

Phil Norrey
Chief Executive

To: The Chairman and Members of
the Cabinet

County Hall
Topsham Road
Exeter
Devon
EX2 4QD

(See below)

Your ref :
Our ref :

Date : 5 July 2016
Please ask for : Rob Hooper, 01392 382300

Email: rob.hooper@devon.gov.uk
:

CABINET

Wednesday, 13th July, 2016

A meeting of the Cabinet is to be held on the above date at 10.30 am in the Committee Suite, County Hall, Exeter to consider the following matters.

P NORREY
Chief Executive

A G E N D A

PART I - OPEN COMMITTEE

1 Apologies for Absence

2 Minutes

Minutes of the meeting held on 8 June 2016 (previously circulated).

3 Items Requiring Urgent Attention

Items which in the opinion of the Chairman should be considered at the meeting as matters of urgency.

4 Chairman's Announcements

5 Petitions

6 Question(s) from Members of the Council

FRAMEWORK DECISION

7 Heart of the South West Devolution (Pages 1 - 12)

Report of the Chief Executive (CX/16/20) on progress with discussions and approval to continuing negotiations for a Combined Authority approach, attached.

Electoral Divisions(s): All Divisions

KEY DECISIONS

- 8 Post-16 Education Transport Policy for 2017-18 (Minute *7/13 April 2016) (Pages 13 - 84)

Report of the Head of Education & Learning ([EL/16/5](#)) on the outcome of consultations on arrangements for post 16 students for the 2017/18 academic year approved previously for report at this time, attached.

Electoral Divisions(s): All Divisions

OTHER MATTERS

- 9 Annual Public Health Report 2015/16

The ninth Annual Public Health Report prepared and published by the Director of Public Health reviewing the state of health of the population of Devon and setting out health and wellbeing priorities for Devon is enclosed, separately.

[NB: The Annual Public Health Report may be viewed at: <http://www.devonhealthandwellbeing.org.uk/aphr/2015-16/>]

Electoral Divisions(s): All Divisions

- 10 Pollinators Plan (Minute 13/13 April 2016) (Pages 85 - 104)

Joint Report of the Head of Planning, Transportation and Environment and Head of Business Strategy & Support ([PTE/16/36](#)) incorporating the final draft of the proposed Pollinators Plan, relating to the Notice of Motion on 'Protection of the Bee Population' previously submitted by Councillor Hook referred to Cabinet by County Council on 10 December 2015, attached.

The Cabinet will also wish to have regard to the views of the Farms Estate Committee (Farms Estate Committee Minute 15/28 June 2016 and the Head of Business Strategy & Support's Report BSS/16/11), also attached.

Electoral Divisions(s): All Divisions

MATTERS REFERRED

- 11 Treasury Management Stewardship Annual Report 2014/15 (Pages 105 - 110)

Report of the County Treasurer ([CT/16/60](#)) considered and endorsed by the Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee on 27 June 2016, attached.

- 12 South Hams: Marldon 20 mph Zone (Minute 16/13 April 2016)

Cabinet Member for Highway Management & Flood Prevention to report on his visit to this area (following the earlier request for a 20mph Zone referred to Cabinet from the South Hams HATOC) and on any proposals arising therefrom.

- 13 Health & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee : Torrington Community Hospital Task Group

The Cabinet will wish to note that the Health & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 20 June 2016 (Minute 5) considered the Report of its Task Group (available at: <http://democracy.devon.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?Committeeld=130>) reviewing the evidence and processes by which decisions were made about Torrington Community Hospital and agreed, in line with its statutory delegated powers, to make a referral to the Secretary of State for Health: the Task Group's Final Report (CS/16/5) will be available shortly on the Council's website (<http://democracy.devon.gov.uk/ecCatDisplay.aspx?sched=doc&cat=13627>) following incorporation of drafting revisions and further changes.

14 Place Scrutiny Committee: Department of Transport Review of 20mph Speed Limits

In noting the postponement of the review of the Council's current *Devon Traffic Policy and Devon Traffic Advice Note on Local Speed Limits* (which was to have taken place after publication of the Department for Transport's (DfT) review of 20mph limits) because the DfT's Review had now been delayed until 2017, the Place Scrutiny Committee (Minute 3/14 June 2016) resolved *'that .. the Cabinet be recommended to make representations to the Department for Transport expressing the Council's disappointment over the continuing delay in the publication of the DfT's new guidance on 20mph limits; and also 'that Devon MPs be also urged to exert pressure on the DfT for early publication'*.

Recommendation: that the Scrutiny Committee's suggestions be endorsed.

STANDING ITEMS

15 Question(s) from Members of the Public

16 Minutes (Pages 111 - 126)

- (a) SACRE - 7 June 2016, attached
- (b) Devon Education (Schools) Forum) – 22 June 2016, attached
- (c) Farms Estate Committee – 28 June 2016 (excepting Minute15 previously taken into account at item 10 above, Page 96).

[NB: Minutes of County Council Committees are published on the Council's Website at:

<http://democracy.devon.gov.uk/ieDocHome.aspx?bcr=1>

Minutes of the Devon Education (Schools) Forum are published at:

<http://www.devon.gov.uk/schoolsforum.htm>]

17 Delegated Action/Urgent Matters

The Registers of Decisions taken by Members under the urgency provisions or delegated powers will be available for inspection at the meeting in line with the Council's Constitution and Regulation 13 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012. A summary of such decisions taken since the last meeting is attached.

18 Forward Plan

In accordance with the Council's Constitution, the Cabinet is requested to review the list of forthcoming business (previously circulated) and to determine which items are to be defined as key and/or framework decisions and included in the Plan from the date of this meeting.

[NB: The Forward Plan is available on the Council's website at:

<http://democracy.devon.gov.uk/mgListPlans.aspx?RPId=133&RD=0&bcr=1>]

PART II - ITEMS WHICH MAY BE TAKEN IN THE ABSENCE OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

None


MEMBERS ARE REQUESTED TO SIGN THE ATTENDANCE REGISTER

Notice of all items listed above have been included in the Council's Forward Plan for the required period, unless otherwise indicated. The Forward Plan is published on the County Council's website at <http://www.devon.gov.uk/cma.htm>

Notice of the decisions taken by the Cabinet will be sent by email to all Members of the Council within 2 working days of their being made and will, in the case of key decisions, come into force 5 working days after that date unless 'called-in' or referred back in line with the provisions of the Council's Constitution. The Minutes of this meeting will be published on the Council's website, as indicated below, as soon as possible.

Members are reminded that Part II Reports contain confidential information and should therefore be treated accordingly. They should not be disclosed or passed on to any other person(s).

Members are also reminded of the need to dispose of such reports carefully and are therefore invited to return them to the Democratic Services Officer at the conclusion of the meeting for disposal.

