

Transport Consultation

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Change log V1.3	Bullet added to exec summary regarding petition after request from Gerry Hudson

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1. Transport consultation Executive Summary

- Over 2,200 children young people and adults in total participated in the consultation with over 400 adults, children and young people participating in direct face-to-face meetings.
- The consultation sought views on a number of proposed changes to providing funding for the transport for children and young people to their place of education; statutory as well as discretionary.
- Views were, nevertheless specifically sought where the funding is currently discretionary. These areas are: transport to faith schools; post 16 transport to mainstream schools/colleges; post 16 transport for students with SEN (a statement of special educational need) and transport to not the nearest school.
- The consultation used a wide range of different engagement processes including: an online survey, a children's survey; a focus groups for SEN pupils and their parents and school staff; several Q&A sessions open to all interested parties; an email address to submit comments and recommendations; a specific session with the Leeds Youth Council and an OBA (outcome based accountability) event.
- In addition a petition was received from a faith group containing 1,460 signatures of residents, students and workers. This was formally acknowledged in writing to the sender with the proposal that the content would be taken into account in the overall analysis of the consultation. The petition was as follows "to retain free transport to/from home and school for children attending their nearest faith school on the basis of their denomination or faith.
- Of the 1,601 adult survey responses:
 - 80% **agreed or strongly agreed** that post 16 discretionary transport for SEN should continue, and 8% **disagreed or strongly disagreed** that this funding should continue
 - 70% **agreed or strongly agreed** that Post 16 discretionary transport to mainstream schools and colleges should continue to be funded, and 19% **disagreed or strongly disagreed** that this funding should continue
 - 67% **agreed or strongly agreed** that funding of transport to faith schools should continue, and 25% **disagreed or strongly disagreed** that this funding should continue
 - 64% **agreed or strongly agreed** that the council should continue to fund discretionary travel to a school which is not the nearest appropriate school, and 18% **disagreed or strongly disagreed** that this funding should continue.
- Of the 26% respondents that stated that they would **not** be affected at all by any of the proposed transport changes:
 - 73% **agreed or strongly agreed** that post 16 discretionary transport for SEN should continue to be funded, and 13% **disagreed or strongly disagreed** that that this funding should continue
 - 51% **agreed or strongly agreed** that Post 16 discretionary transport to mainstream schools and colleges should continue to be funded, and 36% **disagreed or strongly disagreed** that that this funding should continue
 - 35% **agreed or strongly agreed** that funding of transport to faith schools should continue, and 54% **disagreed or strongly disagreed** that this funding should continue.
 - 49% **agreed or strongly agreed** that discretionary transport to a school which is not the nearest should continue to be funded and 32% **disagreed or strongly disagreed** that that this funding should continue
- When comparing the 'not affected' group to the whole survey cohort the only statement which showed similar levels of support across both groups was the continuation of post 16 SEN (a difference of less than 10% between the two groups). In both groups the continuation of SEN provision was the most commonly supported option.
- Support for continuation of transport provision to faith schools differed most between the two groups with 32% less support for this to continue from the 'not affected' group compared to the whole cohort.
- Support for the continuation of post 16 transport to mainstream provision was supported less by the 'not affected' group compared to the whole cohort (19% difference).

- Support for the continuation of transport to not the nearest provision was supported less by the 'not affected' group compared to the whole cohort (15% difference).
- The most favoured options to provide transport for 5-16 year olds with SEN were: 'where absolutely necessary provide taxi/place or minibus for all journeys between home and school', followed by 'provide independent travel training', and the least favoured option was 'parents make their own arrangements'.
- Children and young people participating in the SEN focus groups felt that changes to their transport provision would have the following impacts:
 - no longer able to attend provision
 - it would affect their independence
 - they would feel less safe and
 - it would make transport more complicated.
- Responses to the children's survey mirrored the concerns mentioned in the SEN focus groups but also highlighted that children were concerned about financial implications, lack of closer appropriate schools and safety of public transport.
- Consultation respondents felt that the proposed changes would have the following impacts:
 - pressure on family finance;
 - difficulties around working patterns and childcare
 - impact on the safety
 - independence and wellbeing of children (e.g. stress of more complicated journey, potential move of school, parental concern about safety)
 - cause attendance issues
 - lead to increased cars on the road
 - impact on admission processes and
 - not help us achieved the ambition of being a child friendly city.
- The most common first choice of services that should continue were transport to faith schools (42%) and post 16 transport for SEN (32%). The response that was most commonly ranked lowest (i.e. least preferred option) was to stop providing any of the discretionary transport services that have been considered by this consultation.
- Across all consultation approaches respondents were asked to provide recommendations on how these services could be improved. Common responses included:
 - do not change current funding arrangements
 - make processes/transport more cost efficient
 - introduce some level of charging – possible means testing or subsidising based on income
 - review all other possible transport options (including bus passes) that could be provided
 - cut others services across the council to enable funding for these transport services to continue
 - any changes should be phased
 - current service could be offered to parents at cost price
 - provide reduced cost public transport for children.
- Recommendations that were unique to the SEN focus groups included:
 - need for familiarity in set routes and consistent support
 - involvement in Independent Travel Training (ITT) scheme assessment and training from year 9
 - better assessments to identify and review suitable transport options
 - better disability awareness and training for bus drivers commercial and private and
 - more consultation with young people directly to inform any changes.

2. Home to school transport consultation – adult’s survey

When the survey closed on 25/04/2013 there were 1601 responses that had completed at least one transport related question.

- **Which service directly affects you?**

Most commonly respondents to the survey reported that they were directly affected by changes in transport provision to faith schools. A fifth of respondents were directly affected by post 16 transport to mainstream school and colleges and over 10% of respondents were affected by either Post 16 transport for SEN or travel to not the nearest appropriate school.

