated less favourably than learners of the same age at maintained schools⁷⁶. Other learners receiving full-time education or training at establishments which are not maintained schools (but do fall within Section 1(4) of the Measure) must not be treated less favourably than learners of the same age at maintained schools. Likewise there should be no discrimination between learners attending maintained schools and those of the same age with learning difficulties, a disability or who are 'looked after' by a local authority attending learning establishments other than maintained schools.
- 1.103 In accordance with the Learner Travel Information (Wales) Regulations 2009, local authorities must⁷⁷ publish information about their policies for providing discretionary travel within their learner travel policy. Further information on these Regulations is provided in Chapter 3 paragraphs 3.1 -3.6.
- 1.104 If a local authority chooses to make use of the Section 6 power to provide discretionary transport arrangements, the local authority also has the power to remove this provision at a later date. In doing this the authority should follow the correct procedures for withdrawal of transport provision in line with their relevant policy protocols, for instance, public consultation.

⁷⁶ Section 9 of the Measure

⁷⁷ Regulation 4 of the Learner Travel Information (Wales) Regulations 2009

- 1.105 If a local authority decides to change or remove the discretionary transport provision it provides, it must publish⁷⁸ the information before 1 October of the year preceding the academic year in which the changes will come into force in accordance with the Learner Travel Information Regulations 2009.

The Disclosure and Barring Arrangements.

- 1.106 The Protection of Freedoms Act 2012⁷⁹ (the '2012 Act') sets out the new pre-employment vetting processes that must be followed by local authorities and education providers when checking the records of people who want to work with vulnerable groups this includes children, to ensure they are suitable and do not pose a risk.
- 1.107 The new disclosure and barring arrangements came into force on 10 September 2012. For individuals who do not work in regulated activity, but work (paid or unpaid) with children and vulnerable people, employers can, but are not required to, obtain criminal records checks.
- 1.108 In December 2012, the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) and the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) merged and are now called the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)⁸⁰. CRB checks are now called DBS checks.
- 1.109 The DBS helps employers make safer recruitment decisions and prevent unsuitable people from working with children and vulnerable groups, through its criminal record checking and barring functions:
- 1.110 The checking service allows employers to access the criminal record history of people working, or seeking to work with children or adults. The DBS issues three types of disclosure, each representing a different level of check. The level of check is determined by the duties of the particular position or job involved. Jobs that involve caring for, supervising or being in sole charge of children or adults require an enhanced DBS check.
- 1.111 The barring side of the DBS provides expert caseworkers who process referrals about individuals who have harmed or pose a risk of harm to children and/or vulnerable groups. They make decisions about who should be placed on the children's barred list and/or adults barred list and prevented them by law from working with children or vulnerable groups. It is against the law for employers to employ someone or allow them to volunteer in this kind of work if they are on one of the barred lists.

⁷⁸ In accordance with regulation 4 of the Learner Travel Information (Wales) Regulations 2009 (SI 2009/569) <http://www.assemblywales.org/sub-ld8637-e.pdf>

⁷⁹ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2012/9/contents/enacted>

⁸⁰ <https://www.gov.uk/disclosure-barring-service-check/overview>

1.112 The DBS will only issue certificates to applicants. Employers will need to ask applicants for sight of their DBS Certificate. Someone who is aged under 16 cannot apply for a DBS check.

New definition of 'Regulated Activity'

1.113 The DBS only covers those who may have regular or close contact with children and vulnerable adults, defined as 'Regulated Activity' in legislation. Importantly for schools and FE colleges, the definition and scope of Regulated Activity with children has changed. Being clear about the definition of Regulated Activity is important because:

- Roles that fall within the new definition of Regulated Activity will require an enhanced DBS check and the appropriate barred list check (for children, adults or both)
- An organisation which knowingly allows a barred person to work in regulated activity will be breaking the law
- If you dismiss or remove someone from regulated activity (or you would have done had they not already left) because they harmed or posed a risk of harm to vulnerable groups including children, you are legally required to forward information about that person to the DBS (known as the 'duty to refer'). It is a criminal offence not to do so. If you believe that the person has committed a criminal offence, you are also strongly advised to pass the information to the police.

1.114 Regulated Activity⁸¹ (i.e. work that a barred person must not do) in relation to children can be summarised as unsupervised activity in a limited range of establishments with the opportunity for contact with children. These specified establishments include schools, children's homes, childcare premises and pre-school establishments.

1.115 Under the new disclosure and barring arrangements the scope of Regulated Activity includes unsupervised activities such as driving a vehicle only for children (dedicated learner transport).

1.116 In addition, in order to be regarded as Regulated Activity such unsupervised activity performed must be done frequently. 'Frequently' means carried out by the same person frequently (once a week or more often), or on more than three⁸² days in a 30 day period (or in some cases, between the hours of 2am and 6am)

Vehicle Standards

1.117 Vehicles used for learner transport are required to comply with UK road safety and transport legislation requirements. Local authorities and

⁸¹ Section 5 and Schedule 4, Part 1 of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/47/schedule/4>

⁸² Amended by SI 2010/1154 The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (Regulated Activity, Devolution, Miscellaneous Provisions) Order 2010.
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/1154/contents/made>

Governing Bodies of Maintained schools should liaise with the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) (Formerly the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA))⁸³, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE)⁸⁴ and the Traffic Commissioner⁸⁵ about any concerns they have about suspected breaches of legal standards.

- 1.118 Local authorities should put in place robust monitoring and evaluation procedures to ensure that current legislation requirements are clearly set out in their contracts and are met. This includes the provision that by 1 October 2014, seat belts must be fitted to every seat on dedicated buses used to transport learners to and from school (Safety on Learner Transport (Wales) Measure 2011). Further information on the Safety on Learner Transport (Wales) Measure 2011 and seat belt provision is provided in Chapter 4 paragraphs 4.6 – .4.22.

Licensing and Training of Bus Drivers

- 1.119 In 2008 under the Vehicle Drivers (Certificates of Professional Competence) Regulations 2007⁸⁶ the Driving Standards Association (DSA) required that by 10 September 2013 all coach and bus drivers in the UK must have a 'Driver Certificate of Professional Competence' (CPC)⁸⁷. To obtain a CPC, a driver must complete a minimum of 35 hours periodic driver training within a 5 year period⁸⁸. Once a driver has successfully completed the CPC training, they will be issued with a 'Driver Qualification Card' (DQC), which they will need to keep with them when driving professionally. The CPC and DQC will need to be renewed every 5 years, therefore a bus or coach driver will need to undertake 35 hours (minimum) of driver training over the next 5 year time period (2013-2018) to qualify for renewal. The DSA has agreed a 'one off arrangement' that dual category drivers (meaning drivers of both bus and coaches and lorries) once having completed their initial September 2013 training deadline, will have 6 years to undertake their next block of training – meaning this training session will need to be completed between September 2013 and September 2019.
- 1.120 There is currently no legal requirement that the bus and coach or dual category CPC training has to include a specific learner transport training module for drivers who work on buses or coaches used for learner travel. Further guidance on driver training is provided in Section 3 (Question 3)

⁸³ Further information about the DVSA and VOSA are provided in the glossary (Section 2) and Section 3 (Question 23)

⁸⁴ <http://www.hse.gov.uk/>

⁸⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/traffic-commissioners>

⁸⁶ derived from EU Directive 2003/59/EC on the initial qualification and periodic training of drivers of certain road vehicles for the carriage of goods and passengers.

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2007/605/contents/made>

⁸⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/driver-certificate-of-professional-competence-cpc>

⁸⁸ In 2009, CPC for lorry drivers was also introduced, with a requirement that by 10 September 2014 a lorry driver will be required to have completed a minimum of 35 hours driver training to obtain a CPC certificate.

Change in School Session Times

- 1.121 Section 11 of the Measure requires local authorities and the Welsh Ministers to promote the use of sustainable modes of travel when exercising their functions under the Measure. This means that a local authority should consider sustainability when assessing needs and making travel arrangements.
- 1.122 Section 21 of the Measure amends Section 32 of the Education Act 2002 to allow local authorities to issue a notice to governing bodies of certain schools to change school session times where it would promote sustainable modes of travel or improve the effectiveness or efficiency of travel arrangements. The Changing of School Session Times (Wales) Regulations 2009⁸⁹ set out the procedures to follow when the local authority intends to change school session times.
- 1.123 Section 32 of the Education Act 2002⁹⁰, as amended by the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008, sets out who is responsible for determining:
- the dates of school terms
 - school holidays
 - the times of school sessions
- 1.124 For foundation, voluntary aided and foundation special schools, the governing body determines the above⁹¹. For community, voluntary controlled, community special schools and maintained nursery schools, the governing body determines the times of school sessions and the local education authority determines the dates of the school terms and holidays⁹².
- 1.125 Where a local authority considers that a change in a school's session times is necessary or expedient in order to promote the use of sustainable modes of travel, or improve the effectiveness or efficiency of travel arrangements made or to be made, it can give written notice to the governing body that they will determine the time the school's first session begins and its second session ends (or if there is only one session, its start and end⁹³).
- 1.126 Regulation 3 of the Changing of School Session Times (Wales) Regulations 2009 sets out the procedures to be taken by the local education authority when it proposes to change the session times of a community school, voluntary controlled school, community special

⁸⁹ <http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-guide-docs-pub/bus-business-documents/bus-business-documents-doc-laid.htm?act=dis&id=119939&ds=4/2009>

⁹⁰ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/section/32>

⁹¹ Section 32(2) Education Act 2002

⁹² section 32(1) Education Act 2002

⁹³ section 32(5) to (9) Education Act 2002

school, maintained nursery school, foundation school, voluntary aided school or foundation special school.

These procedures include:

- Consulting with the governing body; head teacher and other staff at the school
- Holding a meeting with the parents and pupils at the school
- Giving at least three months notice of the change and when it is to take effect.

1.127 In accordance with the Learner Travel Information (Wales) Regulations 2009, any changes to learner travel arrangements, which occur as a result of amendments to school session times must⁹⁴ be made available and published by 1 October preceding the academic year to which the information relates.

1.128 Regulation 4 of the Changing of School Session Times (Wales) Regulations 2009 sets out the procedures to be taken by a governing body of a community, voluntary controlled, community special school or maintained nursery school when it proposes to make changes to school session times.

1.129 Governing bodies must⁹⁵ consult with the local authority and school staff, prepare a statement outlining the changes and hold a meeting with the parents of pupils at the school before making a change. This regulation does not apply to foundation, voluntary aided and foundation special schools. If the change is to the time that a school session begins in the morning or ends in the afternoon, the governing body must give at least three months' notice of the change and the change must only take effect at the beginning of a school year. Otherwise it must give at least six weeks' notice, and the change can only take effect at the beginning of a school term.

Charging for Transport

1.130 Local authorities may not charge for transport arrangements that it is required to make for learners of compulsory school age under Section 3 and 4 of the Measure, except in relation to looked after children where the authority making the travel arrangements for a child who is looked after by another authority. In these cases it can recoup costs from the placing local authority (under section 18 of the Measure).

1.131 When a local authority uses its section 6 powers to provide discretionary travel arrangements for learners not entitled to free transport provision, a charge can be made for these arrangements.

⁹⁴ Regulation 4 of the Learner Travel Information (Wales) Regulations 2009.

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2009/569/contents/made>

⁹⁵ Regulation 4 of the Changing of School Session Times (Wales) Regulations 2009.
<http://www.assemblywales.org/sub-ld7424-e.pdf>

- 1.132 For learners who are not of compulsory school age, there is no restriction on charging. With regard to learners of compulsory school age, charging must be in accordance with Section 455 and 456 of the Education Act 1996⁹⁶ (as amended by Section 22 of the Measure⁹⁷). Further information on this provision is provided in Section 3 (Question 26).
- 1.133 Section 6 of the Transport Act 1985⁹⁸ provides for the compulsory registration of local bus services with the Traffic Commissioner. Local Education Authorities must register all services carrying fare paying passengers under section 6 of the 1985 Act. Under Section 46 of the Public Passenger Vehicles Act 1981⁹⁹, a local authority can use a school bus to carry fare paying passengers when it is (or is not) being used to carry children entitled to free school transport. Contracted operators must register any services where learners not entitled to free learner transport are carried on payment of a fare.

General Powers

- 1.134 Under Section 15 of the Measure Welsh Ministers have the power to give guidance and directions. When exercising any of their functions under the Measure, local authorities and governing bodies of maintained schools and further education institutions must have regard to guidance issued by the Welsh Ministers.
- 1.135 Welsh Ministers may also issue a direction under section 15 to require authorities to make learner travel arrangements under sections 3, 4 or 6 of the Measure. Such directions can be given to one or more local authorities or local authorities generally. It allows Welsh Ministers to direct on individual cases or on general policy matters. The power may be exercised irrespective of whether a local authority is in default of its duties. It does not take the place of, or affect, the more general powers of direction that Welsh Ministers have under sections 496-497A of the Education Act 1996¹⁰⁰.
- 1.136 The Welsh Government has no functions in relation to vehicle standards, inspection, enforcement or licensing of vehicles or drivers. These matters are the responsibility of the UK Government.

Other Legal Considerations.

- 1.137 Local authorities and governing bodies of maintained schools are also required to take the following into account:

⁹⁶ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/56/section/455>

⁹⁷ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/mwa/2008/2>

⁹⁸ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1985/67/section/6>

⁹⁹ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1981/14>

¹⁰⁰ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/56/part/IX/chapter/II/crossheading/general-functions>

Equality and human rights legislation and policy such as:

- Equality Act 2010 -
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>
- Welsh Language Act 1993 -
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1993/38/contents>
- Human Rights Act 1998. -
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/42/contents>
- Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 -
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/mwa/2011/1/contents>
- Data Protection Act 1998 -
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/29/contents>
- Protections of Freedom Act 2012 -
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2012/9/contents>
- Children Act 1989 -
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents>
- Children Act 2004 -
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/31/contents>
- United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) -
<https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/creating-a-fairer-and-more-equal-society/supporting-pages/the-united-nations-convention-on-the-rights-of-the-child-uncrc>
- Rights of Children and Young People (Wales) Measure 2011 -
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/mwa/2011/2/contents>
- Children's Rights Scheme 2014
<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/childrenyoungpeople/rights/uncrc/?lang=en>
- Children and Young Persons Plan (Wales) Measure 2007 -
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2007/2316/contents/made>
- Criminal Justice Act 2003 -
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2003/44/contents>

Health and safety legislation, policy and guidance such as:

- Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 -
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1974/37/contents>
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (SI 1999/3242) -
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1999/3242/contents/made>
- Workplace Health, Safety and Welfare Regulations 1992 (SI 1992/3004) =
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1992/3004/contents/made>
- Guidance in 'Workplace Transport Safety' (HSG 136), published by the Health and Safety Executive in 2005 -
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg136.htm>
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Group Act 2006 -
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/47/contents>
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (Regulated Activity, Devolution, Miscellaneous Provisions) Order 2010 -
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/1154/contents/made>

Social Service legislation, policy and guidance such as:

- Local Authority Social Service Act 1970 - <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1970/42/contents>
- Shared Planning for Better Outcomes Guidance 2007 <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/publications/guidance/sharedplanningforbetteroutcomes?lang=en#>
- Stronger Partnerships for Better Outcomes Guidance 2006 - <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/childrenyoungpeople/publications/strongerpartnerships/?lang=en>
- Social Service and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 - <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/anaw/2014/4/enacted>

Education legislation, policy and guidance such as:

- Education Acts (1996 and 2002) - <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/56/contents>
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents>
- Educations and Inspections Act 2006 - <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/40/contents>
- Learning and Skills Act 2000 - <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/21/contents>
- School Standards and Framework Act 1998 - <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/31/contents>
- School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 - <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/anaw/2013/1/contents/enacted>
- Special Educational Needs Code of Practice for Wales 2004 (reprint) - [http://www.ipsea.org.uk/AssetLibrary/Downloadable%20documents/specialeducationneedse\[1\].pdf](http://www.ipsea.org.uk/AssetLibrary/Downloadable%20documents/specialeducationneedse[1].pdf)
- Statutory School Organisation Code 2013 - <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/publications/guidance/school-organisation-code/?lang=en>
- Statutory School Admissions Code 2013 - <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/publications/guidance/schooladmission/?lang=en>
- Statutory School Admissions Appeals Code 2013 - <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/publications/guidance/schooladmission/?lang=en>
- Welsh in Education Strategy Plan and Assessing Demand for Welsh-medium Education (Wales) Regulations 2013 - <http://www.assemblywales.org/sub-ld9585-e.pdf>
- Social Inclusion (Inclusion and Pupil Support) Guidance 2006 - <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/publications/circulars/2463797/?lang=en>
- Changing of School Session Times (Wales) Regulations 2009 - <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2009/572/contents/made>
- Education (Start of Compulsory School Age) Order 1998 - <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1998/1607/contents/made>
- The Education (school leaving date) Order 1997 - <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1997/1970/contents/made>

Transport legislation, policy and guidance such as:

- Transport Act 1985 -
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1985/67/contents>
- Public Passenger Vehicles Act 1981 -
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1981/14/contents>
- Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986 (SI 1986/1078) -
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1986/1078/contents/made>
- Motor Vehicles (Wearing of Seat Belts) Regulations 1993/176 -
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1993/176/contents/made>
- Road Traffic Reduction (National Targets) Act 1998 -
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/24/contents>
- The Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 -
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/mwa/2008/2/contents>
- The Learner Travel Information (Wales) Regulations 2009 -
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2009/569/contents/made>
- Travel Behaviour Code Statutory Guidance 2009 -
<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/transport/integrated/learnertravel/travelcode/tbcstatutoryguidance/?lang=en>
- The Travel Code - <http://wales.gov.uk/travelcode>
- Active Travel (Wales) Act 2014 -
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/anaw/2013/7/contents/enacted>
- Vehicle Drivers (Certificates of Professional Competence) Regulations 2007 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2007/605/contents/made>
- Safety on Learner Transport (Wales) Measure 2011 -
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/mwa/2011/6/contents>
- Guidance on Home to School Transport Risk Assessment 2009 (Welsh Government publication) -
<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/transport/integrated/learnertravel/hometoschooltransport/?lang=en>

Section 1: Statutory Provisions.

Chapter 2: The All-Wales Travel Behaviour Code.

Overview

- 2.1. The Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 (“the Measure”) places a legal duty¹⁰¹ on the Welsh Ministers to make a Travel Behaviour Code and to publish it. The statutory All Wales Travel Behaviour Code (the “Travel Code¹⁰²”) was introduced by section 12 of the Measure and has been in operation since January 2010.
- 2.2. The Travel Code sets out learners’ responsibilities when travelling. It is accompanied by statutory guidance issued under section 15 of the 2008 Measure, which provides advice on how to ensure, as far as reasonably practicable, a safe journey and describes the rights of learners when travelling.
- 2.3. The purpose of the Travel Code and associated Guidance is to promote safety when travelling, by laying down a set of behavioural standards across Wales, for all learners. The Guidance outlines the procedures local authorities, governing bodies and head teachers must adhere to under the Travel Code.
- 2.4. The Travel Code is divided into two Sections. Section one applies to behaviour when travelling on all modes of transport (i.e. buses, trains, cycling, walking, passengers in a parent’s or other person’s car or any other mode of travel). Section two covers behaviour specific to bus travel and is known as the “Bus Travel Code”. The latter provides additional instruction on behavioural requirements for learners travelling on buses to and from school.
- 2.5. The Travel Code supersedes all other learner travel codes of conduct used by local authorities prior to the Travel Code’s introduction. However local authorities may wish to publish supplementary travel information and policies in accordance with the Travel Code provided that they do not contradict the statutory provisions outlined within the Travel Code.
- 2.6. The Travel Code sets out specific requirements regarding the behavioural conduct of learners. It outlines a set of common behaviour standards which apply to all modes of travel by learners irrespective of whether the travel is provided by a local authority, governing body or other modes of travel or transport used by learners (such as taxis, public buses, trains, bicycles, walking, parents’ cars or any other modes of travel).

¹⁰¹ Section 12 of the Measure

¹⁰² <http://wales.gov.uk/topic/transport/publications/travelbehaviourcode/?lang=en>

- 2.7. It is a compulsory code of conduct for all learners under the age of 19 years (or who have reached 19 but started a course when under 19 and continue to attend that course)¹⁰³.
- 2.8. It is recommended that local authorities, education institutions, parents, train and bus service operators, taxi and other contracted operators in Wales promote awareness and understanding of and compliance with the Travel Code. (Further information regarding parents' and schools' responsibilities in relation to the Travel Code are provided in Chapter 6 paragraph 6.10 and Chapter 7 paragraphs 7.2 – 7.5 (respectively) and Section 3 Questions 13, 29 and 31).
- 2.9. Section 12 of the Measure states that the Travel Code applies to home to school journeys and journeys undertaken between places of learning during the day¹⁰⁴.
- 2.10. The Travel Code statutory guidance¹⁰⁵ sets out a framework for the sanctions regime within the Travel Code and provides for the removal of free or subsidised transport for set periods of time if a learner misbehaves on learner transport.
- 2.11. Welsh Ministers have a statutory duty to review the Travel Code from time to time¹⁰⁶. Prior to reviewing the Travel Code, Welsh Ministers must consult such persons as they consider appropriate, for example, local authorities, schools and learners¹⁰⁷.

Enforcement of the Travel Code - Sanctions¹⁰⁸

- 2.12. Where a local authority is under a duty (under Section 3 and 4 of the Measure) to provide transport, it must follow the requirements set out in Section 14 of the Measure, before withdrawing transport provision, namely:
- Be satisfied that the learner has failed to comply with the travel behaviour code (table below)

¹⁰³ Section 89(2A) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 provides that head teachers must include the Travel Code within their behaviour policy and ensure compliance with the Travel Code. <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/40/section/89>

¹⁰⁴ Such as travel to attend courses in line with the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009 (14-19 Pathways) - Further information on the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009 is provided in Section 3 (Question 28).

¹⁰⁵

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/transport/integrated/learnertravel/travelcode/tbcstatutoryguidance/?lang=en>

¹⁰⁶ This duty is set out in Section 12(4) of the Measure.

¹⁰⁷ Section 12(6) of the Measure.

¹⁰⁸ Guidance about the recommended procedures for enforcing sanctions with relation to the Travel Code are provided in Section 3 (Question 29).

Your Responsibility	Your Safety	Your Rights
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Always respect others including other learners, drivers and the public ● Always respect vehicles and property ● Always be polite ● Never drop litter ● Always obey the law 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Always behave well when travelling ● Always follow the driver's instructions when travelling ● You must not distract the drivers ● Always cross the road safely and sensibly ● Always travel by a safe route 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To be safe when travelling ● To be treated fairly and with respect ● To tell someone if somebody is causing you problems ● Not to be bullied or picked on

and that the following conditions applicable to the learner are met:

- 1. Provide the learner and the parent of the learner with an opportunity to make representations and take those representations into account
- 2. Consult with the head teacher of the school or relevant place of learning at which the learner is a registered pupil, and give the head teacher notice of the decision at least 24 hours before the withdrawal takes place.
- 3. Ensure that the decision to withdraw transport arrangements is reasonable in the circumstances. In determining whether this is the case, the local authority must take the following matters into account:
 - whether the period of withdrawal of transport is proportionate in the circumstances of the case
 - whether there are any special circumstances relevant to the withdrawal of travel arrangements which are known to the local authority (or of which the authority ought to be aware of) including:
 - the learner's age
 - any special educational needs the learner may have;
 - any disability the learner may have
 - whether the learner would lose an opportunity to take a public examination and
 - whether suitable alternative arrangements can be reasonably made by the learner's parents.
- 4. Give the learner's parents at least 24 hours notice before the withdrawal of transport provision takes place (Chapter 6 – 'Parental Responsibilities' paragraph 6.10 explains the parental obligations regarding what provisions must be put in place where transport is removed)
- 5. Ensure the period of withdrawal of transport provision does not exceed 10 consecutive schools days.

- 6. Ensure that the period of withdrawal would not result in the learner having travel arrangements withdrawn for more than 30 school days in the school year in which the withdrawal takes effect.

2.13. The Measure provides Welsh Ministers with the power to make regulations to¹⁰⁹:

- Change the number of days for which transport can be withdrawn
- Specify the categories of person who may appeal
- Specify the circumstances in which appeals can be made
- Specify the constitution of appeal panels
- Specify the appeals procedures
- Make provisions for appeals against withdrawal of transport
- Make provisions for reviews of the decision to withdraw transport
- Make provision about the effect of appeal decisions
- Provide for payment of allowances to members of appeal panels
- Require information about appeals to be made available.

2.14. Where a learner has special educational needs, local authorities should consider what constitutes reasonable steps, as detailed in this document. The Special Educational Needs Code of Practice for Wales¹¹⁰ and sections 2 and 3 of the National Assembly for Wales Circular 47/2009 – Inclusion and Pupil Support¹¹¹ guidance provide further guidance on dealing with misbehaviour for disabled learners and those with learning difficulties.

Publication of Local Authority Travel Codes

2.15. Local authorities are under a duty to publish the Travel Code in accordance with section 12(5) of the Measure and the requirements within the Learner Travel Information (Wales) Regulations 2009¹¹². Chapter 3 paragraphs 3.1 -3.6 provide further information on what provisions needs to be covered by these Regulations.

Raising Awareness of Issues

2.16. School Councils have a key role to play and in particular could usefully raise the issue of bullying each year and discuss the progress that has been made in taking forward action to address the issue. In doing so, this would be in accordance with article 12 of the UNCRC which states children should have their opinions taken into account when adults make decisions that affect them¹¹³

¹⁰⁹ Section 14(15) of the Measure.
¹¹⁰

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/publications/guidance/specialedneedscoop/?lang=en>

¹¹¹ <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/publications/circulars/2463797/?lang=en>

¹¹² Paragraph 4, Schedule 1 to the 2009 Regulations

¹¹³ <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/childreneyoungpeople/rights/uncrc/?lang=en>

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Chapter 3: The Learner Travel Information (Wales) Regulations 2009

Publication of School Transport Policies and Information for Parents

- 3.1. The Learner Travel Information (Wales) Regulations 2009¹¹⁴ (“the 2009 Regulations”) replace paragraphs 8, 19 and 20 of Schedule 1 to the Education (School Information)(Wales) Regulations 1997¹¹⁵. The Regulations require local authorities to publish and make available information on travel arrangements made under the Measure. They set out not only what information local authorities are required to publish but also when and how the information should be published and made available to parents, learners, governing bodies, head teachers and/or other persons.
- 3.2. Travel arrangements for learners during the school day (e.g. travel to attend courses at other places of learning such as those as a consequence of the (14-19) Learning Pathways Programme) are not covered by the Regulations and are not subject to these provisions.
- 3.3. In addition to the Travel Behaviour Code, local authorities are required under the 2009 Regulations to publish the following information:-
- the general policy on providing free transport
 - the general policy on any travel arrangements made for learners for whom free transport is not provided
 - the circumstances that payment of reasonable travelling expenses will be made
 - arrangements and policies in relation to learners with learning difficulties/disabilities
 - information on how to make enquiries/complaints about travel arrangements, and any local authority appeals procedure
 - any other information that the local authority considers would be useful for learners in its area about travel arrangements made by other organisations.
- 3.4. The information must be made available by the 1 October preceding the academic year to which the information relates¹¹⁶. The information must be made available¹¹⁷:-
- on the local authority website

¹¹⁴ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2009/569/contents/made>

¹¹⁵ S.I. 1997/1832.

¹¹⁶ Regulation 4(2) of the 2009 Regulations.

¹¹⁷ Regulation 4(3) of the 2009 Regulations.

- to parents without charge on request and made available for reference by parents and other persons at:
 - the local authority's offices; and
 - every school maintained by the local authority
- public libraries
- any other relevant place which learners in the area may consider attending
- distributed to parents of pupils who are in the final year of school and may transfer to another school maintained by that authority. (The local authority only needs to give the information that is relevant to the school to which the pupil may transfer)

3.5. Local authorities must also provide free of charge¹¹⁸ and on request from a governing body, a head teacher, a parent of a child or any other learner in the local authority area the following information:-

- information relating to the assessment of learner travel needs under section 2 of the Measure
- information relating to decisions as to the suitability of transport or travel arrangements where the local authority has a duty to make travel arrangement
- information relating to decisions as to whether a route is 'available'
- information relating to decisions as to whether travel arrangements are necessary to facilitate the attendance of the child each day at the relevant place where the child receives education or training (section 4(1) of the Measure)
- information relating to decisions to make travel arrangements using their discretionary powers (section 6 of the Measure).

3.6. Parents should be able to understand their options and any cost implications of the choice of school they make for their child. Accordingly it is recommended that local authorities provide parents with information about transport arrangements alongside, or as part of, the information made available about school admissions. (Further information on school admission criteria and publication of admission arrangements is provided in section 2.2, 2.11 and 2.12 of the Statutory School Admissions Code 2013¹¹⁹)

¹¹⁸ Regulation 5 of the 2009 Regulations.

¹¹⁹

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/publications/guidance/schooladmission/?lang=en>

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Chapter 4: The Safety on Learner Transport (Wales) Measure 2011

Overview

- 4.1. The Safety on Learner Transport (Wales) Measure 2011¹²⁰ (“the 2011 Measure”) makes amendments to the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008. The purpose of those amendments is to enhance the safety of all learners, as far as reasonably practicable, on dedicated transport used for learner travel.
- 4.2. The 2011 Measure incorporates into the Measure a number of provisions about vehicle specification used for dedicated learner transport.
- 4.3. The 2011 Measure also introduces criminal offences and penalties to be used for breaches of requirements imposed under the Measure¹²¹.
- 4.4. To date the only provision introduced by the 2011 Measure to have been enacted is the requirement that every bus used for dedicated learner transport to and from school, which has been secured by a local authority or governing body of a maintained school must have seat belts fitted to every passenger seat by 1 October 2014.
- 4.5. Other provisions introduced by the 2011 Measure which have not been enacted to date include:
 - the recording of visual images or sound on dedicated learner transport;
 - safety risk assessments of dedicated learner transport;
 - driver training (specific for dedicated learner transport);
 - Supervisors on dedicated learner transport;
 - powers of entry and inspection of vehicles or premises owned or controlled by relevant bodies for the use of dedicated learner transport.

Seat Belt Provision.

- 4.6. This section describes the statutory requirements in relation to seat belt provision for learner transport, which is governed by Welsh, UK and EU legislation.

Legislation Governing Seat Belt Provision before 1 October 2014

¹²⁰ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/mwa/2011/6/contents/enacted>

¹²¹ This provision includes the use of criminal and civil sanctions.

4.7. The requirements for the installation of seat belts are set by the Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986¹²² (as amended). Seat belts must be fitted in all minibuses¹²³. Seat belts must also be fitted in coaches (defined as a large bus with a maximum gross weight of more than 7.5 tonnes and with a maximum speed exceeding 60 mph first used on or after 1 October 1988¹²⁴). Buses with a gross vehicle weight exceeding 3500kg and first used on or after 1 October 2001 must have seatbelts fitted to every forward and rearward facing seat¹²⁵.

Legislation Governing Seat Belt Provision after 1 October 2014

4.8. The 2011 Measure requires relevant bodies¹²⁶ to ensure that every bus used for dedicated learner transport¹²⁷ has a seat belt fitted to every passenger seat used on or after 1 October 2014.

4.9. Buses not procured by a local authority or governing body for the purpose of home to school transport will be exempt from this requirement, even where learners use these vehicles in travelling to and from home and school.

4.10. The seat belt provision applies to all buses used for dedicated learner transport between home and school, including public service buses¹²⁸ if they are used for any dedicated learner transport services, even if the majority of their journeys are non dedicated learner transport service routes.

4.11. Passenger seats of double deck buses used for dedicated learner transport on or after 1 October 2014 must also be fitted with seat belts in the same way as single deck vehicles.

The Wearing of Seat Belts

4.12. The wearing of seat belts is governed by the Road Traffic Act 1988 (as amended) ("the 1988 Act"). The 1988 Act requires seated passengers aged 14 years or older in a bus or coach to use a seat belt if one is installed.

4.13. In relation to passengers under the age of 14, the driver of a vehicle is responsible for making sure that those passengers are wearing seat belts¹²⁹.

¹²² <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/1986/1078/made>

¹²³ Regulation 3 of the 1986 regulations defines a minibus as a vehicle adapted to carry more than 8 but not more than 16 passengers in addition to the driver.

¹²⁴ Regulation 3 of the Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986 (as amended).

¹²⁵ Regulation 47 of the Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986 (as amended).

¹²⁶ Statutory definition of 'relevant body' are each of the following 'a local authority' and or 'a governing body of a maintained school' as stated in section 14N of the 2011 Measure.

¹²⁷ Section 3 (Questions 35 and 36) sets out which vehicles are not covered by the 2011 Measure seat belt provision.

¹²⁸ Statutory definition of 'public service buses' is provided in the glossary (Section 2)

¹²⁹ section 15(3) Road Traffic Act 1988

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1988/52/section/15>

However, the drivers of the following types of vehicles are not bound by this requirement¹³⁰:

- Large buses – with 8 seats in addition to the driver
- Small buses – with fewer than 8 seats in addition to the driver and where seat belts are not available and
- Small buses – with fewer than 8 seats in addition to the driver and where the vehicle is being used for a local service within the meaning of the Transport Act 1985 (that is a public service vehicle carrying passengers by road at separate fares) or the vehicle is designed or adapted for standing passengers

4.14. Section 15B of the Road Traffic Act 1988 sets out that where a bus is fitted with seat belts, a bus operator must take all reasonable steps to ensure that all passengers are notified of the fact that it is a legal requirement to wear a fitted seat belt. Passengers may be notified that they must wear seat belts through any of the following ways:

- An official announcement by the bus driver, escort(s) or pupil;
- An audio visual presentation (made when pupils join the bus or within a reasonable time of doing so);
- A pictorial sign or text prominently displayed at each passenger seat equipped with a seat belt.

4.15. Those passengers with medical conditions may be exempt from wearing a seat belt, but must¹³¹ carry their certificate of exemption with them while travelling.

4.16. Bus operators who fail to provide the required notification face a fine of up to £2,500.

EU Legislation

4.17. EU Directive 2003/20/EC¹³² requires learners aged 3 to 13 to wear seat belts whilst on a bus or a coach. The UK Government's Department for Transport is currently consulting on how to transpose and enforce this legal requirement in the UK.

Criminal Sanctions

4.18. The 2011 Measure introduced a criminal sanctions regime to the 2008 Measure¹³³ where:

- A relevant body fails to ensure that the buses it provides or secures for learner transport have seat belts fitted to each seat

¹³⁰ Section 3 (Question 37) provides advice on how to persuade young children and learners how to wear seatbelts.

¹³¹ Motor Vehicles (Wearing of Seat Belts) Regulations 1993/176
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/1993/176/regulation/2/made>

¹³² Information on the EU Directive is provided in the Glossary (Section 2).

¹³³ section 14A 2008 Measure

- Where a 'person' (for example, a bus operator) providing the bus for learner transport fails to ensure that it has seat belts fitted to each passenger seat

- 4.19. Section 14H of the 2008 Measure provides Welsh Ministers with the power to appoint an enforcement body should they wish to do so. The Welsh Ministers have not established a specific enforcement body and have determined that the police would be best suited to fulfil the role of the enforcement authority for ensuring the seat belt provision of the 2008 Measure is enforced in Wales.
- 4.20. The police have the power to carry out spot checks, carried out by the roadside during the school journey or at the school premises before or after a journey to verify that seat belts are fitted to each passenger seat on dedicated learner transport.
- 4.21. When available, vehicle examiners of the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) (formerly VOSA) assist the police whenever and wherever they run school transport checks or operations in Wales. (Further information on the DVSA and VOSA is provided in Section 3 Question 23)

Liability of those who provide or secure learner transport – who will face prosecution?

- 4.22. Where a prosecution for an offence is carried out under the provisions of the 2008 Measure, it would be the local authority or governing body of a maintained school as a whole who would be responsible and there would be no individual liability. However, in some cases it would be possible for an individual to be prosecuted separately alongside the company/ local authority. For instance in the case of a bus company (or a local authority), where it could be proved that the offence was the result of individual negligence or that the offence was committed with the consent of the individual within the company (or local authority)¹³⁴.

¹³⁴ Section 14L of the 2008 Measure (as amended)

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Chapter 5: Risk Assessment of Walked Routes to School

Overview

5.1 Local authorities are under a legal duty to assess the travel needs of learner who walk to school¹³⁵. In making an assessment local authorities are recommended to take into account the following provisions.

Part 1: Risk Assessment Procedure In Relation To Physical/Traffic Risks

5.2 The scope of this section covers the relationship between learners and traffic. As pedestrians, learners face a number of hazards which are identified below. Walking the route will enable risk assessors to identify hazards.

Route Conditions

5.3 For a route to be classed as available Welsh Ministers recommend that the route needs to be:

- A continuous adequate footway on roads which carry medium to heavy traffic flow¹³⁶ **or**
- “Step offs”¹³⁷ on roads which have low traffic flow but adequate sight lines to provide sufficient advance warning to drivers and pedestrians **or**
- On roads with very low traffic flow, no “step offs”, but sufficiently good sight lines to provide adequate advance warning

5.4 If there is a need to cross roads Welsh Ministers recommend that there should be one of the following safety measures:

- Pedestrian refuges **or**
- Visibility – it should be good enough to allow vehicles to stop given the 85th percentile speed rule (or the speed at which no more than 15% of the traffic is exceeding) – vehicle stopping distances are set out in the Highway Code¹³⁸ **or**
- Sufficient gaps¹³⁹ in the traffic flow and sight lines to allow enough opportunities to cross safely **or**
- Sufficient crossing facilities (for example, zebra, pelican crossings) **or**
- Sufficient pedestrian phases at traffic lights (including necessary refuges) **or**

¹³⁵ Section 2 of the Measure

¹³⁶ Traffic flows are defined in Chapter 5 paragraphs 5.8 – 5.12

¹³⁷ For the purposes of this document the definition of “Step-offs” is provided in the glossary (Section 2).

¹³⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/browse/driving/highway-code>

¹³⁹ Sufficient gaps in traffic flow are outlined in more detail in Chapter 5 paragraphs 5.8 – 5.12

- Sufficient school Crossing Patrols (lollipop people)

5.5 Risk assessments of walked routes enable local authorities to determine whether a route to school is 'available' (safe) to walk. Further in cases where a route is deemed to be 'unavailable' (unsafe) the assessment process can determine what safeguards could be put in place to ensure that the route is or can become 'available' (safe) to walk. In deciding whether to undertake a risk assessment exercise the local authority will need to take into account whether the route has previously been assessed. If it has been assessed previously what has changed that would mean that a further assessment is required. For example:

- An accident or similar incident
- High accident statistics
- The opening or closure of schools
- Changes made to a route – road works, infrastructure changes
- Changes to traffic composition and volumes, including cyclists
- Changes affecting the route – new builds/housing developments, large scale construction projects

Changes to the characteristics of the people walking the route – such as a wheelchair user using the route

Traffic

- 5.6 It is recommended that assessments take place at the usual time learners travel to and from school, namely in the morning at the time before schools starts, when traffic flow is generally heaviest (unless it can be shown that the afternoon flow is heavier); at the end of the normal school day finishing time a minimum of three surveys should be taken.
- 5.7 Speed limits on roads around or near schools should also be taken into account in relation to traffic flow to determine what safety measures are necessary.

Traffic Flow on Roads

- 5.8 The flow of traffic along roads is a significant factor in determining the safety¹⁴⁰ of a walked route.
- 5.9 Low traffic flow occurs on roads that have a traffic flow below 400 vehicles in a 1 hour period; medium traffic flow occurs on roads with a traffic flow between 400 to 840 vehicles per hour; and heavy traffic flow occurs on roads with a traffic flow of over 840 vehicles per hour.
- 5.10 It is recommended that risk assessors undertake a gap analysis. This records the number of gaps in traffic flow and should record data in five minute consecutive intervals. Four such gaps within a 5 minute period are considered acceptable.

¹⁴⁰ For the purposes of this document the definition of 'Safety' is provided in the glossary (Section 2)

- 5.11 It is recommended that traffic counts are recorded as “passenger car” equivalent values (Passenger Car Units - PCUs), by using the following factors:

3 pedal cycles	1 PCU
2 motorcycles	1 PCU
1 Car	1 PCU
1 light goods vehicle (up to 3.5 tonnes gross weight)	1 PCU
1 Bus/Coach (over 3.5 tonnes)	2 PCUs
Goods Vehicles (over 3.5 tonnes)	2 PCUs
Goods Vehicles (over 7.5 tonnes/multi-axle lorries)	3 PCUs

- 5.12 All vehicle counts are two-way except on one-way systems. Dual carriageways are counted as one-way on each side. Where the two-way (one-way of a dual carriageway) traffic flow is below 240 vehicles per hour the road is assessed as safe to cross. This is equivalent to 1 vehicle every 15 seconds, allowing a reasonable gap time to cross a 7m wide road at a walking speed of 0.92 m per second.

Collision History

- 5.13 It is recommended that the road casualty record along the route is noted with special attention to accident danger spots. If the route is also used for public transport a note should be made of stopping places and the level of increased pedestrian use that could impact on foot path availability. Risk assessors could, for example, incorporate a 3 year collision history into the assessment of the whole route.
- 5.14 If a risk¹⁴¹ is identified, it is recommended that suitable measures are considered – for example the introduction of speed humps or speed cameras¹⁴².

Footpaths

- 5.15 Welsh Ministers consider that a footway, roadside strip of reasonable width and condition, a public footpath or bridleway will all normally be assumed to provide an available route. The footway will need to be wide enough to allow passage and, in the case of young children or those that should be accompanied, it should be wide enough to allow supervision to be carried out safely. The condition of the path should be examined to ensure it is clear of obstacles underfoot and from excessive foliage.

¹⁴¹ For the purposes of this document the definition of ‘Risk’ is provided in the glossary (Section 2).

¹⁴² Speed humps and speed cameras are normally only put in place in response to Road Traffic Collision statistics.

- 5.16 On a road with low traffic flow, a verge that can be stepped on by a child and accompanying parent when traffic is passing can normally be assumed to provide an available route. Many available routes may lie along roads that have neither a footway nor verge. On these roads, it is recommended that the width of the carriageway, traffic speed and type of traffic (e.g. frequent long or heavy goods vehicles) as well as visibility/sight lines that may be affected by sharp bends, high hedgerows or other obstructions ought to be considered.
- 5.17 Where a route is found to be lacking in 'step offs' there may also be issues with adequate visibility– the features that affect the availability of 'step offs' often impact on visibility – hedges, gradients etc. In such cases, it is recommended that these be considered within the assessment criteria carried out by the local authority.
- 5.18 If a risk is identified the following may provide a solution:
- removing vegetation **or**
 - resurfacing or widening the available foot path **or**
 - providing a new foot path **or**
 - providing lighting.

Crossing points

- 5.19 Where roads need to be crossed, it is recommended that the availability of crossing facilities such as central refuges, pedestrian crossings or traffic signals be taken into consideration. Where there are no crossing facilities, the route's risk assessment ought to consider each required road crossing, bearing in mind traffic speed and flows, sight lines etc.
- 5.20 If there is a need to cross roads there ought to be:
- Sufficient gaps in the traffic flow and sight lines to allow enough opportunities to cross safely. The gap time analysis should be used where necessary **or**
 - Pedestrian refuges **or**
 - Crossing facilities (e.g., zebra, pelican, puffin crossing etc.) **or**
 - Pedestrian phase at traffic lights **or**
 - School Crossing Patrol.
- 5.21 If a road needs to be crossed the visibility at the location should allow a vehicle to stop, given the 85th percentile speed (the speed at which 85% of the vehicles travel below) of the traffic flow. Vehicle stopping distances should be taken as those given in the Highway Code. In many rural areas, the exercise of continuous judgement is likely to be required. No criteria can provide all the guidance or answers to every situation that may be encountered.

- 5.22 If roads have to be crossed to use a footway or to improve sight lines it may be necessary to advise on safe crossing places. On some country roads the footway may not be continuous. Informed judgement will have to be made about the availability of “step off” points.
- 5.23 The difficulty of crossing at a site can be assessed by considering the number of gaps in the traffic flow that are acceptable to pedestrians. Free flowing traffic may provide gaps randomly and fairly frequently but speeds tend to be higher and gaps would need to be longer in order to cross the road safely. An acceptable gap to cross from kerb to kerb varies with each person. Most people will be able to cross two lanes of normal urban traffic in 4 to 6 seconds. Others may need larger gaps of around 10 to 12 seconds.
- 5.24 It is recommended that the survey records the number of gaps in each 5 minute period that are longer than the road crossing time, using one metre per second as the walking speed. Four gaps in each 5 minute period indicate a road that can be crossed without too much delay. Longer gaps could be classified as multiple gaps rather than as just one gap.
- 5.25 In the case of a rail crossing, particular attention needs to be paid to the type of crossing and incidents that have been recorded to assess the safety of the crossing.

Canals, Rivers, Ditches and Embankments

- 5.26 It is Welsh Ministers view that where appropriate, it is important to ensure that adequate barriers and safety features are included and that these are of the appropriate height to take into account the age groups of learners that may use the route. Safety features include improved barriers, better signage, more lighting or alternative available routes.
- 5.27 It will also be important to establish:
- if the route has been subject to severe flooding¹⁴³
 - if this is a regular occurrence and
 - when severe flooding occurs, is there a suitable detour available?
- 5.28 Information on flood management procedures can be acquired from Natural Resources Wales¹⁴⁴.

Lighting

¹⁴³ For the purposes of this document the definition of ‘Flooding’ is provided in the glossary (Section 2)

¹⁴⁴ <http://naturalresourceswales.gov.uk/alerts/?lang=en>

- 5.29 The level of natural lighting will differ over the year. Seasonal change may require that a review of the route assessment may be appropriate (if reported conditions present difficulties for the learner and / or companion).
- 5.30 It is recommended that street lighting is also taken into account.

Planned Changes in the Area

- 5.31 The assessment ought to consider any proposals that might impact on safety. Much of this information is likely to be held by the local authority and therefore the following checks will inform the risk assessment:
- Highways departments for proposed road works that would have a short-term impact on traffic conditions (e.g. road widening schemes)
 - Planning departments for developments that may have a long-term impact on traffic (e.g. housing or retail developments)
 - Education departments to check any proposed school reorganisations and/or mergers
- 5.32 Where proposed changes are developed and may impact on walked routes to school, it is recommended that the relevant local authority department lead consult with learner travel teams as appropriate.

Level Crossings

- 5.33 There are more than 6,500 level crossings in Britain with 1,167 (or 18% of them) within the Network Rail Wales Route.
- 5.34 It is recommended that risk assessors, where applicable, include level crossing risk consideration within the risk assessment. Network Rail have produced educational material for schools which can be accessed by clicking <http://www.networkrail.co.uk/level-crossing/>
- 5.35 Where appropriate, risk assessors should consider contacting Network Rail's team of Level Crossing Managers who can provide advice and guidance on level crossing risk assessment control measures, such as level crossing risk awareness events. Contact details are available at <http://safety.networkrail.co.uk/Services/Contacts>

Part 2: Risk Assessment Procedure in relation to Social Danger

The nature of Social Danger

- 5.36 'Social Danger' is open to different interpretations and is subjective. In this context, the commonest interpretations provided by children and young people are as follows: stranger danger; danger(s) posed by paedophiles; danger(s) posed by criminals (muggers, thieves, murderers, kidnappers); anti-social behaviour (the presence of bullies or of alcoholics or drug

addicts on walked routes to school); and physical manifestations, such as discarded needles or places where drug abuse/misuse take place.

- 5.37 Children experience real dangers when walking to and from school. Like adults, children can also perceive dangers even if none exists, and that too will understandably influence their behaviour and needs to be taken into account. A perceived danger may feel no less real than an actual danger. It will be important that before undertaking risk assessments, local authorities determine whether the perceived danger is supported by any evidence.
- 5.38 Where appropriate, Welsh Ministers recommend that other local authority services work to alleviate some fears, for example street cleaning or dog warden services.
- 5.39 There may also be a need to work with the teachers and parents of children who are concerned about stranger danger so that the child can be reassured though still aware of risk averse behaviours; travelling with friends, not speaking to strangers, etc. Consequently it is recommended that the local authority transport officials refer those cases not substantiated by evidence to the relevant school.

Tackling Social Danger in Risk Assessments – Working with Partners

- 5.40 In the conduct of risk assessments, it is recommended that local authorities work in partnership with organisations/agencies which have expertise in, including responsibility for, tackling and quantifying social danger. The Police or Police Community Support Officers have responsibility for crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour whilst the Local Safeguarding Children Boards have responsibility for safeguarding/child protection matters.
- 5.41 Section 25 of the Children Act 2004¹⁴⁵ places a duty on local authorities to promote co-operation between the authority and ‘relevant partners’ to improve the wellbeing of children and young people. The ‘relevant partners’ comprise the Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs). Usually, these bodies include the Police Authority; the Chief Officer of Police; the local probation board; the youth offending team; the NHS Trust; the Local Health Board; and the relevant local authority (particularly senior Directors of Education and Social Services). The Welsh Government recommends that local authority transport officials should be invited to and regularly attend these meetings of the LSCBs to cover the safety of walked routes. Alternatively it is recommended that transport issues are included as an agenda item at each meeting and where appropriate further engagement with transport officials should be made.
- 5.42 The Children and Young People’s Plan (Wales) Regulations 2007¹⁴⁶ require that each local authority, following consultation with partners,

¹⁴⁵ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/31/section/25>

¹⁴⁶ S.I. 2007/2316. - <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2007/2316/contents/made>

should publish a Children and Young People's Plan setting out how they will improve the well being of children and young people in their authority. The Welsh Government recommends that information about how walked routes have been risk-assessed and made safer should feature in these Plans.

- 5.43 The Welsh Government published Statutory guidance¹⁴⁷, namely 'Stronger Partnerships for Better Outcomes' 2006 (National Assembly for Wales Circular 35/2006)¹⁴⁸ and 'Shared Planning for Better Outcomes' 2007 (Welsh Assembly Government Circular 31/2007)¹⁴⁹ which outlines local authorities requirement to prepare and publish a plan setting out the authority's strategy for discharging their functions in relation to children and relevant young people. Further Information about these documents is provided in Section 3 (Question 18).

Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA)¹⁵⁰

- 5.44 Under sections 325-327 of the Criminal Justice Act 2003¹⁵¹, there is a statutory duty on the "Responsible Authorities" (the Police, Probation and Prison Services) to establish arrangements to assess, manage and reduce the risk presented by relevant sexual and violent offenders to reduce re-offending and protect the public. This includes those who are considered to pose a risk to, or potential risk of harm to, children.
- 5.45 Partner organisations, which include local authorities, health boards, youth offending teams and social housing providers have a statutory duty to cooperate with the Responsible Authorities¹⁵². The Welsh Government expects local authority risk assessors to work within the legal framework described above to obtain the relevant expertise in terms of managing the risks posed to children using walked routes to school.
- 5.46 In terms of quantifying social danger, the existence of any such dangers should be supported by evidence (either qualitative or quantitative).
- 5.47 When cooperating with other agencies, local authorities will need to put in place information-sharing protocols which comply with the Data Protection Act 1998¹⁵³ (particularly as information relating to children is sensitive)¹⁵⁴.

Part 3: Seeking the Views of Learners

¹⁴⁷ Under sections 25(B) 26 and 27(4) of the Children Act 2004

¹⁴⁸ <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/childreneyoungpeople/publications/strongerpartnerships/?lang=en>

¹⁴⁹ <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/publications/guidance/sharedplanningforbetteroutcomes?lang=en>

¹⁵⁰ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/multi-agency-public-protection-arrangements-mappa-2>

¹⁵¹ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2003/44/section/325>

¹⁵² Section 325(3) Criminal Justice Act 2003.

¹⁵³ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/29/contents>

¹⁵⁴ Further information regarding this provision is outlined in Section 3 (Question 22 of this document),

Why is it important to seek the views of children?

5.48 It is important for the following reasons:

- Section 1 of The Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011¹⁵⁵ places a duty on Welsh Ministers to have due regard to Part 1 of, and the Protocols to, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child when exercising any of their functions. In particular, Article 12 Specifies that children have the right to say what they think should happen when adults are making decisions that affect them, and to have their opinions taken into account. The Welsh Government therefore attaches paramount importance to enabling the voice of children and young people to inform its policy development, particularly in relation to the matters which affect children and young people.
- Children are the users of the walked routes to school

5.49 Local authorities can secure the views of children in a variety of ways:

- Children and Young People's Partnerships (CYPP) – these exist in each local authority area with the purpose of bringing together all services working for children and young people aged 0-25. Each partnership provides a voice for children's services and takes a lead in driving forward partnership working
- Funky Dragon – this is the children's and young people's assembly where they can debate topical issues and express their views
- Walked routes forms for parents and children – these can be filled-in to allow views to be expressed about the safety of walked routes
- School Councils – these are a group of pupils elected by their fellow pupils to represent their opinions and raise issues with head teachers or school governors
- Road Safety Officers – children and young people can feed their views to them when they visit schools
- School lessons – these can collect data to feed into School Councils, for example geography lessons that include a survey or risk audit of the local area
- Police and Communities Together (PACT) assemblies – these exist in each ward as a forum in which the Police and members of the public, including children, discuss topical issues/matters of local concern
- The All Wales Schools Core Liaison Programme – within this programme uniformed police officers deliver formal lessons in the classroom to reduce crime and disorder and to promote positive citizenship amongst children and young people
- School Travel Plans – these can be approved by a Local Authority Safety Group who would examine the Plans containing the children's views on the safety of walked home to school routes
- The use of drop-in boxes which enable teachers, parents and learners to raise concerns

¹⁵⁵ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/mwa/2011/2/contents>

Views and Information collected from these engagement exercises could be taken into account and given due regard when assessments are carried out.

5.50 The frequency with which local authorities seek the views of children and young people is a matter for them. Welsh Ministers recommend that local authorities consider the following factors to help them decide when and how often to conduct the risk assessment process:

- An accident, incident or increase in personal injury
- High accident statistics
- The opening of new schools and / or mergers of existing schools (which involves the use of new routes)
- Changes made to a route – road works, infrastructure changes, temporary road closures
- Traffic – changes to traffic composition and volumes
- Changes affecting the route – cyclists, new builds/housing developments, large scale construction projects
- Bullying/anti-social behaviour – these could be addressed by Police Community Support Officers or School Community Police Officers

Part 4: Helping to Ensure the Safety of Children on the Home to School Route

5.51 There are a variety of ways in which local authorities can help ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the safety of children and young people on the walked route between home and school:

- The provision of more lollipop people
- Putting traffic calming measures in place
- Encouraging children to walk with adults, friends or groups (in walking buses)
- Encouraging parents to accompany their children to school
- Encouraging parents to share the school run – such a practice could be coordinated by Parent Teacher Associations or community groups)
- Providing kerb craft training for children and young people – this would be a good way of teaching children how to be safer pedestrians by taking them on to roads and showing them how the right decision-making and behaviour can help them to keep safe
- Making wider provision of travel training – this is particularly useful for those learners with additional learning needs who can be taught how to walk independently between home and school. Such training has been proven to be beneficial for recipients (who develop a greater sense of independence and confidence) and cost-effective for local authorities
- School lessons or assemblies to discuss safe behaviour
- Encouraging School Police Liaison Officers, including Police Community Support Officers, to walk the walked routes to ensure, as far as is practicable, they are safe

- Reducing speed limits around schools to 20 mph and tackle pavement parking
- Encouraging the practitioners involved in the planning, provision and approval of new residential streets or the modification of existing streets to refer to and use the Department for Transport's Manual for Streets <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/manual-for-streets>. This document explains how the relationship between buildings and the street is essential for creating places that are good for people
- Promoting awareness, understanding and implementation of the statutory Learner Travel Code

Part 5: The Mechanics of the Risk Assessment Process

- 5.52 The Risk Assessment matrix is at Annex 1¹⁵⁶.
- 5.53 Welsh Ministers are of the view that the various criteria used for assessing risk should be weighted equally regardless of whether they are physical, topographical, social, environmental or geographic.
- 5.54 Parents can request to accompany the Risk Assessor during the risk assessment.
- 5.55 In the event of disputes between local authorities and parents, it is recommended that the existing dispute resolution mechanisms should be used:
- Step 1 - complaints are referred to the relevant local authority Transport Department
 - Step 2 – if unresolved, disputes are referred to the local authority's Complaints Officer or Monitoring Officer
 - Step 3 – if still unresolved, complainants should take their case to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales. Where cases are referred to the Ombudsman, the issue must comply with the specific eligibility criteria enabling referral, this can be found at <http://www.ombudsman-wales.org.uk/Contact%20us.aspx>

Part 6: Roles and Responsibilities

It is Welsh Ministers view that:

Parents¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁶ It is recommended that this matrix be taken as a basis from which a local authority can develop a more detailed risk analysis assessment form as appropriate and in accordance with this statutory guidance.

¹⁵⁷ The Definition of 'parent' is outlined in section 576 of the Education Act 1996. For ease of reference the definitions of 'parent' and 'parental responsibility' are provided in the glossary (Section 2)

5.56 Parents have the following responsibilities:

- It is for parents to decide at what age it would be appropriate for their child to walk unaccompanied to school
- In the event of a child not being eligible to receive free transport and having to walk to school, it will be for parents to make suitable travel arrangements for their children between home and school. Within the community, parents have the option of sharing the school run. The Welsh Government recommends that parents investigate whether community groups can coordinate this activity
- Parents are advised to ensure that their children are aware of the All-Wales Travel Behaviour Code ('the Travel Code') – the Travel Code sets out the standards of behaviour learners should adhere to when travelling between home and school, regardless of the mode of travel

Head teachers

5.57 Head teachers have a statutory responsibility to:

- Require pupils to comply with the Travel Code¹⁵⁸; and
- Determine the standard of behaviour considered acceptable (where it is not determined by the governing body or the Welsh Ministers)¹⁵⁹

It is recommended that head teachers:

- Incorporate the Travel Code into the School Behaviour Policy and ensure it is complied with
- Cooperate with the local authority, including other relevant agencies (such as the Police), should there be any breach of the Code or incidents concerning child protection issues

Under section 89(5A) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006¹⁶⁰, head teachers have the power to impose penalties on learners who have breached the Travel Code outside of school premises – for example, when learners are out of school premises and unsupervised by teaching staff (such as on the walk between home and school).

Local Authorities¹⁶¹

5.58 Local authorities' responsibilities include:

- Identify whether a walked route is available
- Identifying risks and putting in place mitigation where appropriate

¹⁵⁸ See section 89(2A) Education and Inspections Act 2006.

¹⁵⁹ See section 89(3A) Education and Inspections Act 2006.

¹⁶⁰ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/40/section/89>

¹⁶¹ Local authority means all relevant departments within the authority and is not limited to learner travel teams

- Working in partnership with partner organisations/agencies to complete risk assessments which address identified problems
- Consulting children and young people (including via other organisations/bodies)

A suggested Risk Assessment Checklist for local authorities is at Annex 2.