Membership
Councillors J Hart (Chairman), B Parsons, S Barker, R Croad, A Davis, A Leadbetter, J McInnes, J Clatworthy and S Hughes
Cabinet Member Remits
Councillors Hart (Policy & Corporate), Barker (Adult Social Care & Health Services), Clatworthy (Resources & Asset Management), Croad (Community & Environmental Services), Davis (Improving Health & Wellbeing), S Hughes (Highway Management & Flood Prevention), Leadbetter (Economy, Growth and Cabinet Liaison for Exeter), McInnes (Children, Schools & Skills) and Parsons (Performance & Engagement)
Declaration of Interests
Members are reminded that they must declare any interest they may have in any item to be considered at this meeting, prior to any discussion taking place on that item.
Access to Information
Any person wishing to inspect the Council's / Cabinet Forward Plan or any Reports or Background Papers relating to any item on this agenda should contact Rob Hooper on 01392 382300. The Forward Plan and the Agenda and Minutes of the Committee are published on the Council's Website.
Webcasting, Recording or Reporting of Meetings and Proceedings
<p>The proceedings of this meeting may be recorded for broadcasting live on the internet via the 'Democracy Centre' on the County Council's website. The whole of the meeting may be broadcast apart from any confidential items which may need to be considered in the absence of the press and public. For more information go to: http://www.devoncc.public-i.tv/core/</p> <p>In addition, anyone wishing to film part or all of the proceedings may do so unless the press and public are excluded for that part of the meeting or there is good reason not to do so, as directed by the Chairman. Any filming must be done as unobtrusively as possible from a single fixed position without the use of any additional lighting; focusing only on those actively participating in the meeting and having regard also to the wishes of any member of the public present who may not wish to be filmed. As a matter of courtesy, anyone wishing to film proceedings is asked to advise the Chairman or the Democratic Services Officer in attendance so that all those present may be made aware that is happening.</p> <p>Members of the public may also use Facebook and Twitter or other forms of social media to report on proceedings at this meeting. An open, publicly available Wi-Fi network (i.e. DCC) is normally available for meetings held in the Committee Suite at County Hall. For information on Wi-Fi availability at other locations, please contact the Officer identified above.</p>
Questions to the Cabinet / Public Participation
<p>A Member of the Council may ask the Leader of the Council or the appropriate Cabinet Member a question about any subject for which the Leader or Cabinet Member has responsibility.</p> <p>Any member of the public resident in the administrative area of the county of Devon may also ask the Leader a question upon a matter which, in every case, relates to the functions of the Council. Questions must be delivered to the Office of the Chief Executive Directorate by 12 noon on the fourth working day before the date of the meeting. For further information please contact Mr Hooper on 01392 382300 or look at our website at: http://new.devon.gov.uk/democracy/guide/public-participation-at-committee-meetings/</p>
Emergencies
In the event of the fire alarm sounding leave the building immediately by the nearest available exit, following the fire exit signs. If doors fail to unlock press the Green break glass next to the door. Do not stop to collect personal belongings, do not use the lifts, do not re-enter the building until told to do so.
Mobile Phones
Please switch off all mobile phones before entering the Committee Room or Council Chamber
<p>If you need a copy of this Agenda and/or a Report in another format (e.g. large print, audio tape, Braille or other languages), please contact the Information Centre on 01392 380101 or email to: centre@devon.gov.uk or write to the Democratic and Scrutiny Secretariat at County Hall, Exeter, EX2 4QD.</p>
 Induction loop system available

- (a)
- (b)

CX/16/20

Cabinet
13 July 2016

County Council
28 July 2016

Heart of the South West - Devolution

Report of the Chief Executive

Please note that the following recommendations are subject to consideration and determination by the Cabinet and County Council (and confirmation under the provisions of the Council's Constitution) before taking effect.

Recommendations: that the County Council be recommended to:

- (a) endorse the Leaders approach to devolution and agree to sign up to the principle of creating a Combined Authority for the Heart of the South West, as set out in the Prospectus for Productivity, as the basis for negotiation with Government towards a Devolution Deal for the area;**
- (b) note that giving this endorsement does not commit the Council to entering into a Devolution Deal or becoming a member of a Heart of the South West Combined Authority. This would be subject to future debate and agreement by the Council and subject to negotiations with Government.**

Summary

Devolution for the Heart of the South West (HotSW) is being led by the Leaders of Somerset and Devon County Councils, all Somerset and Devon Districts, Torbay Council, Plymouth City Council, Dartmoor and Exmoor National Parks, the Local Enterprise Partnership and the three Clinical Commissioning Groups. The group has become an informal partnership working towards a Devolution Deal with government to secure greater powers, and control and to have a stronger voice for the area.

Regular updates on progress and key documents are provided on the Council's web page <https://new.devon.gov.uk/democracy/how-the-council-works/devolution/>

This report seeks approval to sign up, in principle, to the pursuit of a devolution deal for the Heart of the South West area and the creation of a Combined Authority to administer the new powers and funding secured through that deal.

Any final deal with Government will be subject to the approval/ratification by Council and public consultation. Through negotiations the partnership will push to secure new powers and control of funding to create new jobs, raise skill levels, improve infrastructure, accelerate the integration of health and care services and secure greater powers over housing. These measures will focus on raising productivity levels in the Heart of the South West and achieve greater prosperity for local people.

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1. Background

At its meeting on 9 September 2015, the Cabinet considered and endorsed (*380 (b) refers) the Statement of Intent submitted to government on 4 September 2015, in response to announcements in the July Budget and the deadline set by the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Since September 2015, the partnership has strengthened and evolved, and jointly devised the HotSW Prospectus of Productivity. The Prospectus builds on the three ambitions; to raise productivity levels; improve health, care and wellbeing; and improve connectivity and resilience. A number of thematic groups were established to develop the detail for the proposition.

- Health, social care and wellbeing
- Skills and employment
- Business support
- Infrastructure, resilience and connectivity
- Housing and planning
- Governance

On 9 December 2015 (Minute *438) and 10 December 2015 (Minute *157) the Cabinet and Council authorised the Leader and Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leaders of the Opposition, to approve the detailed submission to the Government.

The Partnership submitted its Prospectus for Productivity to Government at the end of February 2016. Since then the Partnership has pressed the Secretary of State to enter into discussion with its negotiation team to secure a devolution deal for the Heart of the South West area. Following an invitation from the Secretary of State, on 25 May 2016, leaders from the upper tier authorities met with Greg Clark, Secretary of State for the Department of Communities and Local Government to seek his views on the next steps forward.

Following that meeting, he invited the partnership to come forward with a proposal and the following points were clarified:

- Geography – the Devon and Somerset area is agreed as the appropriate scale. Our proposal will need clearly demonstrate why this is the right geography for the Devolution agreement and all councils and MPs must support the proposal
- Combined Authority – the Partnership will move forward into the negotiation process based on a Combined Authority model. The Mayoral issue may be considered at a later stage, within the timeline agreed by our Partnership. A Mayor will not be imposed or a pre-condition of any initial deal
- Extent of the deal – areas that have agreed to have a Mayor will get more powers than a non-mayoral Combined Authority. However, the negotiation process will be an opportunity to push the limits of this initial deal and the process should be viewed as long term and incremental
- Timeline – the partnership is working towards an Autumn Statement timeline for the announcement of an initial deal
- Growth Deal 3 – the Local Enterprise Partnership will not be penalised in the Growth Deal 3 negotiations because the area has decided to pursue a devolution deal based on a Combined Authority without a Mayor. The decision will be based purely on the quality of the Growth Deal bid

The Secretary of State went on to advise that if the Partnership, backed by each Council and supported by MPs, would sign up to the principle of creating a Combined Authority by the end of July 2016, he would arrange for HM Treasury to open up negotiations towards a deal.

2. Productivity Plan

The Partnership has committed to develop a detailed Productivity Plan to guide the powers and resources received in a devolution agreement. This plan represents a refresh of the LEP's current Strategic Economic Plan (SEP).

Regardless of whether the Government agrees to open up negotiations for a deal, the development of the Productivity Plan is imperative to guide the long term growth objectives for the area. Work will continue on the plan irrespective of whether there is an announcement in the Chancellor's Autumn Statement.

The Productivity Plan will focus on each of the six 'golden opportunities' that have been identified the Prospectus – marine, nuclear, aerospace and advanced engineering, data analytics, rural productivity and health. These will form the backbone of an ambitious delivery plan to transform productivity levels in the area and ensure it can compete on a global as well as a national scale in terms of prosperity.

3. Governance

A Governance Review for the Partnership is already underway. This is examining existing structures and developing options for the best governance structure for the Heart of the South West. The review will consider the following issues and each Council, through their Monitoring Officer, will be involved in the process:

- The extent of the decision making powers to be vested in the Combined Authority
- What decision making structures or advisory committees (including place-based arrangements) will be required under the Combined Authority – including any joint committee arrangements
- Proposed voting arrangements

The results of this Governance Review will form the basis for a draft scheme of governance that will be made available to the Council for approval. The timeline is subject to agreement with Government. If the Government requires Councils to approve a draft governance scheme before an Autumn Statement announcement then a report would be put before Members in the October or November 2016 cycle of meetings.

It should be noted that there is no intention for a new Combined Authority to take existing powers or funding from local authorities without the explicit agreement of the constituent local authorities.

A briefing sheet describing a Combined Authority is attached for information at Appendix 1.

It is possible that one or more partners may chose not to proceed with a formal bid. This would be unfortunate as there is strength in all partners coming on board; however, it is possible for a deal to go ahead even if one or more local authorities choose to opt out. There is significant work underway to produce a draft deal that is acceptable to all and this will be fully explored as the bid develops.