Table 2.1. Which service directly affects you?

	Count of Responses	% of respondents*
Transport for children who choose to attend a school on the basis of faith or beliefs	780	49.06%
Post 16 transport to mainstream schools and colleges	310	19.50%
Post 16 transport for young people with Special Educational Needs (SEN)	180	11.32%
Free travel to a school which is not the nearest appropriate school	220	13.84%
I am not affected by any service	411	25.85%

*Respondents could provide more than one response so % will not total 100%

Source: Adult Transport Survey

When reviewing the responses to the remaining survey questions it is important to note that that it was much more common for survey respondents to be affected by changes to transport to faith schools than any other of the proposed changes to transport provision.

- **Transport to Faith Schools**

Of the 1601 responses 67% agree or strongly agree that funding of transport to faith schools should continue and 25% disagree or strongly disagree that this funding should continue.

Of those respondents that stated that they are not affected by any of the proposed transport changes – 35% agree or strongly agree that funding of transport to faith schools should continue and 54% disagree or strongly disagree that this funding should continue.

“The current system works really well and provides excellent value for money and is such a small proportion of the total budget. This is outright discrimination against families who choose to send their children to the nearest faith school and it is shocking that children are being targeted in budget cuts.”

“Helping families on low incomes is one thing but to provide free school transport simply because a child attends a "faith school" is wrong, they should cover their own costs. How can it be justified? Why do those attending "faith schools" get free transport anyway? It costs me £100 per month to send my 2 children to school, so much for equality!”

Over 70% of respondents who are parents or represented educational establishments¹ felt funded transport to faith schools should continue, this compares to 66% of pupils/students and 51% of LCC employees.

Table 2.2. How far do you agree or disagree that the council should continue to provide discretionary funding to provide transport to faith schools

Strongly agree	922	57.59%
Agree	151	9.43%
Don't know	22	1.37%
Neither agree nor disagree	96	6.00%
Disagree	152	9.49%
Strongly disagree	253	15.80%
no response	5	0.31%

Source: Adult Transport Survey

Respondents were able to provide additional views and comments regarding the proposed change to transport to faith schools; this was a free text question. The most common responses against the continuation of this provision were that it is discriminatory to pupils who do not attend faith schools and families should pay if they are making the choice to attend specific schools (introducing means testing was also often suggested).

Whereas the most common responses in support of continuing to provide funding for transport to faith schools were: that it is discriminatory not to provide this support; that this will unfairly put a financial burden on families who choose a faith school education; and that there will be issues associated with pupils moving to closer

¹ Respondents that identified themselves as Head teacher, teacher, school governor or further education provider

schools. Other common concerns regarding changing this provision were that there could be impacts on other forms of transport (more cars on the road) and pupils may be less safe if they use other forms of transport.

- **Post 16 discretionary transport to mainstream schools and colleges**

Of the 1601 responses 70% agree or strongly agree that Post 16 discretionary transport to mainstream schools and colleges should continue to be funded and 19% disagree or strongly disagree that this funding should continue.

Of those respondents that stated that they are not affected by any of the proposed transport changes – 51% agree or strongly agree that Post 16 discretionary transport to mainstream schools and colleges should continue to be funded and 36% disagree or strongly disagree that that this funding should continue.

“The council should not blanket fund this but some account has to be taken of families personal circumstances. In its drive to be a child friendly city there is a particular question around post 16 - would this negate the obsession on NEET?”

“Most families and young people cannot afford transport now due to government cuts and no jobs, and it is unjust to take help away from young people who are trying to help themselves, I think the council has a duty to help its young citizens, it would be a massive mistake to stop this, and will be challenged.”

80% of respondents who are pupils/students felt that funded transport for Post 16 to attend mainstream schools or colleges should continue, this compares to 79% of respondents from educational establishments, 73% of parents and 57% of LCC employees.

Table 2.3. How far do you agree or disagree that the council should continue to provide discretionary funding to provide Post 16 transport to mainstream schools

Strongly agree	804	50.22%
Agree	322	20.11%
Don't know	22	1.37%
Neither agree nor disagree	130	8.12%
Disagree	171	10.68%
Strongly disagree	136	8.49%
no response	16	1.00%

Source: Adult Transport Survey

Respondents were able to provide additional views and comments regarding the proposed change to providing Post 16 transport to mainstream schools; this was a free text question. The most common responses were:

- It is important to ensure the children are support to attend the education option that is most appropriate to their needs
- Not all families will be able to afford to support their children financially
- The council should continue to provide this support.

- **Post 16 discretionary transport for SEN**

Of the 1601 responses 80% agree or strongly agree that Post 16 discretionary transport for SEN should continue and 8% disagree or strongly disagree that this funding should continue.

Of those respondents that stated that they are not affected by any of the proposed transport changes – 73% agree or strongly agree that Post 16 discretionary transport for SEN should continue to be funded and 13% disagree or strongly disagree that that this funding should continue.

“Young adults with SEN cannot always use public transport and many go to schools not within easy reach of where they live. Local authority transport is essential for most of the pupils and their families.”

“These figures need looking at. The highest transport costs for the smallest ratio of children whatever their needs cannot be right.”

88% of respondents who are from an educational establishment felt that funded transport for Post 16 SEN should continue, this compares to 82% of pupils, 80% of parents and 72% of LCC employees.