Health and Safety Responsibilities of Educational Institutions

The Welsh Government would expect the collection of children at the school gates to be included in the health and safety policy which all education employers must have. The Governors Guide to the Law which includes a chapter on health and safety provides further guidance, which can be found at the link below:

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/schoolshome/schoolfundingandplanning/schoolgov/schoolgovguide/?lang=en>

5.59 The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974¹⁶² and associated regulations place overall responsibility for health and safety with the employer. The person or body that is considered to be the employer varies depending on the type of school :

- For community schools, community special schools, voluntary controlled schools, maintained schools, maintained nursery schools and pupils referral units the employer is the local authority. The Local Education Authority must provide health and safety guidance to those schools and ensure that staff who are delegated Health and Safety tasks such as risk assessment are trained and competent to carry out those tasks
- For foundation schools, foundation special schools and voluntary aided schools, the employer is usually the governing body

For independent schools the employer is usually the governing body or proprietor

Responsibility – Schools, Local Education Authorities (LEAs), Governing Bodies

5.60 The employer must have a health and safety policy and arrangements to implement it. The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974¹⁶³ applies.

5.61 Employers must assess the risk of all activities, introduce measures to manage those risks, and tell their employees about the measures. The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999¹⁶⁴ apply

¹⁶² 1974 c.37 <http://www.hse.gov.uk/legislation/hswa.htm>

¹⁶³ See section 2 of the 1974 Act

¹⁶⁴ S.I. 1999/32425. See regulation 3.

- 5.62 In practice, employers may delegate specific health and safety tasks to individuals (local authorities may delegate them to schools). But the employer retains the ultimate responsibility no matter who carries out the tasks. The employer should therefore maintain an audit track, making clear who is doing what and confirming that those tasks are being carried out
- 5.63 Education employers have health and safety responsibilities towards teachers, staff, pupils, visitors and volunteers including ensuring, so far as it reasonably practicable the health, safety and welfare of pupils in school and on off site visits.
- 5.64 Employees have responsibilities too. It should also be borne in mind that under the general law of negligence school teachers are required to treat and take care of a pupil under the age of 18 as a careful parent would (Williams v Eady [1893] 10 TLR 41, CA).

Section 1: Statutory Provisions.

Chapter 6: Parental Responsibilities.

Overview

6.1. This section outlines the responsibilities of parents and guardians to ensure that travel provision for learners is in accordance with Welsh, UK and EU legislation.

Learners Entitlement to Free Transport Provision.

6.2. Learners are only entitled to free transport provision if they live 2 miles or further from their nearest suitable primary school or 3 miles or further from their nearest suitable secondary school and the learner is of compulsory school age (i.e. 5-16 years of age). If a learner does not meet the eligibility criteria outlined in sections 3 and 4 of the Measure the relevant local authority is not required to provide free transport for the learner. Ultimately, the legal duty to ensure attendance of a child at school rests with the parent or legal guardian of that child.¹⁶⁵

Nearest Suitable School

6.3. The Welsh Government issued the School Admissions Code in July 2013 ("2013 Code") under section 84 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998¹⁶⁶ ("the 1998 Act"). The 2013 Code is statutory and requires local authorities to publish a list of maintained schools within their authority's area from 2014/15 onwards. This information can be accessed via the local authority's individual website or on request. It is the responsibility of the parent to request this information as it may not necessarily be issued to parents automatically. Links to each local authority website are provided in Annex 3

6.4. Under the 1998 Act and the 2013 Code, parents are entitled to state a preference for the school they would like their child to attend. Where possible parental preference will be accepted by the relevant admissions authority and the child will be admitted to the preferred school. It is important to note that a parent's preferred school is not necessarily considered to be the nearest suitable school for that child. The entitlement to free transport provision in accordance with the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 only relates to learners who are attending their nearest suitable school. Learners who by

¹⁶⁵ Section 7 Education Act 1996.- <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/56/section/7>

¹⁶⁶ As amended by section 40 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 - <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/40/section/40>

choice (either parental or learner choice) are not attending their nearest suitable school are not entitled to free transport provision¹⁶⁷.

- 6.5. Parents need to contact the relevant local authority to clarify which school is classified as their child's 'nearest suitable school' to inform their decision about school preference on their child's school admissions form¹⁶⁸. It is the responsibility of the parent to request this information when determining whether their child is entitled to free transport provision to access education and training. Under the 2013 Code local authorities should provide parents or carers, on request, easy access to admissions information. This needs to be clear and easily understood so parents can make an informed choice for their children.

Parental preference

- 6.6. The 2008 Measure only applies to travel arrangements to a learner's nearest suitable school and not to a school chosen because of parental preference where these provisions differ.
- 6.7. If parents enact their parental preference and choose a learning establishment which is not the nearest suitable school or relevant place of learning for their child(ren), local authorities are not legally bound to provide transport although they do have power to make provision on a discretionary basis under section 6 of the Measure¹⁶⁹.
- 6.8. If a parent chooses a school for their child on grounds of language or denominational preference and that school is not the nearest suitable school as agreed by the relevant local authority, then this constitutes the exercise of parental preference.
- 6.9. Likewise, if a parent chooses to transfer their child from one learning establishment to another without the agreement of the relevant local authority, this also constitutes the exercise of parental preference. This means entitlement to free transport is forfeited (even if their child received free transport to and from the school they previously attended).

The Travel Behaviour Code.

- 6.10. The Travel Behaviour Code requires learners to comply with the terms and conditions as detailed in Chapter 2 paragraph 2.12 of this document. Under the Travel Behaviour Code Statutory Guidance¹⁷⁰ 2009, parents have the following responsibilities relating to their child(ren)s behaviour:

¹⁶⁷ Learners may qualify for entitlement to free or subsidised discretionary transport provision, but this is subject to the relevant local authority making use of their section 6 powers of the 2008 Measure.

¹⁶⁸ Contact details for each local authority website are provided in Annex 3

¹⁶⁹ Further information regarding Discretionary Transport provision is provided in Section 1, Chapter 1 Paragraphs 1.98 – 1.105

¹⁷⁰ Issued by the Welsh Government 2009 -

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/transport/integrated/learnertravel/travelcode/tbcstatutoryguidance/?lang=en>

- Ensure that their child(ren) are aware of and understand the Code;
- Accept responsibility for encouraging good behaviour and ensuring their child(ren) are compliant with the Code
- Be aware of the implications of breaches of the Code and the effect this can have on their child's right to the provision of transport to and from their place of education
- Be responsible for their child's continued attendance at their place of learning if transport is withdrawn
- Co-operate with education institutions, transport operators and local authorities to enforce the Code

Dual Residency.

- 6.11. Where a child has dual residency local authorities may need to undertake a review to determine whether the learner continues to qualify for transport provision under sections 3 or 4 of the Measure. It is recommended that the review take into account the parents' views and adheres to the authority's consultation procedures. If it is determined that the learner no longer attends their nearest suitable school, the learner may no longer qualify for free statutory transport provision from that authority. It is then open to the local authority to consider whether the learner could benefit from discretionary transport provision under section 6 of the Measure. Further information on dual residency provisions is provided in Chapter 1 paragraphs 1.54 – 1.59 of this document.

Accompanied Children

- 6.12. Section 3 (8b) of the 2008 Measure states that a walked route to school or relevant place of learning is 'available' if – "it is safe for a child to walk the route with an escort, if the age of the child would call for the provision of an escort". Parents have a duty to ensure their child receives suitable full time education when the child reaches 5 years of age. There is no statutory requirement on local authorities to provide an escort, unless specifically stated in a learners SEN statement. Further information on the assessment of walked routes is provided in Chapter 4 of this document.

Section 1: Statutory Provisions.

Chapter 7: Schools' Responsibilities.

Overview

7.1. This section outlines the responsibilities of schools and other relevant education establishments in relation to ensuring that learner travel provisions are in accordance with Welsh, UK and EU legislation.

Schools' Behaviour Policy and the Travel Behaviour Code

Responsibilities under the Travel Behaviour Code, as outlined in the Travel Behaviour Code Statutory Guidance.¹⁷¹

7.2. The Travel Code requires education institutions to:

- Publicise and raise awareness of the importance of good behaviour and the consequences of failing to comply with the Code
- Enforce the Code where appropriate
- Incorporate the Code into the school's existing behaviour policy
- Train relevant staff in the content and application of the Code
- Engage with the relevant local authority, providing information and assistance accordingly to ensure the Code is complied with
- Make learners aware of an appropriate person to talk to within the institution about incidents of bad behaviour whilst travelling to and from home to school
- If the local authority is responsible for providing transport, co-operate with them in handling disciplinary action for breaches of the Code, including involvement in the interviewing of learners as part of any investigation
- Ensure that designated persons maintain records of all reported incidents that they are responsible for investigating. If the local authority is responsible for investigating an incident they must pass them this information immediately
- If contractual arrangements organised by the school have been entered into with transport operators, the school should ensure that they are aware of the Code and their responsibilities
- Ensure that contact details of designated staff responsible for handling all matters relating to the Code are made available to transport operators, learners and the local authority

¹⁷¹ Statutory Guidance issued by the Welsh Government in 2009 under section 15 of the 2008 Measure.

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/transport/integrated/learnertravel/travelcode/tbcstatutoryguidance/?lang=en>

There is also a duty under Section 89 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 for head teachers to incorporate the travel code into the school behaviour policy.

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/40/section/89>

- Report suspected criminal offences or child protection matters to the relevant parties.

Incidents Investigated by Educational Institutions

- 7.3. Section 89(2A) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (as amended by the Measure) places a duty on head teachers of relevant schools to ensure that pupils comply with the Travel Code as part of their school's overall behaviour policy.
- 7.4. Section 89(5A) of the 2006 Act provides head teachers with a statutory power to regulate learners' behaviour and conduct outside of school 'to such an extent as is reasonable' and which is not already covered by the Travel Code.
- 7.5. Schools are able to introduce measures to regulate conduct of learners when they are off school premises and not under the supervision of a member of staff¹⁷². Disciplinary penalties¹⁷³ may be imposed as a result of such conduct, including breaches of the Travel Code, but a penalty will only be imposed when the learner is under the lawful control or charge of a staff member. Therefore a sanction could be imposed immediately for unacceptable conduct on a school trip, where the learner is under the direct supervision of a member of staff, but not where, for example, a learner engages in unacceptable conduct on their journey between home and school where no such supervision exists. Any penalty for such conduct will be imposed retrospectively when the learner next attends school or when they are next under the control of a member of staff.

School Admissions

- 7.6. Paragraph 2.2 of the 2013 School Admissions Code¹⁷⁴ requires admissions authorities to 'provide parents or carers with easy access to helpful admissions information'. Schools who administer their own admissions arrangements for post-16 learners entering sixth form at that school should notify the local authority as soon as possible of the learners who will be attending the schools sixth form. Local authorities are best placed to provide advice to parents on school transport matters.

Seat Belts on Dedicated Learner Transport

- 7.7. Governing Bodies of maintained schools have a duty under the Measure (as amended) to ensure that any bus the school procures and uses for dedicated learner travel between home and school must have seat belts fitted to every

¹⁷² Section 89(5A) Education and Inspections Act 2006.

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/40/section/89>

¹⁷³ Section 90 Education and Inspections Act 2006.

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/40/section/90>

¹⁷⁴

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/publications/guidance/schooladmission/?lang=en>

seat from 1 October 2014. Further information on this provision is provided in Chapter 4 - paragraphs 4.1- 4.22.

Section 2: Glossary

Admission arrangements - The overall procedure, practices and oversubscription criteria used in deciding the allocation of school places.

Admission authority - The body responsible for setting and applying a school's admission arrangements. For community or voluntary controlled schools, the LA is the admission authority unless under section 88 (1)(a)(ii) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 the function has been delegated in full to the governing body; and for foundation or voluntary aided schools, the governing body of the school is the admission authority.

Admission forum - A statutory local body charged with co-ordinating the effectiveness and equity of local admission arrangements, and monitoring compliance with the School Admissions Code¹⁷⁵. The Forum comprises representatives of admission authorities and schools, dioceses, the local community and parent governors. Their role is set out in the Education (Admissions Forum) (Wales) Regulations 2003.

Admission number - The number of pupils that can be admitted in a year group. Admission authorities are required to have regard to the 'indicated admission number' for each year group. The indicated admission number is calculated in accordance with the capacity assessment method set out in the guidance document "Measuring the capacity of schools in Wales".¹⁷⁶ Admission numbers are part of a school's admission arrangements, and must be consulted upon with the rest of a school's admission arrangements and be published with those arrangements in the school's prospectus and the local authority composite prospectus.

Available Routes – Section 3(8) of the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 defines that a route is an available route if it is safe for a child without a disability or learning difficulty to walk the route alone, or with an escort if the age of the child would call for the provision of an escort.

Bus - A motor vehicle which is constructed or adapted to carry more than 8 seated passengers in addition to the driver¹⁷⁷.

Catchment area - A geographical area, from which children may be afforded priority for admission to a school. A catchment area is part of a school's admission arrangements and must therefore be consulted upon, determined and published in the same way as other admission arrangements. Voluntary aided schools may choose to define their catchment area as their parish boundary, this must be made clear.

¹⁷⁵ Issued by the Welsh Government July 2013-005/2013

¹⁷⁶ School Admissions Code,

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/publications/circulars/0906measuringcapacity/?lang=en>

¹⁷⁷ As defined in Regulation 3 of the Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986

Coach - A large bus with a maximum gross weight of more than 7.5 tonnes and a maximum speed exceeding 60mph¹⁷⁸.

Compulsory School Age - Section 8 of the Education Act 1996 and the Education (Start of Compulsory School Age) Order 1998 explain that a child reaches compulsory school age in the term following their fifth birthday. The term dates being prescribed as 31 August, 31 December and 31 March. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age if they have attained the age of 16 on the prescribed school leaving date, or before the next school year, which is the last Friday in June.

Disability and disabled person – has the same meaning as in section 6 of the Equality Act 2010 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents> . (which repealed the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, but has maintained the same definition of disability) “A person has a disability if (s)he has a physical or mental impairment and the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his/ her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities”.

Driver Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) – replaced VOSA as an executive agency of the Department for Transport. The agency provides a range of licensing, testing and enforcement services with the aim of improving the roadworthiness standards of vehicles.

EU Directive/2003/20/EC - Under the Directive, the obligation to use a seat belt when a vehicle is in motion is extended to all categories of vehicles and to all seats fitted with a seatbelt (apart from certain exceptions). The use of restraint systems specially adapted to the size and weight of children also becomes compulsory. There is a remaining part of the Directive which will need to be transposed into UK Legislation, concerning a requirement for children aged 3 to 13 to wear seat belts on buses and coaches where seat belts are provided.

Education and Inspections Act 2006 - The Act is designed to give greater freedoms to schools, including the possibility of owning their own assets; employing their own staff; and setting their own admissions arrangements, but effectively this now only applies to schools in England. The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 prohibited the establishment of further foundation schools in Wales. Other important provisions include the creation of a local authority duty to promote fair access to educational opportunities; giving school staff a clear statutory right to discipline students; provisions relating to nutritional standards of school food; and the reform of the school inspectorates.

Flooding – is an overflow of a large amount of water, beyond its normal limits especially over what is normally dry land

Governing bodies - School governing bodies are bodies corporate responsible for the management of a school with a view to promoting high standards of educational achievement. Governing bodies have three key

¹⁷⁸ As defined in Regulation 3 of the Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986

roles: setting strategic direction, ensuring accountability and monitoring and evaluation. Governing bodies of voluntary aided and foundation schools are admission authorities for their schools.

Hazard – is any source of potential damage, harm or adverse health effects

Learner – A person receiving education or training¹⁷⁹.

Learning and Skills Measure 2009 - The Measure provides a statutory basis for the 14-19 Learning Pathways. The Measure provides for the creation of local curricula which contain a wide range of academic and vocational courses and opportunities for learners.

Learning difficulty – Section 24(1) of the Learner Travel Wales Measure defines learning difficulty as a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of persons of the same age, or a disability which either prevents or hinders that person from using facilities of a kind provided at relevant places, but a person is not to be taken as having a learning difficulty solely because the language (or form of language) in which the person is taught or will be taught is different from a language (or form of language) which has at any time been spoken in the person's home.

Learner Travel Information (Wales) Regulations 2009 - The Regulations require local authorities to publish and make available information on travel arrangements made under the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008. They set out not only what information local authorities will be required to publish but also when and how the information should be published and made available to parents/guardians, learners, governing bodies, head teachers and/or other persons.

Learner Travel Needs – Section 2 of the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 defines 'learner travel needs' as the needs of learners who are ordinarily resident in the authority's area for suitable travel arrangements each day to and from the relevant places where they receive education or training.

Looked After Children – same meaning as section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989, i.e. a child in the care of the local authority, or who is provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of any functions which are social services functions within the meaning of the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970 (apart from functions under section 17, 23B and 24B).

Maintained school – means a community, a voluntary school, a community school or a maintained nursery school¹⁸⁰.

Minibus - A motor vehicle which is constructed or adapted to carry more than 8 but not more than 16 seated passengers in addition to the driver

¹⁷⁹ Section 1(3) Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008

¹⁸⁰ Under the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 (Schedule 5, Part 2 paragraph 25) the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 has been amended in relation to the definition of maintained school by omitting "or foundation" schools.

Non-Maintained Special School – Approved under section 342 of the Education Act 1996 as any school which is specially organized to make special educational provision for pupils with special educational needs and is not a community or foundation special school..

Nursery class - Part of a primary school that is used by pre-school pupils – those under compulsory school age – and which provides a range of structured educational experiences suitable for children of that age.

Nursery school - A primary school is a nursery school if it is used wholly or mainly for the purpose of providing education for children who have attained the age of two but are under compulsory school age (see section 6 of the Education Act 1996).

Oversubscription criterion – the principle that stipulates conditions that affect the priority given to an application, for example taking account of other preferences or giving priority to families who include in their other preferences a particular type of schools (e.g. where other schools are of the same religious denomination).

Oversubscription criteria - The list of criteria an admission authority must adopt for its school(s) which are used only when the school is oversubscribed to assess which children will be offered a place. Once determined, admissions criteria, including the admission number, must be published by the school and in the local authority composite prospectus at least 6 weeks before parents express their preferences. All criteria must be objective and transparent. Guidelines for adopting appropriate criteria are outlined in the School Admissions Code.

Parent - The definition of “parent” in section 576 of the Education Act 1996 includes any person who is not a parent but who has parental responsibility for the child or young person, or who has care of him/her. Parental responsibility is defined as in the Children Act 1989(3) (see definition below) Any reference to a “parent” for the purpose of this document should be interpreted as the above definition of “parent” under the Education Act 1996. This will include: all natural parents, whether married or not; any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person; and any person who, although neither a natural parent nor a person with parental responsibility, has care of a child or young person.

Parental responsibility - “Parental responsibility” is defined in section 3 of the Children Act 1989 and means assuming all the rights, duties, powers, responsibilities and authority which by law a parent of a child has in relation to the child and his/ her property. The Children Act 1989 states that if a child’s natural parents were not married when the child was born the mother automatically has parental responsibility. The father can, however, acquire parental responsibility by various legal means. It is now the case (following the enactment of the Adoption and Children Act 2002) that a father who is registered as such in the register of births and deaths also automatically attains parental responsibility. In addition, it is now the case that step parents (which includes civil partners) can acquire parental responsibility, for example by entering into an agreement with a parent with parental responsibility.

Primary school - Section 5 of the Education Act 1996 defines “primary school” as a school for providing primary education, whether or not it also provides further education.

Public Service Bus – has the same definition as section 1 of the Public Passenger Vehicles Act 1981 which states “a motor vehicle (other than a tramcar) which—

- (a) being a vehicle adapted to carry more than eight passengers, is used for carrying passengers for hire or reward; or
- (b) being a vehicle not so adapted, is used for carrying passengers for hire or reward at separate fares in the course of a business of carrying passengers

Pupil Referral Units - A school established and maintained by the local authority, for children who are not able to attend a mainstream or special school (for example due to emotional or behavioural difficulties) approved under Section 19(2) Education Act 1996..

Relevant Body - A relevant body refers to a local authority or the Governing Body of a maintained school as defined in section 14N (2) of the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 (as amended)

Relevant Places¹⁸¹ – maintained schools; institutions in the further education sector; independent schools named in statements of special educational needs; non-maintained special schools; pupil referral units; places other than pupil referral units where education is arranged under section 19(1) of the Education Act 1996; places where education or training funded by the Welsh Ministers under section 34(1) of the Learning and Skills Act 2000 is provided; institutions where education and training and boarding accommodation have been secured by the Welsh Ministers under section 41 of the Learning and Skills Act 2000; places where nursery education is provided by a local authority or by any other person who is in receipt of financial assistance given by a local authority under arrangements made by them in pursuance of the duty imposed by section 118 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, places where work experience is undertaken.

Risk – is the chance or probability that a person will be harmed, or experience an adverse effect, if exposed to a hazard.

Safety – is the condition of being protected from or unlikely to cause danger, risk or injury

Safety on Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2011 - A Welsh law passed by the National Assembly for Wales which made amendments to the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008¹⁸² for the purpose of improving safety on dedicated learner transport. Measures of the National Assembly for Wales have been superseded by Acts of the Assembly as a result of the “yes” vote in

¹⁸¹ Section 1 (4) Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008

¹⁸² The Learner Travel Wales Measure 2008 (as amended)

the referendum of 2011 on primary powers for the Assembly (in relation to devolved policy areas). The above Measure sets out that all contracted school buses used for dedicated learner transport must have seat belts fitted to each passenger seat by 1 October 2014.

School day - School day is defined in section 579 of the Education Act 1996 as follows: “school day’, in relation to a school, means any day on which at that school there is a school session”. A school session can be a morning session or an afternoon session, so a school day is any day when the school meets for all or part of the day.

School year In relation to a school, means the period beginning with the first school term to begin after July and ending with the beginning of the first such term to begin after the following July

Secondary school - Section 5 of the Education Act 1996 defines “secondary school” as a school for providing secondary education, whether or not it also provides further education.

Special Educational Needs Code of Practice for Wales - The Code provides practical advice to local authorities, maintained schools, early years settings and others. The Code of Practice helps them to carry out their statutory duties, identify, assess and make provision for children’s special educational needs.

Step-offs – is a term which refers to the facility for pedestrians to easily be able to step off the roadway on to reasonably even and firm surfaces.

Sustainable Modes of Travel – Section 11 of the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure defines sustainable modes of travel as modes of travel which may improve the physical well-being of those who use them; and / or the environmental well being of the relevant area.

Travel arrangements – travel arrangements of any description and include – the provision of transport; the provision of one or more persons to escort a child when travelling; the payment of the whole or any part of a person’s reasonable travelling expenses; the payment of allowances in respect of the use of particular modes of travel¹⁸³.

Urban bus - Buses designed for use on local bus service/rural and urban routes with standing passengers.

Vehicle Operating Services Agency (VOSA) – the now defunct executive agency of the Department for Transport, which has been replaced by the Driving Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) (see glossary for further information on DVSA).

¹⁸³ Section 1(2) Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008

Section 3: Advisory Guidance.

Frequently Asked Questions:

1. In relation to dedicated learner transport, what should be included in a transport risk assessment?

It is best practice when undertaking home to school transport risk assessments that they should cover the following:

- The route
- Identified Pick-up and drop-off points
- Identified School Drop-off and Pick-up Points
- Driver and Passenger Assistant
- Vehicle

Further information can be found by clicking the following link
<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/transport/publications/hometoschooltransport/?lang=en>

Since September 2013, bus and coach drivers are required by law to complete 37 hours of driver training after which they are awarded a Certificate of Professional Competence - Driver Qualification Card (CPC-DQC). Drivers must¹⁸⁴ by law carry their CPC-DQC cards with them at all times while they are operating a bus or coach and must be able to present the cards to the Police or VOSA upon request.

From 1 October 2014, all buses used for dedicated learner transport must have seatbelts fitted to every passenger seat¹⁸⁵.

Transport risk assessments must take account of new legal requirements as and when they come into effect.

2. How often should risk assessments be carried out?

The frequency of risk assessments is currently a matter which is at the discretion of each local authority.

3. Do bus drivers, who transport learners, have to undertake any mandatory training (such as a dedicated learner transport CPC module) to carry out their duties?

¹⁸⁴ EU Directive 2003/59

¹⁸⁵ The Vehicle Drivers (Certificate of Professional Competence) Regulations 2007 – derived from EU Directive 2003/59/EC on the initial qualification and periodic training of drivers of certain road vehicles for the carriage of goods and passengers.

The Safety on Learner Transport (Wales) Measure 2011 allows Welsh Ministers to make regulations introducing the requirement for drivers of dedicated learner transport buses to undertake specific learner transport training, however, to date these powers have not been commenced. The Welsh Government does however recommend that local authorities and transport operators work collaboratively to ensure drivers of learner transport and transport services carrying children and young people (whether: dedicated learner buses, service buses or taxi) undertake training in relation to customer service of children and young people.

This could be achieved by local authorities and bus operators requiring (in accordance with their service contracts) that drivers undertake a certain amount of training to cater for the customer service needs of children / young people/ learners (such as within their CPC modules) or through in house training. This could include:

- Customer care – engaging with children and young people
- Equality training
- Dealing with SEN

4. What is considered a suitable journey time for travel to primary or secondary school?

The Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 ('the Measure') does not specify a time limit for journeys. However, section 2(5)(b) states that transport arrangements are not suitable if they take an unreasonable amount of time. Local authorities are required to assess the individual needs of learners when considering if a journey time is reasonable. An assessment should take into account the nature, purpose and circumstances of each journey to ascertain if the timeframe is suitable. Considerations that should be included in this assessment are:-

- the learner's age
- whether the learner has any disability or learning difficulties that need to be taken into account
- the location of the learner's home in relation to available schools in the vicinity(i.e. whether the nearest suitable school is located in the local authority's area or a neighbouring authority area, in accordance with the authorities transport and education policies)

5. What is meant by the term "looked after children"?

The term "looked after children" has the same meaning as in section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989, that is, a child under the age of 18 in the care of the local authority or who is provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of any functions which are social services functions within the meaning of the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970 (with the exception of functions under section 17, 23B and 24B).

6. Why do 'looked after' children receive free transport to schools which are not the nearest suitable schools to their homes?

Under Section 3 and 4 of the Measure, the same age and distance criteria apply to 'looked after' children (learners) as to those who are not looked after, but the provision that the learner must attend their nearest suitable school to their home does not apply to 'looked after' learners (in the same way it applies to learners who are not looked after). It will be for the local authority looking after a child to determine where he or she should go to school. The school decided upon might be a school other than the nearest suitable school due to the need to maintain continuity in education or contact with siblings or friends to promote wellbeing. If that is the case, transport will be provided.

7. If a learner becomes a 'dual resident', living with 2 parents (people with parental responsibility) at separate addresses, why is it that the school they currently attend may not be deemed their nearest suitable school anymore?

Any changes to a learner's ordinary place of residence needs to be taken into account when determining if the school the learner attended before the change of address is still their nearest suitable school.

Parents should be advised that if one or both move to a new address, a different school may then become their child's nearest suitable school. Consequently, the entitlement to free transport (if previously applicable) could be removed. Transport may still be provided on a discretionary basis under section 6 of the Measure in accordance with the relevant local authority's transport and education policy governing learner travel.

Local authorities are required to publish their general arrangements and policies in relation to learner travel, to include the provision of free transport¹⁸⁶. It is recommended that this information include the provision that any changes to a learner's residence (including dual residence) may affect a learner's eligibility for free transport.

8. What constitutes 'Permanent Living arrangements' in relation to Dual resident learners?

Only permanent established living arrangements should be considered. These would include, for example, a child who stays 2 nights of every school week with one 'parent' (person with parental responsibility) and three nights of every school week with the other, or alternate weeks with each parent. The provision is concerned only with periods during which the child/young person receives education or training i.e. the school week. It does not apply where a child spends weekends with a different parent from where the child lives during the school week.

¹⁸⁶ Regulation 4 of the 2009 Regulations.

In some cases each parent's home may be closer than the 2 or 3 mile walking distance, so a local authority would not generally be under a duty under section 3 to provide free transport. In other cases, one parent's house may be further than the walking distance and one may be closer so generally the duty under section 3 will be engaged in relation to the further away home.

The Welsh Government would not expect a learner to travel an unreasonable distance to attend school. Proper consideration should be given by all involved as to the choice of the nearest suitable school to both parents' homes

9. Do parents have the right to see / request a copy of a risk assessment and, if yes, how do they go about doing this?

Under the Learner Travel Information (Wales) Regulations 2009, where a risk assessment of a route to school has been carried out, a parent is entitled to request a copy of the risk assessment from the local authority who conducted the assessment under Part 2 of Schedule 1.

In order to do so, parents should contact the School Transport team within their local authority.

10. What is the difference between 'travel' and 'transport'?

Travel (i.e. the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008) refers to all modes of travel, which includes walking. Transport (i.e. the Safety on Learner Transport (Wales) Measure 2011) only relates to vehicle transportation and therefore excludes walking.

11. Why does the Active Travel Act 2013 refer to 'accessible' routes whereas the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 refers to 'available' routes. Are these terms different in meaning?

The purpose of the Active Travel Act 2013 is to require local authorities to continuously improve facilities and routes for pedestrians and cyclists, identifying current and potential future routes for use, thereby promoting access. The 2013 Act refers to 'accessible' routes because the planned improvements are not tailored to meet the needs of a specific group of users but to the needs of the public in general.

The Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 specifies that a route must¹⁸⁷ be 'available' because the target users are learners (namely children and young people). The available (or safe) route is used by learners travelling between home and school.

¹⁸⁷ Section 3(8) Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008.

12. Is it a legal requirement for local authorities to provide free transport to Welsh medium primary and secondary schools?

Under current school transport legislation, a learner is entitled to free transport to a Welsh Medium school if that school is considered by the local authority to be the learner's nearest suitable school and the learner meets the distance criteria specific to their age. Primary pupils are entitled to free transport if they live 2 miles or further from the nearest suitable school whilst secondary pupils are entitled to free transport if they live 3 miles or further from the nearest suitable school.

In cases where learners do not attend the nearest suitable school, local authorities use their discretion to provide free transport¹⁸⁸ to Welsh Medium schools regardless of the distance criteria in order to promote access to education and training through the medium of Welsh. Local authorities also operate bilingual policies in schools in order to promote¹⁸⁹ access to education and training through the medium of Welsh. Local authorities have a general duty to promote access to education and training through the medium of the Welsh language when exercising functions under the 2008 Measure, which should be outlined in their Welsh Education Strategy Plan (WESP).

13. Does the Travel Behaviour Code apply to Learners with SEN?

The Travel Behaviour Code does apply to learners with SEN.

However, if a learner has special educational needs it is especially important to give consideration to the nature of the learner's individual circumstances and to discuss the application of any potential sanctions with the learner's place of learning. When considering any special educational needs a learner may have, regard should be given to the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice and the National Assembly for Wales Circular 47/2006 – Inclusion and Pupil Support Guidance to determine what sanctions should be used to deal with issues of misbehaviour.

14. Should each learner with SEN be given one-to-one transport?

Not necessarily. Local authorities have options available to them to promote the interests of learners and save money (but still provide appropriate transport provision for learners with SEN). These include:

Assessing the needs of the learner to determine whether specialist transport is required. If it is required, it is advisable for the local authority to ask questions, such as:

- Is it possible and practical for a SEN learner to travel with other SEN learners? Is the provision of one-to-one transport strictly necessary?

¹⁸⁸ Section 6 Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008

¹⁸⁹ section 10 Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008

What would be the benefits to the SEN learner of travelling with peers? Local authorities should take into account whether the learner could, with or without reasonable adjustments, travel on mainstream transport. Reasonable adjustments may involve travelling with an escort, using wheel chairs to access buses, ensuring the learner is seated with or apart from other learners as appropriate etc.

- Travel Training – this programme provides learners with the support, assistance and skills to enable them to access mainstream transport with the confidence to travel independently.

15. What is Travel Training?

Travel Training Schemes are aimed at providing SEN pupils with the key skills and confidence to travel independently on public transport.

In Wales, for example, Cardiff Council operates a Travel Training Scheme. The scheme is funded by the Welsh Government and focuses on providing free, intensive one to one training to teach SEN pupils to use public transport between home and school.

Working one to one with a travel trainer, learners are accompanied to and from school over an extended period of time until they are ready to make the journey independently. Once a learner has completed the training, they are given an annual bus pass which they can use for school routes and journeys outside of school.

16. What are the travel arrangements for a post 16 learner with an SEN statement?

The Special Educational Needs Code of Practice states that transport provision should be in Part 6 (which is not legally binding on a local authority). If the local authority deems such transport to be necessary in exceptional circumstances because a child has particular transport needs, this should be incorporated into the statement. Local education authorities remain responsible for pupils with special educational needs statements in school until they are 19

17. What is the Social Service and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 and what does it mean in practical terms?

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 for the first time provides a coherent Welsh legal framework for social services.

The Act will:

- Strengthen powers for the safeguarding of children and adults, so that vulnerable people at risk can be protected more effectively;
- Ensure people are assessed on what they need, rather than just on what services are available locally;

- Introduce portable assessments, which means if people move from one part of Wales to another they will continue to be entitled to have their needs met in the new area on the basis of their original assessment until a new assessment is carried out;
- Facilitate an increased take up of direct payments to meet people's care and support needs, meaning people will have more control over how these needs are met;
- Introduce a National Outcomes Framework to set out very clearly what children and adults can expect from social services, to measure achievements and see where improvements are needed;
- Introduce equivalent rights of assessments for carers so that people who care for someone such as an elderly or disabled relative or friend will have the same rights to the people they care for; and
- Establish a National Adoption Service to improve the outcomes of children in need of a permanent family.

18. How does 'Stronger Partnerships for Better Outcomes' and 'Shared Planning for Better Outcomes' statutory guidance impact on Learner Travel?

Sections 25 and 26 of the Children Act 2004, place a duty of local co-operation on local authorities in Wales and a range of partner's to improve the wellbeing of children and young people in each local authority area. It also requires local authorities to prepare and publish a plan setting out the authority's strategy for discharging their functions in relation to children and young people. Section 27 of the 2004 Act requires local authorities' to appoint lead directors and lead members to be responsible for their function under 25 and 26.

In 2006 and 2007 the Welsh Government issued statutory guidance under 25(8), 26(5) and 27(4) of the 2004 Act, namely 'Stronger Partnerships for Better Outcomes' and 'Shared Planning for Better Outcomes'. These guidance documents should be read in conjunction with each other. The guidance sets out local authorities' duties to co-operate through partnerships to improve the well being of children and young people in each local authority area.

Local partners, led by the local authority (in the context of its community leadership role) are expected to work together to implement the necessary changes in organisational culture and practice. The responsibility of partnerships in joint strategic planning driven by shared profiling of service provision and identification of need, to support integrated provision of service.

Partnerships have responsibility for developing and agreeing the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP). The plan should be a strategic document of manageable length. It should set out how the well-being of children and young people in the area will be improved. This is intended to:

- Provide strategic vision and state the agreed priorities that will direct the work of all partners

- Describe how requirements of national and local strategies policies and priorities will be tackled locally
- Set out agreed objectives for services that can act as milestones to enable progress in improving outcomes to be measured over the planning timescale
- Identify the contribution made by individual partners towards meeting joint objectives, ensuring that they are consistent and mutually supportive
- Provide a basis for the joint commissioning of services and sharing of available funding, including core budgets of statutory partners and resource or financial contributions from the voluntary sector.

Plans should be reviewed annually and could enable risk assessment of walked routes to be undertaken and mitigation of risks made as appropriate.

19. What does Disclosure and Barring of information mean?

The Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) and the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) have merged and are now called the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). CRB checks are now called DBS checks. The DBS has two functions:

- Disclosure which searches police records and, in relevant cases, information held by the DBS barring function and issues a DBS certificate to the applicant.
- Barring to help safeguard vulnerable groups including children from those people who work or volunteer with them who pose a risk of harm. The DBS may use any information on a certificate or otherwise held by the DBS to inform any of its barring decisions made under its powers within the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006.¹⁹⁰

20. What information can the DBS share/not share under the current Disclosure and Barring of information requirements and how does the DBS process personal data?

The DBS is legally bound by the Data Protection Act 1998, and they outline their data standards in a personal information charter. When the DBS processes personal data, according to their privacy policy the following principles apply:

- Only the data the DBS needs is collected and processed
- The data is only seen by those who need it to do their jobs
- Data is retained for only as long as it is required
- The data held on people is accurate and is only used as part of the DBS process

¹⁹⁰ DBS Privacy Policy

- Decisions affecting people are made on the basis of reliable and up to date data
- Data is protected from unauthorised or accidental disclosure
- On request, people are provided with a copy of the data held on them
- Data in relation to the disclosure service is only processed with people's knowledge and consent
- A full complaints procedure is in place

Personal data is only held by the DBS if a person has applied for a disclosure check, applied to be a counter signatory for a disclosure check, or has been referred to the barring service. The DBS has access to the Police National Computer ("PNC"), which provides the disclosure function with basic identifying details such as name and date of birth of persons included on the PNC. For the barring function access is granted to personal details and conviction information. Further information on data sharing procedures is included in the Wales Accord on the sharing of Personal Information (WASPI) at the following link: <http://www.waspi.org/>

21. Who are the people who are subject to DBS checks and what are the procedures for DBS checks?

Please refer to, paragraphs 1.106 – 1.116 of this document for information on the Disclosure and Barring Arrangements.

22. Can information be shared between different local authority departments or different local authorities under the Disclosure and Barring of Information requirements?

In each local authority, different departments will have ownership of safeguarding policy in relation to different groups – for example, the Education Department will have ownership of safeguarding policy relating to children in schools; the Health or Social Services Department will have ownership of safeguarding policy in relation to vulnerable groups, including vulnerable children; and the Transport Department will have ownership of safeguarding policy in relation to learner travel arrangements.

Given the potential for overlapping responsibilities, there will be occasions when staff in different departments will need to see the same data to do their jobs.

The legal constraint on sharing personal data is the Data Protection Act (DPA). Any processing or sharing of information has to comply with the DPA. The DPA contains 8 data protection principles which must be adhered to.

In this scenario, the onus of compliance with the DPA is on both the DBS and the local authority as they are the data controllers. They determine

both the purpose for which, and the manner in which, any personal data is being or is to be processed.

The sharing of personal data has to be fair, lawful and needs to meet at least one condition set out in Schedule 2 and, in the case of sensitive personal data, at least one condition set out in Schedule 3 to the DPA.

The individual who is the subject of the personal data must be made aware of the use of that personal data. This is usually done by providing fair processing information to the individual which confirms the identity of the data controller, outlines the personal data being processed, what it is being used for, explains any sharing and outlines an individual's rights in respect of that personal data.

Further information on the DPA is available at <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/29/contents>

23. What is the Vehicle Operating Services Agency (VOSA) and the Driver Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) and what do they do?

VOSA was an executive agency of the UK Government's Department for Transport. The agency closed on 31 March 2014 and has subsequently been replaced by the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency, which now carries out the functions previously undertaken by VOSA. This includes providing a range of licensing, testing and enforcement services with the aim of improving the roadworthiness standards of vehicles. Further information about the Agency can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/driver-and-vehicle-standards-agency>

24. Who is the Traffic Commissioner and what do they do?

In relation to England and Wales, there are six Traffic Commissioners including a Commissioner for the Welsh Traffic Area (Wales and West Midlands).

Traffic Commissioners are responsible for the licensing and regulation of those who operate heavy goods vehicles, buses and coaches, and the registration of local bus services. They are assisted in this work by deputy Traffic Commissioners, who preside over a number of public inquiries.

25. Why do I have to pay the local authority for the provision of my child's school transport?

Under the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008, primary school pupils who live 2 miles or further from the nearest suitable school are entitled to free transport whilst secondary school pupils who live 3 miles or further from the nearest suitable school are entitled to free transport.

If the route to school is deemed to be unsafe, then the learner cannot be expected to walk to school even though the distance from home to school is less than the distance limit that applies to his/her age. In such circumstances, the learner is entitled to free transport.

Learners who do not meet these requirements are generally not entitled to free transport. Local authorities do have a discretionary power under section 6 of the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 to provide learners who do not meet the eligibility criteria for free transport with either free or subsidised transport. Where subsidised transport is provided by the local authority and parents want to use this service, the local authority can, by law, charge for this provision.

26. How much can a local authority charge for the school transport they provide to learners not entitled to free transport?

When a local authority uses its discretionary power to provide transport to learners who are ineligible for free transport, they can charge for the provision of transport.

For learners who are not of compulsory school age, there is no restriction on the amount that can be charged. With regard to learners of compulsory school age, charging must be in accordance with Section 455 and 456 of the Education Act 1996 (as amended by Section 22 of the 2008 Measure).

This means that when transport is provided as an “optional extra”¹⁹¹ to a learner of compulsory school age, a charge may not be made unless arrangements are provided with the agreement of the pupil’s parent. The local authority can charge the parent of the learner¹⁹². The charge to parents may exceed the cost incurred by the local authority to provide the “optional extra”.¹⁹³

Disabled learners may have specific transport requirements (or reasonable adjustments required for this) which may result in increased transport costs. The Equality Act 2010 prohibits an authority charging for any reasonable adjustments it has made for disabled learners.

This means if the cost of providing transport for a disabled learner is higher than it would if the authority were providing transport for a non disabled learner, for example, if the transport provided for a disabled learner includes the need for an escort or the use of a specialised vehicle, the authority can not charge a higher amount for the use of the specialised vehicle and/ or escort (or any other reasonable adjustment) even though the cost to the local authority may be higher¹⁹⁴.

¹⁹¹ Section 455(3) Education Act 1996 - <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/56/section/455>

¹⁹² Section 456(2) Education Act 1996 - <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/56/section/456>

¹⁹³ See section 456(3) Education Act 1996.

¹⁹⁴ See section 20(7) Equality Act 2010. <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/20>

27. How do local authorities treat each request for school transport?

Parents are required to fill-in a School Transport Application Form in which they should present:

- The details of the learner, including their home address (or ordinary place of residence if applicable)
- The details of the learner's parent or guardian
- The reason(s) for making the application
- The location of the pick-up point/nearest bus stop to the home address

In this way, each request for school transport is treated on an individual basis.

It is important that school transport application forms are submitted to the relevant local authority by the stated deadline. This ensures local authorities have the time needed to process the form and put in place suitable transport arrangements for when they are required.

28. What is the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009?

The Measure provides a statutory basis for the 14-19 Learning Pathways. The Measure provides for the creation of local curricula which contain a wide range of academic and vocational courses and opportunities for learners.

These courses may be delivered on different sites which require additional learner travel either at the start and end of the school day or during the school day.

Travel and transport provision required during the school day as a result of the 14-19 Learning Pathways is not covered by the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 or the statutory provisions outlined in this document.

29. What are the recommended procedures for enforcing the Travel Behaviour Code sanctions?

The relevant procedures which are currently in place are set out in the Travel Code statutory guidance. The guidance can be accessed by clicking on the following link
<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/transport/publications/tbcstatutoryguidance/?lang=en>

The procedures to follow if an incident occurs include a number of steps to ensure the incident is dealt with fairly and properly.

There may be cases where learners' severe anti-social behaviour endangers life and causes criminal damage – for example, in cases where fires are started on buses travelling between home and school. In such cases, the sanctions regime set out in the Travel Behaviour Code statutory guidance will be insufficient to address the serious nature of these incidents. The bus operator and/or the local authority will need to refer the matter to the Police for them to investigate and determine the appropriate action.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) should only be involved in investigating a road traffic incident where Police demonstrate that serious management failures have been a significant contributory factor. It is a matter for the Driver Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA), who award the licenses for bus routes, to comment on whether bus companies are operating a safe system of work, as it is here that their knowledge and expertise on matters relating to passenger transport rest.

Teaching resources, which can be used to educate learners on the 'Travel Code can be found at <http://www.travelcode.org/>

30. Must parents and learners be made aware of the use of CCTV on buses used for dedicated learner transport?

Yes. Where CCTV is used, parents and learners must¹⁹⁵ be made aware that recording services are in operation. This could be done through a written statement outlining this provision within the local authority's learner transport application form (terms and conditions) pack, by a letter home to parents or by signs placed on learner transport to ensure that parents and learners are aware of the surveillance.

If parents and learners are unaware that surveillance is taking place, then any evidence gathered by CCTV of a particular incident may be inadmissible in a subsequent court prosecution or hearing.

31. Who should learners report issues of anti-social behaviour to?

It is recommended that head teachers make learners aware of an appropriate member(s) of staff who learners should contact to report incidents of bad behaviour on the home to school journey.

32. What is accessible information?

Information which can be easily understood by its target audience. Examples of this include: the provision of information in alternative languages such as Welsh; making Braille or large print versions available; or having an easy read document which outlines key points and uses illustrations to accompany the document.

¹⁹⁵ Under provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998

33. What is 'dedicated learner transport' and how does this differ from learner transport?

Dedicated learner transport includes buses, coaches, minibuses, taxis. It is transport provided or secured by a relevant body (a local authority or the governing body of a maintained school), specifically for the purpose of transporting learners of compulsory school age (that is, those aged between 5-16) between home and school. Dedicated learner transport is for the use of learners only. Members of the general public are not allowed to use the service.

Learner transport has a more general meaning – it refers to the transportation of nursery learners; those of compulsory school age; and those in post-16 education. The transport could be dedicated learner transport buses, service buses or other types of vehicle (coaches, minibuses, taxis and private ambulances).

34. What is the difference between dedicated learner travel buses and service buses used by learners?

Dedicated learner travel buses have been provided or secured by a relevant body for the specific purpose of transporting learners of compulsory school age between home and school.

Service buses may be used to transport learners between home and school but are also used to transport fare paying passengers who are members of the general public on the same service routes.

35. Why does the requirement to have seat belts fitted to each passenger seat by 1 October 2014 only apply to dedicated learner travel buses, including service buses used for dedicated learner travel, and not to every bus?

Part 1 of Schedule 7 to the Government of Wales Act 2006 sets out the subject areas in which the National Assembly for Wales may legislate, as well as the exceptions to those general subject areas. The legislative competence conferred in relation to transport allows the Assembly to legislate in relation to dedicated school transport which can include buses, coaches, taxis and private hire vehicles such as minibuses. The Assembly may not legislate in relation to public service vehicles. It is the responsibility of the UK Government to propose policies in relation to public service vehicles and the responsibility of the UK Parliament to pass the relevant legislation.

36. My child goes to school on a bus which is not fitted with seat belts. Is this legal?

It depends on which type of bus is being used to transport the child to school.

The Measure requires that every bus provided or secured by a relevant body and used for dedicated home to school learner transport will need to have a seat belt fitted to every passenger seat by 1 October 2014. Service buses, which are used in any capacity for dedicated home to school learner transport (even if the majority of their journeys are non dedicated learner transport service routes), will also need to be fitted with seat belts by 1 October 2014.

The provision **does not** cover public service buses used by learners with local authority-purchased bus passes, even if the route is mostly used by learners travelling to and from school or college. This is because the bus is not used solely for transporting learners and members of the public can also access the service.

Double deck buses used for dedicated home to school learner transport will need to have seat belts fitted to every passenger seat in the same way as single deck vehicles.

37. How can I get children to wear seat belts?

There are a number of ways of encouraging and persuading children to wear seat belts, for example:

- Rolling out a training and education programme in schools on a pan-Wales basis - the programme could be delivered by teachers or the relevant local authority officials and might include activities like quizzes, games, DVDs and role play exercises
- Schools can play a role in encouraging parents to impress upon their children the importance and necessity of wearing seat belts - this could be achieved by schools raising the issue at parents' evenings, engaging with parents through Parent Teacher Association (PTA) meetings, sending information leaflets to parents or including an article on seat belts and responsibility in school newsletters
- Responsible older pupils/prefects can monitor the wearing of seat belts on dedicated school transport and can help enforce the regime by verbally instructing other learners to wear seatbelts and taking the names of those who refuse to
- Local authorities have a role to play in achieving this outcome and could work in partnership with schools providing officials to monitor and enforce the wearing of seat belts on school transport

38. Which seat belts should be used and need to be in place by 1 October 2014 to meet the statutory requirement of the Safety on Learner Transport (Wales) Measure 2011?

The Welsh Government cannot legally specify the type of seat belt that should be used. Lap belts are used on most buses and meet all the

relevant legal requirements. However, a 3-point all age seat belt is generally recommended. Reasons to support this recommendation are:

- The 3-point all age seat belt restrains the upper and lower parts of the torso, is anchored at not less than 3 points, and includes a lap belt - in addition, the position of the shoulder strap can be adjusted to suit the size of the passenger
- This particular type of seat belt is rated highly for its effectiveness and ease of use - the seat belt tongue clips into the buckle, an action which can be performed with one hand and a retractor device is included as part of the seat belt system to ensure that any unnecessary slack is taken up automatically

39. What is EU Directive 2003/20/EC, and what does it mean in practical terms?

Under the Directive, there is an obligation to use a seat belt when a vehicle is in motion. This applies to all categories of vehicles and to all seats fitted with a seatbelt (apart from certain exceptions which can be granted to allow certain professional activities to be carried out, to ensure the proper functioning of law and order, safety or emergency services, or to take account of the special conditions in certain types of transport)). The use of restraint systems specially adapted to the size and weight of children has also become compulsory under the Directive.

There is a remaining part of the Directive which will need to be transposed into UK Legislation by the Department for Transport (UK government). This concerns a requirement for children aged 3 to 13 to wear seat belts on buses and coaches where seat belts are provided.

The Directive does not specify that seat belts must be installed on all buses and coaches. Neither does it specify what type of child restraint system should be used where seat belts are fitted to the vehicle.

40. Is there a statutory duty on local authorities to provide free transport to denominational schools?

If a learner wishes to attend a faith-based school which is the nearest suitable school and also meets the distance criteria, then the local authority will be under a duty to provide free home to school transport.

However, if the criteria set out above are not met, there is no legal requirement for a local authority to provide free transport. In such cases, the provision of transport is a discretionary matter for local authorities.

41. What financial support is available to cover/contribute to the transport costs of those in post-16 education?

The Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) was introduced as a financial incentive for young people from low-income households to remain in full-time education or training beyond compulsory education. It is available to learners who attend school or college.

The Assembly Learning Grant (ALG) is available to learners aged 19 or over who are in Further Education.

The Welsh Government also provides support for those students facing hardship through the Financial Contingency Fund (FCF) which is distributed to further and higher education institutions in Wales.

The EMA, the ALG and the FCF may be used, amongst other things, to cover or contribute to transport costs.

There are instances where local colleges and the relevant local authorities will fund schemes which provide financial support for travel to those in post-16 education.

Each local authority will have its own post-16 transport policy and it is the responsibility of the learner or a learner's parent(s) to check individual local authority websites for specific details.

42. What is the Welsh Government's learner travel policy in relation to learners in further education aged 19-25?

The Welsh Government's policy is that the provision of transport to learners aged between 19-25 is a discretionary matter for local authorities, Higher and Further Educational institutes in Wales.

43. What is the legal definition of "compulsory school age"?

Section 8 of the Education Act 1996 (and accompanying regulations/Order¹⁹⁶) defines compulsory school age.

A child is of compulsory school age when he or she attains the age of 5:

- a) on 31st March, 31st August or 31st December in any given year, or
- b) if not on those dates, on the nearest one of those dates following his or her 5th birthday.

A person ceases to be of compulsory school age at the end of the day which is the school leaving date (currently the last Friday in June):

- (a) if he attains the age of 16 after that day but before the beginning of the following school year,
- (b) if he attains 16 on that day, or

¹⁹⁶ Education (Start of Compulsory School Age) Order 1998 (SI 1998/1607) and The Education (School Leaving date) Order 1997 (SI 1997/1970).

(c) (unless paragraph (a) applies) if that day is the school leaving date next following his attaining 16.

44. What does oversubscription criteria regarding school admissions mean in practical terms?

Parents can express a preference for any school they would like their child to attend. If a school has applications that exceed the admission number for the school, the admission authority will apply oversubscription criteria to all the applications in priority order. This means that all the applications will then be ranked and offered places up to the admission number. Should there be several applications that sit against the same oversubscription criterion, a 'tie breaker' may be used. The tie breaker is usually based on the distance from the pupil's home to the school. Normally the pupils who live the nearest to the school would be offered the remaining places. However, some admission authorities consider other factors, such as; the distance learners would have to travel to the next available school and use this factor as the priority factor for determining places.

In practice this means that pupils living some distance from a school may be offered places and may become eligible for school transport. The local authority Transport Policy defines eligibility criteria for their area in relation to the discretionary transport provision it provides.

45. If I obtain my place of choice will I get transport?

Parents can express a preference for any school and may be successful in obtaining a place at their preferred school. This does not necessarily mean that their child will be eligible for free school transport. This will be determined by the local authority who define eligibility criteria for the discretionary transport provision it provides within their Transport Policy.

46. What considerations should local authorities take into account with regards to post 16 learner travel provision?

In assessing what transport arrangements are necessary for post 16 learners it is recommended that local authorities consider the need to ensure that learners have reasonable opportunities to choose between different establishments at which education and training is provided. Reasonable choice should include enabling learners to choose an establishment of education or training that is not the closest to where they live, if other more significant factors take precedence, for example, the suitability of the course. It is further recommended that local authorities consider the needs of:

- Those who are vulnerable to becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) at the age of 16 or 17 or who have already become NEET.

- Those who live in particularly rural areas where the transport infrastructure can be more limited.
- Those learners who are of low income or are from low income families.
- The distance from the learner's home to establishments of education and training - it is recommended that local authorities consider the distance a young person has to travel to access education in determining eligibility for support with transport. It is Welsh Government's view that young people in rural areas should not be worse off financially because they may need to travel further to access education and training provision than their peers in urban areas. Local authorities could also consider taking into account other factors, such as the impact a learning difficulty or disability may have on a young person's ability to walk a distance, and the nature (including safety) of the route, or alternative routes, which a young person could be expected to take in determining whether transport arrangements are necessary.
- The journey time to access different learning establishment – it is recommended that young people should be able to reach their establishment of education or training without incurring such stress, strain, or difficulty that they would be prevented from benefiting from the education provided. For example, a young person should not have to make several changes of public service bus (or other mode of transport) to get to their establishment of education or training, if that would result in an unreasonably long journey time. In this context, local authorities will want to consider which mode of transport will best meet the need to ensure a reasonable journey time. Best practice suggests that a child of secondary school age may reasonably be expected to travel 60 minutes each way to access learning. It is recommended that local authorities apply similar expectations to post 16 learners.

47. Who is Responsible for the Care of Pupils Travelling to School?

A local authority, a transport operator, a driver and a school, may all have responsibility in law for the care of pupils in transit or when they are waiting to, or in the act of, embarking on or alighting from a vehicle. It is not possible to provide definitive guidance about who is responsible for the care of a pupil at any particular stage of the journey between home and school because the Courts have determined that responsibility depends on the facts of a case (for example who was responsible for the cause of the incident – such as a fault in the bus engine, or a defect in the road or pupil behaviour).

The 2008 Measure (sections 3(5) and 4(6)) now sets out that travel arrangements are not suitable if they cause unreasonable levels of stress, take an unreasonable amount of time or are unsafe. In general terms, therefore, an authority should be satisfied that contracted arrangements are safe, that processes are in place to monitor contracts, and that prompt action is taken to remedy problems. It is recommended that local authorities, bus operators and schools consider jointly the risks pertaining

to embarkation/disembarkation points on or immediately outside school premises.

Guidance on risk assessing dedicated school service contracts is provided in the Welsh Government issue All Wales Home to School Transport Risk Assessment Framework¹⁹⁷

48. What processes should be put in place for embarkation and disembarkation at school premises?

Embarkation and disembarkation areas are potentially dangerous because they can be crowded, busy, confined, and on roads rather than on school premises. Private cars will often be arriving or departing at the same time and may share or pass through or near the embarkation/disembarkation area. Risk may be compounded because pupils may not be as aware of hazards as adults. Accidents are more likely if pupils are not adequately supervised either because of traffic hazards or from crushing on entering or leaving buses.

It is recommended that local authorities, schools and operators work together to undertake risk assessments and follow up action to ensure that:

- There are appropriate levels of supervision of areas in school grounds where pupils congregate before embarking and disembarking
- There are appropriate levels of supervision of bus bays where pupils congregate off site to embark or disembark transport services;
- There are clear road markings for embarkation areas;
- There is, as far as practicable, segregation of pedestrians and vehicles;
- There are safe crossing points; and
- Embarkation areas are kept clear of obstructions.

Advice on how to undertake home to school transport risk assessment, including embarkation and disembarkation is provided in the Welsh Government issue All Wales Home to School Transport Risk Assessment Framework, which was published in 2009¹⁹⁸. The Health and Safety Executive have also published guidance on risk assessments generally, and on "Workplace Transport Safety"¹⁹⁹.

It is recommended that local authorities, schools and operators work collaboratively to ensure that risks are reviewed regularly and that clear procedures are in place for schools, parents, pupils, and transport operators to report problems or concerns. These should be evaluated promptly and appropriate action taken quickly.

¹⁹⁷ <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/transport/?lang=en>

¹⁹⁸ <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/transport/?lang=en>

¹⁹⁹ <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg136.htm>

The Welsh Government regards it as good practice that head teachers ensure that there is supervision of embarkation and disembarkation, whether on, outside, or near the school premises. The level of supervision will depend on local circumstances and the age of pupils. The head teacher should contact the authority immediately about any concerns or matters reported to him or her.

49. How can overcrowding on buses be tackled?

The design of bus will determine the number of seated and standing passengers and the number of wheelchair spaces on board. A sign informing passengers of this capacity must be displayed on the bus. Service registrations do not specify these numbers for either public services or dedicated school transport. DVSA is responsible for providing vehicle type approval. In terms of buses used for dedicated learner transport, the local authority's contract with the operator will specify the seating capacity. From 1 October 2014 these contracts will also need to include that dedicated learner buses must also have a seat belt fitted to every passenger seat, too

It is for bus drivers to determine whether a bus is full and to decline to take more pupils. The driver or other person supervising embarkation should check bus passes for all journeys. An annual photo pass will facilitate easy identification of pupils who are entitled to travel. If pupils not entitled to travel on a bus embark there is more likelihood of overcrowding. Authorities might consider having a 'no pass, no travel' rule, although a common sense approach is needed. Local authorities and schools should have a system in place to deal with genuine mistakes (e.g. the use of emergency one day pass) to avoid stranding children who have simply forgotten or lost their pass.

When making transport arrangements local authorities should consider pupils who carry musical instruments or large sports equipment. Adequate space for them is important from a safety perspective and also so that pupils are not discouraged from pursuing these interests because of the difficulty of travelling with such items.

50. What happens if a learner is sick / absent from school and does not require learner transport for that day(s) the learner is absent– should parents/ guardians inform both the school and the local authority transport team of their child's absence or just the school?