4. Consultation, communication and engagement

On 10 December 2015, the Council (Minute *157) required public consultation to be undertaken on any deal negotiated with Government. Members are asked to note that Cities and Local Government Devolution Act 2016 requires the Secretary of State to be assured

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that sufficient public consultation has taken place before orders can be set before Parliament to formally approve the creation of a Combined Authority.

Once the draft deal and the governance scheme are available the Council will have some detail on which to consult the public. Therefore public consultation will take place once negotiations are at a more developed stage.

Members will be kept informed as work continues through:

- Newsletters from the Heart of the South West devolution partnership
- A video on Member web pages setting out devolution, the benefits it could bring to the area and explaining the role of a Combined Authority
- A Member Development Roadshow at County Hall during the Autumn on Devolution and Combined Authorities

The Partnership has produced a document setting out the potential benefits for partners. This document, at Appendix 2, has been tailored to highlight the opportunities a devolution deal could bring in helping the Council achieve the objectives within its Strategic Plan.

5. Equality Considerations

The impacts and implications of a draft deal will be assessed and considered as part of the negotiation process. The Heart of the South West Partnership will develop an Impact Needs Assessment at the start of the negotiation process and will be updated as specific powers are agreed. It will also reflect the impact of the recommended governance arrangements. The final assessment will be provided alongside the draft deal and the draft governance scheme to inform decision making.

6. Public Health Considerations

Public Health specialists are involved in the development of proposals to Government and providing advice to maximise the potential for public health improvements through this process. The range of public health considerations will be presented once the draft deal is presented to the Council.

7. Risk Management Considerations

The risks to the Council will continue to be assessed and considered as part of the negotiations and will be presented once the draft deal is before the Council.

8. Legal considerations

The Council's Legal team is fully involved in the development of the governance arrangements and the draft deal. The Legal Team will work with colleagues across all Councils to advise the Partnership on the legal implications of the draft deal and the governance arrangements. The team will advise on actions required to protect the legal position of the Council.

9. Financial considerations

The Council's Finance team is fully involved in the development of the draft deal and the investment framework which will support a Combined Authority. The team is working with other finance partners across the other councils. The Finance Team will advise on actions required to protect the financial position of the Council.

10. Options/Alternatives

The following options/alternatives were considered and rejected:

To decline the Secretary of State's offer to work towards a deal announcement in the Autumn Statement and continue to work at a slower pace. Reason for rejection: As far as the Partnership is aware the Heart of the South West may be the first two tier area to be given the opportunity to enter into negotiation with Government for a Deal without committing to a directly elected Mayor. This is a prime opportunity to test Government and secure powers for the area. The offer is likely to be time limited due to Government schedules and pattern of announcements

To make a separate approach to Government rather than move forward as a Heart of the South West Partnership. Reason for rejection: Since the submission of the Statement of Intent in September 2015, 17 local authorities, 2 National Parks, the HotSW LEP and 3 CCGs have worked very effectively to create a strong and credible Prospectus that has been acknowledged by the Secretary of State. The Partnership sees strength in moving forward to negotiations to have a stronger voice and secure a better deal for this part of the South West.

11. Reason for Recommendation/Conclusion

The recommendations will enable Devon County Council to continue to take a full and active part in the Heart of the South West partnership for a devolution deal.

Members are reminded that approving the recommendations does not commit the County Council to any deal. That would be subject to future County Council discussion and agreement.

Phil Norrey
Chief Executive

Electoral Division: All

Cabinet Member for Policy and Corporate: Councillor John Hart

Local Government Act 1972: List of Background Papers

Contact for enquiries: Sue Rook
Room No. G60, County Hall, Exeter. EX2 4QD

Tel No: (01392) 382871
Appendix one – Combined
Authority Briefing Paper (HotSW
Devolution Partnership) June 2016

Appendix two – What does this
mean for the Heart of the South
West and my authority? (HotSW
Devolution Partnership) June 2016)

June 2016

What is a Combined Authority?

Summary

Combined authorities (CAs) were introduced under in the [Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009](#) ('2009 Act'), and subsequently amended by the [Cities and Local Government Devolution Act 2016](#). The Heart of the South West Partnership has developed this briefing note as a simple explanation of both a Mayoral and Non-Mayoral Combined Authority (CA). Following a meeting with the Secretary of State in late May, and in line with the briefing note circulated shortly afterwards, the Partnership is considering establishing a Non-Mayoral CA.

It should be noted that we are not seeking to establish a Mayoral CA at this stage, but we are keeping our options open to see what additional powers this could unlock in the future. It is important that we collectively agree to the principle of setting up a Non-Mayoral CA initially to allow us to enter into negotiations with Government at this time.

What is a Combined Authority (CA)?

England has one of the most centralised governance systems in the world. By creating a CA, the Heart of the South West partnership aims to draw down a range of new strategic powers and funding from central Government, through a Devolution Deal. This will mean that more decisions can be taken locally to better reflect local priorities. A CA can be set up by two or more local authorities. It is a formal structure with a recognised legal status. It usually has one representative from each of the constituent member local authorities, and operates on either a Leader and Cabinet, or Committee structure. A Mayoral CA also has a directly-elected Mayor who is the overall Leader or chair.

The 2016 Act removes previous limitations on the powers that a CA can exercise and permits the Secretary of State to transfer a wide range of statutory functions, including functions from public bodies. The only qualifications on this relate to the transfer of health service functions. The extent of the powers transferred depends on the Devolution Deal agreed with Government. The Secretary of State has been clear that the Mayoral CA model enables areas to draw down the most extensive range of powers. Examples of some pre-existing Combined Authorities that will become Mayoral CAs by May 2017:

- [Greater Manchester Combined Authority](#)
- [Sheffield City Region](#)
- [Liverpool City Region](#)

What it's not.....

A Combined Authority is **not**:

- part of a process to instigate local government reform, or bring about unitary status.
- a take-over by any authority, nor a merger of authorities to form a 'super council'.
- about ceding (transferring) powers to a single body without the express will of the constituent local authorities.
- a 'physical entity,' for example with teams of regeneration officers from the constituent authorities sitting in one building – **unless** the constituent local authorities wish it to be. (Except for a very small core support team that is required by law)

What is a Mayoral CA?

A Mayoral CA is a new variant introduced under the 2016 Act and is different to the elected mayors that a number of councils already have in place such as Torbay.

Up until recently, the Mayor of London had a unique position within English local government, with powers over strategic planning, transport, fire and emergency planning, policing and crime, and economic development over all of London, together with an elected 25-member London Assembly with scrutiny powers. The remaining local government functions in London are performed by the 32 borough councils.

Through Devolution Deals a number of areas have agreed to have a directly elected Mayor and a CA in return for a range of additional powers. An example of this is Greater Manchester Combined Authority. It will have a different model from London as they will operate a cabinet model CA, where all GMCA leaders have a clear portfolio of responsibilities that will act as a supporting and advisory function to their Mayor and CA in respective policy areas. Elections for the GMCA Mayor will take place in May 2017.

In this example the Mayor will need to consult the Cabinet on his/her strategies, which it may reject if two-thirds of the Members do not agree. Some functions such as the Statutory Spatial Framework will need to be approved by a unanimous vote of the Cabinet.

What is the process for setting up a CA?

There are a number of routes for establishing a CA.

- 2009 Act – requires the authorities to carry out a governance review and publish a scheme recommending the creation of a combined authority. This requires the consent of the authorities involved in the scheme and the Secretary of State will agree to make a Parliamentary Order under the Act to create the CA.
- 2016 Act – the Secretary of State can establish a Combined Authority if the councils in the area consent. The Secretary of State must hold a public consultation if this has not already been undertaken locally. The Secretary of State needs to be satisfied that the CA is likely to “*improve the exercise of statutory functions*” in the area. The typical timeframe for establishing a CA through this route is 6-9 months.

An existing CA can be changed into a Mayoral CA through a Statutory Order from the Secretary of State. Any authorities that do not consent must be removed from the CA when the elected Mayor is established.

The governance review stage is important in determining the best model of CA for an area and is part of the overall scheme. In a Non-Mayoral CA the constituent members need to decide if they want a Leader and Cabinet, or a Committee style model for the CA

Can the membership of a CA be changed?

It is possible for councils to leave, or for new councils to join a CA, however Government agreement is required to amend or dissolve the Combined Authority. If a local authority wishes to leave the Combined Authority, a new review of governance arrangements would have to take place, and a revised scheme would need to be published, before the Statutory Order could be amended.