Table 2.4. How far do you agree or disagree that the council should continue to provide Post 16 discretionary transport for SEN

Strongly agree	947	59.15%
Agree	331	20.67%
Don't know	23	1.44%
Neither agree nor disagree	151	9.43%
Disagree	81	5.06%
Strongly disagree	47	2.94%
no response	21	1.31%

Source: Adult Transport Survey

Respondents were able to provide additional views and comments regarding the proposed change to transport for SEN pupils; this was a free text question. The most common responses were that that no one should pay for this provision and that all should be done to support people with SEN. Although the majority of respondents felt that this funding should continue the suggestion to review the cost of providing this provision and reviewing all other possible options for providing transport were also commonly noted.

Other responses provided by at least 5% of those who commented were: means testing based on ability to pay/introduce some level of charging; review whether other SEN financial support could contribute towards to transport; and reducing the ages that receive this support.

When asked to rank the various options to provide transport for 5-16 year olds with SEN needs the option that was most commonly ranked highest was ‘where absolutely necessary provide taxi/place or minibus for all journeys between home

and school', followed by 'provide independent travel training' and the option that was most commonly ranked lowest was 'parents make their own arrangements'.

Respondents were asked to describe any other measures that the council could take in order for pupils with special needs to travel safely between home and school; this was a free text question. Other measures that were suggested included:

- Assess individual need
 - School provide transport and contribute towards costs
 - Provide service that is more value for money
 - Support individual travel/travel training
 - Use mini buses instead of taxis.
- **Fund discretionary transport to a school which is not the nearest**

Of the 1601 responses 64% agree or strongly agree that the council should continue to fund discretionary travel to a school which is not the nearest appropriate school and 18% disagree or strongly disagree that this funding should continue.

Of those respondents that stated that they are not affected by any of the proposed transport changes – 49% agree or strongly agree that discretionary transport to a school which is not the nearest should continue to be funded and 32% disagree or strongly disagree that that this funding should continue.

“We are both working parents and would find it impossible to get the children to school some distance away and then get to work on time, particularly as the traffic will be grid locked by all the extra cars on the road.”

“If this is the nearest school a child can attend then they should qualify for free transport - the key is to making sure children can get into their local school”

68% of respondents who are from an educational establishment felt that funded transport to a school which is not the nearest should continue, this compares to 66% of parents, 63% of pupils, and 57% of LCC employees.

Table 2.5. How far do you agree or disagree that the council should continue to fund discretionary travel to a school which is not the nearest appropriate school

Strongly agree	679	42.41%
Agree	341	21.30%
Don't know	33	2.06%
Neither agree nor disagree	224	13.99%
Disagree	149	9.31%
Strongly disagree	139	8.68%
no response	36	2.25%

Source: Adult Transport Survey

Respondents were able to provide additional views and comments regarding the proposed change to transport to a school that is not the nearest appropriate school; this was a free text question. The most common response was that this funding

should continue, although the next most common response was funding should only be provided if the nearest school was not available. Other responses provided by at least 5% of those who commented were: choosing not the nearest school is a choice and parents should contribute to transport costs; funding should only be provided to the next nearest school; and funding only if the school is not the parent's choice.

- **Impact of changes**

Most commonly respondents reported that the proposed changes to transport would affect them financially (55% of respondents). One in ten respondents report that they would change school preference and one in five say that they would have childcare issues.

Respondents were also asked to provide additional comments on how they would be affected if one or more of these services were to be discontinued, this is a free text question. Common themes that emerged regarding the impact of the proposed changes included:

- Extra pressure on family finances – low income, squeezed middle
- Additional pressure on families – i.e. impact on working patterns, time to transport children to various schools, childcare
- Impact on young people – safety (busier roads, more children walking, safety of public transport), independence, wellbeing
- Negative impact on school attendance
- Children may not be able to attend the most appropriate education
- Change may impact on other transport options – potentially could lead to more private cars on the roads, or increased demand for other public transport
- Impacts on school admission processes – faith children attending alternative provision
- How do the changes reflect our ambition to be a Child friendly city.

- **Recommendations**

When asked to rank which of the five transport options should be continued. The most common first choice of service that should continue were transport to faith schools (42%) and post 16 transport for SEN (32%). Whereas the most common first choice by respondents who stated that they would not be affected by the proposed transport changes was to continue post 16 transport for SEN (52%) The response that was most commonly ranked lowest by all respondents and by those that were not affected by the proposed changes (i.e. least preferred option) was to stop providing any of the discretionary transport services that have been considered by this consultation.

It is perhaps not surprising that transport to faith schools ranked the highest in terms of what service should be continued as the majority respondents to the survey said they would be most affected by changes to transport to faith schools. It is interesting

that post 16 transport for SEN also ranked high as this was the service that respondents were least likely to say directly affects them.

Respondents were asked to provide suggestions on how these transport services could be delivered differently, better or more cost effectively; this was a free text question. Common themes that emerged regarding recommendations for the future included:

- Make processes/transport more cost efficient
- Introduce some level of charging – possible means testing or subsidising based on income
- Review all other possible transport options (including bus passes) that could be provided
- Cut others services across the council to enable funding for these transport services to continue
- Any changes should be phased
- Current service could be offered to parents at cost price
- Provide reduce costs of public transport for children.

3. Home to school transport consultation – children and young people’s survey

271 children and young people responded to the Home to school transport survey. There were 241 individual and 24 group responses.