As soon as a parent or guardian is aware that their child will be absent from school, for any period of time, they are required by law to inform the school of the absence. There is no legal requirement for a parent to notify the local authority of a planned absence. However, if a learner receives transport provision provided for by the local authority, and the absence means the learner does not require this transport for a certain period of time, Welsh Government recommends that parents inform the local

authority transport team as soon as they know the transport will not be required (usually at the same time they notify the school).

In doing so, local authorities can ensure transport provision, such as taxis, minibuses etc, are not sent out unnecessarily (Particularly if it entails collecting the learner from a location where other learners are not also being collected). This not only reduces unnecessary public expenditure on transport services not required, but may also help to reduce the local authorities carbon footprint thus being beneficial to the environment.

51. What transport arrangements should be put in place for learners moving authority area during their GCSE ('critical') years²⁰⁰?

The Welsh Government recognises that there is currently no consistent policy approach adopted by local authorities in Wales for when a learner moves house/ local authority area during their critical years in education (GCSE).

At present, some local authority's policy states that; if a learner (who has started their GCSEs) moves house and their new home resides in a neighbouring local authority, although their current school is no longer technically their nearest suitable school, the local authority will still provide free transport provision for the learner to the school they currently attend for the duration of their GCSE studies (subject to the learner meeting the distance criteria and the school resides in a neighbouring local authority area). In doing so the learner's 'critical years' of study are not disrupted. However, other local authorities do not currently adopt this policy approach.

To ensure that a consistent policy approach is applied across Wales, Welsh Government recommends that all local authorities in Wales adopt the same policy approach whereby if a learner has started their GCSE studies and subsequently moves house/ authority area, then provided that the move takes place after the October half term break of their first year of GCSE studies (Year 10), the local authority, where the learner's new home resides, picks up the travel costs enabling the learner to continue their studies at the same school/ education institute the learner currently attends.

²⁰⁰ 'Critical years' are learners in years 10 and 11 of secondary school.

Annex 1

RISK ASSESSMENT MATRIX

Learner details		Companion details		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name Age Name of school 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name Relationship to Learner 		
Route – A to B				
	Risk Severity*	Risk Level**	Control Measures	Mitigated Risk***
Learner concerns <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personal issues Local issues Hot spots Other transport Issues 				
Traffic levels				
Footpath details				
Footways				
Crossing points				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rivers Canals Ditches Embankments Vegetation 				
Lighting				
Planning impacts				
Social hazards				

*Scale of 1 very low → 5 very high

** Likelihood (scale of 1 → 5) multiplied by severity

*** Likelihood (scale of 1 → 5) after putting in place control measure multiplied by severity

Annex 2

Local Authorities' Risk Assessment Checklist

Before a Risk Assessment a local authority should ask:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To which category do the risks/dangers belong? Are the risks/dangers physical, topographical, geographic, environmental or social?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When was the route last risk-assessed?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What changes have been made to the route since the last risk assessment? (Note: Records should specify any changes, such as construction work; infrastructure changes; the introduction of traffic calming measures; new build developments; new road works).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Were learners consulted during the last risk assessment? If so, what were their views?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When would be the ideal time to conduct a risk assessment of the route in question? (Note: Usually, the best time would be when learners are using the route - that is, in the morning on the way to school and/or in the afternoon when learners are making their way home)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the case of social dangers, who are the relevant partner organisations/agencies?
During the Risk Assessment process, a local authority should ask:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whether the learners/parents/persons exercising parental responsibility would like to accompany the local authority Risk Assessor during the risk assessment? (Note: This often enables learners/parents/other persons to demonstrate exactly why they consider a route to be unsafe).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Should learners be consulted (particularly if they have not been consulted at all or for a long time)?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Which mechanism should be used to consult learners – for example School Councils etc.)?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In relation to social dangers, what kind of evidence will be supplied by the relevant partner organisations (the Police or LSCBs)? Is the evidence qualitative or quantitative?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When will the evidence (qualitative or quantitative) become available?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If working with partner organisations, have information-sharing protocols been put in place? Have local government lawyers been consulted?
Following Risk Assessment, a local authority should ask:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the learner/parent/person exercising learner parental responsibility satisfied? If not, why?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the route in question need to be assessed again?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are the correct complaints procedures in place?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has the evidence demonstrating the safety of the route been compiled so that it can be made available to the learner/parent/person exercising parental responsibility?

Annex 3:

Related Web links

Local authority:

The relevant contact details for local authority School Transport teams are as follows:

Isle of Anglesey

<http://www.anglesey.gov.uk/education/schools/school-travel-support/>

Bridgend County Borough Council

<http://www1.bridgend.gov.uk/services/highways/transport-and-roads-home/public-transport/school-transport.aspx>

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council

<http://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/education/18101.asp>

Caerphilly County Borough Council

<http://www.caerphilly.gov.uk/site.aspx?s=qDAHRXN8cSZ9oLQm4cwPGFdfG1SCeIA>

Cardiff Council

http://www.cardiff.gov.uk/content.asp?nav=2869,3047,3063,5164&parent_directory_id=2865&id=5455&d1p1=1

Carmarthenshire County Council

<http://www.carmarthenshire.gov.uk/english/education/schools/schooltransport/pages/schooltransport.aspx>

Ceredigion County Council

<https://www.ceredigion.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=9584>

Conwy County Borough Council

<http://www.conwy.gov.uk/doc.asp?cat=6249&doc=23052>

Denbighshire County Council

<https://www.denbighshire.gov.uk/en/resident/education/grants-and-funding/free-school-transport.aspx>

Flintshire County Council<http://www.flintshire.gov.uk/en/Resident/Schools/School-Transport.aspx>

Gwynedd Council

http://www.gwynedd.gov.uk/gwy_doc.asp?cat=7052&doc=25990&language=1&p=1&c=1

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council

<http://www.merthyr.gov.uk/English/EducationAndLearning/SchoolsAndColleges/Pages/SchoolTransport.aspx>

Monmouthshire County Council

<http://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/home/education/schools/school-transport/>

Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council

<http://www.npt.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=5065>Newport City Councilhttp://www.newport.gov.uk/dc/index.cfm?fuseaction=schools_parentsinfo&contentid=DevXP001620

Pembrokeshire County Council

http://www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/content.asp?nav=647,867&parent_directory_id=646&id=7551&d1p1=1

Powys County Council

<http://www.powys.gov.uk/index.php?id=3064&L=0>Rhondda Cynon Taf<http://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/en/transportstreets/schooltransport/schooltransport-policy/schooltransport-policy.aspx>City and County of Swansea<http://www.swansea.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=10438>

Torfaen County Borough Council

<http://www.torfaen.gov.uk/en/EducationLearning/Grants/School-travelsupport/Transport-Entitlement.aspx>

Vale of Glamorgan County Council

http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/working/education_and_skills/schools/school_transport/school_transport.aspx

Wrexham County Borough Council

http://www.wrexham.gov.uk/english/education/Transport_Policy.htm#criteria

Other useful websites:

Engagement with Children and Young People

Children's Commissioner

<http://www.childcom.org.uk/>

Children in Wales

<http://www.childreninwales.org.uk/inyourarea/singleplans/index.html>

Funky Dragon (Children and Young People's Assembly for Wales)

<http://www.funkydragon.org/en/>

Learning Disability Wales

<https://www.ldw.org.uk/>

School Councils/ Pupils Voice Wales

<http://www.pupilvoicewales.org.uk/>

Snap Cymru

<http://www.snapcymru.org/>

Super Ambassadors (Children's Commissioner)

<http://www.childcom.org.uk/en/super-ambassadors/>

The All Wales Schools Core Liaison Programme (AWSCLP)

<http://www.schoolbeat.org/en/parents/know-the-programme/national-events/what-is-the-all-wales-school-liaison-core-programme/>

<http://wales.gov.uk/statistics-and-research/all-wales-school-liaison-core-programme-evaluation-report/?lang=en>

Travel Code (teaching resources)

<http://www.travelcode.org/>

Best practice and Case studies:

Faith in Education (Wales)

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/schoolshome/curriculuminwales/arevisedcurriculumforwales/religiouseducation/?lang=en>

Learning Wales (Improving Behaviour and attendance)

<http://learning.wales.gov.uk/improvementareas/behaviourandattendance/?lang=en#/improvementareas/behaviourandattendance/?lang=en>

Learning Wales (SEN)

<http://learning.wales.gov.uk/resources/special-education-needs-code-of-practice/?lang=en>

Living Streets

<http://www.livingstreets.org.uk/>

Powys Association of Voluntary Organisations (PAVO)

<http://www.pavo.org.uk/home.html>

Sustrans

<http://www.sustrans.org.uk/wales>

Tendering road passenger transport contracts – best practice guidance

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tendering-road-passenger-transport-contracts-best-practice-guidance>

Travel Training

http://www.traveline-cymru.info/uploads/TravelPlans/SMART_TRAINING_-_ENGLISH.pdf

<http://www.welshcontactcentreforum.co.uk/admin/content/files/SWWITCH/Smart%20Travel%20Training%20presentationWWACC.pdf>

<http://www.wlga.gov.uk/stp08-cardiff-council>

Safe Travel:

Arriva Wales (Educating Children)

<http://www.arrivatrainswales.co.uk/EducatingChildren/>

Network Rail (rail crossing safety)

<http://www.networkrail.co.uk/level-crossings/using-level-crossings/>

School Travel Plans

<http://www.gettravelwise.com/business-education/schools/benefits-of-school-travel-plans>

Wales Accord on the Sharing of Personal Information

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/improving-services/sharing-pip/waspi/?lang=en>

<http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sites3/home.cfm?orgid=702>

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APPENDIX 2

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STRONG HERITAGE | STRONG FUTURE
RHONDDA CYNON TAF
TREFTADAETH GADARN | DYFODOL SICR

WELSH IN EDUCATION STRATEGIC PLAN

2014 – 2017

Contact: Esther Thomas
Service Director
Schools and Community
01443 744002
esther.k.thomas@rctcbc.gov.uk

Appendix 1: The Action Plan – Tackling national targets at a LA level

Section 1: Your vision and aim for Welsh-medium education

The County's Vision

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council believes in the educational value of individuals being proficient in both English and Welsh and that the ability to use Welsh as well as English language skills can be a big advantage for young people seeking work. In practice this means we not only make provision for education through the medium of Welsh, but also ensure that the provision is of the highest quality and the consistent focus on raising standards in Welsh as a second language so that all pupils develop their bi-lingual skills.

In order to take this agenda forward it is intended that the Program Manager for Welsh in the Central South Consortium Joint Education Service (CSCJES) oversees the progress made by first language and second language Welsh learners. This will enable the five LA's in the CSCJES to target their resources especially the School Effectiveness and Welsh Education Grants more effectively. Currently 19% of learners in RCT study through Welsh, our ambition is to increase this percentage to 23% by 2015. Data from the Welsh Government demonstrates that there has been a steady increase in the numbers of children and young people accessing Welsh-medium Education in RCT. The percentages compare favourably with figures across the Central South Consortium and Wales, given the context of the Authority. This plan for Welsh Education in RCT derives from the challenges articulated in the Welsh Government's paving document 'The Learning Country' and in 'Iaith Pawb' and promotes the notion of Building Effective Learning Communities together which underpins the School Effectiveness Framework. This vision reflects the core values of the Council and the aims and objectives of the Education and Lifelong Learning Directorate. It links with the aims set out in 'Live, Grow, Aspire, Achieve: Rhondda Cynon Taf Community Strategy 2010-2020' and has been supported by the priorities in the Children and Young People's Plan 2011-2014. Now included in the Single Integrated Plan 2013 'Delivering Change'. It supports the aims and objectives of the Council's Welsh Language Scheme to ensure that the use of the Welsh language is safeguarded and promoted throughout Rhondda Cynon Taf.

Rhondda Cynon Taf has a strategy for Raising Achievement in Literacy 'Read, Write, Speak, Succeed' and the vision for zero tolerance of illiteracy in the language of choice. The strategy focuses on the teaching of literacy in both English and Welsh-medium schools. Within the County Borough of Rhondda Cynon Taf, Welsh-medium education will be available to all parents/carers who desire it for their children. It is the Council's policy to provide for the natural progression from Welsh-medium early years and primary settings to Welsh-medium secondary education, in order to support continuity of provision. Pupils in all schools will study Welsh as a subject and we are working to increase the opportunity for pupils to study other subjects through the medium of Welsh. We will also seek to develop with others opportunities for Welsh to be used outside school in the community.

CURRENT POSITION DECEMBER 2014

FIRST LANGUAGE WELSH

Learners are continuing to make good progress in Welsh language skills in Welsh-medium schools.

Foundation Phase

In 2014, 90.1% of pupils achieved the required level, or higher in Language Literacy Skills in Welsh compared to 91.36% across the Central South Consortium and 89.82% across Wales. This ranks us 12th out of 20 authorities.

KS2

In 2014 88.41% of pupils achieved level 4 or higher compared to 90.60% across the Central South Consortium and 88.1% across Wales. This ranks us 15th out of 20 authorities.

KS3

In 2014 90.02% of pupils in RCT achieved level 5 or higher compared to 91.6% across the Central South Consortium and 90.07% across Wales.

Performance at the higher levels are also good with 28.52% achieving outcome level 6+ at FP compared with 29.3% nationally, 29.6% achieving level 5+ at KS2 compared with 30.4% nationally and 40.2% achieving level 6+ at KS3 compared to 45.7%

KS4

In 2014 data shows that 70.02% of pupils who were entered for Welsh 1st language at GCSE obtained grades A*-C compared to 73% across Wales

78% of pupils who entered Welsh literature at GCSE obtained A*-C in RCT compared to 75% across Wales

KS5

The number of pupils sitting Welsh first language is relatively small – in 2014 only 22 entered, the percentage achieving A*-C can vary but for 2014 was 50% compared to 81% nationally.

SECOND LANGUAGE WELSH

Performance of pupils in Welsh as a second language is as follows:

At KS3

74.8% of pupils in RCT achieved the expected level or above in Welsh second language compared to 70.84% across the Central South Consortium and 77.8% across Wales.

At KS4 (provisional figures)

71.9% of pupils who sat Welsh second language full course achieved grade A*-C.

46.99% of pupils who sat Welsh second language short course achieved A*-C.

KS5 - 33 pupils sat 'A' level Welsh 2nd language with 64% achieving A*-C.

TRANSITION RATES

Although there has been a slight decrease in the percentages in 2013, there still remains as a high percentage of transfer between Key Stages 2 and 3 and between Key Stages 3 and 4 within the Welsh-medium sector.

- Transition rates for key stage 2 to 3 in 2012/13 was 96.3% compared with 97.97% in 2011
- The Transition rate for key stage 3 to 4 in 2012/13 was 99.2%. compared with 99.47% in 2011

Main Aims and Objectives of the Welsh Education Scheme

- To ensure that Welsh-medium education is available to all children whose parents/carers wish them to receive their education through the medium of Welsh, and this within reasonable travelling distance from the children's homes. This means children of pre-school age and above.
- To ensure that all pupils attending a designated Welsh-medium school are able to speak, read and write Welsh fluently by the end of KS2. The figures in July 2014 are 89.86% oracy, 83.83% for reading and 80.33% for writing.
- To ensure a developing continuum from Welsh-medium primary education through to Welsh-medium secondary education. Pupils who have received their primary education through the medium of Welsh will be able to attend a Welsh-medium secondary school
- To promote a linguistic continuum from KS4 onwards through to their lifelong learning career for pupils and students within the County.
- To ensure that all pupils are given the opportunity to sit an externally accredited examination in Welsh by the end of KS4.
- To ensure that children and young people with special educational needs receive linguistic equality of opportunity in terms of Welsh-medium education, during the entire statementing process, and this in line with the SEN Code of Practice for Wales 2002.
- To work in partnership with all schools in order to improve the standard of Welsh as a first and second language. All schools will receive advice and support from advisors on the Welsh language and from school support services. Further support will be provided by Welsh in Education Officers (previously Athrawon Bro) who visit and monitor schools' language standards on behalf of the Authority
- To run and promote the existing In-Service Training Programme that supports the development of Welsh as a first and second language, and to provide opportunities for pupils to improve their knowledge and understanding of the cultural, economic, environmental, historical and linguistic ethos/characteristics of Wales via the Cwricwlwm Cymreig.

Section 2: The Action Plan

Outcome 1: More seven-year-old children being taught through the medium of Welsh			
Responsible officers: Head of Achievement (Primary), Head of Early Years and Family Support Services, Head of School Organisation, Planning and Governance, Systems Leader with Program Manager for Welsh (Consortium)			
A. Objective	B. Current Performance	C. Targets	D. Progress
1.1 Increase the number of seven-year-old children taught through the medium of Welsh	<p>Mudiad Meithrin receives core funding for the Welsh in Education Unit of The Welsh Government and great emphasis is placed on transition figures from the Cylchoedd meithrin to local Welsh Medium schools. Mudiad Meithrin (with whom we work in partnership) believe in the importance of promoting the benefits of Welsh Medium education at pre-school and and Ti a Fi level to parents cannot be over emphasised because linguistic educational decisions are made at this stage.</p> <p>The Local Authority recognises the important role that Mudiad Meithrin and the Cylchoedd Meithrin play in signposting parents towards Welsh Medium Education. The authority funds 5 hours each per week for the 2 Development Officers who work in Cynon Taf and Rhondda Taf. The Local Authority has also paid sustainability grants to a number of Cylchoedd Meithrin during this academic year. Mudiad Meithrin's co-ordinator attends and represents the organisation, it's cylchoedd and the Welsh language on a number of committees and forums within the Local Authority including, the WESP forum, Quality and Grants panel, Registered Education Providers Panel and Early Childhood and Play Partnership.</p>		<p>Mudiad Meithrin provides the Welsh Government with quantitative and qualitative data on transition levels which can be found at appendix 2 of this document.</p> <p>Mudiad Meithrin recognises that there is an issue with transition levels at some of the Cylchoedd Meithrin. Cylchoedd Meithrin Cilfynydd and Rhydyfelin will be part of a national campaign called "Cychwyn Gorau" (which translates as "best start").</p>

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Responsible officers: Head of Achievement (Primary), Head of Early Years and Family Support Services, Head of School Organisation, Planning and Governance, Systems Leader with Program Manager for Welsh (Consortium)			
A. Objective	B. Current Performance	C. Targets	D. Progress
	<p>The percentage of seven-year-old children taught through the medium of Welsh in the past three years is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 19.6% - 2010 ➤ 20% - 2011 ➤ 20.6% - 2012 ➤ 20.1% - 2013 <p>Ysgol Llanhari new primary provision opened in September 2012 with nursery and reception children – the Local Authority is funding a permanent Foundation Phase post to enable the setting up and development of this provision.</p>	<p>2014- 21.1%</p> <p>2015 – 21.5%</p> <p>2016 – 21.9%</p> <p>2017 – 23.0%</p>	<p>This campaign has been developed with a view to supporting the Cylch staff in promoting the advantages of Welsh medium Education to parents and increase the transition levels where they currently fall below 50%. Resources have been made available and a Facebook page ("#cychwyngorau") which gives further information and interesting articles</p> <p>19.6% in RCT 2014 (need to explore reasons why there has been a decline)</p>

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A. Objective	B. Current Performance	C. Targets	D. Progress
			Consideration is being given to develop more provision in the north of the Authority, and consultation to increase capacity at 2 WM schools – YGG Tonyrefail and YGG Llwyncelyn ends on 27.2.15. These plans form part of our wider proposals to reorganise school provision in the Rhondda and Tonyrefail areas of RCT, the target implementation date is September 2018 for the whole project.
	Figures obtained from the Welsh Government show that the numbers and percentage of seven year olds taught through the medium of Welsh in RCT has increased year on year and is higher than other LA's in the Central South Consortium. It is the LA's intention to maintain with an increase to 21.5% by 2015.		

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A. Objective	B. Current Performance	C. Targets	D. Progress
	Learners attending the nearest Welsh-medium or dual language school receive free transport in accordance with the LA's agreed policy on walking distance and safe routes. RCTCBC has exercised the discretionary powers afforded to it under the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 to make a more generous provision to learners as set out on Page 32 (Point 2) in 2014-2015 Dechrau'r Ysgol.		
1.2 Adopt systematic processes for measuring the demand for Welsh-medium statutory educational provision. Act promptly on the findings of parental surveys.	<p>The report to WG in April 2013 identified that from the data received, there is no unmet need in RCT. The CSA 2013 update demonstrates that demand does not out-strip supply. However, both parental, employer and setting response to the CSA remains low (33%). Therefore an Early Education Language Choices booklet is being distributed to all new parents to gain a picture of future demand. Also, the Flying Start registration forum gathers data about language preferences in Flying Start childcare. These three pieces of data will be interrogated to gain a more robust picture of future demand.</p> <p>A full audit is undertaken 3 yearly, with the last full one in 2011. It is reviewed annually. The next full audit will be undertaken in 2014, to be submitted by April 2014.</p> <p>To measure the demand for Welsh medium education forecast data is used, together with information gleaned from the annual admissions round, plus other statutory returns such as PLASC, and the September Class Size Count. All data is analysed on a regular basis, updated, and</p>	Increase response to CSA to 50% in 2014; 55% in 2017	Early Education Language Choices: Return rates for the booklet are low for 2013-14. (97 responses) 38% identified Welsh as choice of education language. Of the 97 responses, 32% were from Flying Start families.

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Responsible officers: Head of Achievement (Primary), Head of Early Years and Family Support Services, Head of School Organisation, Planning and Governance, Systems Leader with Program Manager for Welsh (Consortium)			
A. Objective	B. Current Performance	C. Targets	D. Progress
	<p>used to inform bids for capital funding for new provision such as 21st Century Schools.</p> <p>The Education Language Preference (ELP) Survey will be undertaken every two years. The current survey is due to be distributed in November 2015 and the report will be completed by March 2016. There will be slight changes to the survey to incorporate previous recommendations and additional information required for this plan.</p> <p>The ELP Survey is distributed to all houses where birth occurred in the last 2 years. The last ELP Survey has been analysed and will be used to inform future levels of demand. However, historical data suggests that there can be an 18% point's difference between the expressed demand and actual uptake.</p>	<p>Further investigation required to identify why this gap exists</p>	<p>Next survey distribution October – December 2015. Analysis by March 2016. Survey to be brought to the next meeting and Menter Iaith to explore leaflets distributed in other LAs with a view to wider distribution (including libraries)</p>
<p>1.3 Ensure that proposals for 21st Century schools include full consideration of Welsh-medium education.</p>	<p>Rhondda Cynon Taf has, at present, 13 Welsh-medium Primary schools, plus 3 dual language Primary schools. It also has 4 Welsh-medium Comprehensive schools. In September 2012, one of our Comprehensive Schools, Ysgol Gyfun Llanhari, was redesignated as a Middle School, and is able to admit pupils aged between 3 and 19 years. The new Primary department of Ysgol Llanhari will have the capacity to admit 240 pupils aged between 3 and 11 years, and this provision can be expanded in future years if demand for places can be evidenced. The</p>		

Outcome 1: More seven-year-old children being taught through the medium of Welsh			
Responsible officers: Head of Achievement (Primary), Head of Early Years and Family Support Services, Head of School Organisation, Planning and Governance, Systems Leader with Program Manager for Welsh (Consortium)			
A. Objective	B. Current Performance	C. Targets	D. Progress
	school admitted Nursery and Reception pupils initially in September 2012, increasing by one year group each year until all year groups from Nursery to Year 13 are catered for at the school.		
	<p>In January 2012, 4,270 pupils received Primary education in RCT through the medium of Welsh, representing 19.9% of the total Primary school population. 3,258 pupils received Secondary education through the medium of Welsh, or 19% of the total Secondary school population.</p> <p>In January 2013 numbers in Primary Education 4332 - 19.9% numbers in Secondary Education 3128 - 18.7%</p> <p>The new development at Llanhari will add sufficient Welsh-medium Primary education capacity to meet current, and future forecasted demand in the south-west of the County Borough and, as advised, this provision can be increased in the future if demand can be evidenced.</p>	<p>22% by 2015 22.2% - 2016 22.4% - 2017</p>	<p>Primary – 2014 – 19.63% Secondary – 2014 – 18.57%</p>
	There are proposals in the Council's 21 st Century Schools Programme to increase Welsh-medium provision in other areas of the county where pressure on places currently exists. These proposals include potential new provision in the Cynon Valley, plus a replacement school for YGG Tonyrefail, with additional capacity. The organisation of school provision in the Porth area will also be reviewed under this Programme. More precise details of proposals will be provided following relevant consultation with Elected Members.		Consultation has commenced to consider increasing the capacity of YGG Llwyncelyn and to relocate YGG Tonyrefail to a new building, which has increased capacity and is in far better condition

Outcome 1: More seven-year-old children being taught through the medium of Welsh Responsible officers: Head of Achievement (Primary), Head of Early Years and Family Support Services, Head of School Organisation, Planning and Governance, Systems Leader with Program Manager for Welsh (Consortium)			
A. Objective	B. Current Performance	C. Targets	D. Progress
			<p>The projects at Tonyrefail, Porth and the Cynon Valley will be undertaken during Band A of our 21st Century Schools Programme and will therefore be completed by August 2018. The planned capacity of the replacement YGG Tonyrefail will be subject to assessment of current and future forecasted demand and will be evidence based. It is expected however that the revised capacity will be at least 360 places, including Nursery provision.</p>

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A. Objective	B. Current Performance	C. Targets	D. Progress
	A bid was made for funding to replace Welsh medium schools in areas of greatest need which are subject to approval. In Band A of our 21 st Century Schools bid, i.e. our highest priority projects, to commence in 2014.		The main area of greatest need for additional Welsh medium provision was the Llantrisant/Pontyclun/Talbot Green area. The issues in this area have now been resolved by the opening of our Welsh Medium Primary provision at Ysgol Llanhari in September 2012. This can be evidenced by the fact that YGGG Llantrisant will have surplus capacity in both its Nursery and Reception year groups in September 2014.

Outcome 1: More seven-year-old children being taught through the medium of Welsh			
Responsible officers: Head of Achievement (Primary), Head of Early Years and Family Support Services, Head of School Organisation, Planning and Governance, Systems Leader with Program Manager for Welsh (Consortium)			
A. Objective	B. Current Performance	C. Targets	D. Progress
			This Council made amendments to the catchment area of Heol y Celyn dual language Primary School in 2008, to incorporate the communities of Taffs Well and Nantgarw, up to the County boundary for Welsh Medium provision. There is sufficient capacity at this school to meet current and future forecasted demand for Welsh Medium Primary provision in this area.
1.4 Ensure collaborative working through consortia.	<p>The Authority collaborates with neighbouring LA's to consider Welsh medium provision across the Central South Consortium. The Rhydywaun cluster of primary schools has accessed joint training opportunities with Merthyr Tydfil, as learners from 2 primary schools in Merthyr Tydfil transfer to Rhydywaun for their secondary education.</p> <p>Further discussion and consultation is required with colleagues in Merthyr CBC regarding their proposals in respect of home to school transport.</p>		Forums have been developed across the 5 LAs. A post to drive forward 'Qualified for Life' in Welsh medium school has been created in the Consortium.

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Responsible officers: Head of Achievement (Primary), Head of Early Years and Family Support Services, Head of School Organisation, Planning and Governance, Systems Leader with Program Manager for Welsh (Consortium)			
A. Objective	B. Current Performance	C. Targets	D. Progress
			<p>Pupil numbers from Welsh medium primary schools in Merthyr are taken into account when preparing our forecasts. Current data for Rhydywaun, which was submitted to WG at the end of May 2014, is as follows:</p> <p>Capacity of the school: 1022</p> <p>Forecasts: 2015 – 1009; 2016 – 1018; 2017 – 1022; 2018 – 1063; 2019 – 1097.</p>
	<p>PROGRESS REPORT DECEMBER 2012</p> <p>Restructure of ESIS and establishment of the Central South Consortium and the changing role of the Athrawon Bro (now called Welsh in Education Officers) will impact on future service delivery.</p> <p>More effective links with the use of the Welsh Education Grant to target underperformance is a priority for the Central South Joint Education Service.</p>		

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A. Objective	B. Current Performance	C. Targets	D. Progress
	Athrawon Bro team (now Welsh in Education Officers) has been re-structured as part of the regional changes within Central South Consortium School Improvement Service - more regular visits to schools ensures better continuity of support and challenge.	To further develop the work of the First-language/Welsh in Education Officer in the most challenged school through the development of literacy and numeracy packs.	
	The impact of the Welsh in Education Officers input is evident with good working relationships developed between our Welsh first language schools in RCT and Merthyr Tydfil, with for example the provision of curriculum materials to support the raising of literacy skills. More targeted support has been made available to specific schools in order to raise pupil standards in Welsh.	To ensure the Central South Consortium consider the impact of literacy and numeracy frameworks on Welsh-medium schools and provide appropriate support.	

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A. Objective	B. Current Performance	C. Targets	D. Progress
1.5 Increase the ability to take advantage of Welsh-medium provision through immersion education schemes and centres for latecomers.	At present no specific services are provided by the Authority to primary schools for Welsh language latecomers, other than the general support for Welsh language learning provided by the Welsh in Education Officers. In previous years support has been available to schools in the form of funding for 1:1 work with learners, support to assist latecomers to integrate according to demand and needs of schools on an individual basis. From evidence available, there have been no latecomers this situation is continuously monitored.	To consider immersion schemes in collaboration with other LA's in Central South Consortium (Cardiff)	
1.6 Establish a Welsh-medium Education Forum and establish links with the Children and Young People's Plan. Ensure considerations for resources and finance for Welsh-medium provision within early years.	<p>The RCT Children & Young People's Plan has been superseded by the RCT Single Integrated Plan (SIP) which is led by the Local Service Board and has three priorities which are that the people of RCT are safe, healthy and prosperous.</p> <p>Fframwaith, the Children & Young People's Partnership contributes to the SIP in ensuring that the voices of Children and Young people in RCT are heard and listened to.</p> <p>Fframwaith continues to support Welsh medium schools having equal access to services and provision and the priorities for this is an overarching theme throughout the SIP.</p>	Improve services and opportunities through the medium of Welsh	The Fframwaith partnership will not exist in the future. Early years matters will be directed via the Early Childhood and Play Partnership (ECAPP) which also discharges the statutory functions of an Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP)

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A. Objective	B. Current Performance	C. Targets	D. Progress
	<p>Although Core Aim 2 as a forum is no longer in existence, Fframwaith continues to support the Welsh Education Strategy and a priority within the SIP is that everyone in RCT has the right to access the same high quality services in the language of their choice.</p> <p>This has an impact on future workforce training pathways and as such appropriate training will continue to be delivered to the workforce to support Welsh Language service delivery.</p>		
	<p>The Welsh Language Matters Group will continue to ensure a collaborative approach in the delivery of services through the medium of Welsh. With the introduction of the SIP, Fframwaith is reviewing how best it supports the priorities within the SIP as well as other statutory duties, this includes a review of its sub-groups to ensure that they are fit for purpose and are working towards the priorities in the SIP.</p>	<p>To review the group members and Terms of Reference to ensure appropriate representation to take account of service changes within the LA to ensure Welsh Language skills are met by end of March 2015.</p>	<p>This group no longer meets</p>

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A. Objective	B. Current Performance	C. Targets	D. Progress
	<p>As a consequence of this and in order to raise the profile of Welsh matters within the Local Authority, the Welsh Language Matters Group are revising their terms of reference and expanding their remit. The following actions are currently being undertaken:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expanding the membership to other departments within the Local Authority to ensure that Welsh issues are taken into consideration in the planning stages of service development. 		This group no longer meets
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expanding the remit to become an information sharing hub so that anyone who is providing services has the opportunity to disseminate information to a wider audience. • Will provide advice and guidance on Welsh matters. • Challenge and raise awareness of Welsh Language matters to a wider audience. 		
1.7 Provide information for parents/carers	<p>Information regarding all of our schools, both Welsh-medium and English-medium is contained within our admissions policy document 'Starting School', which fully complies with Welsh Government guidelines and is updated annually. Details of non-maintained pre-school education provision in both English and Welsh are also included. We do not provide information relating to neighbouring authorities, the aforementioned WG guidance does not require this.</p>	<p>All information in 'Starting School' book is updated annually in line with Welsh Government guidelines.</p>	<p>A sub group will meet in the new year to improve information available regarding availability of Welsh Medium education</p>

Outcome 2: More learners continuing to improve their language skills on transfer from primary school to secondary school			
Responsible officers: Head of Early Years and Family Support Services, Head of Achievement – Primary, Systems Leader with Strategic Lead for Welsh			
A. Objective	B. Current Performance	C. Targets	D. Progress
2.1 Increase the percentage of Year 9 learners who are assessed in Welsh (First Language).	<p>All pupils attending the 4 Welsh-medium Comprehensive schools are assessed in Welsh First Language Skills. In addition some pupils attending Treorchy Comprehensive School are assessed in Welsh First Language. In 2011 at the end of KS3, 17% of the Year 9 cohort in Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council was assessed in Welsh First Language. In 2012, 18.8% of the Year 9 cohort in Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council was assessed in Welsh First Language.</p> <p>PROGRESS REPORT DECEMBER 2012</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2012 there was a growth of 1.8% of pupils assessed in Welsh First Language Skills at the end of KS3. In July 2013 - 17.9% were assessed there is a decline of 0.9% 	<p>19.13% by 2015 19.63% by 2016 19.70% by 2017</p>	2014 – 18.94%
2.2 Develop more effective transfer between the funded non-maintained provision to maintained school provision, between KS2 and 3 and KS3 and 4.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-maintained education settings and Flying Start settings use the 'Ar Fy Ffordd' (On My Way) document which allows information to follow a child on to school. Of the 19 non-maintained settings, 100% use the document. Of the 24 Flying Start settings, 100% usage is expected by December 2014. The onward education destination of children in non-maintained education and Flying Start settings is now being gathered. The data is now available for the last 2 academic terms but requires further analysis. 	Improve processes to transfer information.	Onward destination of FS children: Autumn 2013: 171 children left FS childcare, 5% to Welsh medium, 30% to English and 65% not known

Outcome 2: More learners continuing to improve their language skills on transfer from primary school to secondary school			
Responsible officers: Head of Early Years and Family Support Services, Head of Achievement – Primary, Systems Leader with Strategic Lead for Welsh			
A. Objective	B. Current Performance	C. Targets	D. Progress
	<p>An analysis was completed on available data April – July 2013. The onward destination of children leaving cyloedd Meithrin is attached in Appendix 2.</p> <p>This analysis was completed on available data. Miskin, Pendyris and Treorci removed from original data due to data quality issues. 22 establishments included in analysis.</p> <p>Comparison to previous year: 7 percentage point decrease in children accessing Mudiad Meithrin.</p> <p>Transfer rate: RCT - 1 percentage point decrease in overall transfer rate. 50% (11) establishments remained unchanged or increased their transfer rate. Rhondda - No change in transfer rate overall. Cynon – 9 percentage point decrease in transfer rate overall. Taff Ely – 2 percentage point increase in transfers. 64% (7) establishments remained unchanged or increased their transfer rate; 3 of these by more than 25%</p>	<p>Increase transfer to Welsh medium primary from all Flying Start childcare provision from 12% in 2014 to: 13% in 2015; 14% in 2016; and 15% in 2017.</p> <p>Increase transfer to Welsh medium primary from Welsh medium Flying Start childcare provision from 46% in 2014 to: 47% in 2015; 48% in 2016; and 49% in 2017</p>	<p>Spring 2014: 122 children, 13% Welsh, 75% English, 12% not known</p> <p>Summer 2014: 227 children, 13% Welsh, 76% English, 11% not known</p>

Outcome 2: More learners continuing to improve their language skills on transfer from primary school to secondary school

Responsible officers: Head of Early Years and Family Support Services, Head of Achievement – Primary, Systems Leader with Strategic Lead for Welsh

A. Objective	B. Current Performance	C. Targets	D. Progress												
	<p>Transition rates between Key Stage 2 and 3 are monitored, there is a high percentage of transfer between Key Stages 2 and 3 and Key Stages 3 and 4 within Welsh-medium sector as noted below.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="743 619 1263 727"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>2011</th> <th>2012</th> <th>2013</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>KS2&3</td> <td>97.97%</td> <td>98.5%</td> <td>96.3%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>KS3&4</td> <td>99.5%</td> <td>99.3%</td> <td>99.2%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>In order to achieve this, we will improve the transition arrangements between KS2 and KS3 including early identification of any issues of concern.</p>		2011	2012	2013	KS2&3	97.97%	98.5%	96.3%	KS3&4	99.5%	99.3%	99.2%	<p>KS2&3: 97.9% in 2014 97.6% in 2015 98.3% in 2016 99% 2017</p> <p>KS3&4: 99.6% in 2014 99.5% in 2015 99.7% in 2016 99.9% in 2017</p>	<p>2014 – 97.91%</p> <p>2014 – 99.59%</p>
	2011	2012	2013												
KS2&3	97.97%	98.5%	96.3%												
KS3&4	99.5%	99.3%	99.2%												
	<p>PLANNED ACTION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> LA to continue to monitor and report on transition rates. The authority's admission/transfer process to continue to track pupils who change schools within the County Borough. 														

Outcome 2: More learners continuing to improve their language skills on transfer from primary school to secondary school			
Responsible officers: Head of Early Years and Family Support Services, Head of Achievement – Primary, Systems Leader with Strategic Lead for Welsh			
A. Objective	B. Current Performance	C. Targets	D. Progress
2.3 Promote a higher proportion of Welsh-medium provision within bilingual schools.	RCT has no bilingual schools.		

Outcome 3: More learners aged 14-16 studying for qualifications through the medium of Welsh Outcome 4: More learners aged 16-19 studying subjects through the medium of Welsh in schools, colleges and work-based learning Responsible officer: 14-19 Strategy Officer			
A. Objective	B. Current Performance	C. Targets	D. Progress
3.1 Increase the percentage of learners aged 14-16 studying for qualifications through the medium of Welsh.	<p>In each of our four Welsh-medium comprehensives, all of the learners study for five or more qualifications through the medium of Welsh (100%). In 2010 the number of learners represented 19% of the cohort in the county but this has risen to 20% in 2011. 19.7% for the whole Year 11 cohort studied 5 or more qualifications through the medium of Welsh in 2012. We currently provide Welsh-medium education for both Merthyr Tydfil and Bridgend but Bridgend students are now attending YG Llangynwyd. In effect, by keeping the percentage level we will be increasing the number of learners from RCT by some 120 learners per year.</p> <p>Bridgend learners in the former Ysgol Gyfun Llanhari have transferred to the newly established Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Llangynwyd, in the Bridgend County Borough. Ysgol Llanhari (formerly Ysgol Gyfun Llanhari) has become a 3-19 school and provides a seamless service to the local population.</p>	Maintain figures at 19-20%	18.2% - 2014
	<p>The Authority will be working with schools/consortia basis to enhance curricula opportunities.</p> <p>Continue to support the development of professional learning communities to meet the needs of the 14-19 curriculum.</p>	23% of all learners in RCT to be studying through the medium of Welsh by 2015.	18.5% - 2014

Outcome 3: More learners aged 14-16 studying for qualifications through the medium of Welsh Outcome 4: More learners aged 16-19 studying subjects through the medium of Welsh in schools, colleges and work-based learning Responsible officer: 14-19 Strategy Officer			
A. Objective	B. Current Performance	C. Targets	D. Progress
	<p>Much work has been done to improve the curriculum on offer but the opening of the new college facility, in Nantgarw, close to two of our Welsh-medium schools has had an effect.</p> <p>34 pupils (8.65% of the cohort) left Welsh medium education to go to the new college.</p>	<p>Collate information to assess the impact of drift of pupils to the new college facility, and work closely with the college to increase bilingual opportunities for learners</p>	

Outcome 3: More learners aged 14-16 studying for qualifications through the medium of Welsh Outcome 4: More learners aged 16-19 studying subjects through the medium of Welsh in schools, colleges and work-based learning Responsible officer: 14-19 Strategy Officer			
A. Objective	B. Current Performance	C. Targets	D. Progress
	<p>Coleg y Cymoedd is also a large Work Based Learning provider and is proactively seeking to increase the number of opportunities for students to take up Welsh medium work placements, most notably within childcare.</p> <p>The bilingual champions, now appointed by all FE Colleges in Wales and funded by WG, present opportunities for further developing partnership work with the aim of increasing Welsh medium and bilingual provision within the authority. The bilingual champions work towards a strict set of targets set out by WG.</p>	<p>2014/15/16 - A minimum increase of 2% (40) learners in each academic year that pursue Welsh-medium or bilingual courses or modules.</p>	<p>In 2013-14, 96 learners followed Welsh medium and/or bilingual courses and/or modules. These learning activities were centred around the College's priority areas; Childcare, Health and Social Care, Catering, Business. Figures for 2014-15 are not currently available, although current strategic planning would suggest a further increase.</p>

Outcome 3: More learners aged 14-16 studying for qualifications through the medium of Welsh Outcome 4: More learners aged 16-19 studying subjects through the medium of Welsh in schools, colleges and work-based learning Responsible officer: 14-19 Strategy Officer			
A. Objective	B. Current Performance	C. Targets	D. Progress
		At least 1% (2) of these learners assessed through the medium of Welsh. Difficult to set targets as the cohort of learners is unknown	In 2013-14, 96 learners were assessed through the medium of Welsh. This was against a baseline of 0 in the previous 3 years. Figures for 204-15 are not currently available although current strategic planning would suggest a further increase
		2014/15/16 - Ensure an annual minimum of 5 module options made available through the medium of Welsh	In 2013-14 there were 38 Welsh medium/bilingual module options available. Figures for 2014-15 are not currently available

<p>Outcome 3: More learners aged 14-16 studying for qualifications through the medium of Welsh Outcome 4: More learners aged 16-19 studying subjects through the medium of Welsh in schools, colleges and work-based learning Responsible officer: 14-19 Strategy Officer</p>			
A. Objective	B. Current Performance	C. Targets	D. Progress
		or bilingually, based on college audit and plans	although strategic planning would suggest a further increase
		2014/15/16- Ensure an annual minimum increase of 2 learning activities achieving the LA26, 50% threshold	In 2013-14 all 38 Welsh medium / bilingual module options achieved the LA26 50% threshold. Finite figures for 2014-15 are not currently available, although present provision would suggest that the targets will again be exceeded
3.2 Ensuring that provision for 14-16 year old learners complies with the	All schools in RCT meet the Learning and Skills Measure (2009). The Welsh-medium schools fully meet these requirements through the medium of Welsh. All the Welsh-medium schools work together as a consortium/Cyfleoedd. They share courses, involve the colleges in Bridgend, Coleg y Cymoedd and Merthyr		

Outcome 3: More learners aged 14-16 studying for qualifications through the medium of Welsh Outcome 4: More learners aged 16-19 studying subjects through the medium of Welsh in schools, colleges and work-based learning Responsible officer: 14-19 Strategy Officer			
A. Objective	B. Current Performance	C. Targets	D. Progress
Learning and Skills Measure (Wales) 2009	<p>Tydfil for vocational courses such as construction, work based learning partners and outside providers who provide courses in Law, Dance and CACHE. This provision is monitored through the consortium and Careers Wales. The majority of this provision is supported through core school funding but it is enhanced through the Annual Network Development Plan (ANDP) and Bilingual grant.</p> <p>Future of grant funding unclear and a reduction could compromise the current level of provision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training is in place and the Welsh consortium is progressing under the new chair. • Sustainability of collaborative courses and events is a major concern. Some are becoming embedded in the schools but others are at risk if the grants are reduced or removed. • All schools now exceed the measure providing more choice than previously. 	Analyse data to evidence effectiveness of Welsh consortium. Ensure that all Welsh-medium secondary schools continue to meet the measure.	
	<p>Schools will continue to be supported through Careers Wales. In addition there is a comprehensive support system of key workers, learning and youth coaches in place. In addition, Services for Young People currently and will continue to provide out of school hours support through the medium of Welsh. Schools have also planned recruitment fairs and events to encourage young people to make better choices.</p>	Hold recruitment fairs annually	

Outcome 3: More learners aged 14-16 studying for qualifications through the medium of Welsh Outcome 4: More learners aged 16-19 studying subjects through the medium of Welsh in schools, colleges and work-based learning Responsible officer: 14-19 Strategy Officer			
A. Objective	B. Current Performance	C. Targets	D. Progress
	<p>Added value activities are also planned to give pupils opportunities to experience Welsh language and culture in practical and exciting ways. In this way it will encourage increased participation at post-14.</p>	<p>Plan a calendar of events for 2014/15 and for subsequent years</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools have a planned calendar of events for 2013/14. • Courses introduced this year will be supported by the provision of enhanced levels of training for staff and a regional group will expand upon consortia collaboration. 	<p>Undertake training programme</p>	

Outcome 3: More learners aged 14-16 studying for qualifications through the medium of Welsh Outcome 4: More learners aged 16-19 studying subjects through the medium of Welsh in schools, colleges and work-based learning Responsible officer: 14-19 Strategy Officer			
A. Objective	B. Current Performance	C. Targets	D. Progress
4.1 Increase the percentage of learners aged 16-19 who study subjects through the medium of Welsh in schools.	<p>Currently 24% of the entire Year 13 population of RCT study two or more A levels through the medium of Welsh while a slightly higher figure exists for Year 12. 2011 census results show 12.3% of the population of RCT are Welsh speakers.</p> <p>There are a very small number of courses that are delivered bilingually and opportunities to expand these are being explored.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early figures indicate a rise in these percentages but these can be unreliable until the learners on new courses settle down. • Confirmed figures growth to 26% • The opening of a new A level provision at Coleg y Cymoedd has had an effect on retention figures. Again, early figures can be unreliable but there is a downward trend indicated. Now 61.42% 	<p>24.6% to be studying for two or more A levels by 2014; 25.1% by 2015; 25.6% by 2016; and 26% by 2017.</p> <p>Retention to increase to 70% by 2017.</p>	<p>22.0% - 2014</p> <p>69.4% - 2014</p>

Outcome 3: More learners aged 14-16 studying for qualifications through the medium of Welsh Outcome 4: More learners aged 16-19 studying subjects through the medium of Welsh in schools, colleges and work-based learning Responsible officer: 14-19 Strategy Officer			
A. Objective	B. Current Performance	C. Targets	D. Progress
	<p>The four Welsh-medium schools are organised into a consortium and they share a small number of courses. This helps the schools to expand their curricula and meet learner demand. The schools also have individual and consortium relationships with Coleg y Cymoedd and Bridgend college in order to deliver specialist vocational courses such as construction and hairdressing. Relationships with third party providers are also established and provide the schools with courses in Law, Psychology and work based learning courses.</p> <p>The schools are supported financially through the ANDP and bilingual grants but changes in grant conditions will require schools to plan for sustainability.</p> <p>The Authority is represented at the Welsh-medium Forum through one of the Head Teachers in RCT. Benefits include sharing of good practice, information, resources in the Welsh language and development opportunities. Consortium working and sharing of resources are facilitated through this group. The Authority makes a contribution to the running of this group.</p> <p>PLANNED ACTION</p> <p>To continue to participate in the Welsh-medium Forum. The Welsh-medium schools will continue to obtain learner view to ensure that their curriculum meets their needs.</p>	<p>Ensure that learner views are collected on a yearly basis.</p>	

Outcome 3: More learners aged 14-16 studying for qualifications through the medium of Welsh Outcome 4: More learners aged 16-19 studying subjects through the medium of Welsh in schools, colleges and work-based learning Responsible officer: 14-19 Strategy Officer			
A. Objective	B. Current Performance	C. Targets	D. Progress
	The consortium will continue to work with the Authority in order to enhance the delivery of courses within their schools and with colleges and outside providers to provide a quality education for their learners.	Monitor effective delivery of courses through the consortia. Monitor that schools are adhering to Quality Framework.	
4.2 Work through 14-19 Networks and 14-19 Regional Forums to sustain and improve Welsh-medium provision.	<p>RCT is an active partner in the Welsh-medium network and uses the consortium as a panel to improve the delivery of Welsh-medium education. Schools, colleges and third party providers are linked using the Authority as a conduit. This network is, in turn linked directly by membership to the regional forum and so is able to inform and be informed directly. Officers from the Authority ensure good communication channels between partners and encourage good practice and compliance with local, regional and national policy.</p> <p>Collaborative working is well established in the area and the benefits of choice and efficiency are understood and enjoyed by all. Collaborative working is also supported the ANDP and Bilingual grants which are administered through the Authority.</p>		

Outcome 3: More learners aged 14-16 studying for qualifications through the medium of Welsh Outcome 4: More learners aged 16-19 studying subjects through the medium of Welsh in schools, colleges and work-based learning Responsible officer: 14-19 Strategy Officer			
A. Objective	B. Current Performance	C. Targets	D. Progress
	RCT will continue to build upon existing provision where learners will be consulted to ensure that curricula offered will meet their requirements. Existing provision will be reviewed and quality assured. Particular attention will be given to the impact of changes at Llanhari and the effect of the provision changes in Merthyr Tydfil (Merthyr Learning Quarter) and Nantgarw. To continue the links with the regional group and explore new providers.		
4.3 Gather, analyse and use data for 14-19 Welsh-medium provision. Plan for post-16 Welsh-medium provision within partnerships.	Pupil choice and need is collated by schools using questionnaires and information from careers surveys and learner voice. This information is matched to the existing provision in schools by the consortium group and agreed with the authority in November and March, in line with the WG planning policy. Any new provision required is considered within the consortium, alongside Labour Market Intelligence (LMI) and destination information, and where appropriate partnerships are established with Coleg Y Cymoedd, Bridgend College, Merthyr College and Work Based Learning Partners (WBLP). Service level agreements (SLA's) are put in place to ensure quality and monitored by schools. The system is in a state of change at the moment with Careers Wales changing their role and WG improving LMI systems. Challenge – information sharing protocol, reliability of LMI.		

Outcome 3: More learners aged 14-16 studying for qualifications through the medium of Welsh Outcome 4: More learners aged 16-19 studying subjects through the medium of Welsh in schools, colleges and work-based learning Responsible officer: 14-19 Strategy Officer			
A. Objective	B. Current Performance	C. Targets	D. Progress
	As part of the process of reviewing and revising post-14 curriculum the consortium group will centrally collate data including: attainment, analysis of value added, retention and completion rates of students. This information is provided by officers of the Authority who are present at the consortium planning meetings. These agreed statistics form part of the planned data processing calendar of the Authority and are fed into quality assessments. In turn, this is used to guide planning at school level.		
	Approximately 2% of the Welsh-medium curriculum is provided by WBLP and 5% through College provision. No change. Challenge – sourcing courses through the medium of Welsh.		No change but college WBLP may change next year as the college has lost the contract
	PLANNED ACTION To review current systems to assess their appropriateness and efficiency and respond to any changes identified.	Monitor systems in place to ensure the effective use of data.	

Outcome 5: More learners with higher skills in Welsh			
Responsible officers: Head of Services for Young People, Program Manager for Welsh, Heads of Achievement Primary and Secondary, 14-19 Officer			
A. Objective	B. Current Performance	C. Targets	D. Progress
5.1 Improve provision to address literacy in Welsh	<p>The Local Authority is committed to raising standards in literacy across all schools and intends to achieve this by implementing a bilingual Literacy Strategy for raising achievement in Literacy in RCT (Read, Write, Speak, Succeed) which will address the following aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopting a focused approach to literacy training for all practitioners; • Providing targeted intervention support for pupils aged 7-14 who are under-attaining in reading and writing; • Closing the gender gap. <p>School Improvement within the LA has negotiated a training programme for all Welsh-medium settings in the use of the synthetic phonics programme – Tric a Chlic.</p> <p>During the academic year 2012/13 all Welsh medium schools received comprehensive training and resources to deliver the phonic programme Tric a Chlic.</p> <p>Schools will have access to a comprehensive training programme for staff, through the CSCJES to enable them to deliver National Curriculum programmes of study, in order to respond to the Literacy Framework for Wales and other initiatives promoted by the Welsh Government to further raise standards.</p>		

Outcome 5: More learners with higher skills in Welsh			
Responsible officers: Head of Services for Young People, Program Manager for Welsh, Heads of Achievement Primary and Secondary, 14-19 Officer			
A. Objective	B. Current Performance	C. Targets	D. Progress
	The demand for Welsh-medium CPD will be assessed, and where demand is sufficient and the relevant training available through the medium of Welsh, this will be facilitated.		
	<p>PLANNED ACTIONS</p> <p>To continue to promote a the Strategy for raising achievement in Literacy in RCT (Read, Write, Speak, Succeed):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To monitor and evaluate standards and the quality of provision, through analysis of Estyn inspection reports, information received from the LA Review and Development programme and information from Key Officers. • To provide access to a comprehensive training programme to develop staff skills and respond to any initiatives promoted by the Welsh Government, and LA/Consortium to develop pupils' literacy skills. • Specialist teachers and LSA's will continue to support learners and there is an expectation that school budgets and grants will continue to be used to provide literacy interventions. • Provide additional support to Welsh-medium primary schools through the System Leader with strategic responsibility for Welsh in the Central South Consortium Joint Education Service (CSCJES) and Welsh in Education Officers. 	Provide an annual report to the Welsh Education Forum on standards of literacy in Welsh-medium schools during 2014-17.	

Outcome 5: More learners with higher skills in Welsh Responsible officers: Head of Services for Young People, Program Manager for Welsh, Heads of Achievement Primary and Secondary, 14-19 Officer																							
A. Objective	B. Current Performance	C. Targets	D. Progress																				
5.2 Improve provision and standards of Welsh First Language.	<p>The following table shows the percentage of pupils who, in 2013, achieved at least Foundation Phase Outcome 5 in Language, Literacy and Communication Skills in Welsh-medium/schools. These figures indicate performance which continues to be below the Welsh average, however, they also represent a closing of the gap between local and national performance.</p> <table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>KS1 Lev 2+</th> <th>F.Phase 5+</th> <th></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>LA</td> <td>2011</td> <td>2012</td> <td>2013</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Rhondda Cynon Taf</td> <td>90.8%</td> <td>82.3%</td> <td>84.1%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Wales</td> <td>90.9%</td> <td>85.9%</td> <td>86.7%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>July 2013 RCT increase by 1.8% to 84.1%. Target achieved.</p>		KS1 Lev 2+	F.Phase 5+		LA	2011	2012	2013	Rhondda Cynon Taf	90.8%	82.3%	84.1%	Wales	90.9%	85.9%	86.7%	<p>To achieve the following FP Outcome 5+ LLC Welsh targets:</p> <table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <thead> <tr> <th>2014</th> <th>2015</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>88%</td> <td>90%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>There are no targets available yet for 2016/17</p>	2014	2015	88%	90%	<p>2014 RCT 90.1% Wales 89.9%</p> <p>RCT Rank 12th</p>
	KS1 Lev 2+	F.Phase 5+																					
LA	2011	2012	2013																				
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Outcome 5: More learners with higher skills in Welsh

Responsible officers: Head of Services for Young People, Program Manager for Welsh, Heads of Achievement Primary and Secondary, 14-19 Officer

A. Objective	B. Current Performance	C. Targets	D. Progress																				
	<p>The percentage of learners at the end of KS2 who reached at least Level 4 in teacher assessment in Welsh is noted in the table below. For the past two years the LA results have been slightly above the national averages, however, there has been a dip in 2012 leaving the LA 3% below the national average. These results are monitored on an annual basis by both the individual school's system leader and CSCJES' program manager for Welsh.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="539 727 1303 871"> <thead> <tr> <th>Key Stage 2</th> <th>2011</th> <th>2012</th> <th>2013</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>RCT</td> <td>82.5%</td> <td>80.9%</td> <td>84.3%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Wales</td> <td>82.0%</td> <td>84.0%</td> <td>86.7%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>July 2013 RCT increase by 3.4% to 84.3%. Target exceeded.</p>	Key Stage 2	2011	2012	2013	RCT	82.5%	80.9%	84.3%	Wales	82.0%	84.0%	86.7%	<p>To achieve the following KS2 L4+ Welsh targets:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="1487 580 1870 721"> <thead> <tr> <th>2014</th> <th>2015</th> <th>2016</th> <th>2017</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>87.3%</td> <td>88.4%</td> <td>89%</td> <td>89.1%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	2014	2015	2016	2017	87.3%	88.4%	89%	89.1%	<p>2014 – RCT 88.4% Wales – 88.1%</p> <p>RCT Rank 14th Target exceeded</p>
Key Stage 2	2011	2012	2013																				
RCT	82.5%	80.9%	84.3%																				
Wales	82.0%	84.0%	86.7%																				
2014	2015	2016	2017																				
87.3%	88.4%	89%	89.1%																				
	<p>The percentages of learners at the end of KS3 who reach at least Level 5 in teacher assessment in Welsh are noted below. Following a significant widening of the gap between LA and national averages in 2011, the improvement in standards in 2012 has been maintained in 2013 narrowing the gap between local and national attainment to under 2%.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="530 1190 1312 1295"> <thead> <tr> <th>Level 5+</th> <th>2011</th> <th>2012</th> <th>2013</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>LA</td> <td>71.7%</td> <td>76.8%</td> <td>85.9%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Wales</td> <td>81.3%</td> <td>84.2%</td> <td>87.6%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>July 2013 RCT increase by 90% to 85.9%. Target exceeded.</p>	Level 5+	2011	2012	2013	LA	71.7%	76.8%	85.9%	Wales	81.3%	84.2%	87.6%	<p>To achieve the following KS3 L5+ Welsh targets:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="1487 1171 1874 1295"> <thead> <tr> <th>2014</th> <th>2015</th> <th>2016</th> <th>2017</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>88%</td> <td>89%</td> <td>90.1%</td> <td>90.3%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	2014	2015	2016	2017	88%	89%	90.1%	90.3%	<p>2014 – RCT 90% Wales 90.1% RCT Rank 8th Target exceeded</p>
Level 5+	2011	2012	2013																				
LA	71.7%	76.8%	85.9%																				
Wales	81.3%	84.2%	87.6%																				
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Outcome 5: More learners with higher skills in Welsh																							
Responsible officers: Head of Services for Young People, Program Manager for Welsh, Heads of Achievement Primary and Secondary, 14-19 Officer																							
A. Objective	B. Current Performance	C. Targets	D. Progress																				
	<p>The percentage of learners at the end of Key Stage 4 who achieve grades A*- C in GCSE Welsh first language in 2011-2013 are outlined in the table below:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>2011</th> <th>2012</th> <th>2013</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Rhondda Cynon Taf</td> <td>73.6%</td> <td>69.7%</td> <td>67.47%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Wales</td> <td>73.0%</td> <td>73.7%</td> <td>N/A</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		2011	2012	2013	Rhondda Cynon Taf	73.6%	69.7%	67.47%	Wales	73.0%	73.7%	N/A	<p>GCSE L2 Welsh:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>2015</th> <th>2016</th> <th>2017</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>74%</td> <td>74.2%</td> <td>74.5%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	2015	2016	2017	74%	74.2%	74.5%	<table border="1"> <tbody> <tr> <td>2014</td> </tr> <tr> <td>70.02%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Improvement made but target not met</p>	2014	70.02%
	2011	2012	2013																				
Rhondda Cynon Taf	73.6%	69.7%	67.47%																				
Wales	73.0%	73.7%	N/A																				
2015	2016	2017																					
74%	74.2%	74.5%																					
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70.02%																							
	<p>The CSCJES program manager for Welsh and Welsh in Education Officers responsible for Welsh First Language in the primary and secondary phase, will continue to work with the Authority's Welsh-medium primary and secondary schools to support the raising of standards in Welsh and literacy across the curriculum.</p> <p>The LA and the CSCJES school improvement service will continue to monitor and evaluate standards and the quality of provision, through analysis of school data, comparative data, Estyn inspection reports, and information received from the LA's Review and Development programme and key officers.</p>	<p>To further develop a close working relationship between the LA's Welsh-medium schools and the CSCJES school improvement service which impacts positively on raising standards in Welsh first language.</p>																					
	<p>The CSCJES program manager for Welsh and Welsh in Education Officers will ensure that there is a language continuum between the primary key stages to enable pupils who are taught through the medium of Welsh to have the necessary Welsh language skills to access the curriculum across the Key Stages.</p>																						

Outcome 5: More learners with higher skills in Welsh			
Responsible officers: Head of Services for Young People, Program Manager for Welsh, Heads of Achievement Primary and Secondary, 14-19 Officer			
A. Objective	B. Current Performance	C. Targets	D. Progress
	Welsh-medium schools will continue to focus on developing Welsh language skills throughout the primary phase and English language skills in Key Stage 2, by using assessment to inform learning; setting challenging targets and monitoring and evaluating standards and the quality of provision. (Appendix 4)		
5.3 Increase opportunities for learners of all ages to practise their Welsh.	All Welsh-medium primary and secondary schools offer residential experiences in Welsh speaking settings, including the Urdd centres at Llangrannog and Glan Llyn. In addition to breakfast clubs, most schools also have after school clubs providing a diverse range of after school activities. All are conducted through the medium of Welsh and are run mainly by school staff with the assistance of external agencies in some cases.	Need to establish baseline Attend Welsh for Adults Centres for informal learning activities which currently exist; attend reading clubs, speaking clubs, how to use apps for tablets and phones.	Menter Iaith RhCT have increased their after school provision from 6 to 7 and are looking to increase to 8 provisions by September 2015. Their Holiday Play Schemes have also be increased from 2 to 3. One more facility will be registered by September 2015.