What sort of powers could the HotSW Combined Authority expect to receive through its first Devolution Deal?

No other areas of the country have been given a Devolution Deal based on the establishment of a new Non-Mayoral Combined Authority, however the Deals struck with Cornwall and West Yorkshire provide a guide as to what we might expect to be in our Deal.

We believe we are in a strong position to push for as much as possible in our first Deal with Government.

Devolution Deals tend to be incremental and to evolve over time. Once areas are able to demonstrate that they have strong and accountable governance arrangements in place, and that they can successfully deliver on the new functions, Government is willing to transfer further powers by negotiating subsequent deals. In March 2016, Greater Manchester, the pioneers of Devolution, successfully secured their 4th Deal with Government which gave them greater powers over more public services, including the criminal justice system.

All Devolution Deals have a common set of themes; however, the greatest powers, funding control, and influence are reserved for areas with Mayoral Combined Authorities. We believe that the following examples would be available to us as a bare minimum:

- **Transport** – for example around bus franchises, and determining local bus network routes
- **Learning and Skills** – for example, control of the Adult Education Budget to redesign further education
- **Business Support** – having the freedom to join up a range of Government agencies locally to provide a better, more coordinated offer to businesses
- **Employment Support** – the ability to influence commissioning of the new DWP Health and Work Programme
- **Land and Housing** – greater influence over the use or disposal of central Government land and assets, and working with Government on planning reforms

We will be pushing hard for all the powers and influence reflected in the 'Asks' in our Prospectus. In particular, we will be making a strong case to secure a long term investment commitment for the infrastructure we need to unlock growth.

How would it impact on my Council?

The CA does not replace the existing member Councils, it operates alongside and allows those members to draw down and exercise a range of powers and control funding from Government they would not otherwise be able to access. It means that local politicians have greater control over decision making traditionally held in Westminster. The extent of the powers is determined by the Devolution Deal negotiated with Government.

It is not intended for any existing council functions across Devon and Somerset councils to transfer to the CA at the time of its establishment, but once established it would be possible, where there is a clear benefit, for councils to transfer functions into the CA, subject to agreement.

Further information

House of Commons Briefing Paper on Combined Authority – February 2016
<http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN06649/SN06649.pdf>

June 2016

What does Devolution mean for the Heart of the South West - and for my own organisation and local authority area?

Since the submission of the Statement of Intent in September 2015, the Heart of the South West Partnership have been working together to try and draw down greater powers, funding and freedoms from Government by securing a Devolution Deal for the area.

There are a number of underlying reasons to pursue a Devolution Deal and Combined Authority as a Heart of the South West Partnership

The partnership has agreed the rationale and benefits for being involved in this process as follows:

- This is a unique opportunity to release powers and funding from Whitehall and enable us to have greater influence to deliver on the priorities we know are important to our sub-region
- It places our Partnership into an exclusive club with the 10 other deal areas and the advantages this can bring in terms of incremental shifts of power from the centre to local areas
- It is the start of an ongoing process that will allow us to build on our track record and credibility for delivery that makes a tangible difference to our communities

By working together as a Partnership we have a stronger voice with Government and greater clarity about our shared priorities. It puts decision-making closer to our communities so that we can plan, sequence and deliver what our areas need over the longer term. It will create a firm foundation for working together and for having conversations at a strategic level with neighbouring areas across the South West.

The benefits across the whole partnership of working together towards a Devolution Deal include access to new powers, for example around:

- **Transport** – for example greater power to influence major infrastructure schemes for road and rail
- **Learning and Skills** – for example, control of the Adult Education Budget to redesign further education
- **Business Support** – having the freedom to join up a range of Government agencies locally to provide a better, more coordinated offer to businesses
- **Employment Support** – the ability to influence commissioning of the new DWP Health and Work Programme
- **Land and Housing** – greater influence over the use or disposal of central Government land and assets, and working with Government on planning reforms

Benefits within my own organisation and for my local area

The main benefit to Devon County Council and the area is the opportunity to have a greater say and influence on local matters which are currently controlled by Whitehall. It provides an opportunity for Devon County Council to deliver or accelerate delivery on many of its strategic objectives. The list of potential benefits has been linked to the Council's Strategic Objectives set out in its Strategic Plan:

Resilient – the County could draw down greater powers, control over funding and influence national agency programmes with regards to preparedness and prevention of flooding. The transfer of more powers from Whitehall gives local people greater control and influence over decisions and therefore strengthens local democracy. The principle of the Partnership is for powers to be delivered at the appropriate geographic level bringing communities closer to the decision making and fits with our aspirations around locality working.

Healthy – a key theme within the Devolution proposals is health, care and wellbeing. The County faces significant financial pressures due to its demographic profile. Working with partners across the Heart of the South West and making the connections between jobs, connectivity, skills and wellbeing will help our population to age well and become healthier. The focus on prosperity within the proposals has a direct relationship with the wellbeing of our communities.

Prosperous – the Partnership is committed to developing a Productivity Plan. This has a direct connection to our aspirations for greater prosperity. Through improved skills and employment prospects for all and in particular our younger population and those furthest from the work force. The Business Support proposals will provide more appropriate assistance to our local business community.

Connected – Through the Devolution Deal the Partnership hopes to pursue a commitment to 100% Broadband coverage across the County. This is a direct link to the ambitions of the County Council. Also having a greater say in infrastructure investment such as road and rail improvement will help improve access to work, training and essential services for our residents.

POST-16 EDUCATION TRAVEL POLICY FOR 2017-18

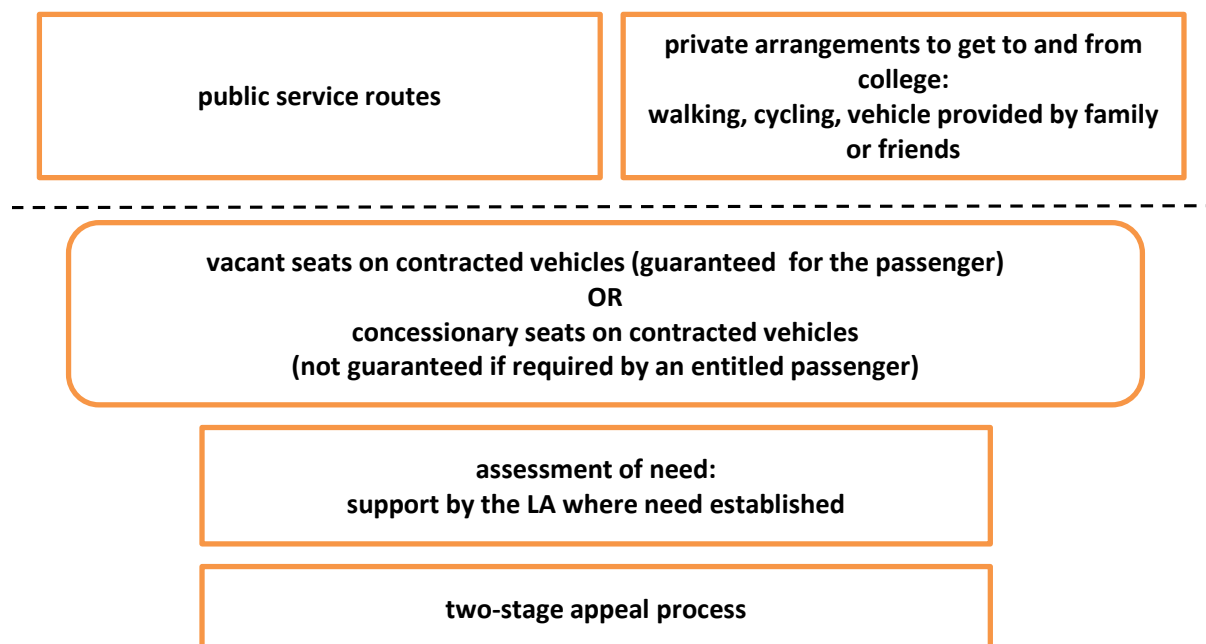
Report of the Head of Education and Learning

Please note that the following recommendation is subject to approval by the Cabinet and confirmation under the provisions of the Council's Constitution before taking effect.