Table 3.1 provides a breakdown of respondents by age range

Age range	No.
11-16 (Year 7 – 11)	145
16- 18 (Year 12 -13)	76
16-25 (Students with SEN)	38
4-11 (Reception to year 6)	12
Grand Total	271

Source: CYP Transport Survey

Table 3.2 provides a breakdown of respondents by type of transport user

Transport user group	No.	%
Free transport for children and young people who chose to attend a school based on faith / beliefs	117	34.8
Free transport to a school which is not the nearest available school	55	16.4
Free transport for young people aged 16+ to schools and colleges	68	20.2
Free transport for young people aged 16+ with Special Educational Needs.	58	17.3
None of these	34	10.1
Don't know / not sure	4	1.2

Source: CYP Transport Survey

Children and young people were asked a series of free text questions about how they would be affected if the transport service was no longer provided. The following section outlines the most common responses by children and young people. A coding frame was used to identify the most common themes and this can be found at the end of this report. The themes discussed were most commonly reported across all transport user types, although additional concerns were noted for young people affected by post 16 transport for those with Special Education Needs.

- **May no longer be able to attend the provision**

The most common response across all provision types was that children and young people may no longer be able to attend their current school if a transport service was not provided. A third of those who said that they may no longer be able to attend said that this was because of the additional financial cost to the family.

- **Financial difficulty**

Children and young people reported that funding bus fares would cause financial difficulties for the family or young person.

- Many felt that the cost of bus fares would stop them from being able to attend their current school
- It will be particularly difficult for families on low incomes and with more than one child
- Some young people would need to catch two buses each way and some across city boundaries/ bus companies costing more money
- Post 16 users felt that the additional expenditure on bus fares may prevent them from continuing in education and going to university
- Funding transport for young people with SEN will be financially difficult/impossible in some cases, particularly if require specialist transport.

“It would take two trains or two buses to get to the school I attend without free school transport. So without free transport it would be too expensive for me”

“My mum is a single parent and she wouldn't be able to afford to pay mine and my sisters bus fare as she gets a low wage.”

‘My brother has special needs and we have a younger brother as well. If my brother didn't get his transport paid for my mum would need to give up work as she would be rushing all around the city to pick him up. If we paid for a taxi for him everyday it would be the equivalent of another mortgage. This would be crippling for my parents. My parents already pay for my transport as we live closer than 3 miles away from school.’

- **The journey would be more complicated**

Young people across all settings said that their journey would be more complicated without school transport. Children and young people discussed the following concerns:

- Lack of direct route to particular settings
- Impact of more complicated journeys on attendance and punctuality.

“I attend faith school and have school bus I catch with my brother without this we would have two buses to catch and mum probably wouldn't let us do that”

“I would find it very hard to get to my school and possibly end up being late very often”

“I would struggle to actually get to school, as I live quite far away. Also there are not direct bus routes, and the buses taken are not regular, so it could hinder my attendance at school”

- **Equality – It is unfair/discriminatory to not provide**

Children and young people across all settings feel that it is unfair to remove transport provision and some suggest that it raises questions of equality. Most frequent concerns are listed below:

- Unfair and unequal to not support children and young people to attend a faith school, particularly given that less provision available and there is no choice but to travel a further distance. Removal of the choice element
- It will affect the most vulnerable young people with special educational needs who will find it the most difficult to complete journeys without transport
- Raising the participation age compels young people to stay in education longer yet local authority will not support them to do so
- The council should be investing in children and young people as the future of Leeds.

“As a practising Catholic my faith is very important to me. My parents already make a contribution to the school costs by paying a monthly direct debit and Catholic schools get less funding than state schools. It feels harsh that we are penalised even more because of our faith”

“Those who need special needs would not be able to get what they need as that they can achieve everything they can. This would be unfair. You are only giving those who have more a chance in life. Creating a divide within society.”

- **There is not an appropriate school which is closer**

Many children and young people said that they were attending the closest most appropriate school and that the alternative would be detrimental to their faith/ belief, educational attainment or career options. Some of the reasons and comments for no reasonable alternative included:

- The nearest school is not as high attaining
- The importance of faith within education to the individual/family and no closer faith school
- There are only a small number of appropriate schools for young people with SEN
- Lack of choice of provision for appropriate post 16 courses.

“I have special needs and the most suitable mainstream school is the opposite side of Leeds to where I live”

“To go down my chosen career path (Software Engineering), the course Computing is a good option to give me a head's start and a higher chance of getting into the course. This is not a readily available course and only my current College does it that I know of. It is a 30 minute bus journey there and back each day and I cannot afford the cost of making that journey without my free bus pass”

“My school is the closest faith school in my local area, it is not within walking distance and I could not afford public transport, it also my choice to go to a faith school”

“The nearest school doesn't get as good grades as the school I go to”

- **Detrimental impact on child/young person**

Whilst a negative impact for children and young people's wellbeing was discussed to a small extent across all user groups, it was most commonly reported for those affected by post 16 SEN transport.

Children and young people with SEN felt that:

- It would not be safe for them to use public transport
- Their independence would be compromised
- It would affect their general wellbeing.

In mainstream schools a small number of young people felt that:

- Education, health and wellbeing may suffer from potentially having to move school mid education.

- **Young people with SEN require specialist type of transport**

Children and young people affected by post 16 SEN transport felt that they required a specialist type of transport and that it would not be appropriate to remove funding. They felt that the implications of removing this funding would be:

- Unable to travel alone
- It would be very difficult/not possible to use public transport
- It would be very difficult for families to be responsible for the transport.

"It will make us upset and we won't be able get to college gutted difficult to be independent I will have to ask somebody else"

"My taxi means I can go to college, if I didn't have it I couldn't go. It hurts my legs if I get a bus my transport is very important to me I wouldn't get to college without it"

- **Summary of responses by user group**

- All user groups most commonly reported that they may no longer be able to attend the provision
- All groups, except those affected by post 16 transport for SEN, also most frequently responded that they would be affected financially and that it would make the journey more complicated
- Users of post 16 transport for SEN were more likely to respond that they would no longer be able to attend the provision, followed by a detrimental impact on their safety, independence and wellbeing and that they require a specialist type of transport. Finance and more complicated journey were also themes discussed, but less frequently than the aforementioned.