Outcome 5: More learners with higher skills in Welsh			
Responsible officers: Head of Services for Young People, Program Manager for Welsh, Heads of Achievement Primary and Secondary, 14-19 Officer			
A. Objective	B. Current Performance	C. Targets	D. Progress
	A strong partnership has developed between RCT LA and Menter Iaith (language initiative in RCT) – youth service activity programmes have been provided at a number of sites across the county during the schools’ holiday periods.	To recruit more Welsh speaking youth staff placed in Welsh medium secondary schools	Menter Iaith is running 5 youth Forums in the 4 Welsh medium secondary schools and Coleg y Cymoedd. A country wide Welsh language youth Forum will be created in March 2015 during a residential course in Llangrannog. This county wide forum will be a partnership between Menter Iaith, Urdd and YEP.

Outcome 5: More learners with higher skills in Welsh			
Responsible officers: Head of Services for Young People, Program Manager for Welsh, Heads of Achievement Primary and Secondary, 14-19 Officer			
A. Objective	B. Current Performance	C. Targets	D. Progress
	<p>PLANNED ACTION</p> <p>The LA will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure greater collaborative working between all Welsh-medium schools in RCT in order to improve the informal use of Welsh amongst pupils; and • continue to work in partnership with a range of providers and initiatives to develop opportunities for learners to develop their use of Welsh language outside school. 	<p>100% of Welsh-medium schools offer a range of activities to support the use of Welsh outside the classroom and improve the informal use of Welsh during 2014-17.</p> <p>Menter Iaith to offer interest clubs to 100% of Welsh-medium schools during 2014-17.</p> <p>Initiatives at RCT Welsh-medium secondary schools fully supported by Menter Iaith and Urdd Gobaith Cymru Officers during 2014-17.</p> <p>100% of Welsh-medium schools to offer a range of residential activities during 2014-17.</p>	

Outcome 5: More learners with higher skills in Welsh			
Responsible officers: Head of Services for Young People, Program Manager for Welsh, Heads of Achievement Primary and Secondary, 14-19 Officer			
A. Objective	B. Current Performance	C. Targets	D. Progress
	<p>There is a commitment to support Welsh-medium extra curricular activities through E3+ with a specific Welsh-medium budget. E3+ programme has seen 1,015 young people attending Welsh medium provision. This is a 16% increase on 2011/12. This equates to E3+ engaging with 31% of young people on the Welsh secondary school roll. For 2012/13 114 E3+ activities were delivered through the medium of Welsh which is an increase of 27 activities compared to 2011/12. The E3+ programme provide holistic support through informal and non-formal education, engagement, one to one and group work establishing trusting and meaningful relationships with young people through the medium of Welsh. SFYP teams and staff providing a wide range of needs led activity and intervention both in school and during holidays and weekends as required through the medium of Welsh.</p> <p>Support engagement to social events through Welsh speaking third sector youth provision via Menter Iaith, Urdd etc.</p>	<p>To review current SFYP structure and make recommendations for service re-structure and realigned with School Improvement, Access and Inclusion and the Attendance and Wellbeing Service. To maintain current levels of Welsh medium provision across SYFP programmes eg. E3+, 5x60, Youth clubs, holiday provision.</p>	<p>SFYP restructure has been completed with the creation of the Youth Engagement and Participation Service. Links between the service and the Supporting Education Employment and Training (SEET) team, School Admissions, School Improvement and 14-19 Pathways have been strengthened as a result.</p>

Outcome 5: More learners with higher skills in Welsh			
Responsible officers: Head of Services for Young People, Program Manager for Welsh, Heads of Achievement Primary and Secondary, 14-19 Officer			
A. Objective	B. Current Performance	C. Targets	D. Progress
			Welsh medium provision has been maintained and in some areas strengthened through better partnership working with the Urdd and Menter Iaith.
	Cluster Youth Operational Groups collaborate with Menter Iaith and the Urdd to provide activities through the medium of Welsh.		
	<p>1 Youth Club operates through the medium of Welsh with Welsh speaking staff working across a further 6 youth clubs available.</p> <p>Duke of Edinburgh Award is delivered through the medium of Welsh.</p> <p>Welsh-medium representative sits on SFYP management group weekly to ensure joined up seamless support.</p>		The restructure of SFYP has led to extended provision (Youth Club) being delivered from each of the 4 Welsh medium school sites, with Welsh speaking

Outcome 5: More learners with higher skills in Welsh Responsible officers: Head of Services for Young People, Program Manager for Welsh, Heads of Achievement Primary and Secondary, 14-19 Officer							
A. Objective	B. Current Performance	C. Targets	D. Progress				
			staff managing the provision.				
	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>No. of activities currently delivered through the medium of Welsh</td> <td>159</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No. of young people attending</td> <td>1714</td> </tr> </table>	No. of activities currently delivered through the medium of Welsh	159	No. of young people attending	1714	Outcome targets will be identified when new structure is in place.	This information currently being collated not yet available
No. of activities currently delivered through the medium of Welsh	159						
No. of young people attending	1714						
	<p>A new procurement exercise for the appointment of providers to the services for Young People Framework has been completed/undertaken. Max. of 6 suppliers per activity have been appointed to the framework with at least 1 of these providers being able to deliver the activity through the medium of Welsh. 71 providers have the ability to deliver activities through the medium of Welsh, an increase of 238% (21 providers). This includes providers who can deliver animation, fine art, photography, website design, journalism, poetry through the medium of Welsh.</p>						

Outcome 5: More learners with higher skills in Welsh			
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A. Objective	B. Current Performance	C. Targets	D. Progress
	External evaluation revealed a correlation between increased literacy and numeracy attainment levels and increased school attendance of E3+ participants, specifically vulnerable learners (free school meals).		
	<p>Garth Olwg Life Long Learning Centre stages Welsh medium events, shows, performances and audience members have increased substantially.</p> <p>As well as organising the above events the centre hosts the Eisteddfod Dysgwyr Morgannwg / Glamorgan Learners' Eisteddfod.</p> <p>The Centre hosts some 18 Welsh language learning courses (15 in 2012) at various levels provided by the Welsh for Adults Centre the University of South Wales (formerly University of Glamorgan).</p>		
	<p>PLANNED ACTION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To continue to evaluate the impact on the E3+ Welsh-medium project. Initiate a pilot project with 1 Comprehensive school where a series of Welsh-medium activities can be offered to second language Welsh pupils over the age of 16. Then assess the impact of the project before evaluating its potential for expansion to other schools (no progress to date due to lack of staff to implement). <p>Garth Olwg Life Long Learning Centre stages Welsh medium events,</p>	Community Learning Service to facilitate the delivery of 20 Welsh medium courses for 16+ in RCT during 2013/14 academic year.	The following courses and activities will be facilitated through Community Learning's partnership with the Workers Educational Association (WEA) for

Outcome 5: More learners with higher skills in Welsh			
Responsible officers: Head of Services for Young People, Program Manager for Welsh, Heads of Achievement Primary and Secondary, 14-19 Officer			
A. Objective	B. Current Performance	C. Targets	D. Progress
	<p>shows, performances and audience members have increased substantially. Listing of events between April 2012 and March 2013:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ~ 2 performances: 'Gwobr y Gwenyn Gweithgar' (audience of 235) ~ 1 performance of Guto Nyth Bran (audience of 33) ~ 2 performances Andorra Star yn y Gymraeg (audience of 246) ~ 3 performances 'Teigr yr Eira' (audience of 315) ~ 2 performances SXTO (audience 200) ~ Trwy ddulliau Chwyldro (audience of 61) ~ 1 performance: 'Cnoi Draenogod' (audience of 36) ~ 1 performance: 'Dyled Eileen' (audience of 100) ~ 2 performances: 'Ar eich Marciau' (audience of 132) ~ Gŵyl Garth Olwg Festival (audience of 450) <p>As well as organising the above events the centre hosts the Eisteddfod Dysgwyr Morgannwg/Glamorgan Learners' Eisteddfod.</p> <p>The Centre hosts some 18 Welsh language learning courses (15 in 2012) at various levels provided by the Welsh for Adults Centre the University of South Wales (formerly University of Glamorgan).</p>		<p>learners aged 16+ in community venues in 14/15: Creative textiles Literature appreciation Eye on Wales Pilates Bridge for pleasure Welsh Heroes Wales yesterday and today Computers for All Dance classes – street, hip hop</p> <p>Due to major funding reductions in adult community learning and the current lack of clarity on future</p>

Outcome 5: More learners with higher skills in Welsh Responsible officers: Head of Services for Young People, Program Manager for Welsh, Heads of Achievement Primary and Secondary, 14-19 Officer																		
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			funding it is not possible to offer targets post 2014 at this point in time.															
	Specific training aimed at increasing opportunities for learners of all ages to practise their Welsh outside the classroom will be offered as part of the CSCJES programme. Training needs will be identified by the Welsh in Education Officers and fed back to CSCJES.	Maximised opportunities for learners of all ages to practise their Welsh language skills through multi-agency working.																
5.4 Improve provision and standards of Welsh Second Language	<p>The percentage of learners at the end of Key Stage 2 who reached at least Level 4 in the teacher assessment of Welsh second language has increased exponentially over the last four years, virtually closing the gap between the LA's performance and the national average in 2012. This gap has widened again in 2013 as the national rate of improvement has been faster than that of the LA.</p> <table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>2010</th> <th>2011</th> <th>2012</th> <th>2013</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>LA</td> <td>23.4%</td> <td>42.8%</td> <td>59.6%</td> <td>63.3%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Wales</td> <td>35.4%</td> <td>51.4%</td> <td>61.6%</td> <td>67.7%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>July 2013 percentage increased by 3.7% to 63.3%. Target exceeded.</p>		2010	2011	2012	2013	LA	23.4%	42.8%	59.6%	63.3%	Wales	35.4%	51.4%	61.6%	67.7%	100% of Welsh-medium schools to offer a range of residential activities during 2014-17.	Menter Iaith to discuss possibilities of running a lunch time Welsh club in one of the English medium primary schools 2014 – RCT 69.12% Wales 73.1%
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	<p>There is some overlap in the activities described in 5.3 and 5.5.</p> <p>Training and support provided has increased teachers' confidence in monitoring and challenging pupils' progress in Welsh second language.</p>		
	<p>PLANNED ACTION – KS2</p> <p>CSCJES Welsh in Education Officers will continue to support schools in the planning and delivery of Welsh language development and Welsh second language in order to raise levels of attainment. Ongoing support for the Foundation Phase and Key Stage 2 to be through exemplar lessons / team teaching within classes and also staff training during twilight sessions or closure days.</p>	<p>100% of schools have access to a training programme during 2014-17.</p>	<p>KS2 second language 2014: RCT 69.12% Wales 73.1% New target in line or above Wales' average</p>
	<p>Training events specifically designed to meet schools needs to be offered as part of the CSCJES programme. A Welsh language programme of support in the use of Welsh and the development of pupils' bilingual skills to be provided for all staff in classes throughout the primary phase.</p> <p>Schools to access relevant resources created by the Welsh in Education officers (WEOs) through the second language wikispace. The WEOs' wikispace will be replaced by the Welsh in Education Officers website (Welsh first language and Welsh second language). All schools to be notified when the website is live.</p>		

Outcome 5: More learners with higher skills in Welsh			
Responsible officers: Head of Services for Young People, Program Manager for Welsh, Heads of Achievement Primary and Secondary, 14-19 Officer			
A. Objective	B. Current Performance	C. Targets	D. Progress
	The LA will continue to monitor and evaluate standards and the quality of provision, through analysis of school data, comparative data, Estyn inspection reports and information received from the Review and Development programmes and key officers.		
	The LA, in collaboration with the CSCJES, will continue to develop a language programme which supports the development of the Welsh language throughout all key stages in the primary phase.		
	The Welsh Adviser and Welsh in Education Officers led a programme to support schools during 2011-12 in preparing for WJEC accreditation. Evidence gathered from this programme of support indicates there has been an improvement in good practice across most schools and a developing awareness of the need to ensure that effective planning is in place to support language development. Practitioners have shown increased confidence in the assessment of Welsh second language following the cluster moderation exercise. Schools have been encouraged to continue with regular cluster moderation work.		

Outcome 5: More learners with higher skills in Welsh Responsible officers: Head of Services for Young People, Program Manager for Welsh, Heads of Achievement Primary and Secondary, 14-19 Officer																											
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	<p>At the end of Key Stage 3, the percentage of learners who reach at least Level 5 in the teacher assessment of Welsh Second Language continues to show an upward trend. Although the improvement continued in 2013, the gap between national and local attainment widened from 2%<3.7%. Pupil performance is closely monitored by the CSCJES program manager for Welsh and schools are challenged to raise standards as part of the LAs monitoring procedures.</p>	<p>To achieve the following KS3 L5+ Welsh Second Language targets during 2013-15:</p>	<p>KS3 2014: RCT 74.7% Wales 77.7% New target in line or above Wales' average</p>																								
	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Level 5+</th> <th>2011</th> <th>2012</th> <th>2013</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>LA</td> <td>57.6%</td> <td>66.2%</td> <td>69.9%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Wales</td> <td>64.6%</td> <td>68.2%</td> <td>73.3%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>July 2013 a further increase of 3.4% to 69.9%.</p> <p>It should be noted that some pupils will be studying Welsh at Entry Level and they will not be included in the above result.</p>	Level 5+	2011	2012	2013	LA	57.6%	66.2%	69.9%	Wales	64.6%	68.2%	73.3%	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>2014</th> <th>2015</th> <th>2016</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>88%</td> <td>89%</td> <td>90%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	2014	2015	2016	88%	89%	90%	<table border="1"> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td>2014</td> </tr> <tr> <td>LA</td> <td>74.8%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Wales</td> <td>77.7%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Target not reached but improvement made</p>		2014	LA	74.8%	Wales	77.7%
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	<p>PLANNED ACTION – KS3</p> <p>The LA, in conjunction with the CSCJES school improvement service, will continue to provide curriculum support for schools to raise levels of attainment.</p>	<p>100% of schools have access to a training programme during 2014-17.</p>																									

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A. Objective	B. Current Performance	C. Targets	D. Progress
	<p>Schools will have access to a training programme for staff, through CSCJES, to enable them to deliver the National Curriculum programme of study.</p> <p>The LA will respond to initiatives promoted by the Welsh Government to provide training for staff to support the raising of standards at Key Stage 3.</p>		
	<p>The LA, in conjunction with CSCJES, will support Welsh Language development across the curriculum and the teaching of Welsh as a second language.</p> <p>The LA, in conjunction with CSCJES, will continue to monitor and evaluate standards and the quality of provision, through analysis of school data, comparative data, Estyn inspection reports, and information received from the Review and Development programme and key officers.</p>		
	The achievement of learners at the end of Key Stage 4 in GCSE Welsh Second Language Full Course are outlined in the table below:	KS4 GCSE L2 Welsh 2 nd language (Full Course)	

Outcome 5: More learners with higher skills in Welsh Responsible officers: Head of Services for Young People, Program Manager for Welsh, Heads of Achievement Primary and Secondary, 14-19 Officer																																								
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A. Objective	B. Current Performance	C. Targets	D. Progress
		reduce the number who do not sit any external exam in the subject as follows.	
	<p>PLANNED ACTION – KS4</p> <p>The LA will continue to ensure that every pupil in an English-medium secondary school is given the opportunity to sit an external examination in Welsh Second Language by the end of KS4, and to increase the percentage of pupils entered for GCSE Welsh Second Language.</p> <p>The LA will continue to monitor and to evaluate standards and the quality of provision in Welsh Second Language at Key Stage 4 through analysis of school data, comparative data, Estyn inspection reports, and the LA's programme of school and departmental reviews.</p> <p>The LA, in conjunction with the CSCJES school improvement service, to disseminate effective practice and provide support for schools, where required.</p>		

Outcome 5: More learners with higher skills in Welsh			
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A. Objective	B. Current Performance	C. Targets	D. Progress
	<p>PLANNED ACTION – Welsh Second Language</p> <p>The LA, in conjunction with the CSCJES school improvement service, will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide support and challenge to all schools to improve performance in Welsh second language at the end of all key stages. • target improvement in the primary sector, primarily through the work of the Welsh in Education officers. • target improvement in the secondary sector by working with Welsh second language departments in order to raise standards in KS3 and KS4, thereby increasing the number of students opting to follow the GCSE full course of study and continuing to AS/A level. • target WEG funding to establish and support PLC work aimed at raising standards in Welsh second language. 		
5.5 Increase opportunities for learners of all ages to practise their Welsh outside the classroom	<p>The CSCJES Welsh in Education Officers work closely with schools in order to increase their own capacity to further raise the profile of the Welsh Language and standards of achievement, by providing the following support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrating to teachers how to provide opportunities for pupils to use everyday Welsh, during exemplar lessons provided in primary schools; • Encouraging the <i>Helpwr Heddiw</i> strategy, with pupils being given responsibility for giving instructions and commands to their peers through the medium of Welsh; 		Many of the schools work closely with Urdd Gobaith Cymru and Menter Iaith in order to enhance their range of activities

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing input into Foundation Phase courses on Welsh language development; • Producing an Everyday Welsh document which shows progressive banks of language for use in schools (copy on wikispace); • Providing a bank of Welsh signs for use on displays (copy on wikispace); • Providing training for teachers (intensive Welsh courses); • Providing training for Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) (intensive Welsh courses). • All resources created by the Welsh in Education Officers (WEO) to be available electronically via the WEO website. Information has been distributed to all schools September 2013. 		
	In the secondary sector various strategies to support Welsh across the curriculum have been initiated e.g. at Treorci Comprehensive School and Y Pant Comprehensive School. All schools have received the WJEC document "Developing Welsh Across the Curriculum in English Medium Schools". Tonyrefail and Treorci have invested in courses provided by the Welsh for Adults Centre (University of South Wales) in order to upgrade teachers' Welsh language skills across the curriculum.		Appointment of Adviser for the Qualified for Life – initiative – working across all LAs within CSC
	All schools in RCT offer a range of extra curricular activities to support opportunities to extend the use of the Welsh language. These activities are offered during the school time and twilight activities. Many of the schools work closely with Urdd Gobaith Cymru in order to enhance their range of		

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5.6 Increase the total A Level Welsh and Welsh Second Language entries as a percentage of GCSE Welsh and Welsh Second Language entries.	<p>Typically 400 pupils sit GCSE Welsh 1st language in RCT schools. Approximately 8% continue to AS level, 74% of whom continue to A level.</p> <table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>2011</th> <th>2012</th> <th>2013</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>A</td> <td>26</td> <td>22</td> <td>19</td> </tr> <tr> <td>AS</td> <td>32</td> <td>30</td> <td>30</td> </tr> <tr> <td>GCSE</td> <td>256</td> <td>534</td> <td>498</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		2011	2012	2013	A	26	22	19	AS	32	30	30	GCSE	256	534	498		<table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <thead> <tr> <th>2014</th> <th>2015</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>24</td> <td>26</td> </tr> <tr> <td>49</td> <td>53</td> </tr> <tr> <td>503</td> <td>511</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	2014	2015	24	26	49	53	503	511
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100	113																										
570	596																										
	<p>PLANNED ACTION</p> <p>The LA, in conjunction with the CSCJES school improvement service, will continue to work with the Welsh departments at the four Welsh-medium secondary schools in order to maintain and increase number of pupils wishing to opt for AS/A level Welsh First Language in KS5.</p> <p>The LA will also target an increase in the number of students opting to follow the GCSE Welsh Second Language Full Course of study thereby encouraging progression to AS/A level.</p>																										

Outcome 5: More learners with higher skills in Welsh Responsible officers: Head of Services for Young People, Program Manager for Welsh, Heads of Achievement Primary and Secondary, 14-19 Officer			
A. Objective	B. Current Performance	C. Targets	D. Progress
	<p>CURRENT PERFORMANCE</p> <p>Currently 29.5% of GCSE candidates continue to complete GCE A level. This is higher than most other subjects offered in RCT. There is a slight drop off between AS and A level but this is one of the smallest percentages in the county.</p> <p>Retention between Years 11 to 12 and 12 to 13 are the key to improving this statistic. The trend is for more take up at GCSE especially Welsh second language and this should continue to increase the number of Welsh speakers in the future.</p>		
	<p>PLANNED ACTION</p> <p>Schools are encouraged to raise the value of a Welsh qualification through events, careers and their curriculum. Increase opportunities to engage in Welsh language and culture events and there are plans for more in the next academic year. Close collaboration with the Welsh-medium consortium and their partners to raise the profile of Welsh-medium qualifications.</p> <p>Schools and consortia have a planned calendar of activities that is currently being implemented.</p>		

Outcome 6: Welsh-medium provision for learners Additional Learning Needs (ALN)			
Responsible officer: Head of Access and Inclusion			
A. Objective	B. Current Performance	C. Targets	D. Progress
6.1 Improve Welsh-medium Additional Learning Needs (ALN Provision)	<p>Data collated in January 2014 from PLASC suggests that 17.17% of the LA's primary pupils are taught within a Welsh medium setting. A further 4.74% of primary school pupils are taught in dual language settings. 18.57% of secondary pupils receive Welsh-medium education. 1.94% or 757 pupils in RCT have a Statement of Special Educational Needs. Only 1.85% of these 14 pupils attend Welsh-medium schools. This is a very small percentage. The level of statements in Welsh medium schools is monitored and the level of need rigorously appraised to establish demand.</p> <p>Pupils who attend Welsh-medium education have their SEN well provided for within their mainstream schools in accordance with RCT's Inclusion Policy. Where appropriate, support is provided by staff from the Access and Inclusion Service staff who are Welsh speaking (eg. Learning Support Service, Behaviour Support Service, and Educational Psychology Service team members). Educational Psychology input is time allocated to schools and Learning and Behaviour Support Services, provided in response to referrals to the Access and Inclusion Service. Whilst there are Welsh speaking staff available in both services, there are gaps in some key areas. There has been Welsh speaking educational psychology staff available for all settings in 2013/14.</p> <p>Data analysis shows that all pupils in Welsh medium schools who have met the criteria to access specialist support from the Learning Support Service central team are currently able to access appropriate SEN support for severe and complex needs in Welsh. A recent audit (March 2014) showed that the majority</p>	<p>Establish demand for Welsh medium support for learners with Hearing Impairment, Visual Impairment, Autistic Spectrum Disorder, Specific Learning Difficulties and physical/medical needs.</p> <p>To close the gap in current provision through</p>	

Outcome 6: Welsh-medium provision for learners Additional Learning Needs (ALN)			
Responsible officer: Head of Access and Inclusion			
A. Objective	B. Current Performance	C. Targets	D. Progress
	<p>of pupils being supported by the Behaviour Support Service in Welsh medium schools are currently supported in English due to the limited number of Welsh speaking staff in the service. Remodelling of the Behaviour Support Service is imminent and action will be taken to address demand through training, commissioning and cross border initiatives.</p> <p>The demand for specialist Welsh-medium provision is regularly audited. A recent audit (November 2013) of Welsh medium pupils receiving support from the Access and Inclusion Service for severe and complex needs, together with those receiving a high level (15+ hours) of special needs support assistant (SNSA) input via Additional Needs Funding (ANF) has shown that there is currently insufficient evidence to support the need to establish a Welsh medium specialist Learning Support Class. This is largely due to the low incidence and diversity of SEN in Welsh medium schools, together with a broad age range and diverse geographical distribution.</p> <p>Only 17 pupils with a range of SEN across RCT from Foundation Phase to KS2 would meet the criteria for placement in specialist Learning Support Classes. A further 5 pupils ranging from KS2 to KS4 would meet the criteria for placement in Pupil Referral Unit, only 3 pupils ranging from FP to KS2 would meet the criteria for placement in a special school. Audit outcomes therefore do not justify the establishment of a Learning Support Class at this moment in time.</p> <p>The Data Analysis Report for SpLD 2012-13 shows that 50% of the Welsh medium pupils receiving SpLD support from the Learning support Service were</p>	<p>training, commissioning and cross border initiatives.</p> <p>Annual data analysis to be undertaken to inform an annual report to reflect the demand for Welsh medium provision and to identify any gaps in provision January 2015.</p>	<p>2013-14 SpLD 80% Speech and Language 65%</p>

Outcome 6: Welsh-medium provision for learners Additional Learning Needs (ALN)			
Responsible officer: Head of Access and Inclusion			
A. Objective	B. Current Performance	C. Targets	D. Progress
	<p>off-listed due to good progress. 100% of Welsh medium pupils made progress in their reading age. This provision is to continue.</p> <p>The Data Analysis Report for Speech and Language Needs 2012-13 shows that 100% of Welsh medium pupils receiving support from the LSS Speech and Language Team made progress in their receptive language acquisition. Current staffing meets demand.</p>		
	<p>Pupils with significant SEN are supported in the mainstream by school based Special Needs Supports Assistants (SNSAs) or teaching staff. This support is provided from school based resources in the first instance. Children with severe and persistent needs can access further support by making applications to Local Cluster Group Panels (LCGPs). Additional Needs Funding (ANF) is delegated to clusters of schools and awarded if threshold criteria are met. Current figures (November 2013) show that 100 pupils with a range of ALN accessed additional support through ANF. RCT delegates £2.7 million to Local Cluster Group Panels (LCGP) to fund mainstream inclusion opportunities for pupils with severe and persistent SEN. This ANF is delegated annually. A total of £362,833 has been delegated to all 4 Welsh medium clusters for the financial year 2013-14. This has enhanced the SEN funding available to Welsh medium schools and enhanced mainstream inclusion opportunities in line with the LA inclusion policy. Schools use ANF to fund learning support assistants. Schools can access Welsh medium training from the Access and Inclusion Service, the Central South Consortium Joint Education Service and other providers. 2 Welsh-medium training sessions were delivered in 2012/13.</p>	<p>To enhance Welsh medium training courses available to schools by 50% by January 2015</p>	<p>November 2014 – 120 pupils access ANF</p>

Outcome 6: Welsh-medium provision for learners Additional Learning Needs (ALN)			
Responsible officer: Head of Access and Inclusion			
A. Objective	B. Current Performance	C. Targets	D. Progress
	<p>If there is still evidence of continued difficulties despite ANF, then applications for additional funding <i>and specialist input</i> can be made to the Severe and Complex Welsh Medium Panel. This ring-fenced funding is intended to further enhance mainstream support for pupils in Welsh medium settings who have considerable needs. Minutes from Severe and Complex Welsh Medium Panels provides a detailed record of the submissions and successful awards made. During 2012/13, 11 pupils were discussed at Severe and Complex Needs Panel of which 2 were allocated support. Designated Welsh speaking Specialist Teachers provide this support and current provision meets need.</p>	<p>To interrogate outcome data to ensure that Welsh medium pupils receiving ANF make progress in line with the RCT wide peer group. September 2014.</p>	<p>Data analysis for 2013-14 shows that 92.03% of returns from schools identified that ANF had had a positive impact on pupils using a range of outcomes, of which 22.12% of Welsh medium schools reported that ANF had enhanced the rate of pupils' progress compared to 11% of English medium schools.</p>
	<p>The LA has facilitated focus groups to obtain parental views about the Access and Inclusion Service. In addition, a perception survey is undertaken with all schools within the LA and the LA seeks feedback about the services we provide. References to Welsh medium provision is teased out, analysed and acted on. Focus groups has recently been replaced by parental questionnaires this academic year.</p>	<p>Parental feedback questionnaire to be collated by July 2014. Aim to get 60% returns.</p>	<p>Focus group has been replaced with parental questionnaires which have been anonymised therefore we have been unable to</p>

Outcome 6: Welsh-medium provision for learners Additional Learning Needs (ALN)			
Responsible officer: Head of Access and Inclusion			
A. Objective	B. Current Performance	C. Targets	D. Progress
			identify the Welsh schools. This will be redone.
	RCT liaises with other authorities to develop enhanced Welsh language ALN provision. RCT currently provides Welsh-medium Educational Psychology Services for Merthyr Tydfil. Central South Consortium meetings provide a forum for exploring the possibility of cross boundary training, involving Access and Inclusion Services.	To continue with collaborative arrangements across RCT and Merthyr Tydfil.	

Outcome 7: Workforce planning and Continuous Professional Development			
Responsible officers: Head of Access and Inclusion, Welsh Language Officer, Systems Leader with Strategic Lead for Welsh, Human Resources Manager, Head of School Organisation, Planning and Governance			
A. Objective	B. Current Performance	C. Targets	D. Progress
7.1 Ensure that there are sufficient numbers of practitioners to deliver Welsh-medium education.	<i>Number of primary school teacher vacancies to teach through the medium of Welsh not filled at the start of September 2013:</i> One	No vacancies	No vacancies at 1 September 2014
	<i>Number of secondary school teacher vacancies to teach through the medium of Welsh not filled at the start of September 2013:</i> None	No vacancies	No vacancies at 1 September 2014
	The LA has prioritised the need to ensure that all schools in RCT including Welsh-medium schools are led and managed by high performing staff. Actions include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Proactive LA involvement in initial recruitment processes by utilising the services of recruitment agencies to actively seek highly experienced, successful leaders to headship and deputy headship posts; ▪ More robust selection processes with LA officer involvement; and ▪ Leadership and management courses 		
	<i>Number of secondary school teacher vacancies to teach Welsh not filled at the start of September 2013:</i> Two	No vacancies	No vacancies at 1 September 2014

Outcome 7: Workforce planning and Continuous Professional Development			
Responsible officers: Head of Access and Inclusion, Welsh Language Officer, Systems Leader with Strategic Lead for Welsh, Human Resources Manager, Head of School Organisation, Planning and Governance			
A. Objective	B. Current Performance	C. Targets	D. Progress
	<p><i>Number of secondary school teacher vacancies to teach Welsh Second Language not filled at the start of September 2013:</i></p> <p>None</p>	No vacancies	No vacancies at 1 September 2014
	<p><i>Number of classroom assistant vacancies to work through the medium of Welsh not filled at the start of September 2012?</i></p> <p>2 vacancies Primary School; and 2 vacancies Secondary school</p>	No vacancies	No vacancies at 1 September 2014
	RCT has been proactive in recruiting Welsh speaking staff across schools and Central Services. The Access and Inclusion Service has a high number of staff who is able to deliver services through the medium of Welsh.		
	RCT undertakes an annual audit of training needs which informs the planning of the Access and Inclusion Training Schedule and the demand for Welsh medium training. A range of SEN/ALN courses are available for Welsh medium schools and Welsh speaking LA staff. – e.g. POPAT, Foundation POPAT, Dyslexia Awareness, Diagnostic Literacy Assessment and IEP Planning.		

Outcome 7: Workforce planning and Continuous Professional Development			
Responsible officers: Head of Access and Inclusion, Welsh Language Officer, Systems Leader with Strategic Lead for Welsh, Human Resources Manager, Head of School Organisation, Planning and Governance			
A. Objective	B. Current Performance	C. Targets	D. Progress
	<p>RCT has recently updated our Access and Inclusion Service training schedule which has a wide range of Welsh-medium training events available for Welsh medium schools and Welsh speaking LA staff.</p> <p>An annual audit of Welsh speaking staff to be undertaken and pro-active steps taken to recruit appropriate Welsh speaking staff where gaps in provision are identified.</p>	<p>Annual audit undertaken by HR.</p>	

Outcome 7: Workforce planning and Continuous Professional Development			
Responsible officers: Head of Access and Inclusion, Welsh Language Officer, Systems Leader with Strategic Lead for Welsh, Human Resources Manager, Head of School Organisation, Planning and Governance			
A. Objective	B. Current Performance	C. Targets	D. Progress
	A representative from the Early Years Service visits secondary schools to raise awareness of employment opportunities for students on Childcare courses.	2 schools per year.	The Welsh speaking Senior Manager has now left the organisation. However the lead Internal Verifier (non-Welsh speaking) for the Flying Start Training Centre has become an Early Years Ambassador for the Care Council for Wales. This will involve visiting schools to discuss benefits and career progression routes in childcare.

Outcome 7: Workforce planning and Continuous Professional Development			
Responsible officers: Head of Access and Inclusion, Welsh Language Officer, Systems Leader with Strategic Lead for Welsh, Human Resources Manager, Head of School Organisation, Planning and Governance			
A. Objective	B. Current Performance	C. Targets	D. Progress
	<p>Officers from School Improvement and the Advisory service support Governing Bodies of all schools including Welsh-medium schools when new staff is appointed. Officers from School Improvement, work in close collaboration with HR officers and the CSCJES, to support all senior leadership appointments within our Welsh-medium schools. School governing bodies and headteachers work with the LA in order to comply with the Council's Welsh Language Scheme when advertising posts for practitioners to support teaching through the medium of Welsh.</p> <p>We have also utilised and will continue to employ the services of recruitment agencies to actively seek highly experienced, successful leaders to headship and deputy leadership posts.</p>	To continue to recruit experienced successful leaders and managers to senior leadership posts in schools.	
	<p>The LA will continue to work with</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • headteachers to ensure that there are sufficient numbers of practitioners to deliver Welsh-medium education; and • governing bodies to ensure that they comply with Council's Welsh language scheme and recruitment policy when advertising for practitioners to support teaching through the medium of Welsh. 	Improved linguistic and methodological skills of practitioners in English-medium schools during 2013-15, as identified by audit.	

Outcome 7: Workforce planning and Continuous Professional Development			
Responsible officers: Head of Access and Inclusion, Welsh Language Officer, Systems Leader with Strategic Lead for Welsh, Human Resources Manager, Head of School Organisation, Planning and Governance			
A. Objective	B. Current Performance	C. Targets	D. Progress
7.2 Improve practitioners' linguistic skills.	HR collate information on all Council staff in RCT including school staff to identify 'fairly fluent' and 'fluent' Welsh speakers. In March 2012, 1268 members of school based staff judged themselves to be fluent (842) or fairly fluent (426). It must be stressed that the responses are completed and returned on a voluntary basis so the true figure could be higher.	To use this information to target resources more effectively and to encourage school to school working.	As at 11 December 2014 there were 998 members of school based staff judged themselves to be fluent (632) or fairly fluent (366)
7.3 Improve practitioners' methodological skills.	This information is kept live on the HR's Vision database and the current level stands at 1209 with 784 fluent and 425 fairly fluent	Improved methodological skills of practitioners in Welsh-medium schools during 2013-2015, as identified by monitoring and evaluation of standards.	
	The Welsh in Education Officers also completed an audit of language skills during 2011-12. The audit focused on teachers' accreditation in the language and attendance at language courses provided by the LA. The audit identified that there is a need to continue to provide linguistic training as part of the CSCJES CPD programme.		

Outcome 7: Workforce planning and Continuous Professional Development			
Responsible officers: Head of Access and Inclusion, Welsh Language Officer, Systems Leader with Strategic Lead for Welsh, Human Resources Manager, Head of School Organisation, Planning and Governance			
A. Objective	B. Current Performance	C. Targets	D. Progress
	<p>As noted in the WEG guidelines for 2013-14, each consortium was expected to hold a review of the Welsh language skills of teaching staff during the year as part of the work of the Grant. The intention of this review was to collect consistent information at a national level in order to improve the planning and targeting of training programmes and support in the future.</p> <p>The review included the following practitioners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers and teaching assistants in primary schools (Welsh and English medium) • Teachers and teaching assistants in secondary schools (Welsh medium / bilingual only) <p>A questionnaire (along with language skills level descriptors) was prepared for this review in order to collect information about the Welsh language skills of practitioners as well as their training needs. Head teachers were asked to complete the questionnaire on behalf of their staff, allocating each practitioner to one of the given categories. Completed questionnaires were returned by over 90% of schools across the CSC</p>	<p>Improved linguistic and methodological skills of practitioners in English-medium schools during 2014-17, as identified by audit.</p>	<p>Welsh in Education Officers update data on Welsh language skills of staff in their initial yearly meeting with Welsh Subject Leaders within their schools</p>

Outcome 7: Workforce planning and Continuous Professional Development			
Responsible officers: Head of Access and Inclusion, Welsh Language Officer, Systems Leader with Strategic Lead for Welsh, Human Resources Manager, Head of School Organisation, Planning and Governance			
A. Objective	B. Current Performance	C. Targets	D. Progress
	<p><u>Planned Action</u></p> <p>Welsh second language To identify the needs for training in methodology for those teaching in Welsh-medium schools the LA to continue to monitor and evaluate standards and the quality of provision, through analysis of Estyn inspection reports and information received from the LA's Review and Development programme. (2014-17)</p> <p>The LA, in conjunction with CSCJES, to ensure that the Welsh in Education Grant (WEG) is used effectively and to maintain sufficient Welsh in Education Officers to provide specific training and mentoring support for teachers in Welsh-medium primary and secondary schools, to improve methodology. The LA/CSCJES will work in partnership to ensure effective strategic planning of the use of WEG grant. Evidence considered will include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools' annual performance reports; • Whole school and subject monitoring reports; • School self-evaluation, improvement and transition plans; • Foundation Phase, KS2 and KS3 performance data; • Estyn inspection reports (LA and schools) and publications. <p>(2013-2015)</p>	<p>HR officers to continue to feed information on recruitment to the Welsh Language Officer in order to maintain database.</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Yearly and ongoing</p>	<p>Waiting to see new grant conditions for 2014-15 and effect any changes will have on the structure of the team and future support for schools</p>

Outcome 7: Workforce planning and Continuous Professional Development			
Responsible officers: Head of Access and Inclusion, Welsh Language Officer, Systems Leader with Strategic Lead for Welsh, Human Resources Manager, Head of School Organisation, Planning and Governance			
A. Objective	B. Current Performance	C. Targets	D. Progress
	<p>Considerable effort is put into signposting learners/improvers to increase their Welsh language skills. Primarily, courses highlighted/promoted would be those via:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welsh for Adults Centre (University of South Wales) – courses in the workplace or in the community also informal learning activities. <p>Welsh Government Sabbatical Courses specifically for schools based staff (Gloywi iaith/Higher Short Course for Welsh speakers also</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foundation (classroom assistants) and Entry level for non-Welsh speakers. <p>Courses for all council learners/improvers organised and offered in council offices include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welsh Language Awareness Raising Sessions • Welsh Language 2 Day Taster Courses • Welsh in the Workplace (20 hr) Courses specifically for council Welsh speakers include: • Confidence Raising Courses (Magu Hyder/Gloywi iaith) <p>Currently, we are exploring opportunities to upskill Welsh speakers numeracy and literacy in Welsh using the WG (Essential Skills, Employer Pledge Fund). Staff to be targeted would include Early Years Staff and Services for Young People as well as other staff from other directorates.</p> <p>Siop Siarad in (weekly opportunity for Welsh speakers to drop in and practice their Welsh/raise questions about Welsh in the workplace etc).</p>		<p>Gloywi iaith training has been held during the year targeting staff who wish to improve their Welsh linguistic skills. The training is available over 7 weeks delivered on a Wednesday between 3.30 and 5.00pm. The training is also offered to TAs.</p>

Outcome 7: Workforce planning and Continuous Professional Development			
Responsible officers: Head of Access and Inclusion, Welsh Language Officer, Systems Leader with Strategic Lead for Welsh, Human Resources Manager, Head of School Organisation, Planning and Governance			
A. Objective	B. Current Performance	C. Targets	D. Progress
	<p>Welsh in Education Officers will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • work in partnership in order to raise standards in Welsh (first language) learning and teaching in the Welsh medium nursery, primary and secondary schools of the five constituent authorities of CSC; • provide a scheduled programme of curriculum support and challenge for targetted schools in order to further develop practitioners' skills and increase schools' capacity to deliver high quality Welsh medium literacy teaching and learning. <p>Welsh in Education Officers will</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. plan and deliver a targeted programme of support based on an analysis of performance data for schools in order to meet the Welsh medium literacy needs of prioritised schools, the LAs and the Consortium including supporting practitioners responsible for teaching learners with additional learning needs (ALN). 2. contribute as appropriate to the development and delivery of a programme of continuous professional development, including the work of professional learning communities, in order to improve Welsh language / Welsh medium literacy learning and teaching methodologies across the curriculum. 3. strengthen language continuity across and between key stages (Foundation Phase / KS2 / KS3 / KS4) through the promotion of transition arrangements. 4. provide mentoring for practitioners who have completed Sabbatical Scheme language training courses. 5. support schools in developing the reliability and validity of teacher assessment through the sharing of best practice in cluster moderation 		<p>Schools targeted for support identified by Welsh in Education Officers. RAG data available for all schools arranged in clusters feeding a specific medium secondary school.</p>

Outcome 7: Workforce planning and Continuous Professional Development			
Responsible officers: Head of Access and Inclusion, Welsh Language Officer, Systems Leader with Strategic Lead for Welsh, Human Resources Manager, Head of School Organisation, Planning and Governance			
A. Objective	B. Current Performance	C. Targets	D. Progress
	<p>work.</p> <p>6. support schools in promoting learners' use of the Welsh language outside the classroom.</p> <p>CSCJES will provide an extensive linguistic training programme for teachers, which schools will be able to access via delegated WEG funds and which will include the following elements:</p> <p>Welsh second language - Primary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intensive Welsh language skills development/methodology for practitioners • 5, 10 and 15 day intensive courses targeted at three levels of ability, to increase the number of teachers who have sufficient working knowledge of Welsh to teach it as a second language subject to pupils from Foundation Phase to the end of Key Stage 2 • Follow up courses for attendees. <p>Criteria for targeting schools to attend intensive Welsh language courses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welsh in Education Officers' baseline assessments • KS2 Welsh second language teacher assessment results • ESTYN inspection reports • Individual school requests • Database of teachers' Welsh language skills • The role and responsibilities of the Welsh second language curriculum leader 		<p>Ensure access to current provision on offer: proficiency courses; confidence raising courses; and written courses</p> <p>Increase number of Foundation Level teachers on Sabbatical / intensive courses:</p> <p>6 in 2013/14 8 in 2014/15 9 in 2015/16 10 in 2016/17</p> <p>Increase number of Entry Level LSAs</p>

Outcome 7: Workforce planning and Continuous Professional Development			
Responsible officers: Head of Access and Inclusion, Welsh Language Officer, Systems Leader with Strategic Lead for Welsh, Human Resources Manager, Head of School Organisation, Planning and Governance			
A. Objective	B. Current Performance	C. Targets	D. Progress
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment of Welsh second language (package) • Developing learner profiles in Welsh second language across KS2/3 • Developing reading skills in Welsh second language in KS2 • Welsh language development / bilingualism across the curriculum (package) • Welsh language development / bilingualism for Headteachers • The use of ICT in Welsh second language development, including the use of the iPad in learning and teaching and the development of HWB (new digital learning platform for all 3-19 education establishments in Wales) • Welsh second language in special schools • Y Pod Antur (The Adventure Pod) • Developing Welsh outside the classroom – Urdd Gobaith Cymru centre WMC <p>Welsh second language - Secondary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welsh language skills development for practitioners (Gloywi Iaith) • Welsh second language teaching methodology • Welsh language development for TAs • Welsh language development / bilingualism for Headteachers • Developing learner profiles in Welsh second language across KS2/3 • The use of ICT in Welsh language development, including the use of the iPad in learning and teaching and the development of HWB <p>The Council adopted a Language Skills Framework (Nov 2011) with the aim of</p>		<p>on Sabbatical / intensive courses: 10 in 2013/14 12 in 2014/15 13 in 2015/16 14 in 2016/17</p> <p>Fforwm Penaethiaid Adran y Gymraeg mewn Ysgolion uwchradd ail-iaith. A forum has been set up for HoD's from Welsh departments in secondary schools across the LAs in the Consortium.</p>

Outcome 7: Workforce planning and Continuous Professional Development			
Responsible officers: Head of Access and Inclusion, Welsh Language Officer, Systems Leader with Strategic Lead for Welsh, Human Resources Manager, Head of School Organisation, Planning and Governance			
A. Objective	B. Current Performance	C. Targets	D. Progress
	<p>developing a bilingual workforce and to maintain an overview of those language skills needs and resources with a view to recruiting and training staff in order to meet the objectives of the Welsh Language Scheme, under the obligations of Welsh Language Act, 1993 and the further enhancements under the Welsh Language Measure, 2011.</p> <p>April 2013 1,783 (13.5%) are fluent or fairly fluent, of which 1,200 are school based staff; 783 being fluent, 426 being fairly fluent.</p> <p>The framework will support the Council's Welsh Language Scheme by offering a plan to begin the process of addressing the imbalance in our workforce profile to ensure we have a complement of bilingual staff with the aim of increasing our capacity to deliver services bilingually. It should be noted there is no corporate Welsh language training budget to deliver training.</p> <p>Considerable effort is put into signposting learners/improvers to increase their Welsh language skills. Primarily, courses highlighted/promoted would be those via:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welsh for Adults Centre (University of South Wales) – courses in the workplace or in the community also informal learning activities. • Welsh Government Sabbatical Courses specifically for schools based staff (Gloyw iaith/Higher Short Course for Welsh speakers also Foundation (class room assistants) and Entry level for non-Welsh speakers. 	<p>HR officers to continue to feed nformation on recruitment of the Welsh Language Officer in order to maintain database. Ongoing.</p> <p>Yearly and ongoing.</p>	<p>The aim is to develop new material and to share the good practice. The focus for this group is to look at the transition between KS2 and KS3.</p>

Outcome 7: Workforce planning and Continuous Professional Development			
Responsible officers: Head of Access and Inclusion, Welsh Language Officer, Systems Leader with Strategic Lead for Welsh, Human Resources Manager, Head of School Organisation, Planning and Governance			
A. Objective	B. Current Performance	C. Targets	D. Progress
	<p>Courses for all council learners/improvers organised and offered in council offices include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welsh Language Awareness Raising Sessions • Welsh Language 2 Day Taster Courses • Welsh in the Workplace (20 hr) <p>Courses specifically for council Welsh speakers include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confidence Raising Courses (Magu Hyder/Gloywi Iaith) • Currently, we are exploring opportunities to upskill Welsh speakers numeracy and literacy in Welsh using the WG (Essential Skills, Employer Pledge Fund). Staff to be targeted would include Early Years Staff and Services for Young People as well as other staff from other directorates. • Siop Siarad in (weekly opportunity for Welsh speakers to drop in and practice their Welsh/raise questions about Welsh in the workplace etc) <p>To identify the needs for training in methodology for those teaching in Welsh-medium schools the LA to continue to monitor and evaluate standards and the quality of provision, through analysis of Estyn inspection reports and information received from the LA's Review and Development programme. (2014-17)</p>	<p>Yearly and ongoing</p> <p>Yearly and ongoing</p> <p>Improved methodological skills of practitioners in Welsh-medium schools during 2014-2017, as identified by monitoring and evaluation of standards.</p>	

Outcome 7: Workforce planning and Continuous Professional Development			
Responsible officers: Head of Access and Inclusion, Welsh Language Officer, Systems Leader with Strategic Lead for Welsh, Human Resources Manager, Head of School Organisation, Planning and Governance			
A. Objective	B. Current Performance	C. Targets	D. Progress
	<p>The LA, in conjunction with CSCJES, to ensure that the Welsh in Education Grant (WEG) is used effectively to ensure that there are sufficient Welsh in Education Officers to provide specific training and mentoring support for teachers in Welsh-medium primary and secondary schools, to improve methodology. The LA / CSCJES will work in partnership to ensure effective strategic planning of the use of WEG grant. Evidence considered will include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools' annual performance reports; • Whole school and subject monitoring reports; • School self-evaluation, improvement and transition plans; • Foundation Phase, KS2 and KS3 performance data; • Estyn inspection reports (LA and schools) and publications. <p>(2014-17)</p> <p>CSCJES has since September 2012 assumed responsibility for providing an effective CPD programme across its five constituent member LA's. The Welsh in Education Officers provision has been reviewed at the time of establishing CSCJES and their role has evolved in order to challenge standards achieved by schools and provide suitable training and mentoring for teachers and learning support assistants.</p>		<p>A forum has been set up for Heads of Departments from Welsh departments in secondary schools across the LAs in the Consortium. The aim is to develop new material and to share the good practice already in existence. The focus for this group is to look at the new GCSEs spec with an initial focus on developing Pisa style material for KS3 Year 9.</p>

Outcome 7: Workforce planning and Continuous Professional Development			
Responsible officers: Head of Access and Inclusion, Welsh Language Officer, Systems Leader with Strategic Lead for Welsh, Human Resources Manager, Head of School Organisation, Planning and Governance			
A. Objective	B. Current Performance	C. Targets	D. Progress
	<p>The Welsh in Education Officers are line-managed by a senior Welsh in Education Officer. The aims of this team are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • raise standards of achievement in Welsh first and second language; • increase schools' capacity to deliver high quality teaching and learning in Welsh; • and improve strategies and methodologies for both first and second language teaching. <p>According to needs identified by schools, courses to be provided for primary and secondary teachers in Welsh first language, to support the development of their Welsh language skills. Activities provided by CSCJES which schools will be able to access via delegated WEG funds:</p> <p>Welsh first language – Primary/Secondary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Literacy Framework – accompanying activities including the literacy tests • Literacy across the curriculum • Developing Welsh language skills – speaking and listening, reading and writing (package) • 'Moving from Level 4 to 5' – making progress across the key stages • Welsh language skills development for practitioners (<i>Gloywi Iaith</i>) • The role and responsibilities of the Welsh curriculum leader • Assessment, including developing learner profiles in Welsh across KS2/3 • The use of ICT in Welsh language development, including the use of the iPad in learning and teaching and the development of HWB 		<p>Welsh in Education Officers to provide information, guidance and support for staff who have attended the Sabbatical Training. Others are also involved in the recruiting process in order to ensure that all places are filled.</p>

Outcome 7: Workforce planning and Continuous Professional Development			
Responsible officers: Head of Access and Inclusion, Welsh Language Officer, Systems Leader with Strategic Lead for Welsh, Human Resources Manager, Head of School Organisation, Planning and Governance			
A. Objective	B. Current Performance	C. Targets	D. Progress
	The LA will work in partnership with other LA's to ensure that the CSCJES CPD programme includes an appropriate range of training activities focusing on improving standards in reading, writing, speaking and listening in Welsh across the curriculum. (2014-2017)	100% of schools have access to a CPD programme that is focused on raising standards in Welsh during 2014-2017	
	WEG funding to be used effectively to support the establishment and development of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) within schools and on a cluster and regional basis to share good practice and research innovative teaching strategies to support the raising of standards of literacy in Welsh. (2014-2017)	Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) established within the LA and across the Central South Consortium and focused on further developing and sharing good practice in respect of Welsh language and Welsh medium provision during 2014-2017.	

Outcome 7: Workforce planning and Continuous Professional Development			
Responsible officers: Head of Access and Inclusion, Welsh Language Officer, Systems Leader with Strategic Lead for Welsh, Human Resources Manager, Head of School Organisation, Planning and Governance			
A. Objective	B. Current Performance	C. Targets	D. Progress
	<p>The LA will collaborate with its partners in the Central South Consortium, to deliver support for Welsh literacy development, in both first and second language contexts, in line with emerging WG policy and strategy for the improvement of standards of literacy. This work will be led and co-ordinated by the program manager for Welsh within CSCJES. The LA and CSCJES will ensure that support is targeted at those schools where the need is greatest in terms of pupils' standards and teachers' skills.</p> <p>(2014-2017)</p>	<p>Targeted support impacts positively and raises standards in Welsh first and second language during 2013-2015 (see targets above).</p>	
	<p>CSCJES provides additional support through advice, consultancy and training services that schools are able to purchase from their own delegated resources, in line with identified needs in their improvement plans.</p> <p>(2014-17)</p> <p>The LA and CSCJES will continue to evolve and develop the current service so that it can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • support schools according to individual needs; • advise individual schools through discussions with key staff members on strategies to raise standards in Welsh second language and literacy skills; 		<p>Questionnaire to be sent to all schools to evaluate the support given by the Welsh in Education Officers</p>

Outcome 7: Workforce planning and Continuous Professional Development			
Responsible officers: Head of Access and Inclusion, Welsh Language Officer, Systems Leader with Strategic Lead for Welsh, Human Resources Manager, Head of School Organisation, Planning and Governance			
A. Objective	B. Current Performance	C. Targets	D. Progress
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • focus on training and mentoring in the classroom e.g. through exemplar lessons and team teaching; • mentor classroom practitioners; • monitor provision and review pupils' progress; • evaluate provision in lessons and offer advice and support; • report on pupil standards and school provision. (2014-17)		
	<p>CSCJES provision will also ensure that additional support can be targeted appropriately, based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pupils' standards of achievement; • classroom practitioners' language skills; • the presence of Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) and new subject leaders; • effectiveness of planning of provision for Welsh; • KS2-3 transition and the sharing of data. (2014-17)		
	<p>The CSCJES program manager for Welsh will monitor, evaluate and report on the support provided by the Welsh in Education Team.</p> (2014-17)		

Outcome 7: Workforce planning and Continuous Professional Development			
Responsible officers: Head of Access and Inclusion, Welsh Language Officer, Systems Leader with Strategic Lead for Welsh, Human Resources Manager, Head of School Organisation, Planning and Governance			
A. Objective	B. Current Performance	C. Targets	D. Progress
	<p>WG Sabbatical courses specifically for schools based staff (Gloywi Iaith, Higher Short Course for Welsh speakers also Foundation for primary teachers and Entry level for classroom assistants.</p> <p>The LA has always worked closely with the Welsh Government's Welsh language Sabbatical Scheme administrators at University of South Wales to target teachers and teaching assistants in RCT's Welsh and English-medium schools who are motivated and would benefit from accessing the courses. The provision to date has had a very positive impact on schools and has been an important vehicle in raising standards and confidence of individuals in their delivery of Welsh, both as a first and second language.</p> <p>Allied to this, the team of Welsh in Education Officers at CSCJES consult and work closely with WG concerning the Sabbatical Scheme and all schools have been notified of this opportunity.</p>		

Outcome 7: Workforce planning and Continuous Professional Development			
Responsible officers: Head of Access and Inclusion, Welsh Language Officer, Systems Leader with Strategic Lead for Welsh, Human Resources Manager, Head of School Organisation, Planning and Governance			
A. Objective	B. Current Performance	C. Targets	D. Progress
	<p>PLANNED ACTION</p> <p>The LA and schools will continue to support teachers who wish to attend the sabbatical training programme. The Welsh in Education Officers at CSCJES will identify suitable practitioners on an annual basis and refer to the Sabbatical Scheme. They will also provide follow up support for practitioners who have attended the programme. (2014-2017)</p>	<p>Maximum take up of available places on the WG Sabbatical Scheme and support provided for previous attendees during 2014-2017.</p>	<p>Ensure access to current provision on offer: proficiency courses; confidence raising courses; and written courses</p> <p>Increase number of Foundation Level teachers on Sabbatical / intensive courses: 6 in 2013/14 8 in 2014/15 9 in 2015/16 10 in 2016/17</p> <p>Increase number of Entry Level LSAs on Sabbatical / intensive courses: 10 in 2013/14 12 in 2014/15 13 in 2015/16 14 in 2016/17</p>

Outcome 7: Workforce planning and Continuous Professional Development																																			
Responsible officers: Head of Access and Inclusion, Welsh Language Officer, Systems Leader with Strategic Lead for Welsh, Human Resources Manager, Head of School Organisation, Planning and Governance																																			
A. Objective	B. Current Performance			C. Targets	D. Progress																														
	<p>The following table outlines the number of practitioners that have attended Welsh language courses organised by CSCJES as part of their continuous professional development during the 2013-14 financial year:</p> <p>34 LSAs</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th colspan="2">Primary</th> <th colspan="2">Secondary</th> </tr> <tr> <th>RCT</th> <th>1st lang</th> <th>2nd lang</th> <th>1st lang</th> <th>2nd lang</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Attendees</td> <td>131</td> <td>90</td> <td>2</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <th colspan="2">Total</th> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <th>RCT</th> <th>1st lang</th> <th>2nd lang</th> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Attendees</td> <td>133</td> <td>92</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>				Primary		Secondary		RCT	1st lang	2nd lang	1st lang	2nd lang	Attendees	131	90	2	2		Total				RCT	1st lang	2nd lang			Attendees	133	92				
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Outcome 7: Workforce planning and Continuous Professional Development			
Responsible officers: Head of Access and Inclusion, Welsh Language Officer, Systems Leader with Strategic Lead for Welsh, Human Resources Manager, Head of School Organisation, Planning and Governance			
A. Objective	B. Current Performance	C. Targets	D. Progress
	<p>Flying Start will support staff working in Childcare settings to improve Welsh Language skills.</p> <p>Progress to date: 3 staff completed Cwrs Iaith Meithrin 7 staff completed Geiriau Bach 7 staff completed Cynllun Iaith Sylfaenol Meithrin 10 staff undertaking other basic Welsh courses</p> <p>PLANNED ACTION</p> <p>CSCJES to continue to provide appropriate training to support NQT and EPD teachers</p>	<p>Significantly increased number of attendees at Welsh-language courses during 2014-2017.</p>	<p>30 Flying Start staff completed basic Welsh courses in 13-14 these courses were delivered directly by the Flying Start Training Centre. The other courses are delivered by external trainers but the annual training needs analysis will identify these at a later date.</p>
	<p>The following table outlines the number of learning support assistants and teaching assistants that have attended Welsh language courses organised by CSCJES as part of their continuous professional development during the 2013-14 financial year:</p>		

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7.3 Integrate Welsh-medium considerations into each aspect of the School Effectiveness	<p>CSCJES has been established on the premise that it will provide shared school improvement services, including the support for the teaching of Welsh and Welsh Second Language. The CPD programme incorporates the School Effectiveness Framework by focusing on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> raising standards of literacy in Welsh; improving learning outcomes and wellbeing for children and young 																																															

Outcome 7: Workforce planning and Continuous Professional Development			
Responsible officers: Head of Access and Inclusion, Welsh Language Officer, Systems Leader with Strategic Lead for Welsh, Human Resources Manager, Head of School Organisation, Planning and Governance			
A. Objective	B. Current Performance	C. Targets	D. Progress
Framework.	<p>people regardless of their socio-economic background;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reducing variation in the learning outcomes within and between classrooms and schools within the local authority and other members of the consortia; • raising standards in teachers' Welsh language skills through both LA initiatives and professional learning communities. 		
	<p>PLANNED ACTION</p> <p>The continued development of CSCJES will take full account of the need to provide appropriate challenge and support in order to secure improvement in standards in Welsh first and second language.</p> <p>The deployment of the Welsh in Education Grant to be planned strategically on a consortium wide basis.</p> <p>The Welsh in Education Grant to be deployed to support the achievement of the targets set within the WESP, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To improve standards in the teaching of Welsh first and second language across all Key Stages; • To improve levels of achievement of children and young people in Welsh 	<p>CSCJES provides challenge and support that secures school improvement during 2014-2017.</p> <p>Welsh in Education Grant used effectively to achieve all targets outlined in the WESP during 2014-2017.</p>	

Outcome 7: Workforce planning and Continuous Professional Development			
Responsible officers: Head of Access and Inclusion, Welsh Language Officer, Systems Leader with Strategic Lead for Welsh, Human Resources Manager, Head of School Organisation, Planning and Governance			
A. Objective	B. Current Performance	C. Targets	D. Progress
	<p>first and second language across all Key Stages;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To continue to support children and young people receiving their education through the medium of Welsh at primary school level, as measured by the percentage of year 2 and year 6 pupils assessed in Welsh as a first language; To support children and young people who continue to improve their language skills on transfer from primary to secondary school, as measured by the percentage year 6 and year 9 pupils assessed in Welsh first language; To support children and young people studying for qualifications (general and vocational) through the medium of Welsh; Raising standards in both pupils' and teachers' Welsh language skills through both LA initiatives and professional learning communities. <p>It is expected that the <u>outputs</u> of activities supported by the WEG to include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> headteachers and senior leadership teams will be proactive in the promotion of improving standards of learning and teaching in Welsh (first and second language) as measured by annual School Effectiveness Framework (SEF) self-evaluation reports and Estyn inspection framework. teachers across all phases of learning will be confident in their ability to teach Welsh (first and second language) to the full range of learners in their classes. teachers will use assessment to identify under-attaining and under- 	<p>Prioritised Welsh language courses for all practitioners, including Support Officers, during 2014-2017.</p>	

Outcome 7: Workforce planning and Continuous Professional Development			
Responsible officers: Head of Access and Inclusion, Welsh Language Officer, Systems Leader with Strategic Lead for Welsh, Human Resources Manager, Head of School Organisation, Planning and Governance			
A. Objective	B. Current Performance	C. Targets	D. Progress
	<p>achieving pupils in Welsh-medium literacy and plan effective interventions to support these pupils.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PLC working and other networking activities will lead to practitioners further identifying and sharing good practice in Welsh language / Welsh-medium teaching and producing high quality language resources. 		