1. Note the travel policy was proposed and consulted on by the Local Authority.
2. Consider the recommendations at section 3.1.
3. Determine the recommended policy for 2017-18 at www.devon.gov.uk/admissionarrangements

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Local Authority (LA) has statutory responsibilities to provide free transport to and from school for children of statutory school age who meet set criteria. It may also exercise its discretion to provide assistance for children in other circumstances, for which it may charge a fee or contribution. The LA must also support travel for post-16 students where there is a need to do so and may charge a contribution for that support. Under Section 509AB(3)(a) of the Education Act 1996, the LA must have regard to the needs of those post-16 students who would be unable to access education or training provision if transport arrangements were not made by the LA to support them.
- 1.2 A policy was proposed under which the LA would become the safety net for transport for post-16 students rather than the scheme provider. The LA would only support transport where no other options are possible to enable a student to access education post-16. The proposed policy would not lead to post-16 students unable to travel to school or college to continue in education. The process detailed below at sections 4 and 5 can be summarised as below with LA support below the dotted line:



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- 1.3 The County Council's Education transport budgets are under severe pressure and a range of management actions are being implemented to reduce costs to be within the budget envelope. The budget for 2016-17 is £21,564,000 and taking into account savings targets at the end of month 2, there is a predicted overspend of £1,080,026.

The post-16 transport budget is £449,000 with a predicted overspend based on month 2 of £80,000. By increasing the post-16 contribution over recent years and with the 2016-17 proposed change it is anticipated that this will contribute towards reaching a balanced budget.

2. PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

- 2.1 This paper is to report the outcome of a consultation on amendments to the education travel policy for post-16 students which would affect travel during the academic year 2017-18 and to seek approval for the amended policy.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Members are requested to:

1. Increase the contribution level for all subject to pay a contribution from £560 to £580 per annum; and
2. Remove an automatic entitlement to transport support for post-16 students, with support being available from the Local Authority only where students¹ can evidence that they could not access education or training provision without support being given by the LA.

4 CONSULTATION

- 4.1 The Education Transport Policy for 2016-17 was determined by Cabinet in April 2016 and included arrangements for Post-16 Transport within that policy. Where a contribution towards costs of the LA was required, this was increased from £520 to £560 per annum. A reduction for children and students from low-income households was removed. No other changes were made from the 2015-16 policy.

- 4.2 The LA consulted on the proposed policy for 2017-18 between April and June 2016. The consultation was hosted at www.devon.gov.uk/admissionarrangements. Information was sent to all schools and colleges in the county and close to the county border. Letters were also sent to schools and colleges for distribution to the parents of children in Year 10 to inform them of proposed changes to the 2017-18 policy affecting new post-16 applicants. Children of current Year 10 age will enter post-16 education for the first time in 2017-18. Parents, children and colleges were invited to comment on the proposals with the consultation ending on 30 June.

- 4.3 A large number of responses have been received to this consultation. The principal concern of parents is that their child would not be able to get to college without transport provided by the LA. The view from a number of colleges has been that the level of funding available through the College Bursary Scheme would be insufficient to meet the needs of all of their students. The responses are detailed at **Appendix A**.

5. TRANSPORT WITHOUT ASSISTANCE FROM THE LA

- 5.1 The overarching principle is that students and parents have the primary responsibility for travel to and from college. They would be expected to have explored all options and in order to request support from the LA, to provide evidence that no other means of travel or sources of support are available. They may seek support through the Bursary

¹ In most cases it is the student's parent or carer who makes applications and pays contributions towards the LA costs.

scheme and, if that is not available or is insufficient, in the last resort from the LA as a safety-net. Students and their parents would be expected to:

- walk to and from college; or
- use a bicycle; or
- use a motorcycle or moped; or
- use a car provided by family or friends; or
- access public transport; or
- make other arrangements.

In many cases, the student will be able to walk to and from college or travel using public transport. Where this is the case, there is no need for the LA to assist in any way.

6. PROPOSED AMENDMENTS

6.1 Under the proposed policy, support would not be available from the LA unless satisfactory evidence is provided that the student could not travel to college independently or by using public transport. This approach is based on the following:

- there is no universal entitlement to travel assistance from the LA for post-16 students;
- parents are responsible for making travel arrangements for their children;
- colleges are provided with bursary funds to support students with travel, clothing, books and equipment for a course;
- where there is financial difficulty, parents or students should approach colleges for assistance through the bursary scheme;
- the LA should only be seen as providing assistance where there is a barrier to accessing or remaining in education and where all other options have been investigated and are not available, as evidenced by the parent or student; and
- where travel assistance is provided by the LA, a contribution towards costs will be required.

6.2 In determining whether there is a need for the LA to provide support for an individual student, the LA would retain eligibility criteria. The student must:

- live in the Devon County Council administrative area;
- attend the nearest appropriate post-16 establishment;
- live further than three miles from the establishment;
- be in full-time education; and
- be under 19 years of age on the 31 August before the beginning of the academic year²

6.3 There would be no automatic entitlement to support from the LA and the LA will not arrange for transport support to be put in place without contact from the student or parent. The LA will continue to operate an advice service which will be able to signpost students to sources of support for transport arrangements, principally through sixth forms and other colleges. The LA will continue to work with transport providers to develop sustainable travel options for students.

6.4 Where a student or parent seeks support from the LA, it will require satisfactory evidence:

² Or he or she must be attending a specific course for those with learning difficulties and be required to attend beyond the age of 19 in order to complete the course. Support would then continue until the end of the academic year during which he or she reaches 21 in order to attend the same course at the same establishment.

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- that they have applied to their college for financial assistance, with details of the level of support offered;
- of the cost to them if they were to make the necessary travel arrangements;³
- of a medical condition or other circumstance that would prevent the parent making the other necessary travel arrangements, and
- of their financial circumstances, for instance, proof of receipt of means tested benefit.

6.5 The LA would then consider the evidence and reach an individual decision whether there was a need for assistance to be provided. There would be a very clear expectation that where a public service vehicle could be used by the student to get to and from college, it would be used, paid for by the student or parent. Students from low income households especially are able to seek financial support from the college through the Bursary scheme.

In the absence of a public service route, the student or parent would be expected to provide evidence that there are no other arrangements that could be made to get the student to and from college – such as a car or other means of transport within the family. It would not be sufficient to state that it would be inconvenient for the family to use its own resources. In some circumstances, it may be accepted that there is a need for the LA to assist a student to get to a public service route.

6.6 It is expected that there will be a number of students with additional needs for whom transport arrangements will require specialised or individual transport. The expectation that parents will transport students would apply equally in these circumstances, including where a vehicle has been made available for the student's transport needs. The LA will assume that where public funds have been used to provide a Motability vehicle for the student's direct benefit, this will be used for home to college travel. However, where it is evidenced that the family is unable to make arrangements for transport, the LA would continue to provide support over and above any support provided by the college through the Bursary scheme. Bursary funding may be used to help the family pay the contribution towards the costs of the LA.

6.7 Similarly, where the cost of transport is higher due to rurality and isolation, the LA recognises that it may be required to assist the student. This may be through an allowance to support a family vehicle or to pay other costs or, in more exceptional cases, the provision of a seat on a vehicle contracted by the LA.

6.8 Transport support from the LA may include the offer of Independent Travel Training to enable the student to get to and from college either without the need for a vehicle or by using a cheaper option. Independent Travel Training offers financial savings and enables a student to be more self-reliant in other areas of life.

6.9 In all cases where the LA provides support, there will be a requirement to pay the contribution towards LA costs. This cost is to be met by the student or parent and would apply equally to all students, including those from low-income households and those with additional needs. Students will be advised to approach the college for financial assistance through the Bursary scheme. Under the 2016-17 transport policy, post-16 students and their families are expected to pay a contribution towards LA costs. They can approach colleges for assistance from the Bursary scheme. This is targeted towards the most disadvantaged but available for all families to request.

6.10 Under a revised policy, LA support would be the most cost-effective possible and consist in:

³ This should be the most cost-effective arrangements possible.

- provision of a seat on a LA contract vehicle or
- a financial allowance to assist with travel costs to and from college or to and from an appropriate pick-up/drop-off point for a public service or LA contract vehicle; or
- Independent Travel Training.