Recommendations

Children and young people were asked to provide suggestions on how transport could be delivered more cost effectively. Many discussed the impact the removal of transport would have on their school life and these views are represented above. Common recommendation themes included:

- **More efficient processes/systems to save costs**

The most common recommendation was to revise existing transport processes and systems to reduce overall costs. Children and young people said that:

- Save money on free passes, for example, recover uncollected passes and produce cheaper passes
- Revise transport routes and make more efficient, for example, collection points rather than door to door, increase the number of collections to ensure buses are full
- Review tendering process to ensure cheaper contract
- Better assessment of need
- Independent Travel Training, particularly for older pupils
- Public transport companies to review timing of services, for example, provide services less often to ensure bus is fully utilised.

“The actual point at which the service is delivered is the most important aspect of any they provide. Maybe the bureaucracy of everything should be examined more”

- **Do not remove services**

Many respondents felt strongly that transport services should not be removed and that it should be financed through cuts elsewhere within the council or from other funding streams, for example: higher council tax, taxing the wealthiest more or making cuts elsewhere.

“Make everyone pay their taxes. The rich must have a higher tax wedge”

- **A level of charging is required**

There was an acknowledgement by some that a level of charging is required and suggestions included charging a small fee by subsidising and including a means test based on ability to pay.

“Means test free bus pass including 60+, or if not means test at least give people the opportunity to refuse if not needed”

Some simply commented that bus fares needed to be cheaper.

“They could lower the price to fifty pence so you pay 1 pound each day. So it would be easier”

Coding Frame

	No. of times raised
Themes - Impact of removing service	
May no longer be able to attend provision	189
It would be financially difficult	146
The journey would be more complicated	49
Equality - it is not fair/discriminatory to not provide	45
No closer appropriate alternative	41
Detrimental impact on young person e.g. safety/independence/wellbeing	28
Should be supported to provision	24
SEN require specialist types of transport	21
Should not be supported to provision	3

	No. of times raised
Themes – Recommendations	
Make processes/transport more efficient to save costs	29
Do not remove services - fund through other methods (higher taxes etc)	23
Some level of charging is required e.g. subsidise/means test	19

4. Summary Report – SEN Home School Transport Consultation Katherine Runciman – Voice and Influence Team

- **Background:**

The Voice and Influence team were asked to take a lead on consultation with young people potentially affected by the proposed changes in funding around transport to and from school. One of the key areas was around SEN support for post 16 with additional needs.

One of the things everyone involved wanted to ensure, was they we got a clear picture of how important the routine and the process was, as much as the transport itself and how any change, however it may appear small to others, such as a change in escort support, change in route or timing, may cause huge problems which would require additional support and possible funding, which could offset any initial obvious savings.

The on line surveys were not suitable to be used with young people with additional and complex needs, therefore I took time with young people and staff from 2 of the specialist disability residential homes to work through how this could be translated into a meaningful and appropriate format for both individual and group completion.

- **Methods:**

Due to the complexity of the target group for this consultation I worked with staff, children and parents and carers to develop a methodology that was appropriate and flexible. A draft template was designed with staff and young people from Rainbow House and Pinfolds as part of a Voice and Influence programme of work within the specialist residential settings. This used Boardmaker symbols and clear language to encourage both discussion and clear answers to the questions (see appendix– Individual and Group SEN Consultation documents)

Meetings were held within the South SILC (Specialist Inclusive Learning Centre) with Mrs Bev Newstead (awaiting job title) who liaised with their satellite base within Rodillion School. The format was refined and altered slightly due to possible ambiguity in some of the language and dates were set for the focus groups.

The groups were to be supported by school staff and young people would be given the choice to take part in a group activity or take the consultation document away within the room and complete it themselves, if they found group working too stressful.

The groups would take an hour and take place within the lunchtime break period at both settings.

2 focus groups were held at:

South SILC (Broomfield) and Rodillion SILC Base - 19 yrs	19 young people aged 13
Individual consultations within homes and residential settings 19 yrs	8 young people aged 15 –

Table 4.1 Results - SEN Consultation - Impact codes and frequency:

	freq
<p>May no longer be able to attend provision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Because I don't want to go on a bus on my own • It's just not fair. Why would someone stop us going to school and make our parents sad or angry about having us at home all the time! • My school is in Thurnscoe (Robert Ogden) if I didn't have school transport I couldn't go to school • maybe stay at home but it would get boring after a while. I would ring leeds city council and say where is my minibus this is upset me 	27
<p>Detrimental Impact on YP e.g safety/independence/wellbeing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I would kick off! Get really angry and hit people. I would write a letter to the big boss of leeds city council • Would feel isolated and sad • If school transport was banned I would be FURIOUS • Get really upset, why cant I go to school? Other people do! I need help, so why not me? I may try walking but I think I may get lost but I have to go to school, I know this. • Go back to bed, whats the point and where is my bus, I need to go to school no school, no college, no job, its bad 	26
<p>The journey would be more complicated</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I would not know where to go or what time to go for the bus • I live near a bus that goes to Rodillion but would need help 	20
<p>It will constrain choice of courses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • parents wouldn't be able to go to work! I would be worried about what to do when older, college or job you need to learn 	10
<p>Equality – it is not fair/discriminatory to not provide</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why would someone do this? We need to learn! The government says we have to learn, but if no transport for people who need it will the police come? This would make us sad and angry too. • I would complain, it's the law. We need to learn and do things and see our friends • Why cant I do what I need to do? Then I get a job and do stuff and learn about getting about independently 	8
<p>No closer appropriate alternative</p>	1

It is important to note that although young people told us that “I would walk”, “I would get the bus”, staff and parents supporting the sessions raised immediate concerns about actual capacity to undertake these tasks and wanted decision makers to be very clear about this. It was felt that young people could present as being both willing and enthusiastic about doing tasks young people without additional and complex needs could do without support, and adults supporting the sessions felt in the past this had given a skewed result on which decisions had been made which in the long run were detrimental to safety and wellbeing and took more resources to address than the initial provision.