Section 3: Commentary and further notes

The demand for Welsh medium education in RCT has not been judged by the Welsh government to be low or in decline. Progress in the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan is reported by the named responsible officers and monitored during every term in the Academic Year by the Welsh Education Plan Strategic Group. Membership of this strategic group includes representatives from: LA Education and Lifelong Learning Directorate, Coleg y Cymoedd, Welsh medium primary and secondary schools, English medium primary and secondary schools, Equality and Diversity Service, Human Resources, RhAG, Mudiad Meithrin, Menter Iaith, Community Learning 14-19 network, Urdd, Early years, Fframwaith, Performance Management Unit, Services for Young People, Access and Inclusion, Central South Consortium, Welsh Services Unit, Governor Support Services, and Community First. The presence of members at meetings is excellent with an approximate 80% attendance rate usually recorded and all members who are unable to attend offering apologies or sending appropriate representatives.

The Draft WESP 2014-2017 was presented to RCTs Cabinet in November 2013. Discussions have already taken place within the Central South Consortium Joint Education Service, which includes the school improvement service and training arm regarding joint working arrangements, delivery, monitoring and interrogation of data to evidence progress by learners. It is recognised that there will be challenges as not all aspects included in the WESP can be monitored through the Central South Consortium and there will be local targets remaining within each Local Authority. Nevertheless, the intention will be to work as a consortium on those areas relating to school improvement and the provision of support and training to schools.

Progress against targets in the WESP will be reported to RCT Education and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee on an annual basis.

The Welsh in Education Plan Strategic Group have decided to investigate the possibility of implementing Siarter Iaith Gwynedd within RCT in the future. The group recognise the possibilities and successes of this Charter within Primary Schools in Gwynedd. The group will discuss the charter with all relevant parties.

Appendix 2: Number and percentage of pupils attending funded non-maintained Welsh-medium settings which provide the Foundation Phase and who transfer to Welsh-medium/bilingual schools (*please note if information is unobtainable*)

Area	Cylch	2011/12			2012/13			2013/14	
		Total	No. Trans to WM	%	Total	No.	%	No.	%
C	Aberdare	85	63	74	60	40	67	30	59
T	Efail Isaf							17	94
T	Garth Olwg	U	U	U	U	U	U	U	U
R	Nant Dyrys	22	21	95	16	14	88	U	U
T	Pentre Eglwys							16	80
R	Porth	23	21	91	18	18	100	U	U
T	Rhydfelin							18	41
T	Thomastown	24	20	83	22	21	95	U	U
R	Tynewydd	14	13	93	11	10	91	U	U
R	Ynysir & Wattstown	22	18	82	22	19	86	U	U
T	Ynysybwl	52	22	42	27	11	41	26	59
	Total	242	178	560	176	133	568	107	333

Grey boxes denote years prior to setting registration with Estyn. U denotes where information is unobtainable

Appendix 3: Number and percentage of pupils in Welsh-medium and bilingual primary schools transferring to Welsh-medium secondary schools

	Total number of Yr 6 pupils taught through medium of Welsh remaining in RCT schools in Yr 7	Total number of Yr 7 pupils taught through the medium of Welsh in RCT schools in Yr 6	Percentage of pupils transferring to Welsh-medium or bilingual secondary schools
2011/12	453	445	98.2%
2012/13	462	445	96.3%
2013/14	431	421	97.67%

Appendix 4: Attainment and performance in Welsh Second Language (this information should be provided at LA level)

	Number of Pupils 2012-13	Percentage of Pupils	Percentage achieving Level 4
Teacher assessment in Welsh Second Language at the end of Key Stage 2	1854	94.7%	63.3%
	Cohort - 2185		

	Number of Pupils 2013-14	Percentage of Pupils	Percentage achieving Level 4
Teacher assessment in Welsh Second Language at the end of Key Stage 2	1901	87%%	69.12%
	Cohort - 2185		

	Number of Pupils 2012-13	Percentage of Pupils	Percentage achieving Level 4
Teacher assessment in Welsh Second Language at the end of Key Stage 3	2274	100%	69.6%
	Cohort - 2274		

	Number of Pupils 2013-14	Percentage of Pupils	Percentage achieving Level 4
Teacher assessment in Welsh Second Language at the end of Key Stage 3	2143	100%	74.76%
	Cohort - 2143		

Appendix 5: Data is included within the text in Outcome 5.**Appendix 6:**

Rhondda Cynon Taf in accordance with Section 84 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 will consult on the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2014-17 (draft) with:

Merthyr County Borough Council
Bridgend County Borough Council
Cardiff Council
Caerphilly County Borough Council
Vale of Glamorgan Council
Powys County Council
Headteachers, Governing Bodies and school councils of all Secondary, Primary and Special Schools in RCT
Coleg y Cymoedd
Church in Wales
Roman Catholic Diocese
Welsh Language Commissioner
Early Years and Family Support Service
Children's Services
Cwm Taf Local Health Board
Equality and Diversity Service
Human Resources
RhaG
Mudiad Meithrin
Menter Iaith
Community Learning 14-19 Network
Urdd
Early Years

Fframwaith
Performance Management Unit
Services for Young People
Access and Inclusion
Central South Consortium
Welsh Services Unit
Governor Support Services
Communities First
Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales (ESTYN)
Welsh Government Members for Cynon, Pontypridd, Rhondda and Ogmore
Members of Parliament for Cynon, Pontypridd, Rhondda and Ogmore
Local Elected Members
Trade Unions

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APPENDIX 3

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Edwina Hart MBE CStJ AC / AM
 Gweinidog yr Economi, Gwyddoniaeth a Thrafnidiaeth
 Minister for Economy, Science and Transport



Llywodraeth Cymru
 Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref
 Ein cyf/Our ref

All Assembly Members

05 August 2014

Dear Assembly Member

I wrote to you on 28 July to outline the further consideration that I had given to the issues arising from a Plenary debate on learner travel. I know that this is a matter which continues to be raised with many of you and I thought it would be helpful to provide some background on the current legislation to assist you in responding to queries.

Section 3 of the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 ("the 2008 Measure") requires that local authorities must provide free transport to the nearest suitable school for children of compulsory school age (aged 5-16) if they live:

- two miles or further from their nearest suitable primary school or pupil referral unit or
- three miles or further from their nearest suitable secondary school or pupil referral unit

The nearest suitable school is defined as being the Local Education Authority (LEA) maintained school closest to the pupil's home by the nearest available route and provides education for the relevant age, ability and aptitude of a pupil, and for any learning difficulties he / she may have. Language or religion are not factors that are included in determining whether a school is 'suitable' under section 3 of the 2008 Measure.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
 Caerdydd • Cardiff
 CF99 1NA

Wedi'i argraffu ar bapur wedi'i ailgylchu (100%)

English Enquiry Line 0845 010 3300
 Llinell Ymholiadau Cymraeg 0845 010 4400
Correspondence.edwina.Hart@Wales.gsi.gov.uk
 Printed on 100% recycled paper

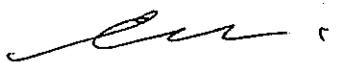
This means that, where a parent chooses to send their child to a Welsh medium or denominational school but another 'suitable' school is closer (i.e. it is an LEA maintained school closest to the pupil's home by the nearest available route which provides education for the relevant age, ability and aptitude of a pupil, and for any learning difficulties he / she may have), their child will not be entitled to free transport to their preferred school.

Historically this has not generally posed a major issue because most local authorities have exercised their discretionary powers under section 6 of the 2008 Measure to provide free transport. However, as local authorities have reduced services to manage within reduced budgets; discretionary learner travel is one of the areas that have been cut back. In making such decisions, local authorities are required to give proper consideration to the issue and to carry out impact assessments to inform their decisions.

Local authorities have a duty under section 10 of the 2008 Measure to promote access to Welsh language medium education when exercising their functions under the 2008 Measure. This does not require that free transport must be provided but it does mean that a local authority must be able to show how it is promoting access to Welsh medium education through its learner travel provision.

In addition, local authorities must also prepare and submit a Welsh in Education Plan (WESP) to Welsh Ministers in accordance with the Welsh in Education Strategic Plans and Assessing Demand for Welsh Medium Education (Wales) Regulations 2013. We would expect this to identify tools the local authorities intends to employ to support access to Welsh medium education and this should include appropriate consideration of learner travel matters.

Section 3 of the 2008 Measure only covers children of statutory compulsory school age. Therefore children under five years and young people over 16 years of age are not included under the provisions for free transport. Local authorities are able to use discretionary powers under section 6 of the 2008 Measure to provide free transport to these age groups.



APPENDIX 4

APPENDIX 4 IS MADE UP OF 4 SEPARATE APPENDICES –
4(1); 4(2); 4(3) & 4(4)



Home to School Transport Consultation Report

August 2015

Consultation Team

SIAL£NS 
CYLLID
 Rhondda Cynon Taf

Rhondda Cynon Taf 
BUDGET
CHALLENGE

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- This section outlines a summary of the consultation process on the Home to School Transport proposal and the main issues and themes that were raised.
- The Council is facing a significant financial challenge into the medium term and all services and their delivery must be assessed. On the 4th March 2015, Council agreed a budget strategy for 2015/16 which balanced an initial budget gap of £21.9M. The strategy included a number of budget reduction measures and used £4.4M of reserves (Medium Term Financial Planning and Service Transformation Reserve). The remaining budget gap projected to 2017/18 was £42.3M (£23.7M for 2016/17).
- This consultation report relates to the proposal that was put before Cabinet on the 19th May 2015, entitled, Home to School Transport. The proposal is outlined in more detail in section 4. If implemented, the proposals contained in this report would deliver £2.048M of savings per year for the Council. At the 19th May meeting, Cabinet agreed to proceed to a formal consultation on the proposals. The consultation began on the 2nd June and ended on the 28th July, 2015.
- This report sets out the key issues and themes that have arisen as part of the consultation process. This along with access to the full responses received will provide the Cabinet with the materials needed to assist in the final decision making process on the proposal. The consultation results will need to be considered in conjunction with the Equality Impact Assessment and any other information that is available on the proposed service changes.
- The consultation has been conducted in-house. Before beginning the consultation, discussions were held between officers on the most effective approach to take to ensure that everyone who was potentially affected by the service changes would be able to have their say. The consultation process and materials were agreed by the Council's Corporate Management Team. The consultation materials were considered to provide clear information in an appropriate and understandable format.
- This report attempts to provide a readable summary of the main responses received. No attempt at recommendations are made; the document has been put together impartially and will be presented to Cabinet to aid decision making.
- The following number of responses were received;
 - 984 online/paper questionnaires
 - 109 emails (including attachments, such as letters)
 - 478 letters
 - 3 Petitions (total signatures = 1480)

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- 12 different types of Pre-completed forms (total = 1279)
 - 16 School Council returns (in addition, we received some individual responses from St.Johns School)
 - 40 Other materials (including comment cards received at the Public Engagement events, posters and pictures produced by children at schools)

Summary of Responses

- Open responses in relation to the proposal overall (questionnaire, letters, emails) were received from 1,570 individuals. The number of views expressed totalled 11,780.
- A number of themes emerged from the analysis of the proposal as follows;

Financial Impact

- There should be no charge as school transport is a right and should be provided by the Local Authority (n=772)
- Families will suffer financially/an additional cost to parents (n=892)
- The proposed charge is too high/unreasonable (n=819)
- Cannot afford the charge (n=693)
- Impact on working families (n=253)
- Working families adversely affected (n=186)
- The poorest would suffer the most (n=281)
- Financial circumstances may change during the year (n=127)
- There would be an issue committing to transport for a full school year (n=218)
- Would affect ability to work (n=118)

School/Attendance/Achievement Impact

- School attendance would suffer (n=867)
- Pupil/parent choice would be restricted (n=389)
- Would discourage people from continuing education (n=252)
- Educational achievement would suffer (n=280)
- Would have to change schools (n=271)

Discrimination

- The proposal is discriminatory against Faith Schools (n=757)
- Could impact long term viability of Faith schools (n=78)
- All discretionary transport school be treated the same (n=316)
- Could no longer go to Faith/Welsh school (n=114/192)
- The proposal is discriminatory against Welsh Schools (n=260)
- Could impact long term viability of Welsh schools (n=50)
- The policy discriminates on racial grounds (n=76)

Other Main Themes

- Safety issues (n=281)
- The Council should find cuts elsewhere (n=217)

- **984 questionnaires were received.**

- The majority of respondents disagreed that changes should be made to the Council's current Home to School Transport policy, given the extent of the current level of provision (81.0%).

- Levels of disagreement varied from 79.0% in respondents who attended Welsh schools to 91.6% in Faith Schools.

- 48.3% of respondents did not agree that if changes had to be made, a charge towards the discretionary elements of provision is preferable to completely stopping providing transport.

- 83.0% of respondents stated that the introduction of a charge towards all the discretionary elements of Home to School Transport was not fair.

- The majority of respondents (66.2%) thought that the inclusion of a means test of the ability to pay, based on free school meals and where this is the case a reduced level of charge was unfair.

- 52.6% of respondents thought that the proposed cap at 2 children was unfair.

- The majority of respondents thought a standard charge of £1.75 was unfair (87.4%).

- The majority of respondents thought that the proposed means tested level of charge of £1.00 per day was unfair (77.5%).

- 43.1% of respondents said that they would be more likely to stop using Home to School Transport, rather than pay the charge.

- A lower proportion of Faith school respondents (45.4%) and Welsh school respondents (41.7%) stated that they would stop using the service, than English school respondents (53.9%).

- Those respondents that stated they were likely to stop using the service were asked how they or their children would travel to school in the future. The majority (52.0%) said they would use a car.

- The majority of respondents felt that no charge was fair for both the standard charge proposal (64%) and the proposed reduced (free school meals) charge (75%).

- The majority of respondents (62.2%) thought that it was unfair that the proposal required people to decide annually, before the start of the school year whether Home to School Transport was required for the full school year ahead.
- If the proposed charge was introduced, respondents stated that they would like to be able to make the payment on a monthly basis (34.2%).
- The majority of respondents (63.8%) thought it was unfair that the new arrangements would be in place from the school year beginning September 2016.

Other Options Considered

- A number of options were considered when putting the proposal together, these were not the preferred options and the reasons were set out in the questionnaire.
- The majority of respondents felt that Option A should have been the preferred option (65.6%).
- The majority of respondents thought that Option B and C should not have been the preferred options (54.5%).
- The majority of respondents did not agree that Option D to remove all pre-compulsory school age transport should have been the preferred option (64.3%).
- 72.7% of respondents did not think Option E should have been the preferred option.
- 66.0% of respondents did not think Option F or G should have been the preferred options.
- 69.8% of respondents did not think Option H or I should have been the preferred options.
- 76.4% of respondents did not think Option J should have been the preferred option.
- 74.2% of respondents did not think Option K should have been the preferred option.

Next Steps

- This report will be presented to Cabinet for consideration, Cabinet have also had the opportunity to review the filed responses which are available, before any final decisions on the proposal for Home to School Transport are made.
- The consultation results, although an important part of the decision making process, are not the only consideration to take into account. The Cabinet will also need to consider other information available alongside the consultation responses (for example the results of the Equality Impact Assessment).

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report presents the consultation findings for the Council's service change proposal – Home to School Transport.
- 1.2 Section 2 provides some brief background information on the budget gap faced by the Council.
- 1.3 Section 3 provides detail of the methodology used.
- 1.4 Section 4 outlines the details of the proposed service change to Home to School Transport.
- 1.5 Section 5 outlines a profile of respondents.
- 1.6 Section 6 provides an overall analysis of the proposal.
- 1.7 Section 7 provides a summary of the responses related to the proposed charging of Home to School Transport.
- 1.8 Section 8 shows the results of the reported impact on education.
- 1.9 Section 9 outlines the petitions and pre-completed responses received.
- 1.10 Section 10 looks at the other options considered.
- 1.11 Section 11 provides detail of how the proposal could impact people because of certain protected characteristics.
- 1.12 Section 12 outlines the detail of School Council responses.
- 1.13 Appendix 1 and 2 provide the consultation materials that were used.
- 1.14 Appendix 3 and 4 provide the notes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Finance & Performance Scrutiny Committee meetings.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Council is facing a significant financial challenge into the medium term and all services and their delivery must be assessed.
- 2.2 On the 2nd July 2015, the Group Director, Corporate and Frontline Services provided a presentation to Cabinet in respect of Medium Term Financial & Service Planning. This presentation updated the projected budget gap based on different settlement levels and showed a gap for 2016/17 of between £23.7m and £30.8m (rising to between £59.8m and £69.7m up to 2018/19).
- 2.3 Given the size of the budget gap faced and the timescale requirements for any implementation of service changes, Cabinet has agreed to receive reports on potential service change/cut proposals as soon as these become available.
- 2.4 The Council operates a very generous Home to School Transport policy which means it is the largest operation of its kind in Wales. The Council currently provides Home to School transport for approximately 11,690 mainstream pupils each day through the provision of more than 230 routes and the issue of public transport season tickets. Approximately 7,000 learners are transported on a discretionary basis.
- 2.5 Many Councils have already modified their eligibility criteria. The Council now provides discretionary transport for more learners than almost every other Council's entire Home to School Transport operations. In addition the service provides transport for approximately 1,000 Special Educational Need ('SEN') pupils daily. The home to school transport budget for 2015/16 is £11.4m.
- 2.6 This consultation report relates to the proposal that was put before Cabinet on the 19th May 2015, entitled, Home to School Transport. The proposal is outlined in more detail in section 4. If implemented, the proposals contained in this report would deliver £2.048M of savings per year for the Council.
- 2.7 At the 19th May meeting, Cabinet agreed to proceed to a formal consultation on the proposals. The consultation began on the 2nd June and ended on the 28th July, 2015.
- 2.8 The following section outlines the methodology used in the consultation.

3. METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 The consultation has been conducted in-house. Before beginning the consultation, discussions were held between officers on the most effective approach to take to ensure that everyone who was potentially affected by the service change would be able to have their say. The process was designed to be open and transparent.

Consultation Materials

- 3.2 The questionnaire and consultation materials were prepared working closely with the appropriate service managers and a working group met on a regular basis.
- 3.3 The consultation process and materials were agreed by the Council's Corporate Management Team. The consultation materials were considered to provide clear information in an appropriate and understandable format.
- 3.4 The questionnaire was piloted internally. The questionnaire allowed ample opportunity to provide free text, allowing any comment/view to be expressed throughout the survey. The questionnaire and consultation booklet are found in Appendix 1 and 2.
- 3.5 The questionnaire included a section on protected characteristics. The Council is required to consider people with these protected characteristics as part of their obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the resultant Public Sector Equality Duties.

The Consultation

- 3.6 The 8 week consultation period began on the 2nd June 2015 and ended on the 28th July 2015.

Distribution

- 3.7 The materials were designed and printed in house and the distribution of materials was undertaken by Council couriers. The following lists the approximate number of booklets that were distributed;
- A copy with a covering letter to the household of every Primary and Secondary School Parent/Carer/Learner – 26,929
 - All Year 11 or above learners addressed to the individual – 7,372
 - Copies for school receptions – 2,520
 - College receptions – 3,000
 - Pupil Referral Units - 75

- Registered Childcare providers – 112 (393 email)
- Flying Start – 3000
- Looked After Children (LAC) through foster carers – 240
- School Governors – 1600
- College Governors (email)
- Headteachers (email)

- Doctor's Surgeries – 2,500
- Libraries – 260
- Leisure Centres – 220
- Communities First Offices – 200
- Main Receptions – 60
- PSSOs - 60
- One4All Centres – 200
- Contact Centre on request – 200
- Spares held in Contact Centre – 200

3.8 This equates to over 48,000 copies in total.

3.9 Posters to advertise the consultation were sent to all schools and doctors surgeries, as well as being placed in libraries, leisure centres, communities first offices and other Council frontline offices, including the One4All Centres.

3.10 The consultation materials were available in a number of different languages in addition to English and Welsh and were made available at the consultation drop in events. In addition copies were made available to those schools where it was considered that materials in other languages may have been required.

Table 1: Consultation materials that were required in different languages (by school)

School	Language	Quantity
St Margaret's RC Infants	Polish	1
Aberdare Town Church Primary	Russian	2
	Turkish	1
Our Lady's RC Primary	Polish	1
	Mandarin	1
St Michael's RC Primary	Polish	4
St Gabriel and Raphael RC Primary	Polish	2
Blaengwawr Primary	Portuguese	1
Tylorstown Primary	Portuguese	1
St John's CIW High School	Polish	1
Ferndale Comprehensive	Portuguese	1
Treorchy Comprehensive	Portuguese	1
Cardinal Newman	Polish	1 (provided at event) School did not confirm

		how many further copies they needed.
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- 3.11 One week after the main distribution had been completed a follow up letter was sent to all schools to distribute to parents. This letter asked parents/carers if they had received a booklet and if they hadn't they could contact the Council to request one. In addition, the remaining (majority of) engagement events were listed in the letter.
- 3.12 Anyone, whether an individual or an organisation in Rhondda Cynon Taf, could take part in the consultation, including employees of the Council.
- 3.13 The consultation was promoted on the Council's website and to the press via press releases. Coverage included Wales Online, the Rhondda Leader, Cynon Valley Leader and Pontypridd Observer, and the South Wales Echo. There was also coverage on local radio station GTFM. All consultation events were advertised extensively via the Council's Social Media channels.
- 3.14 A dedicated section of the RCT website was created, containing all the consultation materials along with the option of an online survey. A web logo box was placed on the front of the website for ease of access. The online survey was sent out to over 400 Citizens' Panel members with email addresses.
- 3.15 A link to the online page was placed on Social Media. Twitter advertised the consultation, to the Council's 7,700 followers. The Leader of the Council undertook a live session via twitter that allowed people to ask questions about the service change proposal.
- 3.16 A dedicated telephone number was set up in the Council's Contact Centre to deal with any queries on the proposal, and to distribute materials as necessary. 57 calls were received, 28 of these were directed to the website for information, 17 requested a questionnaire and 12 requested a pack in the post. In addition the One4aLL centres issued packs on request.
- 3.17 A dedicated email address and free post address were also provided.
- 3.18 All correspondence was dealt with as quickly and efficiently as possible, this included acknowledging comments when requested, passing on questions to the relevant service and passing on and working with the complaints department to ensure a fast response and turnaround.
- 3.19 A number of Councillors provided verbal comments at the Overview & Scrutiny meeting of the 8th July and the Finance & Performance Scrutiny Committee on the 30th June, 2015. These were noted at the meetings and have been included in the consultation process. The notes of the meetings can be found in Appendix 3 and 4 attached to this report.

- 3.20 Public Engagement Events were held across the Borough to discuss and share views on the proposal as follows;

Table 2: Public Engagement Events at Schools and Colleges

Date	Venue - Schools	Number of Attendees
10 th June	Tonypandy Community College	8
11 th June	Ferndale Community School	37
15 th June	Porth County Community School	2
16 th June	Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School	97
17 th June	Mountain Ash Comprehensive School	12
22 nd June	Y Pant Comprehensive School	6
23 rd June	Tonyrefail Comprehensive School	4
24 th June	Ysgol Gyfun Garth Olwg	7
29 th June	Treorchy Comprehensive School	1
30 th June	Ysgol Gyfun y Cymmer	3
1 st July	Hawthorn High School	5
6 th July	Ysgol Gyfun Rhydywaun	15
7 th July	St. John Baptist CIW High School	121
8 th July	Aberdare Community School	13
13 th July	Ysgol Llanhari	20
14 th July	Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School	13
15 th July	Pontypridd High School	28
	Total	392
	Colleges	
16 th June	TELC Nantgarw	
17 th June	Aberdare Campus	
18 th June	Llywnypia	

- 3.21 Representatives from the Consultation Team, Finance, Transport, Education Departments and Cabinet Members from the Council attended the various events.

The events were advertised in the press, via social media and posters that were displayed in Libraries, leisure centres and frontline offices.

As previously stated, materials were available in a number of different languages at the events and in addition an internet based translation package was available for parents/public who wanted to ask questions in their own language.

- 3.22 A Young Persons version of the consultation was developed for primary and secondary schools. The booklet/questionnaire was distributed to all schools, for pupils on school councils to meet and discuss the proposals

and provide a response. In addition the consultation was promoted on the young persons website WICID and placed on the School Moodles.

- 3.23 An officer from the Consultation Team attended the Council's Teddy Bears' Picnic event in Ynysangharad Park, Pontypridd, to hand out information on the Home to School Transport Consultation.
- 3.24 The Consultation Team met with the Colleges and agreed the following approach;
- 3 engagement event drop in sessions as listed above
 - Email to all College Governors
 - Email to all students
 - Promotion on Facebook and College Screens
- 3.25 A number of other stakeholders were contacted by letter, outlining the proposal and requesting views, including;
- Bus and taxi operators
 - Neighbouring Local Authorities
 - Partners on the Local Service Board
 - Diocese
 - AM's/MP's
 - Welsh Language Commissioner
 - Trade Unions
 - NUS

Analysis and Report Writing

- 3.26 The analysis of the quantitative data (from the questionnaire) was undertaken using SNAP survey software.
- 3.27 The analysis of the qualitative data was undertaken by using a standardised coding template, which was developed in line with the main themes identified when reviewing responses as they were received.
- 3.28 All responses were allocated a unique reference number upon receipt. They were then read and coded against the template, using as many codes as necessary. Once coded they were input into a database to record and capture all responses against the coded themes. The hard copies were then ordered and filed.
- 3.29 Internal Audit has undertaken a walkthrough review of the consultation exercise and internal quality assurance processes.
- 3.30 The report attempts to provide a readable summary of the main issues identified in the responses received. No recommendations are made,

the document has been put together impartially and is presented to Cabinet to aid decision making.

Note: Where % respondents are referred to in the tables in the report, it refers to the % of base respondents who answered that particular question.

Note: Where totals do not add up to 100% this is due to rounding and where respondents were able to choose more than one answer (multiple response questions).

Note: The tables that include cross tabulations have a base to reflect those respondents that answered both questions and the figures are of responses, where one of the questions is multiple response.

Responses Received

- 3.31 There was a large response to the consultation, with the following number of responses received;
- 984 online/paper questionnaires
 - 109 emails (including attachments, such as letters)
 - 478 letters
 - 3 Petitions (total signatures = 1480)
 - 12 different types of Pre-completed forms (total = 1271)
 - 16 School Council returns (in addition, we recieved some individual responses from St.Johns School)
 - 40 Other material (including comment cards received at the Public Engagement events, posters and pictures produced by children at schools)
- 3.32 The list below shows a selection of the stakeholder groups that submitted written submissions to the consultation;

Political Groups

RCT Plaid Cymru
RCT Welsh Liberal Democrats

Schools

Chair of Governors - Tonypandy Community College
Chair of the RCT Church School Transport Action Group
Miskin Primary School
Dolau Primary School
Chair of Governors YGG Ynyswen

Chair of Governors, St Michaels RC Primary School
 Governors of Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Tonyrefail
 Chair of Governors and Headteacher, Cardinal Newman School
 Chair of Ysgol Gyfun Cymer Rhondda Parent Staff Association
 RCT Primary Headteachers Federation

Voluntary/Community Groups/Special interest

Church in Wales Diocese of Llandaff
 Catholic Archdiocese of Cardiff
 Archbishop of Wales & Bishop of Llandaff,
 Chief Executive Menter Iaith RCT
 Director of Development - Rhieni Dros Addysg Gymraeg (RHAG)
 Parish of the Archdiocese of Cardiff (PAC Secretary)
 RCT Church School Transport Action Group

Assembly Members (AMs)

Leighton Andrews AM/AC
 Leanne Wood AM/AC
 Mick Antoniw AM/AC
 David Melding AM/AC
 Eluned Parrott AM/AC
 Andrew RT Davies AM/AC
 Christine Chapman AM/AC

Local Authority Councillors

Cllr Barrie Stephens

RCTCBC Overview and Scrutiny Committee
 RCTCBC Finance & Performance Scrutiny Committee

Trade Unions

RCT NASUWT Secretary
 RCT NUT
 UCAC - Undeb Cenedlaethol Athrawon Cymru

3.33 The map below shows the distribution of the respondents across Rhondda Cynon Taf and surrounding areas by postcode (figure 1).

3.34 The Cabinet will be able to view all of the online and hard copy filed responses, as well as considering the report findings, before any final decisions are made. It is useful to note that the consultation results, although an important part of the decision making process, are not the only consideration to take into account. The Cabinet will also need to consider other information available alongside the consultation responses (for example, the results of the Equality Impact Assessment).

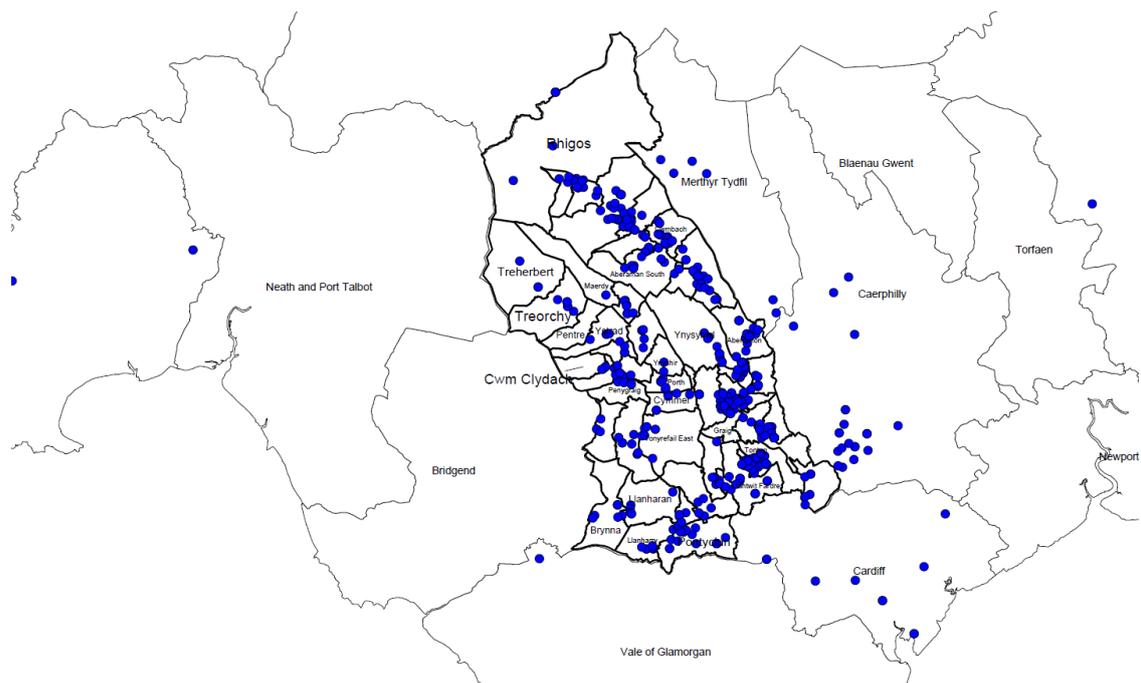


Figure 1 - Responses by Postcode where provided

4. Proposed New Policy – Home to School Transport

- 4.1 The Council currently provides Home to School transport for approximately 11,690 mainstream pupils each day through the provision of more than 230 routes and the issue of public transport season tickets. Approximately 7,000 learners are transported on a discretionary basis. In addition the service provides transport for approximately 1,000 Special Educational Need ('SEN') pupils daily. The home to school transport budget for 2015/16 is £11.4m.
- 4.2 The Council is currently exercising its discretionary powers under the provisions of the Measure to make a more generous provision to learners.
- 4.3 Whilst the Council has chosen to make use of its powers to provide discretionary transport arrangements, it also has the power to remove or make a charge for this provision at a later date.

Proposed New Policy – Statutory Distances, Post 16 & Faith/Welsh Medium Education Schools

- 4.4 The Council's **current distance eligibility criteria** for Home to School Transport **would continue to apply** and the Council would therefore provide discretionary transport provision in excess of the current minimum statutory requirement. However **discretionary elements of provision would become a chargeable but still subsidised service** as set out in the table below:-

Table 3: The Council's current distance eligibility criteria

Age during Academic Year	User	Statutory Requirement to Provide Transport to Free	Proposed changes to RCT Mainstream Transport Provision from September 2016
3 – End of term in which child turns 5	Non-compulsory school age, learner selecting education through English or Welsh medium.	No statutory provision (although duty to assess needs)	Continue to provide transport at current discretionary distances for pupils at the beginning and end of the normal school day, and not at lunchtimes but introduce a charge for all pupils choosing to travel on Council funded school transport who reside 1.5 - 2 miles safe walking distance to their catchment or nearest suitable school.

Age during Academic Year	User	Statutory Requirement to Provide Free Transport	Proposed changes to RCT Mainstream Transport Provision from September 2016
Term following 5 th Birthday – 11	Learner receiving compulsory primary education, learner selecting education through English or Welsh medium.	Reside 2 miles or further safe walking distance to their nearest suitable school	Continue to provide transport at current discretionary distances but introduce a charge for all pupils choosing to travel on Council funded school transport who reside 1.5 – 2 miles safe walking distance to their catchment or nearest suitable school.
12 – 16	Learner receiving compulsory secondary education, learner selecting education through English or Welsh medium.	Reside 3 miles or further safe walking distance to their nearest suitable school	Continue to provide transport at current discretionary distances but introduce a charge for all pupils choosing to travel on Council funded school transport who reside 2 - 3 miles safe walking distance to their catchment or nearest suitable school.
16+	Post-16 learners, learner selecting education through English or Welsh medium.	No statutory provision (although duty to assess needs)	Continue to provide transport at current discretionary distances but introduce a charge for all pupils choosing to travel on Council funded school transport who reside 2 miles or further safe walking distance to their catchment or nearest suitable school or college.
3 - 19	Learners selecting a school in accordance with their preferred religious denomination	No statutory provision – Measure does not require provision where learner selects a school that is not the nearest 'suitable school' (as the definition does not include voluntary aided (Faith) mainstream schools).	Continue to provide transport at current discretionary distances but introduce a charge for all pupils choosing to travel on Council funded school transport who reside beyond ² ; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.5 miles for 3-11 year olds (primary) attending full time in line with the Council's admission arrangements. • 2 miles for 11-19 year olds (secondary).

4.5 It is proposed to introduce a **subsidised charge** towards the discretionary elements of Home to School transport provision. **This charge would be £1.75 per day per pupil, which equates to £8.75 per week** (approximately £111 per term and £332.50 per year).

4.6 The proposed £1.75 charge would be applied consistently across the County Borough, regardless of the distance travelled to school, and will ensure that pupils who are currently receiving discretionary transport and who are travelling longer distances are not treated differently from those who live just over the discretionary mileage threshold. Its level has been determined having taken into account the following:-

- The cost of the alternative, available, public transport service. Due to the range of distances travelled by pupils across the County Borough, particularly by pupils attending faith schools, the cost of alternative provision can vary significantly. An analysis of a number of possible routes has shown that ticket prices on public transport could range from £1.20 to £5.00. Note – Public transport may not provide direct routes and may require pupils to walk for part of the journey and/or use more than one transport link. Weekly ticket prices, where available, would be lower.
- The cost of transporting pupils by car. The AA publish an annual estimate of the costs of owning a car. In 2014 the average running cost, excluding standing charges such as tax, insurance etc., was estimated to be around 21p per mile. For primary age pupils living just under the 2 mile statutory distance the daily running cost would be £1.67 (assuming 2 return journeys per day). For secondary school pupils living just under the 3 mile statutory distance it would be £2.52. Pupils not attending their nearest suitable school can travel far in excess of these distances, meaning that the daily cost would be much higher.
- The ongoing provision of a subsidy. The Council is not seeking to recover the full cost of the transport provided under the charging option. Based on estimates of the on-going costs, the discretionary service would continue to be operated with a subsidy of approximately £0.3m per year.

4.7 If implemented, the proposed preferred option would deliver £2.048M of savings per year for the Council.

5. ANALYSIS OF RESPONSES

5.1 The following sections of the report provide a summary analysis of the general feedback received on the proposal for Home to School Transport. This section (5) outlines the respondent profile of those people who filled in the questionnaire;

- Section 6 provides an overall analysis of the proposal, with a summary of the main themes and issues raised during the consultation process.
- Section 7 provides a summary of the responses related to the proposed charging of Home to School Transport.
- Section 8 shows the results of the reported potential impact on education.
- Section 9 outlines the petitions and pre-completed responses received.
- Section 10 looks at the other options considered by the Council when putting together the Home to School Transport proposal.

5.2 Each section will include letters, emails and the responses submitted as part of the online survey and from the returned paper surveys, as well as an analysis of the quantitative questions.

5.3 As stated in the methodology, all responses were considered, coded, input and filed. All of the open responses received have been numbered and filed.

5.4 This approach will hopefully provide a document that is accessible to the reader, as a summary of the main points taken from a wide range of often extensive submissions.

5.5 **984 questionnaires were received.**

Respondent Profile

- 5.6 59.8% of respondents to the questionnaire stated that they were a parent/carer of a young person/learner who uses/will use Home to School Transport.

Table 4: Users / non-users of Home To School Transport

Counts Analysis % Respondents	
Base	965 100.0%
Are you...?	
A parent/carer of a young person/learner who uses/will use Home to School Transport?	577 59.8%
A young person/learner who uses/will use Home to School Transport?	239 24.8%
None of the above? (please go to Q3)	149 15.4%

- 5.7 The following table outlines the respondents by school setting. The majority of respondents were from a secondary school setting

Table 5: Respondents by school setting (English / Welsh / Faith)

Is your child(ren) or are you:			
	English	Welsh	Faith
At a School Nursery Setting	16	22	10
At Primary School	96	76	78
At Secondary School (Yr 7 - 11)	177	295	112
At Secondary School/college (Yr 12 - 13, post 16)	89	55	37

6. THE PROPOSAL - OVERALL ANALYSIS

- 6.1 This section of the report provides a summary of the main themes, issues and concerns that have emerged from an overall analysis of returns and considers the extent of agreement/disagreement with the Home to School Transport service change proposal.
- 6.2 For those respondents who disagree with the Home to School Transport proposal and specific aspects of the proposal, the following are the main themes/concerns to emerge from the consultation overall. This is based on all the open responses that were received in letters, emails and all questions in the questionnaire. Where a respondent has commented on the same theme in more than one question each individual response is included in the totals below.

Financial Impact

- There should be no charge as school transport is a right and should be provided by the Local Authority (n=772)
- Families will suffer financially/an additional cost to parents (n=892)
- The proposed charge is too high/unreasonable (n=819)
- Cannot afford the charge (n=693)
- Impact on working families (n=253)
- Working families adversely affected (n=186)
- The poorest would suffer the most (n=281)
- Financial circumstances may change during the year (n=127)
- There would be an issue committing to transport for a full school year (n=218)
- Would affect ability to work (n=118)

School/Attendance/Achievement Impact

- School attendance would suffer (n=867)
- Pupil/parent choice would be restricted (n=389)
- Would discourage people from continuing education (n=252)
- Educational achievement would suffer (n=280)
- Would have to change schools (n=271)

Discrimination

- The proposal is discriminatory against Faith Schools (n=757)
- Could impact long term viability of Faith schools (n=78)
- All discretionary transport school be treated the same (n=316)
- Could no longer go to Faith/Welsh school (n=114/192)

- The proposal is discriminatory against Welsh Schools (n=260)
- Could impact long term viability of Welsh schools (n=50)
- The policy discriminates on racial grounds (n=76)

Other Main Themes

- Safety issues (n=281)
- The Council should find cuts elsewhere(n=217)

Financial Impact

- 6.3 A number of respondents simply felt that there should be no charge and that the Local Authority should provide the Home to School Transport service for free. Some felt that it was something that they were entitled to receive without payment, “a right”, as it was seen as part of the Council’s duty to provide children with education and that it should be included in the council tax that people paid.

- **There should be no charge as school transport is a right and should be provided (n=772)**

“Transport to school is part of the provision of education. If RCT stop the provision of transport to school, they are not meeting their obligations to provide education! I find it hard to believe this is even being considered.”

“We live in the UK where everyone has a right to education. Transport to education is just further to that provision. It is not a separate consideration.”

“Education is a human right for a child. If the council cannot provide transport for ALL children then why should one benefit and not others. There is no means test for heating allowance for the elderly or to licences why should children have to suffer because of lack of proper budget control by the authority.”

- 6.4 There was some concern that the proposed charge would be an additional financial burden to parents, when combined with other general costs and price increases, and that it would therefore have a largely negative impact on family finances. It would mean that people would have less money to spend on essentials, such as food and energy bills.

- **Families will suffer financially/an additional cost to parents (n=892)**

“This would mean a cost of £17.50 per week for a household of 2 children. This could push families who are already on the breadline into poverty and who will suffer? The children when the parents cannot afford to send their children to school. Remember these are families

who also have to pay for school dinners and uniforms, schools trips and equipment.”

“The children will feel the pressure of the cost of the charge as we will have to reduce the. Food bill and electricity bill or maybe stop paying for school equipment such as art provisions. The money has to be saved from somewhere.”

“It would create severe financial difficulties and have a serious impact on lifestyle that the child has. E.g. food or school transport. If a child started to miss school due to the inability to pay transport costs this would also have more financial impact on the family as they would then be fined for not sending their children to school. This could result in more children going into care and families breaking up to the stress put on family life.”

- 6.5 A number of respondents stated that the proposed charge of £1.75 was too high. There was a feeling that the proposed charge was unreasonable, with suggestions that if the charge was to be introduced it would need to be reduced to a more affordable level (note: this is separate to those respondents who said they were not able to afford the charge, see 6.6 below).

- **The proposed charge is too high/unreasonable (n=819)**

“The charge per day is too expensive..... A reasonable amount would be £1 per day”

“Parents will still need to find £700 a year for 2 children which is unreasonable.”

“I believe there should be a transport fee for all, but £1.75 per child per day is too high ... I simply cannot see how this can be deemed as reasonable when the cost of living is already extremely difficult for a lot of families.”

- 6.6 In addition to those respondents above who said that the proposed charge was too high, there were a number of respondents suggesting that they simply could not afford the charge at the proposed level of £1.75.

- **Cannot afford the charge (n=693)**

“I honestly cannot afford the bus fair. I have two children at secondary school and I currently have to car share because of fuel costs are too high for me to run my own car. I don't have the spare cash in my budget to pay for school transport. This is a huge worry for me.”

“I'm just wondering how you're going to get blood from a stone. People simply can't afford it.”

*“Nearly £10 per school week is not affordable.... Give us a break!”
 “...but not at the charge proposed. This is totally unaffordable and unacceptable”*

6.7 The impact that the proposal would have on families was a recurring theme throughout the consultation, as was a reported specific impact on working families.

- **Impact on working families (n=253)**

“The council assumes parents can afford this charge. I don't have any spare cash to pay anything towards this, even though my husband and I both work full time. We won't get help to pay because we work full time.”

“We are working parents and yet we constantly struggle to pay the bills, with this extra expense out of our income we will most definitely end up in dept!”

“definitely not fair we are a working family NOT ON BENEFITS but have bills and debts all the same we have no extra money to pay this fee you are punishing the working poor how dare you before long we will all have to give up our jobs just to live these children deserve to have a safe way of getting to school don't put them at risk because on your head the blame will fall”

“The people on low wage are not the only parents who will struggle to pay these extra bills. I and my husband work full time and are not in receipt of any benefits and we cannot pay this transport bill. We are already struggling at the moment and have cut our household bills down as far as possible. We don't smoke or drink and don't go out to pubs etc we have enough money to live on. This extra bill will cause us to struggle greatly. I am very anxious as I don't know how we are going to pay.”

6.8 Often linked to the above reported impact on working families was a feeling that working families would be worse off when compared with families that receive free school meals (FSM) and would therefore be eligible for the proposed means benefited lower charge. The respondents felt the proposal favoured those families who receive FSM and working families would be adversely affected.

- **Working families adversely affected (n=186)**
- **FSM and non FSM should be treated the same (n=94)**
- **Not worth working/better off on benefits (n=27)**

“It seems to be penalising working families again - that have to pay more than children in receipt of free school meals.”

“We feel proposed changes are unfair and will hit us, as well as other middle class families that do not receive free school meals as our income is above the threshold. “

“We both strive to maintain employment. The £70 penalty is something we could ill afford and could make it pointless to work. The temptation being to revert back to Social Benefits and then have free transport! Your intention to Charge is penalising those that work, and frankly we pay enough Council Tax to expect better.”

94 respondents said that FSM and non FSM children should be treated the same.

“I would pay to ensure my child arrives safely, but this cost should be the same for everyone and not cheaper just for those on free meals”

“The cost should be the same for all”

6.9 A number of respondents felt that the people most affected by the proposal would be the poorest in society and those on low incomes.

- **The poorest would suffer the most (n=281)**

“...it adds problems of child poverty in an already deprived area”

“... no recognition of the working poor in the proposal which makes up a large proportion of the population in RCT given the types of employment in existence....”

“It is definitely unfair as it will discriminate against families on low incomes.”

“The cost to those on low level income, working families who are already living on the breadline and haven’t got the resources to pay. And also those on benefits who live day to day really worries me. Over the past year we support accessing food banks due to not being able to live on minimum wage and benefits.”

6.10 A concern reported by some of the respondents was that their circumstances may change through the year, which would make it difficult for them to plan financially and therefore commit to a charge for the year ahead, for example a change in employment.

- **Financial circumstances may change during the year (n=127)**

“How do you know your financial situation in 6 months with all the cuts?”

6.11 In addition to the financial situation potentially changing during the course of a school year, there was concern that other changes either to personal circumstances, for example illness or a change in family dynamic, would make the proposal unfair.

Respondents reported situations where it would be known that the seat on the transport would not be needed throughout the year or even throughout the week, for example, at exam times, post 16 courses that only require transport on certain days of the week or those children who live at different addresses during the week, with different parents/carers.

The issue of inclement weather was also mentioned and the possibility of a refund for days where transport was not possible.

It was felt that these circumstances would make a full price charge for the year ahead unfair and that the Council should think about how these issues could be dealt with, possibly on a case by case basis.

- **There would be an issue committing to transport for a full school year (n=218)**

“No some people would not use their seats for a full year, e.g. students completing their GCSEs, or may be able to walk during the summer months when the weather is better and the days are lighter, therefore making it safe to walk.....”

“Some students in College don't go to College for a full 5 day week. Would they have to pay for the full 5 days? I didn't see any guidance to this in the proposals.”

“On fine weather days, walking or cycling may be an option. One of my children will be absent from school for 6 to 8 weeks due to operation, however not sure when or if the absence will be longer.”

“If a charge is to be introduced that is at the proposed cost parents should only pay for the days that the service is used.”

“Circumstances change. Very quickly and very easily.”

6.12 118 views reported that the proposal would have an impact on their ability to continue working or the hours they worked would need to be changed, as they would need to transport children themselves.

- **Would affect ability to work (n=118)**

“No we are a low paid working family and will not be able to pay the fees, therefore one of us will have to give up work”

“Would have to cut my hours.”

“..... Also it would be rearranging working hours so that the children can be taken & picked up from school as I will not pay this charge.”

“My children attend Welsh medium schools and I work in a Catholic Primary. From this I could lose my job due to the impact on Faith schools.”

“Would have to try changing working hours to accommodate taking and picking them up as I cannot afford the cost you are asking for.”

“I would have to reduce my working hours, meaning we would struggle even more.”

School/Attendance/Achievement Impact

- 6.13 A number of respondents felt that the proposal would lead to some pupils not going to school and that attendance would suffer.

- **School attendance would suffer (n=867)**

“I believe charging parents for transporting their child to school will have a direct impact on attendance and if the children are not in school they will be hanging around the streets so incidents of anti social behaviour will probably increase”

“Unfortunately it would have an impact on their attendance I should imagine, resulting in my receiving a fine that I also cannot afford to pay. Their education is so important! I feel like I'm being stuck between a rock and a hard place. I cannot expect them to walk to Saint John's school from cwmaman.”

“Difficult - savings do need to be made but I fear this will impact on attendance.”

- 6.14 Linked to the perceived impact on school attendance, 389 views were expressed that the proposal would lead to pupils not receiving as good a standard of education and as a result educational attainment might suffer.

- **Educational achievement would suffer (n=389)**

“It should not affect any current children at the schools as we as parents are already sending children to the school. I will have to move mine to the local secondary school interrupting their education. This means moving from a Welsh school to and English medium school which will affect their education.”

“We would lose the ability for our children to attend the school of their and our choice. This may lead to reducing the level of commitment to education and the loss of motivation, along with disruption to our children's one school education opportunity.”

“As my children have all gone to Welsh school I would have to think of sending my son in his 2nd year of 6 form to a more local English school which would affect my son's education extremely. So I believe he had the right to carry on his education in Welsh as he has done in the past. I could not afford to pay the charge for him to attend his present school. ”

“The Welsh government has 3 priorities – numeracy, literacy and closing the gap. This proposal will affect attendance, thereby hindering progress of attainment in numeracy and literacy. It also unfairly impacts on pupils from lower income families, of which, this school has a huge proportion. Therefore, this proposal already opposes the priorities that schools are trying to address. Ferndale has enough issues to battle without more hurdles being put in our path”.

“Given the focus by Estyn on improving educational standards I am staggered that you propose to threaten the development of children such as my son by forcing their parents to make decisions that are based on finances not their educational wellbeing”.

- 6.15 A number of respondents thought that the proposal would either take away or limit their choice of school/college/education and that this was unfair.

- **Pupil/parent choice would be restricted (n=389)**

“... it would affect the choice of ‘where’ your child would go to school”

“My child will be starting in Nursery in September 2015 and will be attending a Faith school. I don’t agree with the term ‘suitable school’ as you aren’t considering that a non-faith school is not a suitable school for my child. You are allowing parents to choose whether a school is ‘suitable’ or not based on whether the school is Welsh language or not yet penalising parents who choose to send their children to a Faith school and not including this in the definition of ‘suitable’.”

“The choice of school and educational requirements is one of the most important decisions a parent can make for their child. When the preferred choices aren’t available due to over subscription the choice of school does not become discretionary.”

“I do not have a car. I am a single mum but am not eligible for free school meals or school transport as I earn just over the threshold. My son attends a Welsh primary school (Ysgol Llanhari). I have a choice of an English school and a Welsh school in my catchment area. The English primary school in my catchment would not involve a charge for school transport so I am better off sending my son to the English school, which I do not want, I want a Welsh medium education but you are discriminating those who want to send their children to the Welsh school.”

“This cost is totally unfair. It reduces parental choice and is discriminatory.”

6.16 In relation to post 16 education, a number of respondents said that the proposal may mean that young people would not continue their education by moving into further education.

- **Would discourage people from continuing education (n=252)**

"You are penalising children who want to further their education. Age discrimination springs to mind. You need to encourage parents to encourage their children to stay in school not leave because they cannot afford the bus fare."

"My child has already said she will not go on to further education as she knows we as a family are going to suffer greatly from this extra bill."

"Not in post 16 education at the moment but will be shortly and would have an upset because they may not be able to attend a sixth form with their class peers"

6.17 A number of respondents said that they would have to change schools as a result of the proposal going ahead.

- **Would have to change schools (n=271)**

"As a single disabled parent living on benefits this could mean my daughter has to change school."

"the children in our catchment area would probably attend other schools!"

"I'm seriously thinking of putting them in a school within walking distance."

"Mine would have to go to the local English comp ... disrupting their education."

Discrimination

6.18 A main theme running throughout the consultation was a feeling that the proposal was discriminatory against Faith Schools, parents, children and/or religion as a whole. Many respondents felt that the proposal would have a disproportionate impact upon Faith Schools, when compared with Welsh or English Schools.

- **The proposal is discriminatory against Faith Schools (n=757)**
- **Could impact long term viability of Faith schools (n=78)**

"Its discrimination, I chose for my daughter to be brought up and attend a faith school, why should we be charged for an education choice because the only school we have is out of our area and has to travel."

“The current proposals will impact on children attending faith schools which is clear discrimination.”

“You will be creating elite faith based schools. Parents who can afford the charge will pay the levy for the positive education given at the faith schools. The proposals are simply prejudicial.”

“My children are not in a faith school but I feel to propose children attend 'an alternative school nearer' is taking away their rights to a faith education. If people wish their children to go to a faith school then they should not have to compromise this because of transport.”

People who send their children to a faith school have thought long and hard before making this decision. To withdraw transport from faith schools only would be discrimination.

- 6.19 A number of respondents said that all discretionary school transport should be treated equally, for example if Faith schools have to pay, then so should the pupils in Welsh schools.

- **All discretionary school transport is treated the same (n=316)**

“Please devise a fair system. Where I understand you must save money and reduce costs it must be done in a way where no one benefits from free or subsidised transport. Everyone must pay the same regardless of the school they attend. If parents wish to continue using home to school transport then they must all pay an agreed amount for this service. Please do not favour any one type of school. One price for all!”

“As a parent of 4 children that does not claim benefits and also works and has to be responsible for the cost of getting my children to school every day I believe that everyone should be expected to pay a contribution at least regardless.”

- 6.20 Linked to 6.17 above and those respondents stating that they would need to change schools, were a number of people stating directly that they would no longer be able to go to their particular school of choice.

- **Could no longer attend Faith/Welsh school (n=114/192)**

“I can't afford it and will be taking my daughter out of the Welsh medium school and putting her into a school nearer to home which will have to be the English school.”

“My children would be removed from Welsh medium education as I could not afford the proposed charges.”

"I cannot afford this. I will have to stop using the service, take my son out of the Welsh language school (still within my catchment area) and send him to the English language school that is in walking distance."

"St John's has an excellent reputation and I think they may lose pupils."

6.21 Some of the respondents felt that the proposal was discriminatory against Welsh schools, parents, pupils and/or language; and felt that the proposal would have a disproportionate effect on Welsh schools in particular. Some of these views were based on the dispersed location of Welsh medium primary schools, with more pupils potentially impacted than in the English primary schools.

- **The proposal is discriminatory against Welsh schools (n=260)**
- **Could impact on long term viability of Welsh schools (n=50)**

"It is unfair and not thought through..... it will have an impact on children starting Welsh language education, as many live closer to English schools as there are more of them"

"For children to get a Welsh education, they often need to travel on a school bus. Why would parents be punished for choosing Welsh education for their children"

"Welsh Medium schools will be disproportionately affected due to their wider catchment areas."

"Do you want the language to die out?"

6.22 A number of respondents suggested that the proposal could be seen to discriminate on race, due to the potential difference in the number of black and ethnic minority learners that attend Faith schools, compared to Welsh or English medium schools. The comments were often associated with reference to a recent court case in Swansea.

- **The policy discriminates on racial grounds (n=76)**

"It is wrong to discriminate against faith schools. It is illegal to discriminate on grounds of race, colour or creed."

"The policy puts children with non-Welsh and non-UK national origins..... at a disadvantage when they are compared to children with Welsh and UK national origins."