The LA will use the most cost-effective option that would enable the student to benefit from the education provided at college. By targeting support on those with an identified need, the LA would be operating a more flexible, responsive policy for the benefit of those with genuine need. The ongoing pressure on LA finances requires that Devon steps back from making discretionary provision for all students who meet eligibility criteria.

- 6.11 The proposed change to policy recognises the trend over recent years towards post-16 transport becoming more college-sponsored and for fewer students to access LA transport support. It is anticipated that the LA will continue to support a core of students with an identified need for support because of their additional need, the rurality of their home location or because there is another identified need for assistance.

Number of students receiving LA transport support

Year	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
FE college	2460	2042	1769	1446	1243	1336
sixth form	1149	974	834	819	785	715
Special school	130	119	116	124	140	126
Total	3739	3135	2719	2389	2168	2177

7 FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.1 Details of the current overspend are at section 1.3 above.
- 7.2 The proposals in this document are intended to reduce the financial liability of the LA. By removing some discretionary entitlement and increasing the expected income from contributions, the LA would be seeking to lower the overall spend on education transport. It would be for colleges to deploy Bursary funding to reduce or remove any financial impact on families.
- 7.3 Post-16 students can request support from school sixth forms and Further Education Colleges which are funded through the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund. This is money from central government that students or the college can use to pay for transport, lunch of study days or clothing, books and other equipment necessary for the education course.

The Bursary Fund is available to students through a Vulnerable Student Bursary which allows for up to £1200. This is means tested. There is a further fund, a Discretionary Bursary for which colleges will set their own criteria to decide which students will receive assistance. Details of the funding available to colleges under this scheme in 2015-16 are given at **Appendix B**.

- 7.4 It is anticipated that there would remain a number of students who, with higher costs due to rurality or additional need require transport support from the LA either in the absence of Bursary support or in addition to it. For the majority of cases, students will receive financial support from the college or from the family's own resources.

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- 7.5 The post-16 transport budget for 2016-17 is £449,000. From the increase in the contribution level⁴ it is anticipated that £54,000 will be saved in the current financial year. This takes into account the impact of changes being introduced part way through the financial year.

The proposed changes from September 2017 would save £98,000 within year making at total saving including the increased fees of £159,500 for 2017-18. As the revised policy is gradually introduced it is anticipated that the saving by 2019-20 will be £254,000 per annum.

8 SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1 The travel policy supports the principle of promoting access to education and meeting the LA's statutory responsibilities. It is anticipated that students will continue to travel by the same means to college in most instances. The costs of transport would be met either by the student or by the college through the College Bursary scheme rather than by Devon County Council.

9 EQUALITY CONSIDERATIONS

- 9.1 Equality of access to education opportunities is a fundamental feature of transport arrangements. The policy for consideration has been subject to an Equality Impact Needs Assessment, at www.devon.gov.uk/admissionarrangements

10 LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 10.1 Local authorities must have regard to the transport needs of post-16 students. Devon must comply with statutory guidance of the Department for Education: *Post-16 Transport to Education and Training*, February 2014. Setting fair and transparent arrangements ensures that the LA meets its duty and enables parents, colleges and other interested parties to have confidence in them. The policy has been proposed and the subject of consultation.

11 RISK MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- 11.1 The key risks are that the LA will not have a lawful policy for Post-16 Education Transport and that a policy is not determined by the LA ahead of arrangements being made for post-16 education and applications for transport from September 2017 submitted during the 2016-17 academic year by parents and post-16 students.
- 11.2 The LA does not anticipate an increase in the number of young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) as a result of this amendment. It would continue to be a provider of transport assistance for post-16 students as a safety net.

12. CONCLUSION

- 12.1 The LA has a statutory responsibility to provide transport support where the absence of support would prevent a student from remaining in education. This responsibility is confirmed under the proposed policy.

The recommendations in this paper recognise ongoing pressure to reduce costs and to withdraw from provision that is not statutorily required.

Sue Clarke
Head for Education and Learning

⁴ Determined by Cabinet in April 2016.

ELECTORAL DIVISION: All

Cabinet Member for Children, Schools and Skills: Councillor James McInnes
Strategic Director People: Jennie Stephens

Contact for enquiries: Andrew Brent Education and Learning Policy Officer 01392 383000

Local Government Act 1972. Background Papers:

Cabinet Report EL/16/3 (Minute *7/13 April 2016)

Responses to the Consultation on the Proposed Post-16 Transport Policy for 2017-18

		Concerns
Anthony Tschuk Social Worker (ASYE Disability focussed)	<p>I am a social worker with the Community Health and Social Care team based in Newton Abbot. I am currently supporting Mr SG. I have been advised that there has been a consultation with regard to school transport, whereby DCC will not offer any assistance with travel unless there is no other means for the young person to access education.</p> <p>S has previously been assessed by DCC Behaviour Support worker as unable to access any other means of transport to get him to college. I feel that this is the case at this moment in time. I am working with S in conjunction with the Community Enablement Team to reassess him and support him to use public transport. However, he may not be ready to use an alternative before returning to college in September</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specialised provision for students with SEND
Dr Phil Le Grice Principal Bicton College and Director of Rural Economy The Cornwall College Group	<p>Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the consultation on education transport policy for 2016/17 and 2017/18.</p> <p>In overview, anything that makes the decision to embark upon further study cumbersome or financially challenging will affect participation at our college. In particular, at a time when the raising of the participation age is having the unintended consequence of leading families to the belief that learners might need to stay on in their current schools with 6th forms, any bureaucracy that tends to reinforce that misconception, or emphasise alternatives is unhelpful. I make this overview and point two and three below, with particular reference to the Impact Assessment (Version 2016) which helpfully references the social and environmental impact of policy changes that these points will help mitigate.</p> <p>Point 1 Section 5- Eligibility for travel assistance.</p> <p><i>Where a student does not attend the nearest establishment because of their chosen course, they will be required to provide evidence that the course is essential for entry to Higher Education. 13 It must be evidenced that a similar alternative course is not available closer to home.</i></p> <p>As a specialist provider of land-based education is it possible to work with your team to formalise a block position for our suite of specialist vocational courses that lead to HE in land-based disciplines to avoid repeated representations on evidence requirements?</p> <p><i>Nearest appropriate establishment.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact on choices for students Access to specialist courses Signposting to advice and support

Responses to the Consultation on the Proposed Post-16 Transport Policy for 2017-18

	<p>Landex, the national association of Landex Colleges (www.landex.org.uk) audits the facilities, staffing and resourcing that allows an institution delivering land-based programmes to be recognised by funders and stakeholders as 'specialist' colleges. Bicton College and Duchy College along with Bridgewater are the only colleges covering Devon that have this designation. I seek assurance that a learner seeking to travel to these establishments is supported to do so even if, ostensibly, the title of the programme of study at a non-specialist college suggests that a nearer college is a 'designatable' alternative.</p> <p>Point 2 Residential Bursaries are currently available (means tested) for learners taking part in Specialist Land-Based Provision. I seek advice on how we bring residential bursaries and the opportunities for post 16 residential study options to public attention through travel advice and guidance issued by the Local Authority. Promotion of residential places will help impact upon road travel problems, mitigate travel costs for some families and offer a very rich educational experience for some learners.</p> <p>Point 3 Alternatives in post 16 study. Travel Policy guidance might seek to draw attention to apprenticeship opportunity as an alternative route to post 16 participation. As a reminder that travel to some form of college is not the only available route to education and training.</p>	
<p>Alan King Business Manager, Okehampton College</p>	<p>Okehampton College's strategic philosophy has always been to provide and outstanding education opportunity for all of the young people who live in our catchment area. Our results we feel demonstrate that this strategic aim is realised consistently year on year. It is therefore difficult to understand why our County Council would wish to put forward a proposal that undermines the "outstanding opportunities for all" philosophy adopted by one of their own maintained secondary schools. I am of course referring to the proposal to remove access to school transport for Post 16 students. Given the rurality of our catchment area and the extremely inadequate public bus services into Okehampton, the decision would be catastrophic both in terms of disenfranchising future generations of local young people from access to outstanding education provision and the viability of Post 16 provision at Okehampton College.</p> <p>The majority of public transport routes from our area head towards Exeter and the inevitable outcome of the County's proposal would be to create a thriving independent sector within Post 16 educational provision to the detriment of its' own maintained sector. Transport, inevitably in a rural area, is a key ingredient for students and parents when choosing which Post 16 provision they will enrol with. Surely</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact on the most rurally isolated families • Impact on choices for students • Sufficiency of Bursary funds • Safeguarding responsibilities