- **Recommendations and emerging themes:**

- Need for familiarity in set routes and consistent support
- Involvement in Independent Travel Scheme assessment and training from year 9
- Better assessments to identify and review suitable transport options
- Better disability awareness and training for bus drivers commercial and private
- More consultation with young people directly to inform any changes.

The necessity for routine and familiarity was clear in all the consultations. The need for a set route, a familiar driver and escort and clear information about any changes was considered as important as the taxi or minibus itself, and young people and staff, parents and carers asked this to be stressed as a factor which could cause significant disruption and upset if done without thought or consideration.

Staff within the schools expressed clearly their support for the Independent Travel Scheme, but felt it could contribute more to budgetary changes if it were instigated early in the academic process around year 9. By doing this they felt that young people could have their transport needs more accurately assessed and met, to ensure as transition to adulthood loomed, they could be supported more effectively and appropriately.

Young people within the focus groups also reflected the above and stated that they felt it disadvantaged those who may, with earlier intervention, benefit from longer support to overcome phobias and fears and become more accustomed to supported/buddy/independent travel.

School staff and parents and carers clearly expressed their concerns about the assessment process which allocated transport and felt that provisions were made initially based on ‘crisis’, which they felt were not effectively reviewed once stable provisions and services had been put in place.

Young people stated clearly that they felt bus drivers from commercial companies needed to be more understanding and aware of the needs of disabled young people and those with more complex needs. Two wheelchair users reported that buses had not allowed them on due to baby buggies being in spaces and as a result events, meetings and interviews had been missed, which dissuaded them from trying public transport again.

The impact of any change, however small has to be measured around the wider impact on the life of the young person and those who care for them on a daily basis and this has to be the most clear recommendation within this report to support further direct consultation around any proposed changes.

5. Summary of Q&A Sessions for consultation on changes to transport for children

The Transport team held a number of question and answer sessions. This was offered to all provision types as part of the consultation, with over 400 people attending. Table 1.1 provides an outline of the number of meetings held and the groups represented at each meeting

Table 5.1 Public meeting by group type

Group	No. of meetings
Post 16 SEN	7
Faith	6
Post 16	1

Impacts

The most common concerns raised around the impact of the proposed changes were:

- Negative impact on children and young people's safety, independence and wellbeing
- Negative impact on families i.e. logistics of travelling to school and impact on life/work
- Equality – it is unfair and discriminatory not to provide the transport service
- The timescales to remove the funding are too short
- An increase in parents using cars will have a negative impact on the environment/local residents and the community
- The full cost of removing the transport service is not fully considered by the local authority
- Existing public transport is not sufficient/appropriate
- Many families will find the financial impact difficult.

Recommendations

The most frequently suggested recommendations across all meetings were:

- Review existing processes/systems to make transport more efficient and save costs
- Review costs – it is the parents responsibility/parents should contribute
- If the transport service is removed, ensure it is phased out.

In addition at Q&A sessions for people representing Post 16 SEN transport it was commonly recommended that:

- The provision should be responsible for managing/organising transport.

Other recommendations suggest less frequently but more than once included:

- Do not cut this discretionary funding
- Explore alternative cost efficiencies elsewhere in the council /review cost of existing transport provision
- Provide only statutory transport
- Charge parents the mileage over the nearest school distance
- Train bus drivers on public transport to be more children and young people friendly.

6. Summary of correspondence received by email or letter regarding changes to transport provision

There were 81 emails or letters received about the transport consultation. These ranged from requests for information, request for meetings, queries regarding responding to the survey and included 16 responses that were stating views on the proposed changes.

It is important to note the correspondence was not in response to any structured question and that in general those that contact the Council were signposted to the online survey.

The 16 correspondence that stated views on the proposed changes are included in the following analysis:

- 14 contacts expressed their support of continuing transport to faith schools
- 6 contacts noted their support of continuing transport for post 16 mainstream pupils and 1 was against the continuation of this funding
- 3 contacts acknowledged their support of continuing fund transport for post 16 SEN
- 1 contact was to note their support for continuing to fund transport to not the nearest school.

13 different correspondents provide the following recommendations in relation to the proposed changes to transport provision, the bolded suggestions were mentioned by more than one correspondent:

- **Make processes/transport more efficient to save costs**
- **Do not cut - will affect education and future society**
- **Need cheaper bus fares**
- **Means test - on SEN level of need**
- Means test based on ability to pay
- If goes ahead, ensure is phased out
- SEN people specifically should be supported
- Cross boundary transport
- Understand motivation for current student travel behaviour
- Promote active travel
- Cut metro subsidy but increase fares
- Evidence based subsidy on proof of faith.