"Faith schools educate a disproportionately large number of pupils from ethnic minorities. The Council's proposals could impact pupils from ethnic minorities disproportionately."

"...there are a disproportionately high number of pupils from a minority ethnic background in local faith schools. A recent, successful Judicial Review taken against Swansea Council ruled that similar plans there amounted to indirect racial discrimination on these grounds...."

Other Main Themes

- 6.23 A number of respondents perceived that the walking route to the school was not safe, due to the volume of traffic or personal safety concerns, such as inadequate street lighting or pavements.

- **Safety issues (n=281)**

“The route my children will have to walk is unsuitable. I would fear for my children's safety. They will also be soaking wet in inclement weather or freezing cold in snow. Their health may suffer as a result and will be prone to sick days.”

“you are putting children's lives and safety at risk to be forced to walk up to 3 miles to school in the dark in poor weather is totally unacceptable”

“...significantly increase the risk of accidents...”

- 6.24 A couple of themes that have appeared in previous service change consultations were also found with regards to the proposal on Home to School Transport.

- **The Council should find cuts elsewhere (n=217)**
- **People already pay their Council Tax (n=84)**

“I feel that services for children could be avoided and make cuts in other areas”

“It's working. Find savings from other areas where children are not directly affected. We've worked really hard to get attendance p and this will smash it down again.”

“We pay our council tax and council tax pays for home to school transport.”

“I already pay Council Tax, why do I have to pay anything else”

- 6.25 A selection of other themes noted during the consultation are listed below;

- Congestion around schools (n=117)
- Current students should be protected from charge (n=49)
- Not enough notice is being given (n=59)
- Lack of parking facilities near schools (n=37)
- Health would suffer due to air quality (n=45)
- Lack of alternative public transport (n=53)

Agreement with the proposal (Overall)

- 6.26 There was a low level of **agreement with the proposal**, the following are some of the comments received during the consultation from all open responses in the questionnaire, as well as letters, emails etc.;

“I think it is reasonable to make changes to the policy given that the council already provides transport in excess of the statutory minimum requirements.”

“Transport costs for RCT are phenomenal. I am pleased this is being addressed with the hope it protects services for our most vulnerable in society - elderly, disabled, unwell. As a parent it is my responsibility to ensure my children get to school, not the councils really. However I have been fortunate in accessing services provided for my children for the past 13 years for which I am grateful. I hope in the survey people will be measured in their responses and support the proposed changes.”

“Not too badly, it would still form very good value for money for a return fair and I would prefer to pay for this rather than cut more money in more frontline services”

- **Think that parents should make a contribution (n=48)**
- **People who choose to go to a school other than their nearest should pay for transport (n=43)**

“I support charging as suggested for those discretionary travellers, however you could go further and not make any provision at all for those pupils in that group. A bicycle is not an expensive item and a journey of up to 3 miles by bicycle should not be beyond the youth of today. This would also help with the Government policy of reducing motor traffic and supporting Sustainable Transport.”

“I agree that it is reasonable to charge £1.75 a day for transport which you are not statutorily obliged to provide. However, as a school governor..... and a church minister who deals with poverty in the community, I do NOT agree that children on free school meals should be charged to travel to school. Somehow the money to transport FSM children must be found elsewhere.”

“I agree to the extent that you clearly have to make some cuts, and it would seem preferable to target this area rather than others.”

- 6.27 Of those respondents that said they would be happy to pay, the majority had the caveat that the charge should be lower.

- **Would be happy to pay the charge (n=27)**
- **Would be happy to pay a charge, but the cost is too high (n=49)**

“Make a charge but at lower level where they will still be used and will be a more environmentally sound choice”

“I agree that we should contribute to the school transportation but I feel that the so called subsidised proposals are extreme.”

“I agree, but it would be fairer for every child who uses school transport to pay 50p per day. You are then gaining some money, but not taking a lot of money away from families on low incomes”

- **It is a better option to pay for provision rather than have it removed completely (n=21)**

“Yes.. it is better to have something rather than nothing”

“stopping it completely is a terrible idea”

- **Health benefits/Cycling (n=6)**

“perhaps children cycling to school should be encouraged instead of providing transport”

- 6.28 All of the themes considered in this section of the report will be explored in further detail, where appropriate, as we outline the responses to each of the questions in the survey.

Agreement with the proposal (Question 3)

- 6.29 The majority of respondents disagreed that changes should be made to the Council’s current Home to School Transport policy, given the extent of the current level of provision (81.0%).

Table 6: Agreement / disagreement with changes to the existing policy

Do you agree that changes should be made to the Council’s current Home to School Transport policy, given the extent of the current level of provision?	
Base	968
Yes	11.7%
No	81.0%
Don’t know	7.3%

Do you agree that changes should be made to the Council's current Home to School Transport policy given the extent of the current level of provision?

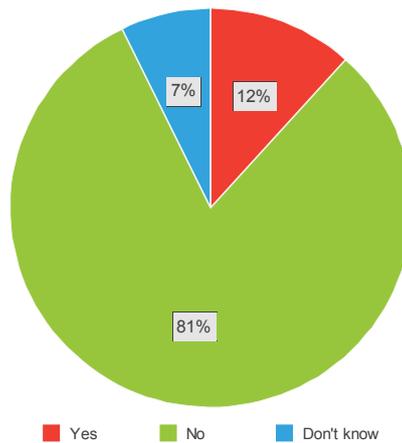


Figure 2: Agreement / disagreement with changes to the existing policy

6.30 As can be seen in the table below, there was more agreement to the need for changes from those not directly affected by the proposal, as would be expected. However, 75.5% of those who could be said to not be directly affected still disagreed with the proposal.

Table 7: Agreement/disagreement with the proposal (users/non-users)

Counts Analysis % Respondents	Total	Do you agree that changes should be made to the Council's current Home to School Transport policy given the extent of the current level of provision?		
		Yes	No	Don't know
Base	955	113 11.8%	772 80.8%	70 7.3%
Are you...?				
A parent/carer of a young person/learner who uses/will use Home to School Transport?	575	73 12.7%	484 84.2%	18 3.1%
A young person/learner who uses/will use Home to School Transport?	233	15 6.4%	177 76.0%	41 17.6%
None of the above? (please go to Q3)	147	25 17.0%	111 75.5%	11 7.5%

6.31 As we have seen there is wide scale disagreement with the need to make a change to Home to School Transport. The table below shows levels of disagreement varied from 79.0% in Welsh schools to 91.6% in Faith Schools.

Table 8: Agreement / disagreement with the proposal (English / Welsh / Faith)

Counts Analysis % Respondents	Total	Do you agree that changes should be made to the Council's current Home to School Transport policy given the extent of the current level of provision?		
		Yes	No	Don't know
Base	1052	114 10.8%	867 82.4%	71 6.7%
English, Welsh, Faith				
English	377	56 14.9%	304 80.6%	17 4.5%
Welsh	438	43 9.8%	346 79.0%	49 11.2%
Faith	237	15 6.3%	217 91.6%	5 2.1%

Open responses (from question 3) were received from 393 individuals. The number of views expressed totalled 556.

6.32 The main themes to emerge from Q3 for those stating that changes should not be made were as follows;

- Families will suffer financially/an additional cost to parents (n=44)
- The proposal is discriminatory against Faith Schools (n=45)
- There should be no charge as school transport is a right and should be provided by the Local Authority (n=56)
- Cannot afford the charge (n=38)
- School attendance would suffer (n=38)

7. CHARGING

- 7.1 48.3% of respondents did not agree that if changes had to be made, a charge towards the discretionary elements of provision is preferable to completely stopping providing transport.

Table 9: Agreement / disagreement with charge towards discretionary elements over stopping the service

If changes have to be made, do you agree that introducing a charge towards the discretionary elements of provision is preferable to completely stopping providing the service?	
Base	932
Yes	34.9%
No	48.3%
Don't know	16.8%

Open responses (from question 4) were received from 391 individuals. The number of views expressed totalled 557.

- 7.2 The main comments received for this question can be grouped into the following themes/issues;
- There should be no charge as school transport is a right and should be provided by the Local Authority (n=75)
 - Families will suffer financially/an additional cost to parents (n=28)
 - The proposed charge is too high/unreasonable (n=43)
 - Cannot afford charge (n=33)
 - All discretionary transport should be treated the same (n=29)
 - School attendance would suffer (n=29)
 - The proposal is discriminatory against Faith Schools (n=26)
- 7.3 83.0% of respondents stated that the introduction of a charge towards all the discretionary elements of Home to School Transport was not fair.

Table 10: Agreement / disagreement that a charge towards discretionary elements is fair

Do you agree that introducing a charge towards all the discretionary elements of Home to School Transport is fair?	
Base	970
Yes	11.4%
No	83.0%
Don't know	5.6%

- 7.4 There was a similar percentage of respondents agreeing that a charge was not fair, across English, Welsh and Faith school respondents, as shown in the table below.

Table 11: Agreement / disagreement that a charge towards discretionary elements is fair (English / Welsh / Faith)

Counts Analysis % Respondents	Total	Do you agree that introducing a charge towards all the discretionary elements of Home to School Transport is fair?		
		Yes	No	Don't know
Base	1053	114 10.8%	881 83.7%	58 5.5%
English, Welsh, Faith				
English	377	57 15.1%	308 81.7%	12 3.2%
Welsh	439	31 7.1%	376 85.6%	32 7.3%
Faith	237	26 11.0%	197 83.1%	14 5.9%

Open responses (from question 5) were received from 308 individuals. The number of views expressed totalled 418.

- 7.5 The main comments received for this question can be grouped into the following themes/issues;
- There should be no charge as school transport is a right and should be provided by the Local Authority (n=47)
 - Families will suffer financially/an additional cost to parents (n=31)
 - The proposed charge is too high/unreasonable (n=28)
 - The proposal is discriminatory against Faith Schools (n=29)
 - Cannot afford the charge (n=26)
- 7.6 The majority of respondents (66.2%) thought that the inclusion of a means test of the ability to pay, based on free school meals and where this is the case a reduced level of charge was unfair.

Table 12: Agreement / disagreement with fairness of reduced level of charge for FSM children

The proposal includes a means test of the ability to pay, based on you/your child(ren) being in receipt of Free School Meals and where this is the case there would be a reduced level of charge. Do you think this is fair?	
Base	961
Yes	21.4%
No	66.2%
Don't know	12.4%

Open responses (from question 6) were received from 396 individuals. The number of views expressed totalled 502.

7.7 The main comments received for this question can be grouped into the following themes/issues;

- The proposal favours children on free school meals with working families adversely affected (n=79)
- Impact on working families (n=74)
- Families will suffer financially/an additional cost to parents (n=39)
- There should be no charge as school transport is a right and should be provided by the Local Authority (n=68)
- The poorest would suffer the most (n=37)

“definitely not fair we are a working family NOT ON BENEFITS but have bills and debts all the same we have no extra money to pay this fee you are punishing the working poor how dare you before long we will all have to give up our jobs just to live these children deserve to have a safe way of getting to school don’t put them at risk because on your head the blame will fall”

“This again penalises those families who work to earn their living and pay taxes. This proposal can only encourage families to claim benefits. Not being in receipt of school dinners does not mean a family has any more disposal income than families who receive free school dinners.”

“Just because you work doesn't mean you have any more money at the end of the week than someone who chooses not to work”

“No - because there are a lot of parents in a similar situation to mine where I work, earn 'too much' to be eligible for free school means - but definitely do not earn enough to have to find £17.50 a week!”

7.8 52.6% of respondents thought that the proposed cap at 2 children was unfair.

Table 13: Agreement / disagreement with fairness of introducing a cap (maximum of 2 children charge)

The proposal also includes a cap (maximum) on the number of children for which a charge would be made. The proposed cap (maximum) is 2 children. (This means there would be no charge for a third, fourth or more child). Do you think this is fair?	
Base	956
Yes	35.3%
No	52.6%
Don't know	12.1%

Open responses (from question 7) were received from 288 individuals. The number of views expressed totalled 339.

7.9 The main comments received for this question can be grouped into the following themes/issues;

- There should not be a cap/parents should pay (n=67)
- There should be no charge as school transport is a right and should be provided by the Local Authority (n=78)
- There should be a cap (n=38)

“If people chose to have more than 2 children, then they should be able to pay for them, maybe at a subsidised rate. You should have what you can't afford!”

“More children doesn't mean you get transport free.. if you choose to have alot of children that's your choice but you have to pay not expect the local authority to”

“Families with lots of children already get more help from the state in the form of higher tax credits etc and have more disposable income than a family on low pay with just one child.”

“I think this is a reasonable proposal. I have 2 children and know the expenses people face.”

“It should be capped at 1 child.”

7.10 The majority of respondents thought a standard charge of £1.75 was unfair (87.4%).

Table 14: Agreement / disagreement with fairness of proposed charge (£1.75 per day)

The proposed standard charge is £1.75 per day per pupil. Do you think this is fair?	
Base	704
Yes	6.4%
No	87.4%
Don't know	6.3%

Open responses (from question 8) were received from 401 individuals. The number of views expressed totalled 516.

7.11 The main comments received for this question can be grouped into the following themes/issues;

- The proposed charge is too high/unreasonable (n=199)
- There should be no charge as school transport is a right and should be provided by the Local Authority (n=51)

“This is really expensive. An extra £35 per month per child? How is that helping families?”

“No as this means a yearly charge of more than £300 but currently if you have to purchase a yearly pass it is a third of the cost.”

“Way too much money for some of the poorer families in our catchment area.”

“This is too much for a family to pay over a year.”

7.12 The majority of respondents thought the proposed means tested level of charge of £1.00 per day was unfair (77.5%).

Table 15: Agreement / disagreement with fairness of proposed charge for FSM children (£1.00 per day)

The proposed "means tested" reduced level of charge where you/your child(ren) are in receipt of Free School Meals is £1.00 per day per pupil. Do you think this is fair?	
Base	966
Yes	12.3%
No	77.5%
Don't know	10.1%

Open responses (from question 9) were received from 311 individuals. The number of views expressed totalled 395.

7.13 The main comments received for this question can be grouped into the following themes/issues;

- The proposed charge is too high/unreasonable (n=77)
- Free school meal and non free school meal pupils should be treated the same (n=27)
- The proposal favours children on free school meals with working families adversely affected (n=39)
- Impact on working families (n=27)
- Cannot afford the charge (n=29)

“It seems to be penalising working families again - that have to pay more than children in receipt of free school meals.”

“People who are eligible for school meals should also receive free home to school transport”

“no because parents receiving free school meals would have to choose between food or getting their child to school”

“Means tested in this context is unfair. My children are not entitled to free school meals, although this is a low income household, I do not know where I am going to be able to find the extra 3% per day from, which will have an impact on school attendance! I should not be put in the position whereby I cannot afford to send my children to school.”

- 7.14 43.1% of respondents said that they would be more likely to stop using Home to School Transport, rather than pay the charge. Only 14.9% stated that they would pay the charge, with 26.3% saying they didn't know what they would do.

Table 16: Likelihood of users continuing to use service and pay the proposed charge / stop using the service

If you/your child(ren) use Home to School Transport, would you/your child(ren) be more likely to pay the charge or stop using the service?	
Base	952
Pay the charge	14.9%
Stop using the service	43.1%
Don't know	26.3%
N/A	15.8%

Open responses (from question 10) were received from 316 individuals. The number of views expressed totalled 386.

- 7.15 Less Welsh and Faith school respondents stated that they would stop using the service (41.7% and 45.4%), than English school respondents (53.9%).

Table 17: Likelihood of users continuing to use the service and pay the proposed charge / stop using the service (English / Welsh / Faith)

Counts Analysis % Respondents	Total	If you/your child(ren) use Home to School Transport, would you/your child(ren) be more likely to pay the charge or stop using the service?			
		Pay the charge	Stop using the service	Don't know	N/A
Base	1036	168 16.2%	486 46.9%	302 29.2%	80 7.7%
English, Welsh, Faith					
English	371	61 16.4%	200 53.9%	91 24.5%	19 5.1%
Welsh	436	69 15.8%	182 41.7%	141 32.3%	44 10.1%
Faith	229	38 16.6%	104 45.4%	70 30.6%	17 7.4%

- 7.16 The main comments received for this question can be grouped into the following themes/issues;

- Cannot afford the charge (n=47)
- Attendance would suffer (n=28)
- More cars on road/congestion (n=20)
- The proposed charge is too high/unreasonable (n=18)

"I would have to pay the charge so my child could continue to use a school of my choice and not the councils."

"I have no idea how I would get the children to school, I do not drive"

"In my area my School - Treorchy Comprehensive managed to negotiate with Arriva Trains to provide free transportation. So I would use that instead of paying a charge."

"I simply cannot afford to pay it, my children would have to be home schooled"

"We will stop using the service completely if the proposed changes go ahead..."

7.17 Those respondents that stated they were likely to stop using the service were asked how they or their children would travel to school in the future. The majority (52.0%) said they would use a car.

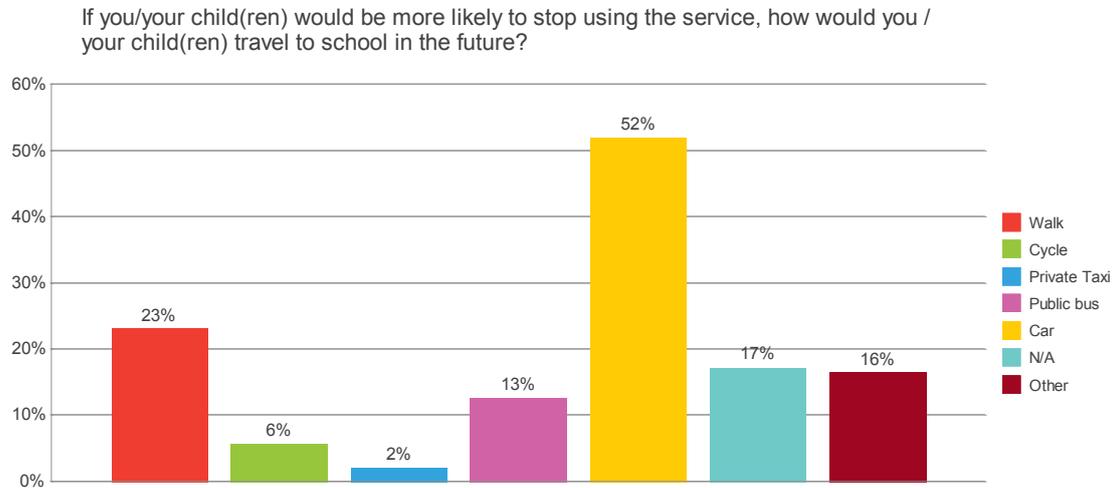


Figure 3: Travel to school – future choices

7.18 The other responses included the following;

1 - Would not Attend/ Would Stay Home	30
2 - Don't Know	25
3 - Would Change Schools	17
4 - Car Share	6
5 - Train	9
6 - Other	6
7 - Rely on Friends/Family	3
8 - Didn't Answer Question	27
9 - arrange transport with other parents e.g. Share a taxi	3

7.19 Respondents who disagreed with the proposed level of charge or would stop using the service were asked to consider what level of charge they thought was fair. Figures 4 and 5 below shows that respondents felt that no charge was fair for both the standard charge proposal (64%) and the proposed reduced (free school meals) charge (75%).

If you disagree with the proposed level of charge or would stop using the service, what level of charge do you think would be fair?



Figure 4: Fair level of charge (standard charge)

If you disagree with the proposed level of charge or would stop using the service, what level of charge do you think would be fair?



Figure 5: Fair level of charge (reduced FSM charge)

- 7.20 The majority of respondents (62.2%) thought that it was unfair that the proposal required people to decide annually, before the start of the school year whether Home to School Transport was required for the full school year ahead.

Table 18: Fairness of deciding on school transport on an annual basis (before the start of the school year)

The proposal would require you/your child(ren) to decide annually before the start of the school year whether Home to School Transport is required for the full school year ahead. Do you think this is fair?	
Base	962
Yes	22.1%
No	62.2%
Don't know	15.7%

Open responses (from question 13) were received from 371 individuals. The number of views expressed totalled 413.

- 7.21 The main comments received for this question can be grouped into the following themes/issues;
- Financial circumstances may change during the year (n=111)
 - There would be an issue committing to transport for a full year (n=154)
 - There should be no charge as school transport is a right and should be provided by the Local Authority (n=24)

“Circumstances can change including moving in and out of school or proposed catchment areas. Payment per school term would seem more sensible”

“How can we predict that we as parents can afford it ? How is this going to be paid in ? School dinner money or snack money is a nuisance to collect now !”

“Some users may only need seats for a shorter period of time rather than the full academic year. Has consideration gone to those who may move? Has consideration gone to children who are in the care system and may not attend full year because they may have just moved I to the area? Would the Foster Carer be charged for a full year? or the child may leave the area after the Foster Carer has been charged for a full year. This could happen to Foster Carers who provide short term placements and due to the cuts that Foster Carers have already had to endure how may will consider leaving the profession? This would increase the number of children needing residential placement which are extremely expensive. Also the Authority as Corporate Parents they are in effect responsible for paying the cost of school transport.”

“This is a very inflexible approach only allowing funds to be calculated and collected for the council.”

- 7.22 If the proposed charge was introduced, respondents stated that they would like to be able to make the payment on a monthly basis (34.2%) Although 42.6% stated other.

Table 19: Preferred frequency of payment following introduction of proposed charge

If the proposed charge was introduced, how often would you want to make the payment (note there would be no ability to pay on the day/on the bus/at the school)?	
Base	868
Monthly	34.2%
Every Term	17.6%
Annually	5.5%
Other	42.6%

- 7.23 Other responses included;

1 - Would Not Use	11
2 - Never/Would Not Pay/Cannot Afford	99
3 - Daily	34
4 - Weekly	63
5 - Other Frequency	4
6 - Needs to be flexible/depends on financial situation	11
7 - Don't Know	6
8 - Did Not Answer Question	90

- 7.24 The majority of respondents (63.8%) thought it was unfair that the new arrangements would be in place from the school year beginning September 2016.

Table 20: Fairness of implementing proposal from September 2016

If the proposal is implemented, then the new arrangements would be in place from the school year beginning September 2016. Do you think this is fair?	
Base	946
Yes	19.3%
No	63.8%
Don't know	16.8%

Open responses (from question 16) were received from 210 individuals. The number of views expressed totalled 238.

7.25 The main comments received for this question can be grouped into the following themes/issues;

- There should be no charge as school transport is a right and should be provided by the Local Authority (n=40)
- Not enough notice has been given (n=41)

Some people felt that this was sufficient time;

“That gives plenty of notice for people to adjust and be ready for the changes and financial implication.”

“Gives people time to find alternative/save/ prepare for the cost of paying for transport”

It's fair in terms of giving us notice however I disagree with the charge altogether.

Whilst others disagreed;

“This is not nearly enough notice for parents or the schools to prepare!”

7.26 A question was included in the questionnaire to allow respondents a further opportunity to add anything else they felt needed to be included in the consultation, specifically asking about the impact the proposal would have upon themselves or their children.

Open responses (from question 15) were received from 745 individuals. The number of views expressed totalled 998.

7.27 The main comments received for this question can be grouped into the following themes/issues;

- Families will suffer financially (n=224)
- Cannot afford the charge (n=100)
- The charge is unreasonable/too high (n=72)
- School attendance would suffer (n=64)
- Safety issues (n=42)
- Would have to change schools (n=50)
- Would affect ability to work (n=35)

8. IMPACT ON EDUCATION

- 8.1 A number of questions asked how the proposal would impact upon people by different types of education. The following section outlines the main themes that emerged in the analysis.

Post 16 Education

- 8.2 **Open responses (from question 17) were received from 388 individuals. The number of views expressed totalled 447.**

- 8.3 The main comments received for this question can be grouped into the following themes/issues;

- Would not go into 6th Form/discourage people from continuing their education (n=103)
- Families will suffer financially/an additional cost to parents (n=35)

“It could influence my child's decision to stay in education”

“May deter children from continuing in post 16 education or attending a facility that would not be their original choice.”

“Children will opt not to return to school as they can't afford it. Why should we have to have a postcode lottery for education.”

“You are penalising children who want to further their education. Age discrimination springs to mind. You need to encourage parents to encourage their children to stay in school not leave because they cannot afford the bus fare.”

Faith Education

- 8.4 **Open responses (from question 18) were received from 269 individuals. The number of views expressed totalled 356.**

- 8.5 The main comments received for this question can be grouped into the following themes/issues;

- The proposal is discriminatory against Faith Schools (n=83)

“You will be creating elite faith based schools. Parents who can afford the charge will pay the levy for the positive education given at the faith schools. The proposals are simply prejudicial.”

- Pupil/parent choice would be restricted (n=31)

"This is the school I have chosen, I should have the right to stay in my faith and not change school"

- Couldn't go to Faith school/would have to move from a faith school (n=30)

"Massive- faith school is not my nearest school but is my preference and both children have gone through primary church school. Not just picked comprehensive for choice but have made a full school commitment to a faith school. By charging I feel I am being forced to change school and not have my faith preference respected....."

"It would impact considerably, possibly meaning that my children will need to change schools!!!"

- Families will suffer financially/an additional cost to parents (n=19)

"Well from my point of view I'm being charged 10 pound a week because of my child's religion"

- 8.6 Some respondents did not support the majority of views that were received on the impact on Faith Schools.

"Faith schools are outside of the local authority remit and therefore should be responsible for their own transport"

"Too many children are using the schools not in their catchment area."

"Hard to know when people not attending closest school. If you choose a school further away should you accept the full cost of transport that this choice brings? Sometimes harsh decisions now will provide savings in 6years, but also set a precedent for future choice making."

"If families are willing to travel to a non-local school because it is "better" then they should contribute"

Welsh Education

- 8.7 **Open responses (from question 19) were received from 386 individuals. The number of views expressed totalled 305.**

- 8.8 The main comments received for this question can be grouped into the following themes/issues;

- Discrimination against Welsh schools, parents, pupils or the Welsh language itself (n=62)

"If this disadvantages or discriminates against those seeking a welsh education then as a welsh speaker myself I worry about the future of the language"

“I feel we would be discriminated against”

- Couldn't go to Welsh school/would have to move from a Welsh school (n=119).

“I wouldn't be able to send my child to welsh school”

“I may have to pull my children out of Welsh school bear in mind my eldest is 8 and this would have a huge effect on her”

English Education

8.9 Open responses (from question 20) were received from 175 individuals. The number of views expressed totalled 218.

8.10 The main comments received for this question can be grouped into the following themes/issues;

- Families will suffer financially/an additional cost to parents (n=33)
- Attainment would suffer (n=23)

“A discrimination against those who have chosen to learn through the medium of English”

9. PETITIONS & PRE-COMPLETED RESPONSES

Petitions

9.1 3 petitions were received against the proposal, as follows;

- Petition 1 (560 signatures)

Online petition -

'The council propose that from Sept 2016 we will have to pay a fee of £1.75 a day to transport our children to school, if you live in between 2 to 3 miles away. Please reconsider and allow our children to carry on travelling to school for free.'

- Petition 2 (376 signatures)

Completed by parents from Aberdare Town Church School, showing people are against the proposals to introduce fees for school transport,

'Petition regarding home to school transport changes – RCT Council has proposed to introduce a charge for those learners who benefit from the discretionary elements of home to school transport provision. This means primary school children living over 1.5 miles and comprehensive aged children living over 2 miles a discretionary payment of £1.75 per day per child will be charged. This petition is against these changes and requests RCT to re-consider the proposal, leaving the current service as it is and unchanged.'

- Petition 3 (544 signatures)

Home to school Transport –

Public Consultation on a Proposed New Policy, "Petition Against Charges On School Buses RCT".

Pre Completed Responses - Faith

9.2 The Council received a number of pre-completed responses letters in relation to the faith school concerns. The responses were identical in terms of their comments. The following were received;

- Pre-completed (a) Practicing Christians (n=327)
- Pre-completed (b) (SS Gabriel and Raphael RC Primary) (n=51)
- Pre-completed (c) (St Michael's RC Primary) (n=45)
- Pre-completed (d) (Parents of Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School pupils) (n=407)

- Pre-completed (e) (Teachers at Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School) (n=20)
- Pre-completed (f) (St John Baptist CIW High School) (n=223)
- Pre-completed (g) (Our Lady's RC Primary School) (n=7)
- Pre-completed (h) Faith Schools and post-16 education (n=59)
- Pre-completed (i) Faith St. Margaret's (n=7)

9.3 The main themes emerging from the pre-completed faith responses included;

- Cannot Afford charge
- Impact on working families
- The poorest would suffer the most
- All discretionary transport should be treated the same
- Would have to change schools
- Pupil/Parent Choice would be restricted
- The proposal is discriminatory against Faith schools
- The proposal discriminates on race grounds
- School attendance would suffer
- Would discourage people from continuing education
- Educational achievement would suffer

Pre Completed Responses - RhaG

- Pre-completed (L) Welsh medium education (n=12)

9.4 A number of standard responses were received with regard to concern about the impact of the proposal on the future of Welsh-medium education in Rhondda Cynon Taf. The main themes arising from this response included;

- Families will suffer financially/an additional cost to parents
- The proposal is discriminatory against Welsh schools/pupils/language
- Would have to move schools from a Welsh school
- Could affect long term viability of Welsh schools
- Pupil/parent choice would be restricted/stopped

Pre Completed Responses - General

- Pre-completed (j) Discretionary School Transport (n=6)

9.5 There was a response that voiced the concerns of the proposed changes in relation to discretionary school transport. The main themes arising from this response included;

- Cannot afford charge
- There should be no charge
- Impact on working families
- All discretionary transport should be treated the same
- Pupil/parent choice would be restricted
- School attendance would suffer
- Would discourage people from continuing education
- Educational achievement would suffer
- The proposal is discriminatory against Faith schools
- The proposal discriminates on race grounds

Pre Completed Responses - Specific

- Pre-completed (k) Pontypridd High (n=115)

9.6 The Council received a pre-completed response letter from Pontypridd High School about the impact that the proposal would have on pupils at the School. The main themes arising from this response included;

- Families will suffer financially/an additional cost to parents
- Impact on working families
- School attendance would suffer
- Would discourage people from continuing education
- Educational achievement would suffer
- There is a lack of alternative transport
- Safety issues
- Distance issues

10. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 10.1 A number of options were considered as part of review that put the proposal together, these were not the preferred options and the reasons were set out in the questionnaire. The following section outlines these alternative proposals and what respondents thought of each option.
- 10.2 The majority of respondents felt that Option A should have been the preferred option (65.6%).

OPTION A. Status Quo i.e. Retain the current level of provision – savings £nil.

Table 21: Preferred option – option A

Do you think this should have been the preferred option?	
Base	931
Yes	65.6%
No	17.6%
Don't know	16.8%

- 10.3 **Open responses (from question 21) were received from 240 individuals. The number of views expressed totalled 273.**
- 10.4 The main comments received for this question can be grouped into the following themes/issues;
- The Council should look elsewhere for cuts (n=76)
 - There should be no charge as school transport is a right and should be provided by the Local Authority (n=25)

“This is the fairest option of all and RCT should be forced to find alternative places of cuts.”

“I feel that this is very important - people in RCT need a choice about education and at the moment we all feel that we are being herded towards the new Aberdare Community School. This is not what everybody wants and I feel that the council are taking our choices away from us. There is a faith school and Welsh comprehensive school in this valley that are both very popular. There are other ways to save money other than targeting what I see to be a 'soft option'.”

- 10.5 The majority of respondents thought that Option B and C should not have been the preferred options (54.5%).

OPTION B. Provide primary school transport above statutory distance only (More than 2Miles) - savings £0.2m.

OPTION C. Provide secondary school and college transport above statutory distance only (More than 3 Miles) - savings £0.8m.

Table 22: Preferred option – option B/C

Do you think this should have been the preferred option?	
Base	881
Yes	18.5%
No	54.5%
Don't know	27.0%

- 10.6 However, there was more support for the alternative proposal B/C from Faith school respondents (27.6%), when compared to English (18.1%) and Welsh school respondents (15.7%).

Table 23: Preferred option – option B/C (English / Welsh / Faith)

Counts Analysis % Respondents	Total	OPTION B/C. Do you think this should have been the preferred option?		
		Yes	No	Don't know
Base	966	186 19.3%	525 54.3%	255 26.4%
English, Welsh, Faith				
English	354	64 18.1%	223 63.0%	67 18.9%
Welsh	395	62 15.7%	186 47.1%	147 37.2%
Faith	217	60 27.6%	116 53.5%	41 18.9%

- 10.7 **Open responses (from question 22) were received from 120 individuals. The number of views expressed totalled 135.**

- 10.8 Comments included;

“For option B as primary children are more vulnerable and need transport when their parents work and are unable to take them themselves. Secondary children are able to make their own arrangements with friends or use public buses.”

“I think that this was not proposed because the savings would not start for six years, not because it would remove provision.”

- 10.9 The majority of respondents did not agree that Option D to remove all pre-compulsory school age transport should have been a preferred option (64.3%).

OPTION D. Removal of all pre-compulsory school age transport – savings £nil

Table 24: Preferred option – option D

Do you think this should have been the preferred option?	
Base	886
Yes	8.7%
No	64.3%
Don't know	27.0%

- 10.10 **Open responses (from question 23) were received from 49 individuals. The number of views expressed totalled 53.**

- 10.11 Comments included;

“If school transport is removed this should be for all schools in all areas of RCT as well as specialist schooling”

“Every parent should pay for transport regardless of travel time or age in mainstream schools”

“Bus would still have to run so why should children pre compulsory school age not be able to travel?”

“Affects smallest amount of children.”

- 10.12 72.7% of respondents did not think Option E should have been the preferred option.

OPTION E. Removal of all post-16 transport - savings £0.8m.

Table 25: Preferred option – option E

Do you think this should have been the preferred option?	
Base	888
Yes	7.0%
No	72.7%
Don't know	20.3%

10.13 **Open responses (from question 24) were received from 84 individuals. The number of views expressed totalled 97.**

10.14 Comments included;

“If some of these children receive EMA, then they could pay out of that.”

“ONLY SUPPLY TRANSPORT TO NON SERVICE ROUTES.”

“I was brought up in a city. Post 16 travel was your own responsibility and created freedom and independence however more public transport was available. Understandably this option has to factor in the public transport routes available, and look at equity for all post 16.”

10.15 66% of respondents did not think Option F or G should have been the preferred options.

OPTION F. Removal of all transport to primary Voluntary Aided (Faith) schools (where not closest suitable school) - saving £0.4m.

OPTION G. Removal of all transport to secondary Voluntary Aided (Faith) schools (where not closest suitable school) - saving £0.7m.

Table 26: Preferred option – option F/G

Do you think this should have been the preferred option?	
Base	894
Yes	11.1%
No	66.0%
Don't know	22.9%

10.16 Unsurprisingly, the largest opposition for the alternative proposals F and G were from Faith school respondents (89.4% against), compared with Welsh (60.0%) and English school respondents (61.2%).

Table 27: Preferred option – option F/G (English / Welsh / Faith)

Counts Analysis % Respondents	Total	OPTION F/G. Do you think this should have been the preferred option?		
		Yes	No	Don't know
Base	975	94 9.6%	656 67.3%	225 23.1%
English, Welsh, Faith				
English	353	66 18.7%	216 61.2%	71 20.1%
Welsh	395	20 5.1%	237 60.0%	138 34.9%
Faith	227	8 3.5%	203 89.4%	16 7.0%

10.17 Open responses (from question 25) were received from 96 individuals. The number of views expressed totalled 106.

10.18 The main comments received for this question can be grouped into the following themes/issues;

- The proposal is discriminatory against Faith Schools (n=36)

“People who send their children to a faith school have thought long and hard before making this decision. To withdraw transport from faith schools only would be discrimination.”

10.19 69.8% of respondents did not think Option H or I should have been the preferred options.

OPTION H. Removal of all transport to primary Welsh schools (where not closest suitable school) -savings £0.8m.

OPTION I. Removal of all transport to secondary Welsh schools (where not closest suitable school) -savings £1.0m.

Table 28: Preferred option – option H/I

Do you think this should have been the preferred option?	
Base	881
Yes	12.0%
No	69.8%
Don't know	18.2%

10.20 Unsurprisingly, there was a very low level of support for the alternative proposal H from Welsh school respondents (4.7%), when compared with Faith (10.6%) and particularly English school respondents (19.1%).

Table 29: Preferred option – option H/I (English / Welsh / Faith)

Counts Analysis % Respondents	Total	OPTION H/I. Do you think this should have been the preferred option?		
		Yes	No	Don't know
Base	964	108 11.2%	683 70.9%	173 17.9%
English, Welsh, Faith				
English	345	66 19.1%	207 60.0%	72 20.9%
Welsh	401	19 4.7%	301 75.1%	81 20.2%
Faith	218	23 10.6%	175 80.3%	20 9.2%

10.21 **Open responses (from question 26) were received from 102 individuals. The number of views expressed totalled 114.**

10.22 Comments included;

“Again similar to my previous comment relating to faith schools. I am English and chose to send my children to Welsh education, and with that choice I support whatever I can whether financial or time.”

“I feel that extra benefits for welsh medium schools do not make financial sense, as there is still little demand for this language post-education within RCT and South Wales”

10.23 76.4% of respondents did not think Option J should have been the preferred option.

OPTION J. Removal of all discretionary provision - savings £4.2m.

Table 30: Preferred option – option J

Do you think this should have been the preferred option?	
Base	873
Yes	4.8%
No	76.4%
Don't know	18.8%

10.24 Open responses (from question 27) were received from 57 individuals. The number of views expressed totalled 64.

10.25 Comments included;

“Again it’s hard to know. We are likely to fall into the discretionary provision. Would parents make alternative arrangements themselves- car share for example? Children could access public transport where available and learn valuable skills. Sometimes it’s not about looking at the negatives that this proposal would bring, but the also the positives. RCT council has always been very protective and looked after its own, something rarely seen in a city.”

“I believe that this option is just cutting off your nose to spite your face. Of course the option should be kept.”

10.26 74.2% of respondents did not think Option K should have been the preferred option.

OPTION K. Removal of all discretionary provision except to Welsh schools - savings £2.6m.

Table 31: Preferred option – option K

Do you think this should have been the preferred option?	
Base	879
Yes	9.0%
No	74.2%
Don’t know	16.8%

10.27 Open responses (from question 28) were received from 93 individuals. The number of views expressed totalled 103.

10.28 Comments included;

“Don’t discriminate against English medium students. The Official languages of Wales are English and Welsh.”

“Total discrimination why are welsh children better than English”

“Where is the question that’s states removal of all discretionary provision except to English medium schools? Yet again deliberate discrimination to non welsh speaking children who already have less money per head for education.

11. PROTECTED CHARACTERISTICS

- 11.1 Under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duties, the Council has a legal duty to look at how its decisions impact on people because they may have particular characteristics. Respondents were asked to state how the proposal would impact them specifically because of these characteristics.
- 11.2 The table below shows the number of respondents who reported that the proposal would affect them specifically based on a number of protected characteristics. 210 respondents reported that the proposal would affect them based on their religion or belief and 192 respondents reported that the proposal would affect them based on the language they prefer to communicate in.

Table 32: Protected characteristics by respondents / respondents' children attending / going to attend English, Welsh and Faith schools

Counts Respondents	
	Base
	498
Please tell us if you think these proposals will affect you specifically because of any of the following:	
You are male / female	66
Your age	153
Your ethnicity	27
You are disabled	51
Your Sexuality	11
Your Religion or Belief	210
Your Gender Identity	15
You are single / married / cohabiting / in a civil partnership / divorced	75
You are pregnant	14
The language you prefer to communicate in	192

11.3 Open responses (from question 30) were received from 183 individuals. The number of views expressed totalled 240.

The main comments received for this question can be grouped into the following themes/issues;

- The proposal is discriminatory against Faith Schools (n=63)
- The proposal is discriminatory against Welsh Schools (n=17)
- Pupil/parent choice would be restricted (n=15)
- Families will suffer financially (n=15)

11.4 The majority of comments related to the perception that the proposal was discriminatory against Faith Schools, parents, children and/or religion as a whole. Comments for Q30 included;

Faith Discrimination

“This charge is intended for faith schools, it is religious discrimination.”

“Accessing a faith school will be adversely affected - children will have further to travel creating an access barrier to them remaining within a faith school.”

“It will affect our religious faith as my children are attending a faith school and its forcing issues of moving schools to the community school where there will be far too many children. Also I made a choice to send my 3 children there and in all I will be paying 6 years worth of money”

“I am a parent of a pupil in faith school and the proposals negatively impact my children's attendance and future attendance at faith school.”

The proposals are unjust and directly discriminatory because of my and my family's faith.”

Welsh Discrimination

“I am a single middle aged disabled welsh speaking mother however my daughters future is what is going to be affected, I have put her through the welsh as I can help her with her school work and welsh is important to me, It would be shocking to think that nothing can be done to support welsh speaking children.”

“My husband is a Welsh speaker and I am learning thus we made the decision to send our children to a Welsh school. We feel we are being discriminated against because of this.”

“This is a basic right to attend a Welsh language under the UN Rights of a child to learn and exist in their heritage and ethnicity”

“Additional charges will force me to consider whether I can afford to send my child to Welsh medium education - this is discrimination”

Single Parents

“Single Mothers will be the worst affected”

“As a single working parent receiving no benefits it would have massive financial implication also as a christian I feel my children will be discriminated as I want them to attend a faith school and not my local primary”

“I am a single parent who goes out work so my children do not qualify for free school meals finding that extra £70 a month will put pressure on me financially for the next few years.”

“I am a single parent who works full time to provide the best for my child and do not wish to be penalised financially for a service that should be provided at no cost.”

“I'm a single mother of 2 kids, 1 in catholic secondary school 1 has autism and is in a special unit and needs a taxi to get there. I work part time and because I get working tax credits am not entitled to free school meals so wouldn't get the free transport either. Just how long after this comes in would it get decided that I'll have to start paying for my sons taxi to school as well. How am I supposed to afford this on top of everything else they need?”

Age

“Discriminating post-16 is based on age and discriminating due to medium of school would be against language rights.”

“Age - post 16 being targeted Language - post 16 discretionary financial element”

Disability

“We care for a disabled young adult who wants to attend college but who is unable to use public transport”

“My wife is disabled and struggles to leave the house, so driving to school is hard.”

“It won't be worth me going to work as I will have extra costs to provide transport for my children to go to school, so my job is at risk. I have a disability so it will not be easy for me to support my children with their journey to school. If my job is at risk then we will have less income. I have chosen to send my children to a Welsh school but suddenly I am being penalised for this.”

“My son is disabled and the lea decided his school not me”

Mental Health

“Partner has mental health issues and the stress of having to find extra money will only add to the problem”

12. SCHOOL COUNCILS

Methodology

- 12.1 Three different consultation documents (including 'easy to read' information) on the proposals were produced for School Councils:

Secondary Schools (inc Welsh Schools)
Faith Primary Schools
Primary Schools (inc Welsh Schools)

- 12.2 A pilot exercise was carried out at Y Pant School, where a Participation and Involvement Officer went in to meet with the young people to test the usability of the easy read versions. A focus group formed the layout for the consultation, which allowed for the young people to speak freely.
- 12.3 The schools were contacted about the consultation and the documents were emailed to the relevant schools where the School Council Leader / Staff member were asked to distribute amongst School Councils.
- 12.4 The School Councils were asked to discuss the proposals at their meetings and fill out the feedback forms (as a collective approach as piloted previously). They were then asked to email or post back the forms to the Consultation Team before the deadline date.
- 12.5 Where required, the Participation and Involvement Officer went into schools that were affected by the proposals and held a discussion, with every one having the chance to speak and voice their opinions, as often as they wished, whilst the officer documented their responses.
- 12.6 School Council feedback forms were received from the following Primary and Secondary schools:

School Councils			
Secondary Schools	8	Primary Schools	8
Tonyrefail Comprehensive School	Non-users	Penrhiwceiber Primary	Non-users
Y Pant Secondary School	User	Our Lady's	User
Mountain Ash Comprehensive School	User	Hafod Primary	Non-users
Treorchy Comprehensive School	User	Porth Junior School	Non-users
Ysgol Gyfun	User	Oaklands Primary School	Non-

Rhydywaun			users
St John's School	User	Perthcelyn Community Primary	Non-users
Y G Llanhari	User	SS Gabriel & Raphael	User
Aberdare Community School	User	Aberdare Town CIW Primary	User
Users	10	Non-users	6

12.7 The questions the pupils were asked to discuss were:

1). After reading this booklet, do you understand how buses to school will change?

2). What do you think about these changes?

3). Would you like to say anything else?

12.8 Based on the responses received, the comments were put into categories, similar to the ones used in the main consultation documents and material received.

12.9 All school Council's responding said that they understood the proposals and the cuts the Council has to look at making. The main comments received for these questions (as a whole) can be grouped into the following themes/issues;

Category / description	Total codes used
We understand the proposals and the cuts the Council has to look at making	18
Price should be cheaper / too expensive (especially with more than one child) / a lot to pay / unaffordable for struggling families	17
Impact upon ethnic minority backgrounds - discrimination	8
Will have a detrimental effect on attendance	6
Impact on Faith pupils	6
Shouldn't have to pay if you aren't going to use it all the time (illness / divorced parents / after school clubs / exams etc)	5
Unhappy about the proposals	5
Payment should be termly	4
Unfair if you live just outside of the distance required / distance issues	4
Unfair to treat schools differently	4

Other ideas and comments included:

Q2). What do you think about these changes?

Welsh medium schools:

12.10 The main issue for young people currently in Welsh Medium schools, is the effect upon choice and whether parents who will now have to pay, will choose to send young people to an English speaking school instead. They were concerned that attending a Welsh Medium school will become 'elitist' and only those who can pay can attend.

- *"Is this against the Welsh Language Act? Also, it doesn't give us the equal chance to access education through the language of choice"*
- *"Welsh Medium Education will become elitist if one had to pay to access school"*

Faith and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

12.11 Article 12: *'You have the right to say what you think should happen when adults are making decisions that affect you, and to have your opinions taken into account'*

12.12 The comments made by the young people reflect their involvement at the later stage. They would have preferred to be involved in the process from the beginning when the initial discussions around HTS transport arrangements were being made. This could be a recommendation for any future decisions which impact directly upon young people.

12.13 Article 14: *'You have the right to think and believe what you want and to practice your religion, as long as you are not stopping other people from enjoying their rights. Parents should guide children on these matters'*

12.14 The young people demonstrate strongly how they feel the changes will prevent some young people from being able to practise their religion and learn in an environment which is Value based.

12.15 There are other Articles the young people commented on in relation to HTS transport and the UNCRC, but fundamentally they object to being treated differently from a Welsh medium school and feel that their rights to equality are being ignored.

- *Church schools are some of the highest performing in the local authority. Is it right to limit access to just those who have the ability to pay?"*
- *Section 9 of the Education Act 2010 places a general duty on local authorities to have regard to the general principles of parental choice. The proposals will remove choice for many hard working families."*

- *“My brother went to St John’s, but I may have to go to the super school and I don’t want to, I want to go to the same school as my brother”*

Other

- *“I have built up my friends in this school and if I have to go somewhere else I would be worried....”*
- *“The Council could lose money because people can’t afford to pay bus fares, so they will have less people on their buses”*
- *“I might have to give up some stuff I do outside of school to pay for my bus fare”*
- *“Possible lack of pupils, which will impact on the drivers jobs”*
- *“the changes can affect the choice of sixth formers whether to stay or not...this will impact the long term income of the school”*

3). Would you like to say anything else?

- *“Could have card punch or a magnetic strip and buy journeys in batches of 100 for example”*
- *“Tell the drivers not to be too picky if the bus pass is slightly damaged”*
- *“when the parents get work they should inform the Council and pay or get fined”*
- *“Council are making too many cuts which affect the wellbeing of children”*
- *“the 2 and 3 mile rule is ridiculous – who would qualify for free transport”*
- *“We have been lucky to have free school transport for children who live 1.5 miles away, but the Council needs to save money to spend on other places in our community, e.g. helping people who come into the country and care for the elderly”*
- *“We are concerned over the potential overcrowding on the trains as a result of the charge. Also, this may lead to more cars being used and in that causing more traffic issues within the town and roads leading to the school.”*
- *“Will there be the availability for ‘late’ buses for those involved in after school clubs?”*
- *“How will the money be charged? Daily, weekly. Monthly etc? what happened if you are unwell for a week/month, can you claim money back?”*

N.B St. John Baptist CIW High School responded to the consultation via a letter from the School Council as a collective. This letter was also sent in by all individual members of the School Council.

Appendix 1 and 2 – Consultation Materials

(see separate attachment)

Appendix 3 & 4

(see below)

APPENDIX 4 (1)



HAVE
YOUR DWEUD
SAY EICH
DWEUD

Home to School Transport - Public Consultation on a Proposed New Policy

The Council is thinking about changing the way it provides Home to School Transport (HTS) for children and young people (learners) in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

The consultation starts on 2nd June and will close at 5pm on the 28th July 2015.

The Council operates a very generous Home to School Transport policy which means it is the largest operation of its kind in Wales. The Council currently provides Home to School Transport for approximately 11,690 mainstream pupils each day through the provision of more than 230 routes and the issue of public transport season tickets. Approximately 7,000 learners are transported on a discretionary basis (where the Council does not have to provide free transport).

The proposal is to introduce a charge towards the discretionary elements of Home to School Transport provision.

Rhondda Valleys and Tonyrefail school reorganisation proposals

Please have regard to the proposals to reorganise Primary Schools, Secondary Schools and Sixth Form provision in the Rhondda Valleys and Tonyrefail areas which have been agreed to progress to the next stage of the review process by issuing appropriate statutory notices. Further information in respect of these changes can be found at:

www.rctcbc.gov.uk/schoolconsultation (please copy and paste links into a separate browser to view)

The period for objecting to the above proposals to reorganise Primary Schools, Secondary Schools and Sixth Form provision in the Rhondda Valleys and Tonyrefail areas closes on 2nd July 2015, i.e. earlier than this consultation on a proposed new Home to School Transport Policy which closes on 28th July 2015. Objections to the school reorganisation proposals should be sent to the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning, School Planning Section, Ty Trevithick, Abercynon, Mountain Ash CF45 4UQ, e-mail schoolplanning@rctednet.net

If you consider that these proposals, should they be implemented, would alter or affect your response in relation to this consultation on a proposed new Home to School Transport policy we would like to hear how and why as part of any response you may submit to the questions contained in this questionnaire.

The Council would like your views, please answer the questions and send them back (submit if completing online) to us by 5pm on the 28th July, 2015.

Q1 Are you...?

- A parent/carer of a young person/learner who uses/will use Home to School Transport?
- A young person/learner who uses/will use Home to School Transport?
- None of the above? (please go to Q3)

Q2 Is your child(ren) or are you:

	English	Welsh	Faith
At a School Nursery Setting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
At Primary School	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
At Secondary School (Yr 7 - 11)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
At Secondary School/college (Yr 12 - 13, post 16)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

THE PROPOSAL

Q3 Do you agree that changes should be made to the Council’s current Home to School Transport policy given the extent of the current level of provision?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Comments

Q4 If changes have to be made, do you agree that introducing a charge towards the discretionary elements of provision is preferable to completely stopping providing transport?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Comments

Q5 Do you agree that introducing a charge towards all the discretionary elements of Home to School Transport is fair?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Comments

Q6 The proposal includes a means test of the ability to pay, based on you/your child(ren) being in receipt of Free School Meals and where this is the case there would be a reduced level of charge.

Do you think this is fair?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Comments

Q7 The proposal also includes a cap (maximum) on the number of children for which a charge would be made. The proposed cap (maximum) is 2 children. (This means there would be no charge for a third, fourth or more child).

Do you think this is fair?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Comments

Q8 The proposed standard charge is £1.75 per day per pupil.

Do you think this is fair?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Comments

Q9 The proposed "means tested" reduced level of charge where you/your child(ren) are in receipt of Free School Meals is £1.00 per day per pupil.

Do you think this is fair?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Comments

Q10 If you/your child(ren) use Home to School Transport, would you/your child(ren) be more likely to pay the charge or stop using the service?

- Pay the charge
- Stop using the service
- Don't know
- N/A

Comments

Q11 If you/your child(ren) would be more likely to stop using the service, how would you / your child(ren) travel to school in the future (please tick more than one box if relevant)?

- Walk
- Cycle
- Private Taxi
- Public bus
- Car
- N/A
- Other

Please specify 'Other'

Q12 If you disagree with the proposed level of charge or would stop using the service, what level of charge do you think would be fair?

Agree with proposed level of charge

	No Charge	£0.00 - £0.50	£0.51 - £1.00	£1.01 - £1.50	£1.51 - £2.00	£2.01 plus	Full cost recovery	Agree with proposed level of charge
Standard Charge	<input type="radio"/>							
Reduced (Free School Meals) Charge	<input type="radio"/>							

Q13 The proposal would require you/your child(ren) to decide annually before the start of the school year whether Home to School Transport is required for the full school year ahead.

Do you think this is fair?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

If no, please state why

Q14 If the proposed charge was introduced, how often would you want to make the payment (note there would be no ability to pay on the day / on the bus / at the school)?

- Monthly
- Every Term
- Annually
- Other

Please specify 'Other'

Q15 How would the introduction of a charge impact upon you or your child(ren)?

Q16 If the proposal is implemented, then the new arrangements would be in place from the school year beginning September 2016.

Is this fair?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Comments

POST 16 EDUCATION

Q17 How would the proposal if implemented impact upon you/your child(ren) in post 16 education?

Q18 How would the proposal if implemented impact upon you/your child(ren) in Faith education?

WELSH EDUCATION

Q19 How would the proposal if implemented impact upon you/your child(ren) in Welsh education?

ENGLISH EDUCATION

Q20 How would the proposal if implemented impact upon you/your child(ren) in English education?

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

A number of options were considered as part of this review, these were not the preferred options, for the reasons set out in the following questions.

Q21 OPTION A. Status Quo i.e. Retain the current level of provision - savings £nil.

Not proposed because the costs of providing discretionary provision as currently provided are considered to be unaffordable.

Do you think this should have been the preferred option?

- Yes
 No
 Don't know

Comments

Q22 OPTION B. Provide primary school transport above statutory distance only (More than 2 Miles) - savings £0.2m.

OPTION C. Provide secondary school and college transport above statutory distance only (More than 3 Miles) - savings £0.8m.

Not proposed as these options would result in the complete removal of transport provision for 2,975 pupils. This could have a negative impact on school attendance. If these options were introduced it is likely pupils who already have a transport entitlement would continue to receive it until they complete the phase of education they are in. Therefore full savings would not be achievable for at least six years.

Do you think this should have been the preferred option?

- Yes
 No
 Don't know

Comments

Q23 OPTION D. Removal of all pre-compulsory school age transport - savings £nil.

Not proposed as this option would not result in any savings due to the small number of pupils travelling (560 pupils on 66 individual routes) and the current capacity available on buses running at the start and end of the school day.

Do you think this should have been the preferred option?

- Yes
 No
 Don't know

Comments**Q24 OPTION E. Removal of all post-16 transport - savings £0.8m.**

Not proposed as this option would result in the complete removal of transport provision for 3,089 pupils. Some journeys will not be on direct public transport routes, reducing the number of alternative travel options for pupils. This could discourage pupils from continuing education in sixth-forms or colleges.

Do you think this should have been the preferred option?

- Yes
 No
 Don't know

Comments

OPTION F. Removal of all transport to primary Voluntary Aided (Faith) schools (where not closest suitable school) - saving £0.4m.

OPTION G. Removal of all transport to secondary Voluntary Aided (Faith) schools (where not closest suitable school) - saving £0.7m.

Not proposed as these options would result in the complete removal of transport provision for 1,635 pupils. Some journeys will not be on direct public transport routes, reducing the number of alternative travel options for pupils. This could have a negative impact on school attendance. If these options were introduced it is likely pupils who already have a transport entitlement would continue to receive it until they complete the phase of education they are in. Therefore full savings would not be achievable for at least six years.

Do you think this should have been the preferred option?

- Yes
 No
 Don't know

Comments

OPTION H. Removal of all transport to primary Welsh schools (where not closest suitable school) -savings £0.8m.

OPTION I. Removal of all transport to secondary Welsh schools (where not closest suitable school) -savings £1.0m.

Not proposed as these options would result in the complete removal of transport provision for 3,614 pupils. Some journeys would not be on direct public transport routes, reducing the number of alternative travel options for pupils. This could have a negative impact on school attendance. There is a risk of not meeting the requirements of the Learner Travel (Wales) measure 2008 in relation to promotion of access to Welsh medium education.

If these options were introduced it is likely pupils who already have a transport entitlement would continue to receive it until they complete the phase of education they are in. Therefore full savings would not be achievable for at least six years.

Do you think this should have been the preferred option?

- Yes
 No
 Don't know

Comments

OPTION J. Removal of all discretionary provision - savings £4.2m.

Not proposed as this option would result in the complete removal of transport provision for 9,604 pupils. Some journeys will not be on direct commercial routes, reducing the number of alternative travel options for pupils. This could have a negative impact on school attendance.

There is a risk of not meeting the requirements of the Learner Travel (Wales) measure 2008 in relation to promotion of access to Welsh medium education.

If these options were introduced it is likely pupils who already have a transport entitlement would continue to receive it until they complete the phase of education they are in. Therefore full savings would not be achievable for at least six years.

Do you think this should have been the preferred option?

- Yes
 No
 Don't know

Comments**OPTION K. Removal of all discretionary provision except to Welsh schools - savings £2.6m.**

Not proposed as this option would result in the complete removal of transport provision for 7,141 pupils. Some journeys will not be on direct commercial routes, reducing the number of alternative travel options for pupils. This could have a negative impact on school attendance.

If this option was introduced it is likely pupils who already have a transport entitlement would continue to receive it until they complete the phase of education they are in. Therefore full savings would not be achievable for at least six years.

Do you think this should have been the preferred option?

- Yes
 No
 Don't know

Comments

Q29 Do you have any other comments that you would like us to consider?

Q30 About you

Under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duties, the Council has a legal duty to look at how its decisions impact on people because they may have particular characteristics.

Please tell us if you think these proposals will affect you specifically because of any of the following:

- You are male / female
- Your age
- Your ethnicity
- You are disabled
- Your Sexuality
- Your Religion or Belief
- Your Gender Identity
- You are single / married / cohabiting / in a civil partnership / divorced
- You are pregnant
- The language you prefer to communicate in

Please provide your reason/s:

Q31 **If you are happy to be contacted further to discuss your response, please tick the box:**

- I am happy to be contacted
- I am not happy to be contacted

Q32 **Name:**

Q33 **Email / Telephone number:**

Q34 **Postcode:**

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Thank you for taking part in this consultation.

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council will process the information you have provided in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. The information may be used for statistical purposes but all personal details will be anonymous.