Responses to the Consultation on the Proposed Post-16 Transport Policy for 2017-18

	<p>the Government initiative to raise the leaving age for young people to 18 will also mean more courses and options being needed for them to access. Post 16 providers, such as Okehampton College, can support this expansion of places if it can rely on all the other key ingredients following suit. Logically then County ought to be considering how it can support the increase in the required expansion and inevitably that will mean overcoming access issues in terms of transport.</p> <p>The majority of Post 16 students and their parents/guardians recognise that transport to the educational provider of their choice will require a financial contribution on their part. However, what they don't understand is how the County proposal will create greater efficiency and save the County money when school buses continue to run through their village but with empty seats? Assuming that County will maintain transport provision for 11-16 year old students and in most cases continue to use the same bus companies and the same buses as at present. If this assumption is correct then school buses will be travelling to Okehampton College with empty seats, seats currently occupied by fee paying Post 16 students. How will this save the County money?</p> <p>On the point that parents can provide or arrange lifts for their Post 16 child can we ask if this a serious option or simply an alternative suggestion someone in County thought of? It is true that most of our families do have access to a private car but for the majority it is one car per household and this is used by the main bread winner to travel to work. This will rarely be in the direction of Okehampton. The suggestion that parents/guardians could rely on friends and/or neighbours to transport their children to school is in direct contradiction of safeguarding principles we adhere to and fully endorse. Are County proposing that parents, through schools, could have the friends and neighbours DBS checked? Equally to think that personal transport provision or transport provided by friends can be sustained for 190 days each year is also way off the mark. What happens when the car is off the road or is needed for other purposes such as emergencies? Post 16 students, through no fault of their own will miss significant parts of their learning and subsequently be penalised through the grades they can achieve as a result of missing topics.</p> <p>Within our current Post 16 cohort we have a number of young people for whom the thought of having to travel anywhere to access learning would be a journey too far. They need a significant level of support and encouragement on a daily basis, especially during the early stages, to get them through the door. They do not possess the confidence, organisational skills or academic ability to access education provision anywhere but on their doorstep. These will truly be the disenfranchised in education terms by any decision that threatens to remove the support structures available to them in their local school. Staff who know them and with whom they have become familiar with are essential to the potential success of this particular group of young people.</p>	
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Responses to the Consultation on the Proposed Post-16 Transport Policy for 2017-18

	<p>Whilst we fully appreciate that local authorities are facing challenging times in budgetary terms we don't accept that removing Post 16 transport is a means to reduce the fiscal pressures. Some of the arguments above demonstrate why we strongly feel that alternatives need to be discussed. Any decision which denies future generations of young people access to outstanding education opportunities has got to be a cause of concern. Currently 65% of our Post 16 cohort require school transport to access education at Okehampton College. No transport provision to our College will inevitably mean students accessing the limited public transport services available in our rural patch and that will not, as previously mentioned, be towards Okehampton. The end result is likely to be the closure of Post 16 provision at Okehampton College and for some young people the opportunity to participate in 'education' beyond the age of 16. Further, it is likely to reduce the educational aspirations of many young people and impact on their GCSE performance as they settle for what they need to enter further education rather than what they are capable of and striving to get the grades to undertake A level courses.</p> <p>A final point is whether Cabinet members have considered the possible impact of this proposal on rural communities across Devon, of which Okehampton is typical. Consider the scenario of transport routes being focused on the major cities of the County and young peoples' only choice of education provision going the same way. Bus companies will no longer be able to maintain rural bus routes or need to think about rural communities. Young people will be given the impression that their education and employment needs can only be realised in larger cities. Families wishing to support their children will want to move closer to the provision and support they need. The impact on local businesses and service providers, such as schools, would be significant and in many cases bring into question the viability of them continuing. The community of Okehampton relies on its young people and their families coming to the town to enjoy their social/leisure time nearly as much as it needs them to attend our schools. Any factor which diverts them away will inevitably lead to less reasons to make the journey.</p> <p>No one at Okehampton College underestimates the challenge Cabinet members' face but equally we strongly feel they need to reflect on their proposal in terms of maintaining quality education opportunities for all young people in their local communities.</p>	
<p>Lynne Williams Finance Manager Bidwell Brook School</p>	<p>Proposal to remove the concessionary rate of travel for low income households</p> <p>We are a special needs school and a lot of our families have huge stress and difficulties associated with having children or young people with complex needs. This can impact on family finances with it being difficult to work full time and find suitable child care.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sufficiency of Bursary funds

Responses to the Consultation on the Proposed Post-16 Transport Policy for 2017-18

	<p>This move would put additional stress and financial pressure on families.</p> <p>Schools have very limited amounts of discretionary funding and would possibly not be able to meet all requests for financial help</p> <p>If we were able to meet all requests, it would mean that we have no bursary funding to meet other requests for specialist equipment or help towards residential etc</p> <p>When young adults are entering post 16 education, it would be a retrograde step for parents to start bringing them in to school as they need to start learning independence. I am not sure how many of our post 16 students would be able to access independent travel training, although this would be a welcome initiative.</p>	
<p>Darren Armstrong Head of Learner Services, Petroc</p>	<p>I am writing in response to Devon County Council's proposed changes to the Post 16 Transport Scheme for 2017/18.</p> <p>The rural nature of our location at both Barnstaple and Tiverton Campuses means that our learners rely heavily on transport that is supplied and supported by Devon County Council. We have serious concerns about how the proposed changes are likely to affect learners both logistically and financially.</p> <p>We have a number of learners who access Devon County Council's Transport Scheme each year using either feeder buses or contract coaches; without this scheme their ability to get to college, and thereby their access to education, will be seriously impaired.</p> <p>Although the proposed changes have included an appeals process to support learners in exceptional need, having no defined scheme or application process is likely to discourage learners who cannot easily access public transport. Of particular concern is how relevant families will be made aware of the appeals procedure, and how long an appeal is likely to take, as well as what will constitute 'exceptional need'. A major concern is that some learners will be left with no means of getting to a public transport route, and therefore no means of getting to college in time for the beginning of term, which is a crucial time for learners (both academically and in building relationships with their tutors and peers).</p> <p>We strongly believe that the proposed withdrawal of funding and services over the next couple of academic years will inevitably build significant barriers to many learners being able to continue with their education. Government policy is clear that all 16-19 year old learners should be given the opportunity to take a study programme which reflects their prior attainment, education and career goals. Petroc is unique within the area that we service, in that we are able to offer a variety of</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signposting for advice and support • Impact on the most rurally isolated families

Responses to the Consultation on the Proposed Post-16 Transport Policy for 2017-18

	programmes, both academic and technical to suit all abilities. Removing transport and financial support ultimately removes choice for those learners, and we strongly urge you to reconsider.	
Peter Gregory Director of Finance, Ivybridge Academy Trust	<p>Having considered your consultation document on education transport policy for 2017/18, we would raise the following concerns:</p> <p>1. We believe your proposal to remove the FSM subsidy of post 16 transport will place a serious barrier to participation in post 16 education for many disadvantaged students (particularly those living in rural areas of Devon). Removal of the subsidy would undermine the Government's policy of closing the gap in our education system (underpinned by such initiatives as Pupil Premium funding) and of offering all students equal opportunity to partake in higher education. Your suggestion that the subsidy could be funded from schools' Post 16 Bursary is mis-guided as these funds are already limited and fully utilised in supporting the less advantaged attend sixth form.</p> <p>2. Whilst we acknowledge the fiscal constraints in which education transport must operate and reluctantly accept that, with the exception of the FSM subsidy referred to above, post 16 students will have to pay for their transport to school; we do not support the proposed removal of a student's entitlement to education transport (provided they pay for it) from 2017/18. The current public transport service is simply inadequate to readily transport students living in rural Devon to school. The removal of the entitlement would therefore again place a significant barrier to such students attending sixth form, contrary to the Government's policy of widening participation in post 16 education.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sufficiency of Bursary funds • Impact on the most rurally isolated families
Alison Pollentine Business Manager Sidmouth College	<p>As a secondary school we would not be able to fund the whole cost for a post 16 student on DCC provided transport, as it will be much more cost effective to provide students with money to buy their own season tickets on service busses if they are available.</p> <p>My concern is for those students with SEND; please be aware in your deliberations that policy surrounding the Bursary funds means that discretionary support is only available to those in financial need, and does not take into account disability or other needs.</p> <p>The Guaranteed Bursary Award of £1200 per year for Vulnerable Learners is available to young people in Care, Care Leavers, Young People in receipt of Income Support and Disabled Young People in receipt of Employment Support Allowance who are also in receipt of Disability Living Allowance. In my experience no disabled students at Sidmouth College have received both ESA and DLA, so many students with special needs or disabilities may fall through the cracks if policy makers rely on schools' Bursary funds to support their transport costs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sufficiency of Bursary funds • Availability of Bursary to students with Special Educational Needs or Disability (SEND)