7. Summary of transport consultation OBA event

Turning the Curve Report	
Population	All children and young people in Leeds that access or may access free transport
Outcome	Do well in learning and have skills for life
Indicator	Attendance
Indicator Baseline	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">COST</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">Birth rate</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">Attendance</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">Fuel etc.</div> </div>
Story behind the baseline...	<p>School population</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing birth rate = increased attendance • Survival rates of children born with, or who develop, very complex needs continue to rise. • Increase in young people with special educational needs (SEN) wanting to attend college • More children and young people with SEN in mainstream school • An increase in the number of faith communities within the city, who want faith school provision. • Raising of the participation age • Increased pressure on resources/school places across the city • Young people attending Specialist inclusive learning centres (SILC) sometimes stay at the school longer because they feel comfortable in the setting. There may be a more appropriate alternative which is closer to home. <p>Assessment of need</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transporting children and young people who may not need it • Some support is means-tested and awarded because of low income <p>Legislation changes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes to fuel rebate has meant there is less money. This puts pressure on operators therefore tenders and fares increase in response. That cost is passed on.

- Smart technology – if operators invest in better technology they receive more rebate. The technology comes at a cost.
- Vehicles need updating at a cost to meet legislation such as the Disability Discrimination Act (low floor vehicles).

Transport Routes

- Pick up from home address. Issues with streets not accommodating larger vehicles so picking up fewer people.
- Parental complaints about length of time taken to transport child leads to fewer collections.
- Inefficiently planned routes

Independent travel

- Limited number of children and young people with SEN who are able to travel independently.
- Parental reluctance to allow children/young people with SEN to travel independently

Parental choice

- The local authority must promote choice and diversity and this places demand on transport. Schools and centres with specialisms particularly with regard to SEN increase the length of journeys
- Parents perceive some schools are more inclusive (SEN) or better attaining schools than others.
- Children travel further to access faith education which is a 'right' they are entitled to.
- Parental right to choice and an expectation that transport should be provided.

Systems/processes

- Some parents pay for transport to the same school when others don't due to the distance.
- There is some abuse of the current system.
- Journeys being made at the same times for different groups of people. Elderly being transported at school times mean more vehicles and drivers are needed.
- Taxis have to be paid for regardless of whether the young person attends.

Limited choice of provision

- Centralisation of college sites, for example, the closure of Leeds City College Thomas Danby and

		<p>Horsforth sites.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in the number of special schools (reduced from 16 to 6) increases travel distance. <p>Transport dependency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A change in the culture of transport dependency, both within families and Council services. • Local authority support is sometimes used in place of childcare. • Parents cannot be in two places at once if they have young children at different schools. • Children and young people are making longer journeys to school because transport is provided to schools further away from home. <p>Information accessibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information pathways are becoming clearer; for example the numbers of assessments of need are increasing because assessment and the availability of the support services following assessment are being better promoted. • The internet makes access to information about assessment and support services easily accessible. <p>Other</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rising costs, fuel etc. • Current economic climate • Leeds choice to provide discretionary services • Historical risk-averse culture within the Authority that has led to a situation which is not sustainable. • Relationship between quality/cost of transport • National policy context outlines care for young people with SEN up to the age of 25. There is a tension between government priorities and local authority funding. • Other authorities have cut
Key Partners	<i>Who's involved?</i> <i>Who's missing?</i>	<p>Education providers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools • SILC's • Faith schools • Colleges

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governors • School crossing patrols <p>Service users:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents • Children and young people • Adults with learning difficulties and disabilities supported by Adult’s Social Care. <p>General public:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local residents • Other bus users • Council Tax Payers <p>Community representatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councillors/elected members (in capacity of constituent advocate) • Diocese <p>Transport providers and drivers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Metro • Taxis • Independent providers • Any organisation who delivers a vehicle service; community transport providers, voluntary sector, commercial operators • Private hire operators • Bus and train drivers • Drivers/escorts – passenger services <p>Advocacy/support services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Care • Voluntary organisations e.g. EPIC, advocacy services • Interpreting Services • Leeds Advocacy • Parent partnership • Pupil voice <p>Local authority:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commissioning, contracts • Independent Travel Team • SENSAP
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Admissions • Passenger transport • Complex Needs and Assessment workers • Highways (increase in cars/lack of cycle path/pavements) • Health • Strategic lead for Child Friendly City • Performance management – attendance/attainment statistics <p>Other public sector:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Police/community police - because of possible issues of behaviour of pupils travelling unaccompanied. • Environments Agency • Community Police Officers <p>Private sector:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business sector – demanding certain academic standards • The wider business community – sponsorship • Local and national press <p>Other:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees delivering frontline services
<p>Best Ideas – What Works</p>	<p><i>We could...</i></p>	<p>What works?</p> <p>Transport routes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collection points rather than door to door collection (own staff as buddies). There have been difficulties with parents not there to collect children at the end of the day. <p>Existing system:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enables young people to exercise their right to attend faith school. • Mybus - very effective and some, evidenced,

		<p>operators. Some offer a high quality of service, with drivers going <i>above and beyond</i>, others don't offer anything like the same level of service.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The current system works • School transport services and companies providing services are well coordinated <p>Training:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent travel training (ITT) and Safemark workshops • Supporting children and young people to use accessible (low floor) public transport • Individual knowledge with a focus on individuals ability but this involves a time investment <p>Alternative transport:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walking buses • Commercial networks mean reduced costs but need to keep an eye on quality. <p>Monitoring and evaluating:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school plus metro card/smart card is being taken up and provides accurate data which in turn reduces charges by reducing empty seats by monitoring capacity. It can provide information for future planning. There is planned to be 'add ons' to the smart card in the future
<p>Think SHARP EDGES!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific • Leverage • Values • Reach 	<p>All ideas</p>	<p>All ideas</p> <p>Targeted support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More frequent assessment/re-assessment of need (SEN) • Monitoring/assessment of who is eligible for transport. • Means testing both discretionary and statutory provision • Means test – on SEN (but involve SILCS in assessment method) <p>Review funding streams/current spend:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove free transport where funding is available elsewhere. For example 'double funding' Zero Fare

SchoolCard and English National Concessionary Pass, bespoke transport and mobility vehicles, DDA and Free transport. Some post 16 funding also available elsewhere.