Please click on 'Submit' to complete the questionnaire online or if you are filling out a paper copy, please post it to:

Freepost RSBU-HJUK-LSSS
 Research & Consultation
 Public Relations & Strategy
 The Pavilions
 Cambrian Industrial Park
 Clydach Vale
 Tonypany
 CF40 2XX

Alternatively, please give us your general views via: [**HTSconsultation@rctcbc.gov.uk**](mailto:HTSconsultation@rctcbc.gov.uk)
 Or write to us with your views (to the freepost address above).

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APPENDIX 4 (2)



APPENDIX 2

HAVE
YOUR DWEUD
SAY EICH
DWEUD

Service Change Consultation **HAVE YOUR SAY!**

HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT

PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON A PROPOSED NEW POLICY

The **Consultation starts** on: **2 JUNE 2015**
and will **close at 5pm** on: **28 JULY 2015**

Local Engagement Events will be held in the community.
Details will be placed on the website when confirmed.

For further information please visit:
www.rctcbc.gov.uk/budgetchallenge
where you can find out the detail of the proposals and fill in a survey.

If you require a hard copy of the questionnaire please get in touch via:

☎ 01443 425014

✉ HTSconsultation@rctcbc.gov.uk

✉ FREEPOST RSBU-HJUK-LSSS,
Research & Consultation, The Pavilions,
Clydach Vale, CF40 2XX

2015

Available in alternative languages or formats on request.
Corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay.

All councils in Wales continue to be affected by significant reductions to their funding as a result of the austerity measures put in place by the UK Government.

Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC is facing an estimated shortfall in resources (budget gap) of £42.3M up to 2017/18, with a gap of £23.7M for 2016/17.

To deal with this budget gap the Council is reviewing all services and considering options to reduce expenditure and / or increase income by reconfiguring, cutting or reducing the services we provide.

An important part of the process is to gauge the views of our residents, staff and key stakeholders on our proposals.

Please take this opportunity to have your say.

Home to School Transport

Background

The Council currently provides Home to School Transport for approximately 11,690 mainstream pupils each day through the provision of more than 230 routes and the issuing of public transport season tickets. Approximately 7,000 learners are transported on a discretionary basis i.e. the Council is not legally required to provide transport for these learners but under its current policy it has chosen to do so. In addition the service provides transport for approximately 1,000 Special Educational Need ('SEN') pupils daily.

The Home to School Transport budget for 2015/16 is £11.4M.

The Council must provide free Home to School Transport for all statutory school age learners who live more than 2 miles from their nearest suitable primary school. We currently provide transport if you live more than 1.5 miles away. Therefore what we provide between 1.5 and 2 miles is discretionary.

For secondary school learners (up to the age of 16 – end of year 11) we must provide free transport if you live more than 3 miles from your nearest suitable secondary school. We currently provide transport to learners who live more than 2 miles away. Therefore what we provide between 2 and 3 miles is discretionary.

The Council must promote access to Welsh Medium Education and in doing so, it allows learners to select their nearest suitable school, in accordance with their choice of English or Welsh Medium Language.

For pupils attending Faith Schools we do not have to provide transport at all (unless it is your nearest suitable school and you live more than 2 miles (primary) or 3 miles (secondary) away). We currently provide free transport to all learners who live more than 1.5 miles away (primary) or 2 miles away (secondary). Therefore if the school is not the nearest suitable school, transport to Faith Schools is discretionary.

For pre-compulsory school age children we do not have to provide transport at all. We currently provide free transport for full-time pupils if you live more than 1.5 miles away from your school. Therefore all transport is discretionary.

For post 16 learners (6th form or college) we do not have to provide transport at all. We currently provide free transport if you live more than 2 miles away from your school / college. Therefore all transport is discretionary.

Proposal

It is proposed to maintain the current level of transport but to introduce a charge for those learners who benefit from the discretionary elements of the provision, as set out above.

It is proposed that the charge would be £1.75 per day, which has been determined by taking into account :-

- The cost of the alternative, available, public transport service.
- The cost of transporting pupils by car.
- The ongoing provision of a subsidy to provide the service.

It is proposed that for those pupils in receipt of Free School Meals, the level of the charge would be reduced to £1.00 per day.

It is also proposed that for families with more than 2 children who would be subject to paying the proposed charge, then they would pay for a maximum of 2 children only.

The proposed new policy would be implemented from the start of the 2016/17 academic year (that is, from September 2016).

The proposed preferred option would deliver full year savings (generate income) to the Council of £2.048M (£1.280M part-year effect in 2016/17).

What does this mean for me?

Your School	Where you live	What it means for you
English or Welsh Primary School (including Nursery)	Living more than 2 miles away	Continue to receive free transport
	Living between 1.5 miles and 2 miles away	Continue to receive subsidised transport but at a charge of £1.75 per day
English or Welsh Secondary School	Living more than 3 miles away	Continue to receive free transport
	Living between 2 miles and 3 miles away	Continue to receive subsidised transport but at a charge of £1.75 per day
Faith School – Primary (including Nursery)	Living more than 1.5 miles away and where there is an alternative school nearer	Continue to receive subsidised transport but at a charge of £1.75 per day
	Living more than 2 miles away where the faith school is your nearest suitable school	Continue to receive free transport
	Living between 1.5 miles and 2 miles away where the faith school is your nearest suitable school	Continue to receive subsidised transport but at a charge of £1.75 per day
Faith School - Secondary	Living more than 2 miles away and where there is an alternative school nearer	Continue to receive subsidised transport but at a charge of £1.75 per day
	Living more than 3 miles away where the faith school is your nearest suitable school	Continue to receive free transport
	Living between 2 miles and 3 miles away where the faith school is your nearest suitable school	Continue to receive subsidised transport but at a charge of £1.75 per day
Post 16 Learners	Living more than 2 miles away	Continue to receive subsidised transport but at a charge of £1.75 per day

Note:

Transport entitlement for pupils attending Middle Schools, (schools with pupils of both Primary and Secondary age), will be in accordance with their primary/secondary school age as detailed in the table above.

The Council considers the term 'suitable school' applies to the catchment area for English, Welsh or dual language mainstream school or special school/class as appropriate.

If you attend on a part time basis then transport would only be provided at the start and end of the normal school day and not at lunchtimes.

Whilst pupils with statements of SEN are assessed by distance criteria, in practice SEN pupils would not be affected by this proposed policy change as their transport is based upon their individual need. The discretionary elements of SEN transport (pre school, post 16, etc.) would continue as an entirely subsidised, non-charged service.

Rhondda Valleys and Tonyrefail school reorganisation proposals

On the 19th May 2015 the Council's Cabinet agreed to progress the proposals to reorganise Primary Schools, Secondary Schools and Sixth Form provision in the Rhondda Valleys and Tonyrefail areas to the next stage of the review process by issuing appropriate statutory notices. The proposals are to:

- Close the sixth forms of Ferndale Community School, Porth County Community School and Tonypandy Community College and transfer the sixth form provision to Treorchy Comprehensive School and a new 3-19 school in Tonyrefail;
- Close Porth County Community School, Llwynceilyn Infants' School, Porth Infants' School, and Porth Junior School and create a new 3-16 middle school on the site of the current Porth County Community School;
- Increase the capacity of Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Llwynceilyn by approximately 100 places, utilising the site of the existing Llwynceilyn Infants' School;
- Close Tonypandy Community College, Penygraig Infants' School, Penygraig Junior School, Tonypandy Primary School and Ysgol Yr Eos Primary School and create a new 3-16 middle school on the site of the current Tonypandy Community College. Relocate the specialist primary pupil referral provision at the Tai Centre, Penygraig to the site of the existing Ysgol Yr Eos Primary School;
- Close Tonyrefail Comprehensive School and Tonyrefail Primary School and create a new 3-19 middle school on the site of the existing Tonyrefail Comprehensive School. Relocate Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Tonyrefail to the current Tonyrefail Primary School;
- Change the catchment area of Treorchy Comprehensive School, Ferndale Community School, and set new catchment areas for the new middle schools for Porth, Tonypandy and Tonyrefail;

- Transfer the Learning Support Class at Ysgol Yr Eos, and the three Learning Support Classes at Porth County Community School to the new 3-16 school at Porth, to create specialist provision for the four key stages;
- Transfer the Learning Support Class at Tonyrefail Comprehensive School to the new 3-19 school for Tonyrefail.

The period for objecting to the above proposals to reorganise Primary Schools, Secondary Schools and Sixth Form provision in the Rhondda Valleys and Tonyrefail areas, closes on 2nd July 2015, i.e. earlier than this consultation on a proposed new Home to School Transport Policy which closes on 28th July 2015. Objections to the school reorganisation proposals should be sent to the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning, School Planning Section, Ty Trevithick, Abercynon, Mountain Ash CF45 4UQ, e-mail: schoolplanning@rctednet.net

Further information in respect of these changes can be found at:
www.rctcbc.gov.uk/schoolconsultation

If you consider that these proposals, should they be implemented, would alter or affect your response in relation to this consultation on a proposed new Home to School Transport policy we would like to hear how and why as part of any response you may submit.

Home to School Transport Policy - Alternative Options

As part of developing a preferred option for consultation, a number of alternative options have been considered and commentary on these alternatives is provided below. The Council invites you to submit your views on these alternative options in addition to any comments you may have on the preferred option above.

Option A - Status Quo i.e. Retain the current level of provision – savings £nil.
Not proposed because the costs of the current discretionary provision are considered to be unaffordable.

Option B - Provide primary school transport above statutory distance only (more than 2 miles) – savings £0.2m.

Option C - Provide secondary school and college transport above statutory distance only (more than 3 miles) – savings £0.8m.

Options B & C are not proposed as they would result in the complete removal of

transport provision for 2,975 pupils. This could have a negative impact on school attendance.

If these options were introduced it is likely pupils who already have a discretionary transport entitlement would continue to receive it until they complete the phase of education they are in. Therefore full savings would not be achievable for at least six years.

Option D - Removal of all pre-compulsory school age transport – savings £nil.

This option is not proposed as it would not result in any savings due to the small number of pupils travelling (560 pupils on 66 individual routes) and the current capacity available on school transport running at the start and end of the school day.

Option E - Removal of all post-16 transport – savings £0.8m.

This option is not proposed as it would result in the complete removal of transport provision for 3,089 pupils. Some journeys will not be on direct public transport routes, reducing the number of alternative travel options for pupils. This could discourage pupils from continuing education in sixth-forms or colleges.

Option F - Removal of all transport to primary Voluntary Aided (Faith) schools (where not closest suitable school) – savings £0.4m.

Option G - Removal of all transport to secondary Voluntary Aided (Faith) schools (where not closest suitable school) – savings £0.7m.

Options F & G are not proposed as they would result in the complete removal of transport provision for 1,635 pupils. Some journeys will not be on direct public transport routes, reducing the number of alternative travel options for pupils. This could have a negative impact on school attendance. If these options were introduced it is likely pupils who already have a transport entitlement would continue to receive it until they complete the phase of education they are in. Therefore full savings would not be achievable for at least six years.

Option H - Removal of all transport to primary Welsh schools (where not closest suitable school) – savings £0.8m.

Option I - Removal of all transport to secondary Welsh schools (where not closest suitable school) – savings £1.0m.

Options H & I are not proposed as they would result in the complete removal of transport provision for 3,614 pupils. Some journeys will not be on direct public transport routes, reducing the number of alternative travel options for pupils. This could have a negative impact on school attendance.

There is a risk of not meeting the requirements of the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 in relation to promotion of access to Welsh medium education.

If these options were introduced it is likely pupils who already have a discretionary transport entitlement would continue to receive it until they complete the phase of education they are in. Therefore full savings would not be achievable for at least six years.

Option J - Removal of all discretionary provision – savings £4.2m.

This option is not proposed as it would result in the complete removal of transport provision for 9,604 pupils. Some journeys will not be on direct public transport routes, reducing the number of alternative travel options for pupils. This could have a negative impact on school attendance.

There is a risk of not meeting the requirements of the Learner Travel (Wales) measure 2008 in relation to promotion of access to Welsh medium education.

If these options were introduced it is likely pupils who already have a discretionary transport entitlement would continue to receive it until they complete the phase of education they are in. Therefore full savings would not be achievable for at least six years.

Option K - Removal of all discretionary provision except to Welsh schools – savings £2.6m.

This option is not proposed as it would result in the complete removal of transport provision for 7,141 pupils. Some journeys will not be on direct public transport routes, reducing the number of alternative travel options for pupils. This could have a negative impact on school attendance.

If this option was introduced it is likely pupils who already have a transport entitlement would continue to receive it until they complete the phase of education they are in. Therefore full savings would not be achievable for at least six years.

Home to School Transport - What you need to know

What do you mean by nearest suitable school?

As defined by the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008, the nearest “suitable school” is the school where the education or training provided is suitable having regard for the age, ability and aptitudes of the learner and any learning difficulties he or she may have.

How much will the charge be for discretionary transport?

The proposed charge is £1.75 a day with the Council covering the remaining subsidy, (or £1 a day for pupils in receipt of free school meals).

Do I have to pay if I/my child receive(s) discretionary transport?

If you/your child would like to continue to access Home to School Transport then, yes you would have to contribute towards the cost of this journey. Otherwise you would have to make alternative arrangements to transport yourself/your child to and from school.

Would I/my child have to pay each day?

The proposal suggests payment would be made monthly, termly or annually but would not be paid on the day on the bus or through the school.

How can I check whether I/my child will be directly affected by the introduction of a charge?

It may be the case that in accordance with existing policy a child is currently (or due to be) entitled to free Home to School Transport but parents/carers/pupils are not aware if that is as a consequence of living in the discretionary distance area which the Council currently provides free provision for (i.e. between 1.5 and 2 miles from a primary school and between 2 and 3 miles from a secondary school).

Maps showing the discretionary and statutory transport distances for each school are available on the budget challenge website (www.rctcbc.gov.uk/budgetchallenge). Please note, these maps are provided as a guide only and do not guarantee entitlement or otherwise.

I have/my child has an SEN statement of needs, will I/they be affected?

No, Home to School Transport arrangements for SEN pupils would not be affected by these proposals.

I am/my child is not currently eligible for Home to School Transport but this year I have been able to purchase a spare seat for travel on the bus. Would this proposal affect me/my child?

Yes, the charge for a spare seat for non-eligible pupils would rise in line with the proposed charge of £1.75 a day. There are no other changes to these arrangements, and as is currently the case spare seats cannot be guaranteed from year to year and this provision is subject to availability.

I live/my child lives within 2 miles of their nearest primary school or 3 miles of the nearest secondary school but the walking route is not safe, would transport be provided free of charge in this situation?

If the walking route to school is considered to be “available” (i.e. safe as far as is reasonably practicable) free Home to School Transport would not be provided. However, if the route is considered to be “not available” (i.e. not safe as far as is reasonably practicable) and there is not an alternative “available” walking route, you/your child would be eligible for free Home to School Transport. If you/your child currently receives free Home to School Transport because the walking route is “not available” then you/your child would continue to receive free transport. Such routes are subject to re-assessment to confirm if they continue to be “not available” (for example following improvement works).

What if I/my child lives over 2 miles (Primary) or over 3 miles (Secondary) from the nearest suitable school?

Entitlement to free Home to School Transport would remain under the proposed new policy.

I/My child is in receipt of free school meals – would I have to register separately to benefit from the reduced level of charge?

An application would need to be made for all pupils wishing to travel on discretionary Home to School Transport. Details of how this can be done will be confirmed should any changes to Home to School Transport be implemented.

How can I check if I/my child is entitled to Free School Meals?

Details of Free School Meals entitlement and an online application form are available on the RCT website on the link below, or by calling **01443 425002**.

www.rctcbc.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals

Can I book transport on a term by term basis, for example in the summer term I/my child may be able to walk to school?

No, In order for the Council to effectively plan its Home to School Transport provision it would not be possible to purchase a seat on an individual term by term basis. Where you/your child does not need to travel for the full school year alternative public transport routes may be a more cost effective option.

What if I/my child is due to sit exams or finish school before the normal end of the academic year (end of summer term)?

In order for the Council to effectively plan its Home to School Transport provision it would not be possible to purchase a seat for individual terms. Where you/your child does not need to travel for the full school year alternative public transport routes may be a more cost effective option.

When is this proposal likely to begin to impact on me?

If approved, the revised policy would be published by the 1st October 2015 and would be effective for all pupils from the 1st September 2016.

What do I need to do now?

The Council is asking all pupils, parents/carers, residents, staff and other key stakeholders to give their views on the proposal. Please take this opportunity to have your say. The questionnaire and full report considered by the Council's Cabinet is available from the following link:

www.rctcbc.gov.uk/budgetchallenge

APPENDIX 4 (3)

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APPENDIX 3 –

Notes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee of the 8th July 2015

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held at the County Borough Council Offices, The Pavilions, Cambrian Park, Clydach Val on Wednesday, 8th July, 2015 at 5 p.m.

PRESENT

County Borough Councillor L.M.Adams – in the Chair

County Borough Councillors

(Mrs.)J.Bonetto	(Mrs.)S.Jones	G.Smith
W.J.David	R.Lewis	P.Wasley
(Mrs.)M.E.Davies	B.Morgan	M.J.Watts
P.Jarman	(Mrs.)S.Pickering	R.Yeo

Members in Attendance

County Borough Councillors:

G.Stacey, (Mrs.)J.Ward and G.Stacey

Education Co-opted Members in Attendance

Mr.M.Cleverley Representing NASUWT and Teachers' Panel
Mr.J.Fish – Elected Parent/Governor Representative
Mr.J.Horton – Elected Parent/Governor Representative
Mr.C.Jones – Representing GMB
Mrs.S.Jones – Elected Parent/Governor Representative

Officers in Attendance

Mr.C.Lee – Group Director, Corporate & Frontline Services
Mr.C.B.Jones – Service Director, Legal & Democratic Services
Mr.R.Waters – Service Director, Highways & Streetcare
Mrs.E.Thomas – Service Director, Schools & Community
Ms.K.May – Head of Democratic Services

5 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from County Borough Councillors S.Evans, A.S.Fox, S.Powderhill and S.Rees-Owen.

6 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, the following declarations of interest were made at the meeting in respect of Agenda Item 2 – Home to School Transport – Consultation on Proposed New Policy:

- County Borough Councillor L.M.Adams – “I am a School Governor”
- County Borough Councillor J.Bonetto – “Governor on Ffynnon Taf Primary and Hawthorn High and Co-Governor on Coleg Cymoedd”
- Mr.J.Fish – “School Governor – Bryncelynog/Maes y Bryn/Coedpenmaen
- Mr.C.Jones – “elected Member of BCBC”
- Mrs.S.Jones - “Parent Governor – Ysgol Llanhari”
- County Borough Councillor R.Lewis – “My mother is an employee of YGG Abercynon and I am a School Governor of YGG Abercynon.
- County Borough Councillor G.Smith – “My grandson attends a Faith School, I am also a School Governor who school may be affected”
- County Borough Councillor S.Pickering – “I am a Governor of Trerobart Primary School, Ynysybwl”
- County Borough Councillor P.Wasley – “My daughter is a School Teacher and I am a Governor”
- County Borough Councillor M.J.Watts – “School Governor”
- County Borough Councillor C.J.Willis – “School Governor”

7 HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT – CONSULTATION ON A PROPOSED NEW POLICY

The Service Director, Legal & Democratic Services outlined the process to be followed at this meeting and explained that the purpose of the meeting was not to scrutinise the proposals but to act as a consultee and therefore there would be no recommendations from this meeting but that the views would be recorded and included in the consultation feedback to Cabinet.

The Group Director, Corporate & Frontline Services reported that the link to the report that was considered by the Cabinet on the 19th May had been included on today's agenda and attached to the agenda was a copy of the consultation booklet which is being used and provides an overview of the current service provision, the proposed changes together with a summary of how the proposals would affect pupils and parents. He gave a summary of the report that was considered by Cabinet and referred to the funding gap that the Authority was faced with, whereby savings in the region of £23.7M were required for the financial year 2016/17 rising to £42M by 2017/18.

The Chair referred to the statutory requirements within the Learner Travel Measure, which had been introduced by the Welsh Government and stated that in his view these were flawed, badly designed and segregates the children of Rhondda Cynon Taf, he was further of the view that it was not a fair and equitable document. With regard to the proposals being consulted upon today, he referred to page 5 of the consultation booklet and indicated that Faith Schools could be incorporated under the same headings as the other Schools.

One of the Members agreed with the views of the Chair and stated that all schools should be treated equitably. He also raised concerns for those parents who are just above the poverty line and where their children are not entitled to free school meals will have to pay

£1.75 per day for transport and for those in receipt of free school meals would be charged £1 per day. The proposal could also result in an increase in traffic as parents, friends and family would be transporting children to school in their own vehicles.

The safety of the children having to walk to school as a result of not being able to afford the transport costs was also a concern for Members, the additional costs to households could also have a knock on school attendance.

One Member also raised concerns on the layout of the consultation booklet and felt that it was very confusing for the 'untrained eye'. She referred to a letter that had been circulated by the School Council of St.John's, Aberdare regarding the rights of the child and compliance with Human Rights. A question was raised as to whether the booklet discriminates against the rights of the child and parental choice.

In response, the Group Director, Corporate & Frontline Services reported that during the eight week consultation process which ends on the 28th July a range of groups and schools are to be consulted upon and various events across the borough will be held. He attended the event at St.John's School where the UN Rights of the Child was mentioned and he reiterated the comments made there, in that all of the statutory requirements had been taken account of in terms of the UN rights of the child together with the commitment to undertake an appropriate Child Impact Assessment as part of considering the proposal.

The Member also referred to the stigma that is attached to a child who is in receipt of free school meals and how Members of the former Education and Lifelong Scrutiny Committee strived to stop the discrimination, these new proposals would open up that stigma and it was also perceived that this was the case with secondary schools as only 19% of free school meals were taken up. She also expressed concern on the indicators that are used in calculating the Council's Standards Spending Assessment where only 60% is allocated to the schools for free school meals amounting to a figure close on £2.1M being received from the Welsh Government, whereas if the total eligibility for school meals was taken up then this would generate a further income from Welsh Government to almost £2M In response, the Group Director, Corporate & Frontline Services indicated that school budgets had again been protected in 2015/16, in line with Welsh Government requirements.

A Member raised concern in respect of the effects that the proposals would have on Post 16 learners as the additional transport costs to travel to and from school could deter pupils in staying on in school to further their education.

A co-opted Member commented on parental choice and stated that in reality they would not have a choice as many people are just above the threshold for free school meals and many households have not got cars so would not be able to send children to a school of their choice due to the cost implications. He also referred to the introduction of a payments options scheme – this would be an additional cost to the Authority in administering and managing the systems.

The Service Director, Highways and Streetcare, in response to a query outlined the tendering process, when it was pointed out by a Member that should there be a drop in the use of the current fleet of buses could result in smaller vehicles needing to be use and could result in a re-tendering process – another cost to the authority.

Following the comments made by Members and co-opted Members, the Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance and confirmed that the views expressed at this meeting

would form part of the consultation process and be fed back to the Cabinet before any changes to the policy are agreed.

**L.M.ADAMS
CHAIRMAN**

The meeting closed at 6.07 p.m.

APPENDIX 4 (4)

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APPENDIX 4**Notes of the Finance & Performance Scrutiny Committee of the 30th June 2015****RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL****FINANCE & PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

MINUTES of the special meeting of the Finance & Performance Scrutiny Committee held at the County Borough Council Offices, The Pavilions, Cambrian Park, Clydach Vale, on Tuesday, 30th June 2015 at 5.00 pm.

Present:

County Borough Councillor (Mrs) J S Ward – in the Chair

County Borough Councillors:

(Mrs) J Bonetto
P Griffiths
(Mrs) S Rees
R A Yeo

S Bradwick
(Mrs) S Jones
C J Williams

G R Davies
(Mrs) C Leyshon
C J Willis

Officers:

Mr C Lee – Group Director, Corporate and Frontline Services
Mr C Bradshaw – Director of Education and Lifelong Learning
Mr R Waters – Service Director, Highways & Streetcare
Mr P J Lucas – Director of Legal & Democratic Services
Ms Ann Edwards – Scrutiny Support Officer

Members in Attendance:

County Borough Councillors:
M Adams and J Watts

(Chair & Vice Chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee respectively)

Education Co-opted Members in attendance

Mr J Fish – Elected Parent/Governor Representative
Mr J Horton – Elected Parent/Governor Representative
Mrs S Jones – Elected Parent/Governor Representative
Mr M Cleverley – Representing NASUWT and Teachers' Panel

6. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from the Chairman, County Borough Councillor M A Norris and County Borough Councillors S Evans, R W Smith and E Webster.

Apologies for absence were also received from Mr R Hull, Chairman of the Audit Committee and Mrs C Jones, Education Co-opted Member.

7. CHAIRMAN

In the absence of the Chairman, the vice chair, County Borough Councillor (Mrs) J S Ward took the Chair.

8. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, the following declarations of interest were made at the meeting in respect of Agenda Item 2 – Home to School Transport: - Consultation on a Proposed New Policy.

- Cllr J Bonetto – “I am a School Governor on a Primary School, a High School and a co-opted Governor on Coleg Cymoedd.”
- Cllr S A Bradwick – “I am Chair of Governors”
- Cllr G Davies – “School Governor YGG Ynyswen”;
- Mr J Fish – “I am the Governor of a school likely to be affected by the proposed change – Bryncelynnog”.
- Cllr P Griffiths – “Member of Governors of Ysgol Llanhari, Member of Governors of Ysgol y Pant”.
- Mr J Horton – “Daughter attends Faith School”.
- Cllr (Mrs) S J Jones – “Governor Llwynypia Primary, Governors' Vice Chair Ynyscynnon Early Years”.
- Cllr (Mrs) C Leyshon – “I am a governor of a primary school but the school is not being discussed”.
- Cllr (Mrs) S Rees – “I am a governor of YGG Aberdar and Oaklands schools.
- Cllr (Mrs) J S Ward – “Member of Miskin Primary School and Perthcelyn Primary School”.
- Cllr C Williams – I am governor of Cymmer Infants School and Vice Chair of Governors at Hafod Primary, Trehafod.

REPORT OF THE GROUP DIRECTOR, CORPORATE & FRONTLINE SERVICES

9. HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT – CONSULTATION ON A PROPOSED NEW POLICY

The Director of Legal & Democratic Services provided the Committee with an overview of the process explaining that it was not the purpose of the meeting to scrutinise the proposals but act as a consultee. He explained that all Members' views would be noted and that the aim was to be as inclusive as possible.

The Group Director, Corporate and Frontline Services drew Members' attention to the consultation document which had been attached to the agenda and which provided an overview of the current service provision and the proposed changes along with a summary of how these proposals would affect pupils. He pointed out that the consultation document also referred to a number of alternative options which had been considered and views on these were also welcomed. He reported that in undertaking the consultation a number of channels are being used including social media, press and a number of public engagement events. He

explained that all feedback would be recorded and following the conclusion of the consultation period an Equality Impact Assessment would be undertaken and the results of this along with key issues drawn from the consultation would be considered by Cabinet before any changes to policy are agreed.

In response to a query the Director of Legal and Democratic Services confirmed that any decision in relation to the Home to School Policy came within the function of the Cabinet and not Council.

A Member pointed out that the Council had a legal duty to promote the Welsh Language but as there were fewer Welsh medium schools across the County Borough it was likely that they would be disproportionately affected by the proposals.

The Service Director, felt that it was unlikely that the Council would be judged as unfair. He pointed out that the proposal was to maintain enhanced transport provision but seek to introduce a contribution toward these discretionary costs. He pointed that the English medium pupils would also be affected but agreed that the level of impact could vary between English and Welsh Medium depending on location and whether considering primary or secondary pupils.

The Director of Legal & Democratic Services pointed out that it was for the Equality Impact Assessment to consider all the issues of concern raised.

A Member asked whether some children would be affected as a result of changes made by the Council through school reorganisation.

The Director of Education and Lifelong Learning agreed that this was possible given that a number of schools had been closed. Some children were having to travel further and amongst these some would fall into the discretionary travel ranges. However, he pointed out that school reorganisation was based on improving the quality of education rather than the distance a child has to travel.

One Member reported that he had a number of concerns. Firstly, he pointed out that the proposals would have a greater impact on Welsh Language and Faith schools and explained that parents did not make such choices for their children's education based on distance. He felt that those in the Rhondda Valleys would be particularly disadvantaged due to the topography. He had calculated that for primary schools 414 Welsh medium pupils would fall within the 1.5 – 2 mile radius and 32 English medium pupils would be affected. He explained that he did not have any figures for those attending Faith schools. Secondly, he referred to the Council's aim of increasing the number of pupils in Welsh Medium schools and suggested that the proposed policy would have an adverse affect on this. Thirdly, he explained that the report to Cabinet made no mention of the impact on child poverty. He pointed out that a parent on low income but whose children are not entitled to Free School Meals will have to pay £1.75 per day and yet the policy of both central government and the Welsh Government is to reduce child poverty. The Member also voiced his concern in relation to the impact on traffic around schools suggesting that there could be an increase in smaller vehicles transporting children in already congested areas.

The Group Director, Corporate and Frontline Services commented that these were the issues that would need to be addressed by the Equality Impact Assessment.

A Member felt that in some areas those attending English Medium Schools would be equally affected. He expressed his concern regarding the proposed introduction of the contribution

charge which he felt would be a significant amount of money for those struggling on a low income. He realised that there was a need to bridge the budget deficit but felt that for those families in or around the poverty line the children could be forced to walk considerable distances to school along busy roads. He added that his main concern was the level of charge rather than the concept. He felt that £1.75 a day was too high and that perhaps £1 for all would be more acceptable.

A co-opted Member commented that unfortunately, the budget shortfall was such that difficult decisions had to be made. He commended the Council for the amount of work which had been undertaken in attempting to find a balanced solution. Given the large number of consultations which have been undertaken he questioned whether a better approach would be to provide the public with a better idea of where potential cuts are likely to be and therefore provide them with the 'bigger picture' upon which to consult.

The Group Director, Corporate and Frontline Services accepted the point being made but explained that the difficulty facing local government is that there is no clear picture of the level of budget cuts from one year to the next. A budget reduction of 3% for the next year will leave a £23m budget gap but depending on decisions taken by the Westminster Government this could change and if for example there is a 5% reduction this will add another £7m to that figure. He pointed out that the Leader of the Council was keen to utilise RCT Together and engage with groups at an earlier stage. He also explained that for some service areas legislation requires the Council to undertake specific consultation before changes can be made.

The co-opted Member asked whether the Council was at a stage where perhaps it needed to fulfil its statutory obligations and only then consider the provision of additional services. He suggested that it might be an easier option than taking services away.

The Director of Legal and Democratic Services highlighted the example of the recent change to nursery provision. He explained that whilst there was a cost to the detailed consultation process that had been undertaken it was a cost that needed to be borne in order to ensure that any legal challenge could be defended.

A Member voiced his concern that the proposals could add to the stigma which some pupils receiving free school meals might feel.

The Director of Education and Lifelong Learning assured the Member that all children would receive the same pass and that no-one would know who had or had not paid the full amount.

A co-opted Member pointed out that in his opinion, those parents struggling to make ends meet would choose to spend their money on food before sending them to school. He pointed out that only those receiving Child Tax Credits were eligible to claim free school meals for their children, those in receipt of Working Tax Credits could not. He reported that a family with 2 children not eligible for free school meals could be paying approximately £200 per term to access free education. He suggested that this was not a small amount of money and he explained that feedback he had received as a parent governor and from what he had observed on social media was that parents were questioning the fairness of having to pay the proposed charges in advance and were asking would they receive a refund if their child became ill during the term and missed several weeks of school. He suggested that there is a perception that Education is taking the lion's share of the hit in relation to bridging the budget deficit. The co-opted Member pointed out that the calculations put forward in the proposal had been based on anticipated take-up but he questioned what would happen if the take-up was poor. He also pointed to the potential impact on attendance and suggested that this would need to be kept under review. He also questioned the position with regard to Safer Walking Routes.

The Director of Education and Lifelong Learning reported that the Council was faced with difficult choices. The Council had protected the Schools' budgets with a focus on improving

the quality of teaching and the quality of leadership and there are signs of improvement in relation to attainment and school attendance levels as a result. However, he pointed out that the service had to 'cut its cloth' accordingly. He pointed out that up until now, parents in Rhondda Cynon Taf had been fortunate that the Council had been in a position to provide free transport over and above the legal requirement but ultimately whilst the Council can facilitate, it is a parent's responsibility to ensure that a child attends school. He explained that the proposals set out in the report were intended to be a compromise and pointed out that Merthyr Tydfil County Council did not provide transport over and above the statutory requirements and that the situation at Bridgend was still not clear following their consultation exercises. He pointed out that Neath Port Talbot Council provided no transport at all for Faith Schools and pupils had to make their own way to schools and that their attendance levels were very good. Whilst there could be an initial dip in attendance he felt sure that parents would value their children's education and ensure their attendance.

The Service Director for Highways and Streetcare reported that in relation to the Home to School Transport Operators' Contracts there were a number of scenarios: smaller vehicles and taxis have framework contracts with electronic tendering and an e - auction process. These contracts run for a 4 year period with 1 month notice for termination. On mainstream, larger vehicles such as coaches operate on longer term contracts, over a 7 year period with an option to extend for up to a further 3 years. There is a 3 month notice period to terminate these contracts. He reported that the contracts would be analysed alongside likely take-up to enable informed decision making. However, there would be a need to err on the side of caution rather than risk pupils being without transport. With regard to safe walking routes the existing routes had been subject to an initial review, those considered not to be available had been excluded from consideration.

A Member suggested that the Council could only do its best and suggested that there would be criticism regardless. The Council was at the sharp end of massive budget cuts and ideas had to come forward to reduce costs.

A Member questioned how it was intended to collect the money from parents.

The Service Director for Highways and Transport explained that it was likely that there would be an on-line application system which would result in a pass to be used on the provided transport which would not make a distinction in relation to whether the child was receiving free school meals or not.

It was suggested that parents needed to be given as many options as possible.

A Member questioned the situation with regard to transportation because a route is deemed unsafe.

The Service Director, Highways and Streetcare explained that they tried to encourage people to bring any concerns to them for investigation.

A co-opted Member commented that her key concerns had already been put forward. However, she was concerned that there was a perception that whilst people were giving their views these opinions were not being taken on board.

The Group Director, Corporate and Frontline Services explained that all the information was being collected whether from the on-line consultation process or the various events being held. He further explained that all the feedback would be available for Cabinet's inspection and that a summary of the key issues drawn out from the feedback would then be included in the report for Cabinet and it would be for Cabinet to address these issues. Again, this would be a meeting which is open to the public to attend.

A Member reported that in his opinion, more parents would be choosing to drop their children off at school in the mornings, adding to congestion around schools and then just pay their half fare journey home on the service bus

The Group Director, Corporate and Frontline Services explained that the proposal put forward was intended to give people choice.

A Member questioned whether there was a danger of a legal challenge as the proposal would have an unequal impact on Faith Schools.

The Director of Legal & Democratic Services responded by explaining that the risk of a legal challenge was very high. Therefore there is a need to ensure that the document which goes before Cabinet includes a proper and robust response to the findings of the consultation.

A Member asked whether the proposal would have any effect on the Council's Looked After Children.

The Director of Education and Lifelong Learning explained that they would not be affected as they would be transported to their usual school to maintain and ensure stability.

A Member asked whether the measurements to determine the mileage from schools would be accurate.

The Service Director, Highways and Streetcare explained that given the Council transported over 11,000 pupils it would be inevitable that there will be the odd anomaly but he reported that measurements would be accurate in nearly all cases.

A Member voiced her concern that the proposal would hit one parent families hard where the parent works but is in low paid employment. She pointed out that they would struggle to pay for the transport and be unlikely to be a position to adjust their hours of working to take and collect children from school.

A Member referred to pupils in her area travelling to Gwaelod y Garth School. She explained that from September only those who already had siblings at the school would be able to start there and she questioned the position with regard to transport.

The Service Director, Highways and Streetcare explained that it would depend on the distance and that any potential child would receive the same benefit as the sibling.

A Member commented that there was a need to consider the impact of any proposal on all schools whether they are Faith, or English or Welsh medium.

The Director of Education & Lifelong Learning explained that to some extent the Council was bound by legislation.

In conclusion, the Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance and comments.

(Mrs) J S Ward
Chairman

The meeting closed at 6.20 pm.

Appendix 5



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

**Medium Term Service Planning:
Service Change Proposals**

**Proposal: Home to School Transport
Policy**

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Equality Impact Assessment**Proposal: Home to School Transport Policy****1. Background and Purpose of the Initiative**

- 1.1 The Council is facing a significant financial challenge into the medium term and all services and their delivery must be assessed.
- 1.2 On the 4th March 2015, the Council agreed a budget strategy for 2015/16, which balanced an initial budget gap of £21.9M and included a number of budget reduction measures.
- 1.3 On the 2nd July 2015, the Group Director, Corporate and Frontline Services provided a presentation to Cabinet in respect of Medium Term Financial & Service Planning. This presentation updated the projected budget gap based on different settlement levels and showed a gap for 2016/17 of between £23.7m and £30.8m (rising to between £59.8m and £69.7m up to 2018/19).
- 1.4 Given the size of the budget gap faced and the timescales required for any implementation of service changes, Cabinet agreed to receive reports on potential service change proposals as soon as these became available.
- 1.5 On the 19th May 2015, Cabinet received a report on potential service changes to the Council's Home to School Transport provision. A number of options and considerations were put forward for Cabinet approval. As a result, the Cabinet agreed to initiate a consultation on a proposal to introduce certain charges to discretionary elements of Home to School Transport provision - 'Option L' within the Cabinet report - which would provide a saving of £2.048M assuming a maximum charge of two children per family and a reduced level of charge for pupils in receipt of Free School Meals of £1.00.
- 1.6 The changes outlined in this proposal are required as part of the Council's Medium Term Service Planning arrangements (specifically to reduce spend and enable the Council to fulfil its statutory responsibility and set a balanced budget into the medium term).

2. The General Duty

- 2.1 The Council is subject to the Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010), where public authorities must, in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:
 - Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

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- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

2.2 This assessment seeks to fulfill the Council's duty to have due regard to the legislation, by assessing the possible impact on individuals and groups in the community and identifying any active steps to promote equality to assist Cabinet in coming to their decision on implementing any changes to Home to School Transport provision.

3. Introduction: Proposal on the Home to School Transport policy

3.1 The Council has a number of statutory duties relevant to this proposal. These are set out in detail within the Cabinet report of the 19th May 2015, and reiterated within these Cabinet papers. Broadly, under the Welsh Government Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008, the Council must:

- Assess the travel needs of learners in its area.
- Provide free home to school transport for learners of compulsory school age, attending primary school who live 2 miles or further from their nearest suitable school.
- Provide free home to school transport for learners of compulsory school age, attending secondary school who live 3 miles or further from their nearest suitable school.
- Assess and meet the needs of "looked after" children in its area.
- Promote access to Welsh medium education.
- Promote sustainable modes of travel.

3.2 Whilst the Council is required to assess the travel needs of all learners under the age of 19, there is currently no legal duty to provide free or assisted transport for non-compulsory school age children (up to the term in which a child turns 5 years old or learners in further or higher education (post 16)).

3.3 The Council has the power to provide discretionary transport for learners who are not attending their nearest suitable school because of language preference. As above, the Council has a duty to promote access to Welsh medium education. In line with the Council's Welsh Language Scheme and Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2015-17, preference for either Welsh or English language education should be treated equally.

3.4 The Learner Travel (Wales) Measure also provides the Council with the power to provide discretionary transport for learners who are not attending their nearest suitable school because of denominational preference.

3.5 The proposal agreed by Cabinet for public consultation was 'Option L' within the Cabinet report, which proposed that a subsidised charge of £1.75 per day be introduced on discretionary provision of Home to School Transport, affecting the following:

- i. Primary school pupils of compulsory school age attending at English or Welsh medium school living between the current discretionary distance of 1.5 miles and statutory distance of 2 miles;

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- ii. Secondary school pupils of compulsory school age attending an English or Welsh medium school living the current discretionary distance of 2 miles and statutory distance of 3 miles;
- iii. Pupils below compulsory school age;
- iv. Post 16 pupils;
- v. All Primary and Secondary school pupils attending a Faith school, except where it is the nearest suitable school and is more than the statutory safe walking distance away.

- 3.6 Therefore, under 'Option L', the Council would continue to provide discretionary transport provision in excess of the current minimum statutory requirement. However, the discretionary elements of the provision (outlined in points i-v above) would become chargeable, but still a subsidised service.
- 3.7 If 'Option L' is implemented, pupils in English or Welsh medium schools living beyond the statutory distances of 2 miles (primary school pupils) and 3 miles (secondary school pupils) will continue to receive free Home to School Transport.
- 3.8 Under the proposed policy, an assessment of a parent's ability to pay the proposed charge would be introduced, based on their child(ren) being in receipt of Free School Meals. Cabinet agreed a proposed level of charge for pupils in receipt of Free School Meals of £1.00 per day for consultation.
- 3.9 Cabinet also agreed to consult on the introduction of a cap on the proposed charges payable for families with more than two children using Home to School Transport.
- 3.10 The discretionary elements of Special Education Needs transport would continue as an entirely subsidised, non-charged service.
- 3.11 Subject to a Cabinet decision on the proposed policy, any new policy would be implemented from the start of the 2016/17 academic year.
- 3.12 This Equality Impact Assessment considers the potential impact of the proposal on protected groups. A separate Child's Rights Impact Assessment has been produced, in line with good practice, attached at Appendix A.

4. What evidence is there to suggest the potential impact of the proposal on protected groups?

4.1 Consultation & Engagement

4.1.1 Following Cabinet approval, a public consultation was launched on the 2nd June 2015 and closed on the 28th July 2015.

4.1.2 A separate consultation report on the methodology and outcomes of the consultation has been produced and is attached with these papers.

4.1.3 The main themes arising from the consultation were:

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- **Financial Impact i.e.**
 - There should be no charge as school transport is a right and should be provided by the Local Authority.
 - Families will suffer financially / an additional cost to parents.
 - The proposed charge is too high / unreasonable.
 - Cannot afford the charge.
 - Impact on working families.
 - Working families adversely affected.
 - The poorest would suffer the most.
 - Financial circumstances may change during the year.
 - There would be an issue committing to transport for a full school year.
 - Would affect ability to work.

- **School Attendance / Achievement Impact i.e.**
 - School attendance would suffer.
 - Pupil / parent choice would be restricted.
 - Would discourage people from continuing education.
 - Educational achievement would suffer.
 - Would have to change schools.

- **Discrimination i.e.**
 - The proposal is discriminatory against Faith Schools.
 - Could impact long term viability of Faith schools.
 - All discretionary transport school be treated the same.
 - Could no longer go to Faith/Welsh school.
 - The proposal is discriminatory against Welsh Schools.
 - Could impact long term viability of Welsh schools.
 - The policy discriminates on racial grounds.

- **Other main themes i.e.**
 - Safety issues.
 - The Council should find cuts elsewhere.

4.1.4 As would be expected, the majority of people who responded to the consultation were those affected by the proposal. 59.8% were a parent / carer of a learner and 24.8% were young people who use / will use Home to School Transport. The majority of respondents (81%) also disagreed with changes to the existing policy. As would be expected, a lower proportion of those not directly affected by the proposal disagreed with the proposal (75.5%). This should be taken into account by Cabinet when reviewing this Equality Impact Assessment and consultation results.

4.1.5 With specific reference to the potential negative impacts on protected groups, the consultation asked respondents if they felt that the proposals would have more of an impact upon them because of a protected characteristic. The majority of respondents to this question stated that they felt the proposal would impact disproportionately on them because of their religion or belief, with a significant number also stating that the proposal would impact upon them due to their age and the language they prefer to communicate in.

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The following table shows the number of responses that considered that the proposal would have an impact on the protected characteristics:

Characteristic	No. of responses
You are male / female	66
Your age	153
Your ethnicity	27
Your are disabled	51
Your sexuality	11
Your religion or belief	210
Your gender identity	15
You are single / married / cohabiting / in a civil partnership / divorced	75
You are pregnant	14
The language you prefer to communicate in	192

4.1.6 Open responses (to this question and letters / e-mails) were received from 183 individuals. The number of views expressed totalled 240. The main comments received for this question can be grouped into the following themes:

- The proposal is discriminatory against Faith Schools.
- The proposal is discriminatory against Welsh Schools.
- Pupil/parent choice would be restricted.
- Families will suffer financially.

4.1.7 The majority of comments related to the perception that the proposal was discriminatory against Faith Schools, parents, children and / or religion as a whole.

4.1.8 Where recurring themes relate to groups of the population potentially being disproportionately affected by the proposal, this theme has been considered in preparing this Equality Impact Assessment to meet the duty (as set out in Section 2).

4.2 Other evidence gathered

4.2.1 Evidence has been gathered from a number of sources, including Government policies, statistical bulletins and local data.

4.2.2 The evidence has been used to, firstly, determine the level of relevance the proposal has to the protected groups covered by the equality duty and, secondly, explore the potential impacts of the proposal further, having due regard to the need to promote equality and minimise any possible adverse impacts.

4.2.3 In line with feedback from the consultation, and other evidence gathered, the following assessment has been taken:

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Could the proposal impact on protected groups covered by the general duty?¹

Protected Group	Could this proposal impact on this group differently from others in RCT?	Could this proposal promote equal opportunities for this group?
<i>Age</i>	Yes	No
<i>Disability</i>	Yes	No
<i>Gender assignment</i>	No	No
<i>Marriage / civil partnership</i>	Yes	No
<i>Pregnancy / maternity</i>	No	No
<i>Race</i>	Yes	No
<i>Religion / belief</i>	Yes	No
<i>Sexual orientation</i>	No	No
<i>Sex (gender)</i>	No	No
<i>Language</i>	Yes	No

4.2.4 The following sections consider the potential impacts the proposal could have on protected groups covered by the general duty, using evidence gathered through engagement, consultation and research.

¹ (Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010)

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What potential impacts could the proposal have on protected groups covered by the general duty? ¹**5. Protected Group: Age****5.1 POTENTIAL IMPACT ON CHILDREN**

5.1.1 The equality duty covers the protected characteristic of age, which refers to a person having a particular age (for example, 32 year olds) or being within an age group (for example, 18-30 year olds). This includes all ages, including children and young people. Due to the nature of this proposal, it could impact on children and young people attending school or college in Rhondda Cynon Taf from September 2016.

5.1.2 The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child recommends that all countries that ratify the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) undertake a Children's Rights Impact Assessment on all decisions related to children. The Welsh Government adopted the UNCRC in 2004 and on the 1st May 2014, a new duty on Welsh Ministers came into effect to have due regard to the UNCRC when exercising any of their Ministerial functions. As such, there is no legal duty on Local Authorities to undertake Child's Rights Impact Assessments, but in line with good practice, an assessment has been carried out in relation to this proposal, attached at Appendix A of this assessment.

5.1.3 Using current data, out of the approximately 38,000 primary and secondary school pupils in Rhondda Cynon Taf, the Council currently provides Home to School Transport for approximately 11,690 children and young people in mainstream education. Approximately 7,000 of those pupils are transported on a discretionary basis, meaning they would be affected under the proposal agreed by Cabinet for consultation on the 19th May 2015. Therefore, the majority of children and young people in mainstream education would not be affected by the proposed policy.

5.1.4 Through public consultation, including engagement with children and young people, several themes have been identified on how the proposed policy could impact on the children and young people affected. The following sections explore each theme in more detail, using consultation and research evidence to assess the likely impact on this group.

a) Potential impact on attendance and achievement

5.1.5 Through consultation, many parents / carers expressed concern that the proposed policy could discourage or inhibit some children and young people from attending school, due to their parents / carers being unable to afford the charge or refusing to pay for transport within the discretionary distances. This would mean pupils affected would need to find an alternative way to get to school, such as on foot / cycling, in a car or on public transport. Consultation respondents felt that children and young people could not be expected to walk the distances outlined in the proposal and / or could not be relied upon to attend school without the provision of free transport.

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- 5.1.6 It was also stated that some parents / carers may find it difficult to transport children and young people by car, because they may not own a vehicle or have work commitments during the school drop-off and pick-up times.
- 5.1.7 In addition, consultation respondents felt that the public transport provision and cost was prohibitive to pupils travelling to school on a public bus.
- 5.1.8 Therefore, overall, parents / carers disagreed with the proposal on the grounds that it could have a negative impact on the attendance of children and young people, which would be likely to have a negative affect on pupil achievement.
- 5.1.9 Parents, or anyone with parental responsibility, have a legal duty to ensure their child of compulsory school age attends school. Failure to do so can result in penalty notices and even prosecution. However, consultation respondents stated that the proposal made it more likely that some children and young people not using the Home to School Transport provision would be expected to walk or cycle to school independently of their parents and, therefore, would be more likely to truant.
- 5.1.10 In assessing the possible impact of the proposed changes on attendance, the attendance data for other Local Authorities, with differing Home to School Transport arrangements, has been studied.
- 5.1.11 The most recent data (2013/14) states that average attendance in both primary and schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf has been improving since 2011/12. The most recent data states that the average attendance in primary schools was 93% and the average attendance in secondary schools was 92%.
- 5.1.12 In Newport, pupils of compulsory school age in primary school receive free transport if they live over 2 miles away from their nearest suitable school (in comparison to the current arrangement in Rhondda Cynon Taf of 1.5 miles). The average attendance rate in primary schools in Newport is 93%; the same as Rhondda Cynon Taf.
- 5.1.13 Similarly, in Neath Port Talbot, pupils of compulsory school age in secondary school receive free transport if they live over 3 miles away from their nearest suitable school (in comparison to the current arrangement in Rhondda Cynon Taf of 2 miles). The average attendance rate in secondary schools in Neath Port Talbot is 93% for 2013/14, slightly better than in Rhondda Cynon Taf.
- 5.1.14 Although no comparison can be made to other Local Authorities that charge for discretionary transport provision, the attendance data would suggest that provision of free transport within 1.5-2 miles for primary schools and 2-3 miles for secondary schools (as is currently the case in Rhondda Cynon Taf) has little impact on attendance.
- 5.1.15 However, it should be noted that every Local Authority is different, with varying levels of public transport provision and car ownership, perhaps enabling children and young people to be transported to school by other means. Overall, car ownership in Rhondda Cynon Taf is relatively low: 27.1% of households do not

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own a car or van.² This is in comparison to 27.9% in Newport and 25.5% in Neath Port Talbot.

- 5.1.16 During the consultation in Rhondda Cynon Taf on the proposed policy, 43% of respondents said they would stop using the service if a charge of £1.75 per day was introduced. Of the respondents who said they would stop using the service, 52% said that they / their child would travel to school by car in future and 23% said they / their child would walk. 13% said they would travel by public bus.
- 5.1.17 Under the Welsh Government Active Travel (Wales) Act (2013), the Local Authority has a duty to promote walking and cycling. The aim of the legislation is to reduce congestion and the impact on the environment, as well as improve the health and wellbeing of the population. This proposed policy complements such legislation, as it could lead to more children and young people walking / cycling the distance (or part-way) to school, which could have a positive impact on health and wellbeing.
- 5.1.18 It has been raised that children and young people travelling to a Faith School or a sixth form provision would find it more difficult to walk, cycle or take public transport as an alternative to Home to School Transport, as the school / college they attend is likely to be further away than if they attended their nearest suitable school. Although the area is well served by public transport, this does not account for the distance from a learner's home to a bus stop or the bus changes that some learners would need to take if the proposed policy is agreed and they did not wish to take up Home to School transport provision.
- 5.1.19 Public transport provision could provide an alternative to Home to School Transport provision or transportation by car, walking or cycling. Many of the secondary schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf are situated in close proximity to a bus stop, with regular bus services. Should the proposed policy be agreed, commercial bus providers may also respond to possible increased demand for public transport and provide more regular services and alternative routes.
- 5.1.20 Although raised as a concern, this assessment would suggest that the likely impact on attendance rates due to the possible introduction of the proposed policy is quite low. However, as a mitigating action if the policy is implemented, officers should continue to monitor attendance on a school level to ensure that any potential negative affect of the policy is identified and arrangements put in place to improve the pupil's attendance.

b) Potential impact on further education and future job prospects.

- 5.1.21 Consultation respondents raised concerns that 16-19 year olds, in particular, could be negatively impacted by the proposal due to the potential introduction of a charge for young people attending further education travelling on Home to School Transport. The proposed policy would impact on all young people using home to school transport provision that lived 2 or more miles from their nearest suitable school or college. Using current figures, this would be approximately 3,000 young people.

² National Statistics: statistical bulletin 100/2013 "People and Licensing and Vehicle Ownership, 2012" (Census data 2011) <http://wales.gov.uk/docs/statistics/2013/131022-people-vehicle-licensing-vehicle-ownership-2012-en.pdf>

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- 5.1.22 It was felt that the proposed policy could discourage learners from progressing to further education and this could, in turn, impact on their future job prospects. Respondents raised that, as the population of Rhondda Cynon Taf has a lower level of qualifications than in other areas, this would have a detrimental impact on the economic growth of the area.
- 5.1.23 In addition, the consultation evidence suggests that less learners would choose to attend a Welsh language sixth form provision, as they may be able to walk to their nearest English language sixth form provision, whereas Welsh medium schools are more geographically dispersed across the County Borough. Respondents suggest that this would mean more pupils would either transfer to a English medium school (nearer their home) or drop out of further education.
- 5.1.24 However, there is no statutory duty to provide transport to learners over the age of 16 years old to English or Welsh schools or colleges. Therefore, in this sense, the proposed policy would partly mitigate against this as it is above the minimum requirement by continuing to provide a service with a proposed charge.
- 5.1.25 If learners choose to use Home to School Transport provision to get to sixth form, the charge would be the same whether they are attending an English medium school, Welsh medium school or Further Education institution, regardless of distance travelled. This demonstrates the Council is promoting education through the medium of Welsh and promoting learner choice.
- 5.1.26 Some learners over the age of 16 are entitled to Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA), an income-assessed payment of £30 per week to help students with the cost of further education. It aims to provide young people with an incentive to earn reward through good attendance and agreed objectives.³ Although the EMA scheme does not make any allowances for the cost of travel to school or college, a recent evaluation of the EMA scheme found that many students use their allowance to fund their transport.⁴ In 2013/14, 2,446 students received EMA in Rhondda Cynon Taf⁵ and, in some areas of the County Borough, up to 75% of learners are eligible. Students could, therefore, use part of their EMA to pay for public transport or Home to School Transport provision.
- 5.1.27 The Welsh Government have recently launched a 'Welsh Young Persons Discounted Travel' scheme to help young people, aged 16-18 years old, to afford travel on local buses and 'TrawsCymru' journeys from 1st September. Should young people attending college or school choose not to use Council Home to School Transport provision, this scheme would help 16-18 year olds afford public transport provision.
- 5.1.28 Although there is no data available, it can also be assumed that a number of learners in further education would use a personal vehicle to get to school or college. Anecdotally, a number of learners in post-16 education use mopeds or cars to travel to school or college.

³ See Student Finance Wales <http://www.studentfinancewales.co.uk/fe/information-for-parents/education-maintenance-allowance.aspx>

⁴ Welsh Government (March 2015) "[Evaluation of the Education Maintenance Allowance \(EMA\) Report.](#)"

⁵ Stats Wales data: <https://statswales.wales.gov.uk/Catalogue/Education-and-Skills/Post-16-Education-and-Training/Student-Support/Educational-Maintenance-Allowances-Further-Education/ApprovedEMAApplications-by-LEA-AwardType>

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5.1.29 As is explored further in Section 9, with regards to the impact on Welsh language provision: if the full age range of the school population is taken into account (3-18 years old), under the proposed policy 12.5% (852) of the Welsh medium pupils would be charged compared to 8.9% (2,478) of the English medium pupils (excluding pupils in Faith Schools). Of those pupils that would be eligible for free home to school transport, 2,762 (40.7%) of the Welsh medium pupils would have free transport compared to 1,997 (8.6%) of the English medium pupils (excluding pupils in Faith Schools).

Note: the figures for English medium education above also exclude the 1,680 pupils in Further Education institutions who would also have to make a contribution to the travel costs.

5.1.30 If the proposed policy is agreed, officers should continue to monitor the number of young people progressing to further education and investigate any decline in figures.

c) Potential impact on children and young people that are absent from school.

5.1.31 A group has been identified through consultation that would potentially be negatively impacted by the proposed policy are those children and young people who do not attend school full-time. This did not relate to pre-compulsory school age children, such as those children in nursery provision; but to the group of pupils that may need to take authorised absence for reasons such as being a young carer or attending regular hospital appointments for a long-term health condition.

5.1.32 Young carers are young people under the age of 25 years old that take responsibility for someone who is ill, disabled, elderly, experiencing mental distress or affected by substance use, or has substantial responsibility for caring for a sibling. They may be providing all of the care or helping someone else provide care. According to the Census (2011), there are 2,509 young carers in Rhondda Cynon Taf. However, the true figure is likely to be higher due to young people not identifying themselves as a 'carer'.

5.1.33 Consultation respondents identified this group as being impacted, due to the proposal that parents / carers would need to state at the beginning of the school year whether they would like to take up Home to School Transport provision, and would be charged for the provision for the whole year. Respondents felt that this was unfair, given that some pupils have authorised reasons why they cannot attend school on certain days.

5.1.34 In order to alleviate this, an application process could be considered that would allow households in exceptional circumstances to provide evidence as to why they needed further support with the proposed charge of Home to School Transport provision.

d) Potential impact on safety.

5.1.35 The safety of children and young people was raised during the consultation on the proposal as a negative impact. Respondents stated that walking or cycling to school posed a risk to children and young people due to road traffic and lighting.

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- 5.1.36 The Local Authority has a duty to assess walking routes. The distance is measured by the shortest available route and the guidance⁶ states that "a route is available if it is safe (as far as reasonably practicable) for a learner with a disability or learning difficulty to walk the route alone or with an accompanying adult if the learner's age and levels of understanding requires this." If the route is not 'available', a learner is entitled to free transport to their nearest suitable school even though the distance from home to school is less than the distance limit applied to his / her age.
- 5.1.37 The Local Authority has a programme of assessing routes for availability, taking into account the factors defined by Welsh Government, such as learner concerns, traffic levels, crossing points and lighting. Assessments will continue following any agreement of a change to provision. In light of new requirements of the Statutory and Operational Guidance (2014) relating to social danger on routes, the Council has established an assessment protocol which has been endorsed by the Cwm Taf Safeguarding Children Board and an agreed set of actions with South Wales Police.

e) Potential impact on pupil choice.

- 5.1.38 With particular reference to parents / carers of pupils attending schools because of denominational preference (Faith Schools) or because of preference for the Welsh language, there was opposition to the proposed policy on the grounds of pupil (and parental) choice. As this potential impact relates to other protected characteristic groups, it is further explored further below.
- 5.1.39 Respondents stated that pupil choice could also be adversely impacted where a young person was deciding to attend their nearest suitable school or a sixth form / college to continue their education post 16 (see section (b) above).