- Explore alternative funding, for example, private companies sponsoring bus routes, seeking lottery funding, parents paying (with targeted support) or introduce a subsidy for discretionary transport.
- Review the tendering process
- Funding for independent companies to set up their own transport services. For example, community organisations and social enterprises.
- Consider charging parents if choosing a school which is not their nearest.
- Free bus travel to all children and young people in Leeds

Review transport/systems:

- Need to review how we transport some young people and look at the economies of scale (SEN). For example, separate taxis or one minibus?
- A central group for co-ordinating journeys via minibus/taxi
- Review the refund of mileage costs to parents (is this cheaper than minibus?)
- Better use of existing transport services to ensure efficient routes, for example, two or more schools sharing buses.
- Systemic change about how we provide transport
- Look at the routes to create better/more effective with regular review
- Services should be coordinated better around the needs of different groups. Transporting elderly to services could where possible avoid busy school times to ensure fewer vehicles and drivers are needed.
- Better ways of communicating across all sectors and providers including schools. Coordinate services and journeys better.
- Prove attendance and practicing faith.
- Transfer funding to schools to organise their own transport and own escorts. Stagger start and finish times so the children are not on the transport too long.

Consider alternative transport:

- Alternative initiatives, like the London bike hire

	<p>Off the Wall Idea</p>	<p>scheme.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More pupils using public transport would reduce overall cost of drivers (for Metro). • A re-introduction of conductors and hosts on buses to oversee behaviour and safety would give parents the confidence to allow their children to use public transport. • Re-route existing bus services when key facilities relocate to new sites (eg The Vine and Leeds City College PrintWorks) so there are bus stops nearby – improve links with Metro • A community <i>caterpillar bus</i> which operates in a similar way to a <i>walking bus</i>, but which involves the participation of children and young people who use wheelchairs, scooters, pushchairs, etc. • Integrate the provision of specialist transport with social care and NHS journeys. • Skip, scoot, skateboard to school • Provide mileage allowance for parents of SEN to make journeys <p>Local authority:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review how services work together (last minute decisions) • Create better integrated public services <p>Training:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent Travel Training for all young people (why only available for SEN?) • Earlier introduction of independent travel training, at around Year9 and to build this into the pupils curriculum. <p>Quality of transport provision:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for well-trained bus drivers and consistent people driving before the service can be delivered well. • Need young people’s engagement to consult on the services and how improvements can be made <p>Other:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils travel to more local school • If it does go ahead then phase it in as will be difficult.
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	Concerns	<p>Off the wall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walk • Cycle – safe and good routes • Reverse tendering • Schools organise their own transport • Leave things as they are • 5000 rickshaws • Moving pavements (travellator-style) • Handgliders • Teleporting • Transport in chinooks • Create a link bus that runs hourly after school linking high schools/university/colleges which will allow children to access after school provisions at their school and different sites. A hop on and hop off type arrangement, covering north and south • Utilise the time of young people who may be unemployed to act as volunteer buddies and mentors to their peers and enable them to gain valuable skills and work experience that will help them gain employment, particularly in caring professions. <p>Throughout the OBA session a number of concerns were discussed. These concerns are listed below:</p> <p>Parental choice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parental preference should count in school choices and not be a barrier for education. By limiting what free transport is actually available aren't we now saying that parental preference is a barrier? • There is a historical tradition of choosing faith based travel • Need to balance a duty of choice with whether that means the local authority must provide transport.
		<p>Equality:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not to provide is discrimination (faith) • The wording of the consultation is poor and should be considered discriminatory by claiming faith schools are discriminatory <p>Alternative transport:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing services with the public will create a negative impact • The current arrangement of radial transport links

		<p>complicates getting to these schools and school services alleviate this.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety – there is a lack of a central hub/interchange in Leeds • If pupils use public bus services, their journeys could be far more complex and their travel-times and the distances they travel could increase significantly. • Some SEN/vulnerable young people access school services and are able to be supported “in house” by removing this there would be an increased demand on specialist transport. <p>Impact on most disadvantaged/vulnerable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faith transport provides an equality of access and income could be a barrier that will affect access, for example, wealthier families sending their children to schools further away and those on low income not being able to • School services protect the most vulnerable • Some parents will not be able to fund transport to faith schools (pressure on their income) <p>Traffic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local communities adversely affected by adding to traffic volume <p>Child Friendly City:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of strategic thinking means there is not a suitable infrastructure to make Leeds a child friendly city. • Currently Child Friendly City feels like a commercial enterprise instead of a coherent strategy with all involved parties - a guru if you will. <p>Cost of transport to Local authority:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constraints on supply of transport if move from school bus to public then still a cost to Leeds City Council for concessionary. • £800k is a small price to pay against negative outcomes (faith transport) • Does the cost of removing free transport to faith schools actually equate to spending more in other areas so negate the actual saving it will initially make? <p>School population/resources:</p>
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased pressure on school places across the city • Faith schools create a diversity in a school's population which is vital to education (mixing of various postcodes within Leeds) Without it, will lead to segregation and poorer opportunities <p>Impact on outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removing free transport will create a barrier to young people attending and adding to NEET post 16 figures. <p>Engagement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any solution that is decided upon needs to be parent focused/ and have their confidence • The consultation was not widely publicised and the table felt that whole networks, for example, governors, were not included. <p>Other:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is an absence of legislation that is up to date and reflects the actual nature of the journey the children need to make (the 3+ mile is obsolete and dates from 1940s)
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