⁶ Welsh Government (June 2014) ['Learner Travel: Statutory Provision and Operational Guidance.'](#)

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5.2 POTENTIAL IMPACT ON ADULTS.

- 5.2.1 Clearly, the proposed policy could also have an impact on the parents and carers of the children affected. Any change concerning children and young people is likely to affect the wider family and those with parental responsibility. Under the Equality Act, therefore, parents / carers of average age would be affected disproportionately by this proposed policy more than other groups of the population.
- 5.2.2 The main themes arising from the consultation in relation to parents and carers were around the **financial impact and affordability of the proposal.**
- 5.2.3 The proposal under consideration is to introduce a subsidised charge of £332.50 per year for discretionary elements of home to school transport provision. This equates to £1.75 per day, £8.75 per week and approximately £111 per term.
- 5.2.4 There is also an element of the proposed policy that includes an assessment of a parent's ability to pay the proposed charge, based on their child(ren) being in receipt of Free School Meals. (A child(ren) may be eligible for Free School Meals if their parents / carers receive certain benefits or support payments. Young people who receive the benefits / support payments in their own right may also be eligible.⁷) Cabinet agreed a proposed level of charge for consultation of £1.00 per day for these households.
- 5.2.5 Cabinet also agreed to consult on a cap on the proposed charges payable for families with more than two children using Home to School Transport be introduced under the proposed policy.
- 5.2.6 Many of the parents / carers consulted felt that the proposed £1.75 per day charge was too high / unreasonable. Whereas others admitted that they would be unable to afford any charge at all.
- 5.2.7 Some respondents also linked being unable to afford the proposed charge with having to transport their children to school, which could have an impact on their employment patterns due to children needing to be dropped off and picked up.
- 5.2.8 Many of the respondents put forward that a £1.00 charge for parents / carers whose child(ren) do receive Free School Meals would also be unaffordable for those families on low incomes / benefit support. But conversely, many people responded to the consultation that families should be treated equally, regardless of whether children receive Free School Meals.
- 5.2.9 There was a recurring theme within the consultation results around levels of charging and the impact on 'working families', who currently do not qualify for Free School Meals but have a low income. Several responses stated that any charging policy would force these families into poverty, due to the household being ineligible for any other help.

⁷ See Welsh Government guidance on Free School Meals eligibility:
<http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/schoolshome/foodanddrink/freeschoolmeals/?lang=en>

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- 5.2.10 It is also likely that any charges introduced would impact on groups of the population who are generally more likely to be in poverty, such as families with disabled parents / carers. For instance, 21% of children in families with at least one disabled member are in poverty, a significantly higher proportion than the 16% of children in families with no disabled member.⁸ In Wales, 26% of people living in a household with at least one disabled adult have a low income, compared to 21% of people living in a household with no disabled adult.⁹
- 5.2.11 Other minority groups of the population, such as Black and Ethnic Minority households, are also more likely to be in poverty (with an income of less than 60 per cent of the median household income) than white British people.¹⁰
- 5.2.12 The proposal includes mitigation around affordability, with the assessment of affordability proposed for those families where the child(ren) is in receipt of Free School Meals and a proposed cap on families with more than two children in receipt of Home to School Transport.
- 5.2.13 However, should the proposed policy be agreed, officers should continue to monitor the process around Home to School Transport charging policy to mitigate any potential negative impact on families. Other local authorities have introduced 'hardship funds' e.g. Leicestershire County Council and Cumbria County Council, which aim to support low income families in meeting the costs of home to school transport. Cabinet could consider the introduction of such a scheme, which could be used in exceptional circumstances.
- 5.2.14 Cabinet should consider how parents / carers would be charged and would be able to pay for the provision, which could help some families in budgeting for expenditure. Appropriate signposting should also be in place, such as to the local Credit Union (which are a non-profit making organisation and can assist in setting up bank accounts and saving plans).
- 5.2.15 Cabinet should also take into account the cumulative impact of service change proposals on particular groups of the population. Parents / carers identified as being potentially impacted by changes to nursery admissions, approved by Cabinet on the 12th February 2015.¹¹ The relevant Equality Impact Assessment found that the proposals (as they were then) on nursery admissions could have a negative impact on parents' ability to work full-time and the affordability of childcare was raised as a potential issue.
- 5.2.16 The affordability of public transport was also raised during the consultation. This was in the context that, for young people entering further education, public transport may be the better option as many learners would not be required to attend school / college every day for the purposes of their course. Therefore, paying for Home to School Transport for a whole year was seen as prohibitive. These respondents felt that public transport costs were very high, and therefore,

⁸ DWP Factsheet *Disability Facts and Figures (2014)* <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/disability-facts-and-figures>

⁹ EHRC *"How fair is Wales?"* (2011) <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/about-us/devolved-authorities/commission-wales/library/how-fair-wales>

¹⁰ Institute of Race Relations

¹¹

<http://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/en/councildemocracy/democracyelections/councillorscommittees/meetings/cabinet/2015/02/12/cabinet12-feb-2015.aspx>

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this might prove unaffordable and discourage learners from attending further education and the number of children and young people not in education, employment or training could increase (see section (b) above).

5.2.17 In proposing this level of charge, officers tried to mitigate the impact of the proposals by taking into account public transport costs, the cost of transporting pupils by car and the ongoing provision of a subsidy provided by the Council. An analysis of possible routes has shown that tickets prices on public transport could range from £1.20 to £5.00 per day (weekly tickets, where available, were more cost effective). The public transport routes are also not always direct and could require learners to walk for part of their journey or use more than one service.

5.2.18 Learners over the age of 16 can also apply to receive EMA and, as suggested by a recent evaluation of the scheme, learners use the allowance to cover personal expenses such as food, equipment, clothing, transport and college trips or educational visits. The evaluation suggests that up to 50% of learners in Wales are eligible.⁴

5.2.19 The Welsh Government 'Young Persons Discounted Travel' scheme could also provide some mitigation around affordability of public transport for young people in sixth form and Further Education. Should young people attending college or school choose not to use Council Home to School Transport provision, this scheme will help 16-18 year olds afford public transport provision.

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6. Protected Group: Marriage / civil partnership

- 6.1 Consultation respondents stated that they felt the proposed policy would impact upon them disproportionately due to their marital status i.e. whether they were single, cohabiting, married or in a civil partnership. When asked for the reasons parents / carers thought they would be impacted more due to this, the recurring theme was around the financial difficulties associated with being a single parent and affording the charge.
- 6.2 In total, there were 13,927 lone parents in Rhonda Cynon Taf at the time of the 2011 Census; less than half of these were classed as being economically active (5,464). In Rhondda Cynon Taf, of those lone parents who were economically active, the majority were working part-time (5,130 in 2011).
- 6.3 Being a lone parent can mean it is more difficult to be in employment and to raise children. Across the UK, for mothers whose youngest child were primary school age (4-10 years old), employment rates were 61% for lone parents and 74% for couples.**Error! Bookmark not defined.**
- 6.4 It has been raised that lone parents on low income, in particular, could be negatively impacted by this proposal. The gradual roll out of the UK Government's welfare reform agenda could also impact on this group, due to changes to benefit entitlements and Universal Credit being introduced. This will mean that claimants receive their benefit on a monthly basis, which could have an impact on budgeting and security of income.
- 6.5 Cabinet should also be mindful that the Equality Impact Assessment for service change proposals on nursery admissions identified a potential negative impact on lone parents.¹¹
- 6.6 As above, Cabinet should consider how parents / carers would be charged and would be able to pay for the provision, which could help some families in budgeting for expenditure. Appropriate signposting should also be in place, such as to the local Credit Union (which are a non-profit making organisation and can assist in setting up bank accounts and saving plans).
- 6.7 The assessment on affordability within the proposed policy for children in receipt of Free School Meals and the proposed cap on parents with more than two children receiving Home to School Transport provision is also a mitigating action. However, some lone parent families may be slightly above the threshold and not qualify. A 'hardship' fund could be considered by Cabinet to support low income households and officers should put in place a way of monitoring the number of applications.
- 6.8 Another common theme was around the impact and affordability of the proposal in a situation where a child or children are living in dual households i.e. where parents or carers do not live together, the child or children could be splitting their week between each parent / carer's household.
- 6.9 Section 19 of the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure (2008) sets out the Local Authority's duties around 'ordinary residence' of a child(ren). The term 'dual

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residence' is used to describe a learner whose parents are not living together, with the learner living partly with each parent, or with a parent and other carer, foster placement or other arrangement.⁶

- 6.10 This translates in practice to the Local Authority having a duty to provide free transport for learners (of dual residence) to their nearest suitable school if the learner is of compulsory school age and the residence(s) meet the statutory distance criteria. If the statutory distance criteria is not met, then the Local Authority still has the option of providing discretionary transport.
- 6.11 Therefore, under the proposed policy, learners of dual residence would be assessed for their eligibility in accordance with both residences nearest to their school. In this instance, consultation respondents felt that it was unfair if one residence was within the proposed chargeable distance for parents / carers to have to pay the full amount towards home to school transport provision when their child(ren) would not be using the bus for one or more day per school week. It was felt that this would disproportionately impact on lone parents, who often have a lower than average income, as outlined above.

7. Protected Group: Race

- 7.1 The consultation respondents felt that this proposal would have a negative impact on the protected characteristic group of 'race' due to the potential difference in the number of Black and Ethnic Minority learners that attend Faith Schools, compared to English or Welsh medium schools, who would be impacted by the Home to School Transport proposed policy.
- 7.2 There are less Faith Schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf than non-Faith Schools; therefore, they are more dispersed geographically across the County Borough. This means that learners are more likely to live further away from a Faith school than a English or Welsh medium school.
- 7.3 Under the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure, Local Authorities do not have a duty to provide transport for learners to a school selected due to their preferred religious denomination. Therefore, there are no statutory distances imposed under the proposal i.e. pupils living more than 2 miles away for primary school and more than 3 miles away for secondary school would continue to be subject to the charge, unlike non-Faith provision for compulsory school age pupils).
- 7.4 However, the proposed policy being considered by Cabinet is to continue to provide transport for pupils attending Faith Schools, subject to a subsidised charge and with built-in means testing. i.e. that transport to Faith Schools for pupils living beyond 1.5 miles (for primary school pupils) and 2 miles (for secondary school pupils) would continue to be provided, but at the charge of £1.75 per day (or £1.00 for pupils receiving Free School Meals).
- 7.5 The transport provision provided to Faith Schools is, therefore, subsidised at a higher level by the Council due to the geographical location of the schools and the distance travelled by some learners. But should the proposed policy be implemented, there would be an equal charge of £1.75 per day for all learners affected.

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7.6 However, consultation respondents objected to the proposal on the grounds that a higher proportion of ethnic minority pupils attend Faith Schools and could be disproportionately affected by the proposal.

7.7 Data on ethnic group is collected by schools and submitted to the Local Education Authority under the Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC).

Please note the following caveats on data: the validity of the PLASC data is dependent on parents disclosing the details of their child's ethnicity and the school correctly inputting this into their systems. Therefore, please note that the data below may not be entirely representative of the true ethnic population.

7.8 Bearing this caveat in mind, current figures show that, of the 16,072 primary school pupils (aged 5 years and over) in Rhondda Cynon Taf:

- 15,548 (96.74%) are White¹² and 524 (3.37%) are Black and Ethnic Minority (BME);
- 12,545 pupils attend English medium primary schools. 391 (3.12%) of those pupils are BME.
- 2,802 pupils attend Welsh medium primary schools. 52 (1.86%) of those pupils are BME.
- 725 pupils attend Faith Schools. 81 (11.17%) of those pupils BME.

Therefore, overall, the majority of BME pupils in Rhondda Cynon Taf do not attend a Faith School; i.e. 15% (81 pupils) of the 524 Black and Ethnic Minority pupils attend Faith primary schools, so 85% (443 pupils) BME pupils attend non-Faith primary schools.

However, the proportion of BME pupils attending Faith primary Schools is higher in overall terms at 11.17% compared to 3.12% and 1.86% for English and Welsh primary schools respectively.

7.9 Current figures show that, of the 15,990 secondary school pupils (aged 11-18 years old) in Rhondda Cynon Taf:

- 15,548 (97.24%) are White and 442 (2.76%) are BME pupils.
- 11,275 pupils attend an English medium secondary school. 320 (2.84%) of those pupils are BME.
- 2,994 pupils attend a Welsh medium secondary school. 29 (0.99%) of those pupils are BME.
- 1,771 pupils attend Faith secondary schools. 93 (5.25%) of those pupils are BME.

In a similar way to the ethnic population of primary schools in Rhonda Cynon Taf, the majority of BME pupils do not attend a Faith School. Of the 442 secondary school BME pupils, 93 (21.04%) attend a Faith School, so 349 (78.96%) attend a non-Faith secondary school.

¹² 'White' refers to 'White British' or 'White Welsh'.

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However, the proportion of BME pupils attending Faith secondary Schools is higher in overall terms, at 5.25%, compared to 2.84% and 0.99% in English and Welsh medium secondary schools respectively.

7.10 Further analysis was undertaken in order to understand the impact of the proposal on this group.

Please note the following caveats on data: the validity of the data is dependent on schools entering the information and doing so correctly. Some assumptions in analysis have been made, due to volume of data but overall impact on the figures should be minimal. Data on ethnic group is also not held for schools outside of the County or Further Education Institutions, therefore, total numbers affected could exceed the figures quoted below. Figures are correct as at June 2015.

This has shown that:

- Of the pupils recorded on the pupil data system, 1,381 were identified as BME.
 - 10,324 pupils in total were transported by Home to School Transport in June 2015. 333 of those pupils were identified as BME. (This does not include 'out of county' pupils).
 - 150 (45%) of the BME pupils transported by Home to School Transport attend Faith primary or secondary schools.
 - Of the 333 pupils transported identified as BME:
 - 121 lived between the discretionary and statutory distances (i.e. between 1.5 and 2 miles for primary school pupils and between 2 and 3 miles for secondary school pupils).
 - Therefore, 212 lived above the statutory distances relevant to their school year, of which 107 attended Faith primary or secondary schools.
 - Therefore, in total, 228 BME pupils would be charged under the current proposed policy (i.e. 121 + 107).
 - 150 (66%) of these 228 pupils who would be charged attend a Faith School; 78 (34%) attend English or Welsh medium education.
- 7.11 Using data from September 2014 and not including pupils travelling to colleges:
- 9,896 pupils in total were transported by Home to School Transport.
 - 2,909 pupils lived between the discretionary and statutory distances imposed by the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure (i.e. between 1.5 and 2 miles for primary school pupils and between 2 and 3 miles for secondary school pupils).

Therefore, although the data above is from different times during the 2014/15 academic year, this would indicate that, of the 2,909 total pupils living between discretionary and statutory distances, 2,788 of the pupils are White British and 121 (4%) are BME.

7.12 Cabinet should consider the potential impact of 'Option L', which may have a disproportionate impact on pupils of Black and Ethnic Minority. Cabinet should consider whether the proposed policy is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

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8. Protected Group: Religion or belief

- 8.1 With specific reference to the potential negative impacts on protected groups, the consultation asked respondents if they felt that the proposals would have more of an impact upon them because of a protected characteristic. The majority of people who responded to this question felt that the proposal discriminated against children, young people and families on the grounds of their religion or belief due to the nature of the statutory provision.
- 8.2 The argument that the proposed policy is discriminatory against Faith Schools was one of the most prominent views put across by consultation respondents, with strong opposition to the perception that Faith Schools would be treated differently under the proposed policy.
- 8.3 Consultation respondents disagreed with the proposed new policy, because this element of the proposed policy could affect a higher proportion of pupils due to Faith Schools being dispersed geographically across the County Borough i.e. pupils are more likely to live further away from a Faith School and, therefore, be subject to the proposed charge. Furthermore, there are no statutory distances imposed i.e. the proposed charge is not capped at those pupils living more than 2 miles away for primary school and more than 3 miles away for secondary school (as it is with mainstream English/Welsh medium provision for compulsory school age pupils). Concerns were raised through the Consultation that this could force families to send their child(ren) to the nearest suitable school, thereby avoiding the proposed charge for Home to School Transport provision and causing a decline in numbers of pupils attending Faith Schools.
- 8.4 Using data from June 2015, 1,227 pupils used Home to School Transport provision to travel to a Faith primary or Secondary School within Rhondda Cynon Taf. This represents approximately 49% of the total primary and secondary Faith School pupils in Rhondda Cynon Taf.
- 8.5 Using data from June 2015, 330 pupils were transported on Home to School Transport to out of county Faith Schools.
- 8.6 Under current proposals, all of these 1,557 pupils would be charged for Home to School Transport provision. Consultation respondents felt that this would threaten the viability of Faith Schools. both within and outside of the County Borough, as parents / carers would choose, or be forced, to send their child(ren) to the nearest suitable school, avoiding the proposed charges for Home to School Transport provision.
- 8.7 Consultation respondents stated that many of the pupils in Faith Schools come from families suffering financial difficulties and deprivation. This was linked to the high number of Black and Ethnic Minority (BME) pupils who choose to attend Faith Schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf and out of county. BME families are more likely to be in poverty (see sections 5 and 7 above). Therefore, it is argued that even fewer families with child(ren) in Faith Schools would be able to afford the charging as those who had child(ren) in Welsh or English medium schools that would be affected by the proposed charge.

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8.8 It must be noted that the Equality Act, so far as it relates to religion or belief-related discrimination, does not apply in relation to anything done in connection with transport to or from school and therefore precludes a claim (challenge) that the proposed policy indirectly discriminates against some individuals on the grounds of the protected characteristic religion or belief.

8.9 It should also be noted that, due to the geographic location of Faith Schools, the transport provision provided is subsidised at a higher level by the Council due to the geographical location of the schools and the distance travelled by some learners. But should the proposed policy be implemented, there would be an equal charge of £1.75 per day for all learners affected (or £1.00 per day for pupils receiving Free School Meals).

8.10 With regards to the potential impact of this proposed policy on the groups outlined in Sections 7 and 8, officers should introduce measures to monitor the effects of the proposal on Faith School provision.

9. Protected Group: Language

9.1 The consultation responses suggest that Welsh schools, the Welsh language and the Welsh language skills of children and young children would be disproportionately impacted upon by the proposed policy.

9.2 The main theme arising from consultation was that, due to there being less Welsh medium schools in the Local Authority, the schools are more geographically dispersed and more pupils attending Welsh medium schools would be affected. This was seen as being an issue for children attending Welsh medium primary school or Welsh medium sixth form provision.

9.3 Consultation respondents felt that the proposed policy would cause parents / carers to send their child to the nearest suitable primary school, which would be more likely to be an English medium primary school, threatening the Welsh language skills within the area and the viability of Welsh medium primary and secondary schools.

9.4 Using current pupil numbers:

- 333 pupils of primary school age live between 1.5 and 2 miles from their Welsh medium school.
- 22 pupils of primary school age attend a school with a Welsh language unit, and live between 1.5 and 2 miles away.
- 2 pupils live between 1.5 and 2 miles away from their English medium primary school.

This demonstrates the fact that Welsh language medium primary schools are more dispersed geographically than English medium primary schools.

9.5 Consultation respondents were concerned that this was discriminatory against the Welsh language as, under the proposed policy, parents would need to make a choice between sending their child(ren) to the local English medium primary school, which is likely to be within walking distance; or sending their child(ren) to a Welsh medium school, which is more likely to be in excess of 1.5 miles away. If the

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child(ren) live between 1.5 and 2 miles away from the Welsh medium primary school, then they would be subject to the proposed charges to use Home to School Transport provision.

- 9.6 It is fair to say that the majority of pupils do not transfer between English and Welsh medium education during the course of their education. But if the full age range of the school population is taken into account (3-18 years old), under the proposed policy 12.5% (852) of the Welsh medium pupils would be charged compared to 8.9% (2,478) of the English medium pupils (excluding pupils in Faith Schools). Of those pupils that would be eligible for free home to school transport, 2,762 (40.7%) of the Welsh medium pupils would have free transport compared to 1,997 (8.6%) of the English medium pupils (excluding pupils in Faith Schools).

Note: the figures for English medium education above also exclude the 1,680 pupils in Further Education institutions who would also have to make a contribution to the travel costs.

- 9.7 The Council has a duty to 'promote access to education and training through the medium of Welsh' and discharges this duty by treating preference for either language equally. The Council has proposed to continue to provide discretionary transport, so pupils would continue to receive free transport if they live further than the statutory distances of 2 miles (for primary school pupils) and 3 miles (for secondary school pupils) from a Welsh medium school. Therefore, the subsidy provided by the Council for pupils attending Welsh medium schools is greater, as the pupils are more likely to live further away.
- 9.8 Therefore, although the proposal is to introduce a charge for primary school pupils living between 1.5 and 2 miles from primary school (currently 333 primary school pupils that attend Welsh medium education), the pupils living more than 2 miles away (currently 1,249 pupils) would continue to receive free transport.
- 9.9 With regards to secondary school, a much higher proportion of children attending English medium schools are affected. This is, again, because there are less Welsh medium schools in the County Borough. Using current pupil numbers:
- There are 4,365 pupils travelling on Home to School Transport to an English medium secondary school.
 - 2,097 secondary school pupils live between 2 and 3 miles from their English medium school and would, therefore, be charged under this proposal. Therefore, the pupils of statutory school age living more than 3 miles away (currently 1,619 pupils) would not be affected.
 - Out of the 2,032 secondary school pupils currently receiving Home to School Transport provision to Welsh medium schools, only 183 pupils live between 2 and 3 miles from the school and would be affected by the proposed charge.

The majority of pupils transported to Welsh medium secondary schools live more than 3 miles away and, therefore, would continue to receive free provision.

- 9.10 However, consultation respondents suggest that if parents / carers are forced to make a choice at primary school age, they are more likely to send their child to an English medium school, closer to their home, to avoid paying for Home to School Transport provision. Respondents suggested that this would threaten the viability

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of Welsh medium secondary schools, as pupils are unlikely to transfer between English and Welsh medium education during their time in school. It was felt that this could threaten the viability of the Welsh medium primary schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf and create a decline in young people learning the Welsh language.

- 9.11 In this way, consultation respondents made reference to the proposal being in direct contrast to the Council's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (2014-17), which aims to ensure Welsh medium education is available to children whose parents / carers want them to receive their education through the medium of Welsh. The Plan contains targets for the numbers of pupils taught in Welsh to increase over the medium term. However, as demonstrated above, the overall impact of pupils affected by the proposed policy throughout their time in school is minimal.
- 9.12 Due to charges being introduced for learners of non-compulsory school age, consultation respondents were also concerned that young people aged 16-18 years old would be less likely to attend a Welsh medium sixth form. This is due to the school being further than 2 miles away from their home and, therefore, they would be subject to charges under the proposed policy. Much of this potential impact is explored in section (b) above, but officers should continue to monitor admission rates to Welsh sixth form provision and investigate any decline in figures.
- 9.13 With regards to the potential impact of this proposed policy on the Welsh language, the Council should introduce measures to monitor the effects of the proposed policy on Welsh medium provision - particularly on pupil admission rates to Welsh medium primary schools and sixth forms.

10. Conclusion

- 10.1 In line with the General Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010), this Equality Impact Assessment has:
- Assessed specific differential impacts that have been identified for each of the protected characteristics;
 - Stated where actions can be considered to minimise or remove any potential negative impacts relating to the proposals;
 - Provided opportunities, where applicable, to advance equality and good relations between different groups.
- 10.2 As such, this Equality Impact Assessment has provided sufficient evidence to demonstrate that due regard has been given to the 'duty' placed on the Council in this respect and set out any grounds based on equality considerations that should be considered as part of the decision on service change proposals in respect of home to school transport provision.
- 10.3 If a decision is taken to implement some or all of the options put forward within the proposal, implementation arrangements will need to have full regard to equality planning requirements, thus ensuring every effort is made to minimise any negative impacts and promote equality.

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Appendix A**Child's Rights Impact Assessment**

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1. IDENTIFY <i>Name of proposal</i>
Home to School Transport policy.
2. MAP <i>Describing what is being proposed, its consequences and goals.</i>
<p>2.1 What is being proposed?</p> <p>The proposal agreed by Cabinet for public consultation was 'Option L' within the Cabinet report, which proposed that a subsidised charge of £1.75 per day be introduced on discretionary provision of Home to School Transport, affecting the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> vi. Primary school pupils of compulsory school age attending at English or Welsh medium school living between the current discretionary distance of 1.5 miles and statutory distance of 2 miles; vii. Secondary school pupils of compulsory school age attending an English or Welsh medium school living the current discretionary distance of 2 miles and statutory distance of 3 miles; viii. Pupils below compulsory school age; ix. Post 16 pupils; x. All Primary and Secondary school pupils attending a Faith school, except where it is the nearest suitable school and is more than the statutory safe walking distance away. <p>Therefore, under 'Option L', the Council would continue to provide discretionary transport provision in excess of the current minimum statutory requirement. However, the discretionary elements of the provision (outlined in points i-v above) would become chargeable, but still a subsidised service.</p> <p>Pupils in English or Welsh medium schools living beyond the statutory distances of 2 miles (primary school pupils) and 3 miles (secondary school pupils) would continue to receive free Home to School Transport.</p> <p>Under the proposal, an assessment of a parent's ability to pay the proposed charge would be introduced, based on their child(ren) being in receipt of Free School Meals. Cabinet agreed a proposed level of charge of £1.00 per day for consultation.</p> <p>Cabinet also agreed to cap on the proposed charges payable for families with more than two children using Home to School Transport be introduced under the proposal.</p> <p>The discretionary elements of Special Education Needs transport would continue as an entirely subsidised, non-charged service.</p> <p>Subject to a Cabinet decision on the proposal, any new policy would be implemented from the</p>

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start of the 2016/17 academic year.

2.2 What is the aim of the proposal?

The aim of the proposal is to reduce spend and enable the Council to meet its statutory duties with regards to setting a balanced budget.

2.3 Who initiated the proposal?

The Director, Education & Lifelong Learning and Group Director, Corporate and Front Line Services. Cabinet have agreed to public consultation on the proposal.

2.4 Who will be responsible for implementing the proposal?

Council officers across the directorates named above.

2.5 What is the legal, police and practice context of the proposal?

As outlined in the Cabinet report (19th May 2015), the following legislative framework applies:

- Welsh Government Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008;
- Equality Act 2010;
- School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 (places a requirement on the Council to produce a Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP))
- Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013;
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

2.6 Which articles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) are relevant?

- Article 3: All organisations concerned with children should work towards what is best for them.
- Article 12: Children have the right to say what they think should happen when adults are making decision that affect them, and to have their opinions taken into account.
- Article 28: Children have a right to an education.

2.7 Has a UNCRC analysis been undertaken when developing the proposal?

The rights of children and young people, particularly the UN seven core aims, have been taken into account.

2.8 What are the resource implications of the proposal?

'Option L' within the Cabinet report would provide a saving of £2.048M, assuming a maximum charge of two children per family and a reduced level of charge for pupils entitled to Free School Meals of £1.00.

3. GATHER

Pulling together relevant information and evidence.

3.1 What relevant information or evidence is available internally?

- Figures are available on the number of children already receiving Home to School Transport

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provision for each school. This gives an indication of the number of children that will be affected.

- Pupil Level Annual School Census data is also available, which provides an approximate of the number of learners defined by their parents as being in a certain ethnic group.
- Assessments of safe walking routes under the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure.
- Assessments of traffic congestion around schools.

3.2 What relevant information or evidence is available externally?

- The implications of proposed policy changes in other Local Authorities e.g. *R v (Diocese of Menevia and others) v City and County of Swansea Council*.
- Consultation responses.
- National statistics.

3.3 Is further information or evidence required?

No.

4. CONSULT

Asking children and young people their views.

4.1 Have children and young people or any other stakeholders been consulted in the development of the proposal?

Prior to the launch of the public consultation period (2nd June 2015), discussions were held between officers to decide the most effective approach to ensure that everyone affected by the proposal would be able to have their say. As a result, a copy of the consultation booklet and covering letter were sent to every household of a primary or secondary school learner (totalling 26,929). The learners in Year 11 (aged 15/16) or above received information addresses to them, also (totalling 7,373).

Copies were also distributed to school and college receptions, the Pupil Referral Units, registered childcare providers, Flying Start provision, Looked After Children (through foster carers), School Governors, College Governors and Headteachers. Copies were made available in public places such as GP surgeries, libraries, leisure centres etc.

A young persons' version of the consultation was developed with young people and distributed to all schools, for School Councils (pupil-led) to meet and discuss the proposals. This was also promoted on the young persons' website, WICID, and School Moodle webpages.

4.2 Is consultation necessary or appropriate?

Yes, consultation is both necessary and appropriate.

4.3 If yes to the above, who should be consulted?

A separate consultation report with this detail included has been produced, attached with these papers.

4.4 Should particular groups of children and young people be consulted for their views?

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A separate consultation report with this detail included has been produced, attached with these papers.

4.5 What format should the consultation take?

A separate consultation report with this detail included has been produced, attached with these papers.

4.6 What questions should be asked?

A separate consultation report with this detail included has been produced, attached with these papers.

5. ANALYSE

Assessing the proposal for its impact on children and young people's rights.

5.1 What impact might the proposal have on the rights of children and young people? (positive or negative)

The articles identified as relevant to this proposal are:

- Article 3: All organisations concerned with children should work towards what is best for them.
- Article 12: Children have the right to say what they think should happen when adults are making decision that affect them, and to have their opinions taken into account.
- Article 28: Children have a right to an education.

Although this proposal represents a change in provision, Rhondda Cynon Taf Council state that the proposed measures continue to be above statutory requirements and exceed provision in neighbouring Local Authorities. The provision will continue under the proposal, albeit at a subsidised charge to some parents / carers / learners, but with an element of means-testing for deprived families.

However, consultation respondents have argued that this proposal opposes Article 28 on the grounds that a 'right to education' should be free, including transportation to the learner's choice of school. The full article reads:

"Article 28

1. States Parties recognize the right of the child to education, and with a view to achieving this right progressively and on the basis of equal opportunity, they shall, in particular:

- (a) Make primary education compulsory and available free to all;
- (b) Encourage the development of different forms of secondary education, including general and vocational education, make them available and accessible to every child, and take appropriate measures such as the introduction of free education and offering financial assistance in case of need;
- (c) Make higher education accessible to all on the basis of capacity by every appropriate means;
- (d) Make educational and vocational information and guidance available and accessible to all children;
- (e) Take measures to encourage regular attendance at schools and the reduction of drop-out rates.

2. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that school discipline is administered in a

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manner consistent with the child's human dignity and in conformity with the present Convention.

3. States Parties shall promote and encourage international cooperation in matters relating to education, in particular with a view to contributing to the elimination of ignorance and illiteracy throughout the world and facilitating access to scientific and technical knowledge and modern teaching methods. In this regard, particular account shall be taken of the needs of developing countries."

(Taken from the UN Human Rights webpage: <http://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx>)

Rhondda Cynon Taf Council state that they fulfil these requirements (particularly Article 28 (b)) by continuing to offer transport (exceeding statutory requirements) to Faith Schools and promoting access to Welsh medium education by proposing the same criteria on transport provision as English medium education.

With regards to Article 12, children and young people will be consulted once more on this proposal and their views will be taken into account.

5.2 Will the rights of one group in particular of children be affected?

Consultation respondents have argued that children and young people attending Faith School; Welsh medium school and post-16 students will be most affected by the proposal.

5.3 Are there competing interests between groups of children, or between children and other groups?

No.

5.4 How does the proposal relate to, promote or inhibit the provisions of the UNCRC, other relevant international treaties and standards or domestic law? (please refer to section 2.6)

Please see response to 5.1.

5.5 How does the proposal relate to the Concluding Observations of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child on the implementation of the UNCRC?

The UN Committee's Concluding Observations and their implementation are applicable to the Welsh Government (further information is available here):

<http://www.childcomwales.org.uk/en/uncrcconcludingobservations/>

5.6 How does the proposal contribute to the achievement of national goals for children and young people?

The Welsh Government have adopted the seven core aims of the UNCRC as the national goals for children and young people. These are:

1. have a flying start in life
2. have a comprehensive range of education and learning opportunities
3. enjoy the best possible health and are free from abuse, victimisation and exploitation
4. have access to play, leisure, sporting and cultural activities

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5. are listened to, treated with respect, and have their race and cultural identity recognised
6. have a safe home and a community which supports physical and emotional wellbeing
7. are not disadvantaged by poverty.

These aims are adopted locally in Local Authority decision-making processes and the proposal does relate to Aims 1; 2 and 3 around the potential health and wellbeing benefits associated with the proposal i.e. increased walking / cycling to school.

5.7 Is there disagreement as to the likely impact of the proposal on the rights of children and young people?

The consultation on this proposal has identified that some members of the public feel this proposal could impact on the learning and development of children and their access to education. Further debate is provided in the main body of the Equality Impact Assessment.

5.8 Is the proposal the best way of achieving its aims, taking into account children's rights?

In order to meet its statutory duty of setting a balanced budget, the Council must bridge a budget gap. Given the scale of this, every service area (that is not statutory) is being reviewed for potential service changes or cuts.

5.9 Can alternatives to the proposal be suggested?

Alternatives to the proposals can be suggested and will be considered by Cabinet when they come to their decision.

5.10 What compensatory measures may be needed to avoid / mitigate a negative impact?

The Equality Impact Assessment provides some compensatory measures to be considered by Cabinet.

5.11 What overall impact will the proposal entail for other policy areas or agendas, or other professionals or groups in their work with children?

Schools will be affected by this proposal.

6. RECOMMEND

Drawing together conclusions and making recommendations.

6.1 What overall conclusions have been reached?

- This proposal relates predominantly to three Articles of the UNCRC.
- This proposal relates predominantly to Aims 1 and 2 of the national seven core aims.
- External and internal evidence and information has been used to make an assessment on the likely impact of proposals on children and young people and other protected groups (see Cabinet report and Equality Impact Assessment).

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6.2 What recommendations should be made?

Recommendations include:

- Cabinet members should consider this assessment in making their decision on the proposal.
- Cabinet members should consider the consultation carried out with children and young people on the proposal.
- Should the proposal be implemented, monitoring should be put in place to ensure mitigation of any adverse impact on children and young people.

6.3 Who should be informed of the recommendations?

Elected members and officers have been informed of these recommendations.

6.4 Does the assessment have any gaps in information, data collection or expertise?

No.

6.5 Is further research or consultation required?

No.

6.6 Are there any other relevant issues?

No, these are included in the Equality Impact Assessment.

7. PUBLICISE

Making the results of the impact assessment known.

7.1 Should the assessment be made available publicly?

Yes, the assessment will be made available publicly as part of papers provided to Cabinet when they come to make their decision on the proposal.

7.2 Should particular individuals or groups be made aware of the assessment?

Yes, both Elected members and officers will be made aware of the assessment. The papers will be made available to the public, also.

7.3 Has the assessment and feedback been provided to those who were consulted with?

Yes, the feedback is provided on the Council's website and publicised to those who took part in the consultation.

8. MONITOR

Monitoring and evaluation of the proposal.

8.1 Is follow-up evaluation and monitoring of the proposal required?

Yes. As part of regular monitoring processes within the Local Authority, should the proposal be agreed, the impact of the proposal should be monitored, in terms of educational achievement,

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admission rates and appeals to the charges.

8.2 Have the recommendations made as a result of the assessment been considered or acted upon?

The recommendations will be considered by Elected members when they come to make their decision.

8.3 Is research required to assess the proposal's impact on children and young people, once implemented?

See above.

Appendix 6

APPENDIX 6**ANALYSIS OF ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF OPTIONS**

Option	Advantages	Disadvantages	Recommended Option?
A Status Quo i.e. retain existing service provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Would retain provision for approximately 11,690 pupils. ○ Meets the requirements of the Learner Travel (Wales) measure 2008 in relation to promotion of access to Welsh medium education. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Discretionary transport costs the Authority £2.6m per year (£4.2m including the additional costs of transport to Welsh schools required under the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008). ○ Current policy does not allow choice of school for pupils attending non-voluntary aided English schools. 	<p>Not proposed as the costs of discretionary provision as currently provided are considered to be unaffordable.</p> <p>Current provision is in excess of statutory requirements.</p>
B Provide mainstream English, Welsh and Faith primary school transport above statutory distance only (>2 miles).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Could encourage pupils/parents to walk to school – Health and environmental benefits. ○ Meets the requirements of the Learner Travel (Wales) measure 2008 in relation to promotion of access to Welsh medium education. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Increased congestion on roads if pupils transported by car. ○ Potential impact on local bus companies. ○ Proposal would need to be phased in over a number of years, delaying savings to the Council. 	<p>Not proposed as these options would result in the complete removal of transport provision for 2,975 pupils. This could have a negative impact on school attendance.</p>
C Provide mainstream English, Welsh and Faith secondary school and college transport above statutory distance only (>3 miles).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Policy applies to all students above the statutory distances. ○ Delivers total savings of £0.9m 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If these options are considered in isolation discretionary provision would cost the Authority £1.7 million per year when fully implemented 	<p>If these options were introduced pupils who already have a transport entitlement would continue to receive it until they complete the phase of education they are in. Therefore full savings would not be achievable for at least six years.</p>

Option	Advantages	Disadvantages	Recommended Option?	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Potential challenges on “available” routes. ○ Will affect 419 primary school pupils and 2,556 secondary school pupils. ○ Potential impact on school attendance levels. 	<p>If implemented these options would deliver combined savings of £0.9m per year, but would not be fully realised until the 2023/24 financial year.</p>	
D	<p>Removal of all pre-compulsory school age travel.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Could encourage pupils/parents to walk to school – Health and environmental benefits. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Increased congestion on roads if pupils transported by car. ○ No savings as buses will need to run at start and end of day for compulsory age primary school pupils. ○ Potential challenges on “available” routes. ○ Will affect 560 pupils. ○ If this option is considered in isolation, discretionary provision would cost the Authority £2.6m per year when fully implemented 	<p>Not proposed as this option would not result in any savings due to the number of pupils travelling (560 pupils on 66 individual routes) and the current capacity available on buses running at the start and end of the school day.</p>
E	<p>Removal of all mainstream English, Welsh and Faith post-16 transport.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Could encourage pupils to walk to school – Health and environmental benefits. ○ Post-16 students receive Education Maintenance Allowance (where appropriate), which is intended to help with day-to-day costs including travel. ○ Delivers savings of £0.8m 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ May discourage students continuing into post-16 education. ○ Potential impact on local bus companies. ○ Could affect choice of school/college and course. ○ Alternative public transport routes may not be available. 	<p>Not proposed as this option would result in the complete removal of transport provision for 3,089 pupils. Some journeys will not be on direct public transport routes, reducing the number of alternative travel options for pupils. This could discourage pupils from continuing education</p>

Option	Advantages	Disadvantages	Recommended Option?
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Potential impact on capacity of schools/colleges. ○ Potential challenges on “available” routes. ○ Will affect 3,089 students. ○ If this option is considered in isolation, discretionary provision would cost the Authority £1.8m per year when fully implemented 	<p>in sixth-forms or colleges.</p> <p>If implemented this option would deliver savings of £0.8m per year, but would not be fully realised until the 2018/19 financial year.</p>
F	Removal of all transport to primary Voluntary Aided (Faith) schools (where not closest suitable school).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Could encourage pupils/parents to walk to school – Health and environmental benefits. ○ Current policy does not allow choice of school for pupils attending non-voluntary aided English schools. Removing this provision would ensure the policy is equitable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Alternative commercial routes may not be available - Faith school pupils generally travel further than non-Faith pupils. ○ Potential impact on capacity of mainstream English/Welsh Medium schools. <p>Not proposed as these options would result in the complete removal of transport provision for 1,635 pupils. Some journeys will not be on direct public transport routes, reducing the number of alternative travel options for pupils. This could have a negative impact on school attendance.</p>
G	Removal of all transport to secondary Voluntary Aided (Faith) schools (where not closest suitable school).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Delivers total savings of £1.1m 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Increased congestion on roads if pupils transported by car. ○ Potential impact on local bus companies. ○ Could affect choice of school/college and course. ○ Proposal would need to be phased in over a number of years, delaying savings to the Council. <p>If these options were introduced pupils who already have a transport entitlement would continue to receive it until they complete the phase of education they are in. Therefore full savings would not be achievable for at least six years.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Potential challenges on

Option	Advantages	Disadvantages	Recommended Option?	
		<p>“available” routes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Will affect 591 primary school pupils and 1,044 secondary school pupils. ○ May impact on viability of Voluntary Aided (Faith) schools. ○ Potential impact on school attendance levels. ○ If these options are considered in isolation discretionary provision would cost the Authority £1.5 million per year when fully implemented. 	<p>If implemented these options would deliver combined savings of £1.1m per year, but would not be fully realised until the 2023/24 financial year.</p>	
H	<p>Removal of all transport to primary Welsh schools (where not closest suitable school).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Could encourage pupils/parents to walk to school – Health and environmental benefits. ○ Delivers savings of £1.8m 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Increased congestion on roads if pupils transported by car. ○ Risk of not meeting requirements of the Learner Travel (Wales) measure 2008 in relation to promotion of access to Welsh medium education. ○ Potential impact on local bus companies. ○ Potential impact on school attendance levels. ○ Could affect choice of school/college and course. ○ Proposal would need to be phased in over a number of 	<p>Not proposed as these options would result in the complete removal of transport provision for 3,614 pupils. Some journeys will not be on direct public transport routes, reducing the number of alternative travel options for pupils. This could have a negative impact on school attendance.</p>
I	<p>Removal of all transport to secondary Welsh schools (where not closest suitable school)</p>			<p>There is a risk of not meeting the requirements of the Learner Travel (Wales) measure 2008 in relation to promotion of access to Welsh medium education.</p>

Option	Advantages	Disadvantages	Recommended Option?	
		<p>years, delaying savings to the Council.</p> <p>Likely to be challenges on “available” routes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Will affect 1,582 primary school pupils and 2,032 secondary school pupils. ○ May impact on viability of Welsh Medium Schools ○ Potential impact on capacity at English Medium Schools ○ If these options are considered in isolation discretionary provision would cost the Authority £0.8 million per year when fully implemented 	<p>If these options were introduced pupils who already have a transport entitlement would continue to receive it until they complete the phase of education they are in. Therefore full savings would not be achievable for at least six years.</p> <p>If implemented these options would deliver combined savings of £1.8m per year, but would not be fully realised until the 2023/24 financial year.</p>	
J	<p>Removal of all discretionary provision.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Equality of provision to all pupils, in line with statutory requirements. ○ Could encourage pupils/parents to walk to school – Health and environmental benefits. ○ Delivers £4.2m savings ○ As this option removes discretionary provision there would be no subsidy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Increased congestion on roads if pupils transported by car. ○ Impact on capacity of schools. ○ Potential impact on local bus companies. ○ Risk of not meeting requirements of the Learner Travel (Wales) measure 2008 in relation to promotion of access to Welsh medium education. ○ Potential impact on school attendance levels. ○ Proposal would need to be 	<p>Not proposed as this option would result in the complete removal of transport provision for 9,604 pupils. Some journeys will not be on direct commercial routes, reducing the number of alternative travel options for pupils. This could have a negative impact on school attendance.</p> <p>There is a risk of not meeting the requirements of the Learner Travel (Wales) measure 2008 in relation to promotion of access to Welsh medium education.</p>

Option	Advantages	Disadvantages	Recommended Option?	
		<p>phased in over a number of years, delaying savings to the Council.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Potential challenges on “available” routes. ○ Will affect 9,604 pupils. ○ May impact on viability of some schools. 	<p>If these options were introduced pupils who already have a transport entitlement would continue to receive it until they complete the phase of education they are in. Therefore full savings would not be achievable for at least six years.</p> <p>If implemented this option would deliver savings of £4.2m per year, but would not be fully realised until the 2023/24 financial year.</p>	
K	Removal of all discretionary provision except to Welsh schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Could encourage pupils/parents to walk to school – Health and environmental benefits. ○ Meets the requirements of the Learner Travel (Wales) measure 2008 in relation to promotion of access to Welsh medium education. ○ Delivers savings of £2.6m ○ As this option removes discretionary provision there would be no subsidy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Increased congestion on roads if pupils transported by car. ○ May impact on viability of some schools and capacity issues in others. ○ Potential impact on local bus companies. ○ Could affect school attendance. ○ Proposal would need to be phased in over a number of years, delaying savings to the Council. ○ Potential challenges on “available” routes. 	<p>Not proposed as this option would result in the complete removal of transport provision for 7,141 pupils. Some journeys will not be on direct commercial routes, reducing the number of alternative travel options for pupils. This could have a negative impact on school attendance.</p> <p>If these options were introduced pupils who already have a transport entitlement would continue to receive it until they complete the phase of education</p>

Option	Advantages	Disadvantages	Recommended Option?	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Will affect 7,141 pupils. 	<p>they are in. Therefore full savings would not be achievable for at least six years.</p> <p>If implemented this option would deliver savings of £2.6m per year, but would not be fully realised until the 2023/24 financial year.</p>	
<p>L</p>	<p>Introduce a charge towards the discretionary elements of the Council's Home to School Transport provision.</p> <p>The proposed charge payable by each pupil would be £1.75 per day.</p> <p>Level of savings (income) depending on charge as follows:</p> <p>£1.00 per day = £1.29m</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Continued availability of transport options in line with current discretionary provision. ○ Less risk to capacity and viability of schools than with provision at statutory levels only. ○ May not result in significant increase in congestion levels. ○ Could encourage pupils/parents to walk to school – Health and environmental benefits. ○ Meets the requirements of the Learner Travel (Wales) measure 2008 in relation to promotion of access to Welsh medium education. ○ Proposal could be implemented in shorter time frame than other options. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Requires additional administration support to manage the process and collect income. ○ Level of demand will not become apparent until the policy is implemented. ○ Could affect choice of school/college and course. ○ Potential impact on local bus companies. ○ Potential impact on school attendance, capacities and viability. ○ Discretionary provision still subsidised (dependent upon level of charge) ○ Possibility of challenges to “available” routes. ○ Potential hardship issues. ○ Will affect 7,141 pupils. ○ If this option is considered in isolation discretionary provision would cost the 	<p><u>PROPOSED PREFERRED OPTION</u></p> <p>This option would continue to offer transport in excess of the statutory minimum and provides an equitable service to pupils and students within the current discretionary limits. Whereas with removal of discretionary transport except to Welsh schools full annual savings would not be achievable until 2023/24, charging £1.75 per day towards discretionary provision would achieve a similar level of savings but would be realised in a much shorter timescale. The Council would still be subsidising the service at this level. A charge would apply for 7,141 pupils and students</p>

Option	Advantages	Disadvantages	Recommended Option?
<p>£1.50 per day = £1.93m £1.75 per day = £2.25m £2.00 per day = £2.58m £2.25 per day = £2.04m</p> <p>Note: assumes full take up of option to purchase seats with no allowance for reduction in demand as charge increases</p> <p><i>Members to consider option of introducing a reduced charge for example by way of receiving Free School Meals</i></p>		<p>Authority £0.3 million per year if the charge was set at £1.75</p>	<p>It meets the requirements of the Learner Travel (Wales) measure 2008 including in relation to the promotion of access to Welsh medium education.</p> <p>If implemented this option would deliver savings (income) of £2.3m per year, which would be fully realised by the 2017/18 financial year.*</p> <p><i>*The savings of £2.3m per year reflect each pupil paying £1.75 and no deductions by way of a reduced charge, for example, payable by those pupils receiving Free School Meals.</i></p>

Notes:

The number of pupils included in the table above are as at September 2014. The difference in the number of pupils affected in options J (Removal of all discretionary provision) and K (Removal of all discretionary provision except to Welsh schools) is 2,463. This does not equal the total number of Welsh school pupils shown in options H & I (3,614) as some pupils would not be eligible for transport in any of these options, these being:

Pre-compulsory school age children ; Pupils living under the statutory distance (2 miles for primary schools, 3 miles for secondary schools); and Post 16 pupils.

Appendix 7

APPENDIX 7**ANALYSIS OF ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS IDENTIFIED/SUGGESTED IN HOME TO SCHOOL CONSULTATION FEEDBACK**

SUGGESTED OPTION (PLEASE NOTE THESE HAVE BEEN INTERPRETED BY OFFICERS BASED ON THE FEEDBACK PROVIDED)	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
<p>All sectors of education whether faith based, Welsh Medium or English Medium schools to be charged the same amount and from the same boundary limits of 2 or 3 miles.</p> <p>Officer understanding of this proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - English medium schools – Charge between discretionary & statutory distances (i.e. provide free transport beyond 2 (primary) / 3 (secondary) miles). - Welsh medium Schools - Charge between discretionary distances & provide free transport beyond 2 (primary) / 3 (secondary) miles. - Faith Schools – Charge between discretionary distances & provide free transport beyond 2 (primary / 3 (secondary) miles). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent transport policy applicable to all pupils (English, Welsh & Faith). • Transport would be guaranteed for all pupils over the current discretionary distances (with charge for pupils between discretionary and statutory distances). • Continued availability of transport options in line with current discretionary provision. • May not result in significant increase in congestion levels. • Could encourage pupils/parents to walk to school – Health and environmental benefits. • Likely to meet the requirements of the Learner Travel (Wales) measure 2008 in relation to promotion of access to Welsh medium education. • Proposal could be implemented in shorter time frame than complete removal options. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would reduce level of savings being achieved. Offsetting savings would need to be found elsewhere. • Would affect approximately 5,500 pupils. • Requires additional administration support to manage the process and collect income. • Level of demand will not become apparent until the policy is implemented. • Could affect choice of school/college and course. • Potential impact on local bus companies. • Potential impact on school capacities and viability, although less than full removal of discretionary transport • Discretionary provision still subsidised (dependent upon level of charge). • Possibility of challenges to “available” routes. • Potential hardship issues.

SUGGESTED OPTION (PLEASE NOTE THESE HAVE BEEN INTERPRETED BY OFFICERS BASED ON THE FEEDBACK PROVIDED)	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
<p>Charge all parents regardless of their faith, the same amount for their child to attend school</p> <p>Officer understanding of this proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - English Medium Schools – Charge all pupils (incl those pupils required to be provided free transport under the statutory provisions of the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure). - Welsh medium schools – Charge all pupils. - Faith schools – Charge all pupils. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 the Council is required to transport pupils attending 'nearest suitable school' if living more than 2 miles for primary age and 3 miles for secondary age pupils. Therefore, a large number of pupils could not legally be charged.
<p>Continue to provide transport to both Welsh language schools and faith schools, but do so for all pupils on a subsidised rather than wholly free basis.</p> <p>Officer understanding of this proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - English – All pupils free / Charge between discretionary and statutory distances - Welsh – Charge all - Faith – Charge all 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent transport policy applicable to Welsh and Faith school pupils. • Continued availability of transport options in line with current discretionary provision. • Could encourage pupils/parents to walk to school – Health and environmental benefits. Although due to longer distances travelled by Welsh & Faith school pupils the changes would be marginal. • Proposal could be implemented in shorter time frame than complete removal options. • As more pupils charged for transport the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk of not meeting requirements of the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 in relation to promotion of access to Welsh medium education due to difference in Welsh & English school provision. • Requires additional administration support to manage the process and collect income. • Level of demand will not become apparent until the policy is implemented. • Could affect choice of school/college and course.

SUGGESTED OPTION (PLEASE NOTE THESE HAVE BEEN INTERPRETED BY OFFICERS BASED ON THE FEEDBACK PROVIDED)	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
	<p>annual charge could be reduced.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential impact on local bus companies. • Potential impact on school capacities and viability, although less than full removal of discretionary transport. Could put pressure on capacity in English schools. • Discretionary provision still subsidised (dependent upon level of charge) • Possibility of challenges to “available” routes. • Potential hardship issues.
<p>Continue to provide transport to both Welsh language schools and faith schools, but do so for all on a subsidised basis provided they are not eligible for free school meals. The parents of those who are eligible should not have to pay anything.</p> <p>Officer understanding of this proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - English – All pupils free / Charge between discretionary and statutory distances except FSM pupils - Welsh – Charge all except FSM pupils - Faith – Charge all except FSM pupils 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent transport policy applicable to Welsh and Faith school pupils. • Continued availability of transport options in line with current discretionary provision. • May not result in significant increase in congestion levels. • Could encourage pupils/parents to walk to school – Health and environmental benefits. Although due to longer distances travelled by Welsh & Faith school pupils the changes would be marginal. • Proposal could be implemented in shorter time frame than complete removal options. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk of not meeting requirements of the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 in relation to promotion of access to Welsh medium education due to difference in Welsh & English school provision. • Would reduce level of savings being achieved. Offsetting savings would need to be found elsewhere. • Requires additional administration support to manage the process and collect income. • Level of demand will not become apparent until the policy is implemented. • Could affect choice of school/college and course. • Potential impact on local bus

SUGGESTED OPTION (PLEASE NOTE THESE HAVE BEEN INTERPRETED BY OFFICERS BASED ON THE FEEDBACK PROVIDED)	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
		<p>companies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential impact on school capacities and viability, although less than full removal of discretionary transport. Could put pressure on capacity in English schools. • Discretionary provision still subsidised (dependent upon level of charge) • Possibility of challenges to “available” routes. • Potential hardship issues. • Significant number of respondents during the consultation commented that lower-earning people who are not entitled to Free school meals are the hardest hit under this proposal.
<p>Implement changes only for new pupils, admitted to denominational schools in the future, would at least enable families to make a fair assessment of their ability to afford the Council’s charges for school transport.</p> <p>Officer understanding of this proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - As per Option L save for amended policy being applicable to new pupils only 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same advantages as option L • Could help decision on school choice for pupils starting/changing schools in next year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same disadvantages as option L • Would delay savings being achieved by up to 6 years. Offsetting savings would need to be found elsewhere.

SUGGESTED OPTION (PLEASE NOTE THESE HAVE BEEN INTERPRETED BY OFFICERS BASED ON THE FEEDBACK PROVIDED)	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
<p>If charging to reduce the subsidy is adopted consideration be given to reducing the level of payment and introducing them in phases over a 2 year period.</p> <p>Officer understanding of this proposal: - As per Option L save for a phased implementation over 2 years</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same advantages as option L • Would give parents/pupils additional time to prepare for costs. • Could help decision on school choice for pupils starting/changing schools in next 2 years. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same disadvantages as option L • Would delay savings being achieved by 2 years. Offsetting savings would need to be found elsewhere in a short period of time. • Reduced charges would require offsetting savings to be found elsewhere.
<p>Delay any implementation of Cabinet's final approved scheme to September 2017</p> <p>Officer understanding of this proposal: - As per Option L save for implementation from 09/2017</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same advantages as option L • Pupils would benefit from free transport for a further year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same disadvantages as option L • Would delay savings being achieved by 1 year. Offsetting savings would need to be found elsewhere.

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APPENDIX 8

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APPENDIX 8

Daily Charge (£)	Annual Income £'000
1.00	1,289
1.05	1,353
1.10	1,418
1.15	1,482
1.20	1,547
1.25	1,611
1.30	1,676
1.35	1,740
1.40	1,805
1.45	1,869
1.50	1,933
1.55	1,998
1.60	2,062
1.65	2,127
1.70	2,191
1.75	2,256

FSM Charge	Full Charge																								
	0.50	0.55	0.60	0.65	0.70	0.75	0.80	0.85	0.90	1.00	1.05	1.10	1.15	1.20	1.25	1.30	1.35	1.40	1.45	1.50	1.55	1.60	1.65	1.70	1.75
0.00	555	611	666	722	777	833	889	944	1,000	1,111	1,166	1,222	1,277	1,333	1,388	1,444	1,499	1,555	1,611	1,666	1,722	1,777	1,833	1,888	1,944
0.25	600	655	711	767	822	878	933	989	1,044	1,155	1,211	1,266	1,322	1,377	1,433	1,488	1,544	1,600	1,655	1,711	1,766	1,822	1,877	1,933	1,988
0.30	609	664	720	775	831	887	942	998	1,053	1,164	1,220	1,275	1,331	1,386	1,442	1,497	1,553	1,608	1,664	1,720	1,775	1,831	1,886	1,942	1,997
0.35	618	673	729	784	840	895	951	1,006	1,062	1,173	1,229	1,284	1,340	1,395	1,451	1,506	1,562	1,617	1,673	1,728	1,784	1,840	1,895	1,951	2,006
0.40	627	682	738	793	849	904	960	1,015	1,071	1,182	1,238	1,293	1,349	1,404	1,460	1,515	1,571	1,626	1,682	1,737	1,793	1,848	1,904	1,960	2,015
0.45	636	691	747	802	858	913	969	1,024	1,080	1,191	1,246	1,302	1,358	1,413	1,469	1,524	1,580	1,635	1,691	1,746	1,802	1,857	1,913	1,968	2,024
0.50	644	700	756	811	867	922	978	1,033	1,089	1,200	1,255	1,311	1,366	1,422	1,478	1,533	1,589	1,644	1,700	1,755	1,811	1,866	1,922	1,977	2,033
0.55	-	709	764	820	876	931	987	1,042	1,098	1,209	1,264	1,320	1,375	1,431	1,486	1,542	1,597	1,653	1,709	1,764	1,820	1,875	1,931	1,986	2,042
0.60	-	-	773	829	884	940	996	1,051	1,107	1,218	1,273	1,329	1,384	1,440	1,495	1,551	1,606	1,662	1,717	1,773	1,829	1,884	1,940	1,995	2,051
0.65	-	-	-	838	893	949	1,004	1,060	1,115	1,227	1,282	1,338	1,393	1,449	1,504	1,560	1,615	1,671	1,726	1,782	1,837	1,893	1,949	2,004	2,060
0.70	-	-	-	-	902	958	1,013	1,069	1,124	1,235	1,291	1,347	1,402	1,458	1,513	1,569	1,624	1,680	1,735	1,791	1,846	1,902	1,957	2,013	2,069
0.75	-	-	-	-	-	967	1,022	1,078	1,133	1,244	1,300	1,355	1,411	1,467	1,522	1,578	1,633	1,689	1,744	1,800	1,855	1,911	1,966	2,022	2,077
0.80	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,031	1,087	1,142	1,253	1,309	1,364	1,420	1,475	1,531	1,587	1,642	1,698	1,753	1,809	1,864	1,920	1,975	2,031	2,086
0.85	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,096	1,151	1,262	1,318	1,373	1,429	1,484	1,540	1,595	1,651	1,706	1,762	1,818	1,873	1,929	1,984	2,040	2,095
0.90	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,160	1,271	1,327	1,382	1,438	1,493	1,549	1,604	1,660	1,715	1,771	1,826	1,882	1,938	1,993	2,049	2,104
0.95	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,280	1,336	1,391	1,447	1,502	1,558	1,613	1,669	1,724	1,780	1,835	1,891	1,946	2,002	2,058	2,113
1.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,289	1,344	1,400	1,456	1,511	1,567	1,622	1,678	1,733	1,789	1,844	1,900	1,955	2,011	2,066	2,122

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