Responses to the Consultation on the Proposed Post-16 Transport Policy for 2017-18

<p>Penny Clark Communications Officer, South Dartmoor Community College</p>	<p>The effect of the changes to the current transport policy will be extremely detrimental to our Sixth Form intake.</p> <p>We currently have a higher than average proportion of rural families who struggle to afford transport Post-16. This year we have had 42 students who successfully applied for our Bursary fund, 19 of those to cover the full cost of transport as families are on low-incomes, and 14 to cover part of the cost (where the rest is born by Devon County) – a total of 33 students who would not be able to attend otherwise. This represents our full Bursary entitlement this year, and has eroded our contingency for administrative costs.</p> <p>If next year's application for the Bursary rise substantially, we will effectively have to refuse some students who are deserving of a place here, on the grounds that they cannot afford the transport costs. As an Academy, about the join a multi-Academy trust, we hope that there will be ways to generate more funds or reduce admin costs, but in the current climate we are already having to advertise further afield and encourage applications from more external students each year as there is competition from other local education providers. We are already bearing the cost of transporting students in by minibuses for the Sports Academy, where families have proven low income.</p> <p>The costs of these reductions to transport are not just about our intake or finances. This is likely to affect students opportunities to continue in education and force more into low paid jobs instead.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sufficiency of Bursary funds • Impact on sixth form numbers • Impact on the most rurally isolated families
<p>Kirsty Matthews Deputy Principal: Director of Sixth Form, South Dartmoor Community College</p>	<p>I have copied in Mel Stride, Member of Parliament for Central Devon, Graeme Cock, our Chair of Governors at South Dartmoor Community College and Hugh Bellamy, Executive Principal of South Dartmoor Multi Academy Trust in order to inform them also of my disquiet regarding the proposed policies.</p> <p>I am concerned that there is an implicit assumption on the part of DCC that Post 16 providers will use the Learner Bursary grants to block subsidise the increased transport costs for our disadvantaged learners. Not only would this transfer an extra administrative burden to school staff it would also have the effect of creating a significant strain on the fixed bursary grant the college can otherwise use to overcome a range of factors that are barriers to access and attainment for vulnerable learners. The bursary was designed by the government to be used not just for transport costs, but also for books, learning resources, meals and costs of open day visits and interviews. The proposed suggestion would surely lead us to "rob Peter to pay Paul". In a time of increasing hardship for many of our poorer</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sufficiency of Bursary funds • Administrative burden on colleges to manage the Bursary scheme • Impact on the most rurally isolated families • Impact on low income families

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	<p>families this could lead to necessary short-term economic savings removing the chances of longer term benefit. By any definition this must be a false economy. Not only our students but also the country would lose by this.</p> <p>The transport policy proposals would seriously impact our ability to 'close the achievement gap' for disadvantaged students – a current DFE priority. To illustrate this point, this year we have used £1500 towards the payment of six students' concessionary transport costs. Assuming the same number of students continue into next year we would experience an increase of cost to £3360 [2016-17] and in the following year to £3600 [2017-18]. In total we support thirty three students with transport costs using the learner bursary and we would be unable to sustain this level of support if the overall costs are raised. To exacerbate this even further schools, in Devon, are still receiving less per capita income than the rest of the UK.</p> <p>As a predominantly rural school, with a two-hundred and fifty square mile catchment area, efficient and <i>affordable</i> transport is a matter of social necessity. There is no workable public transport alternative to bring students from the moor to our site. If our poorer families do own cars they usually rely on them to get them to work and so a school run is often out of the question. Their poverty is compounded by the, quite frankly, urban-biased calculations used to denote areas of deprivation taking rate of car-ownership into account.</p> <p>Finally, in a sector where social responsibility is a core value, how is it fair? how is it equitable? how is it just to treat the poorest families in the same way disreputable utility companies are being chastised for? by asking them to pay more than the rich? by offering a £30 discount for paying an up-front lump-sum of £560? a sum which represents a huge amount to a family on the average family income here in rural Devon?</p> <p>Thank you for taking the views of South Dartmoor Sixth Form into account as part of this consultation process.</p>	
<p>Laurence Frewin Vice Principal Corporate Service and Deputy CEO, South Devon College</p>	<p>Proposed changes for 2017/18:</p> <p>There has been a lot of emphasis placed on the use of College bursary funds to meet the increased cost of travel assistance in the proposed withdrawal of a universal Post-16 assisted travel scheme. We want to make it clear that the College bursary funds are limited and, in light of continued Government austerity policies, our allocations have been reduced significantly year on year and have not reflected the significant increase in demand from those learners who are most in need and qualify for this funding. Therefore, we have also had to make some difficult decisions about what level of support we can offer learners to help them overcome barriers to learning. It is highly unlikely that we will be able to subsidise the full cost of assisted travel even for those households who qualify.</p> <p>It would appear from the proposal that learning providers will need to also play a key role in assessing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sufficiency of Bursary funds • Assessing need

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	<p>and evidencing whether the lack of local authority support will prove an unsurmountable barrier to education. This will bring an additional administrative burden and cost to the College. We would like to know from Devon County Council how this additional burden will be funded?</p> <p>Within the list of circumstances deemed by the local authority not to be exceptional we would like further clarification please on what is meant by 'an unavailable route, assessed by the local authority'</p> <p>We also feel that it is important that parent's working patterns are taken into account when assessing "unsurmountable" reasons. We consider this approach to be counter to Governments policies for supporting parents to engage in employment to support their families. Finally, please will you provide the College with a copy of the Equality Impact Assessment undertaken when drafting your proposals?</p> <p>We would also ask that this is provided prior to the end of the consultation period to ensure that we have received all of the relevant information to provide a fully informed response.</p>	
Helen R	<p>I was very concerned to read the above consultation/proposed policy. We live on the edge of the moors on the outskirts of Lustleigh and have three children (in years 8, 10 & 12) who attend South Dartmoor Community College and catch the School bus from Lustleigh. Our eldest son is in year 12 (post 16) and we pay £500 for him to catch the bus which has plenty of seats and is travelling to/from school anyway. This seems to be a perfectly sensible arrangement rather than "the last resort" proposed under the Policy. There is no public transport from Lustleigh, it is too far to walk from, too dangerous to cycle from (A38/dual carriageway) and the assumption that a parent could take their child to/from school on a daily basis would preclude the parent from having a 9-5 job. All of the children catching the bus from Lustleigh would be in the same position in terms of their inability to catch public transport, walk or cycle. South Dartmoor Community College has a catchment area consisting of schools from rural communities which means that the majority of its pupils arrive by school bus and given that the majority of post 16 students will come from the school, by definition they will also come from those catchment areas and, I imagine, walking and cycling (and probably public transport) are unlikely to be feasible options for them, too.</p> <p>I therefore urge you to reconsider the proposed policy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact on the most rurally isolated families
Alistair C	<p>I write regarding the Devon County Council proposed post 16 education transport policy for 2017-18, affecting current Yr 10 pupils. I am very concerned by this proposal.</p> <p>On a personal level, Liverton is served by the X38 bus service, as the only means of public transport to Ashburton. It is too far to walk, and cycling along the A38 is not a safe option, particularly in the dark. The current bus timetable lists stops in Liverton at 0648 and 0918 Mon - Fri, arriving in Ashburton at 0659 and 0929.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of statutory entitlement to transport for post-16 students in line with Raising of the Participation Age (RPA)

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	<p>Clearly, neither of these bus services is suitable for the school hours operating at South Dartmoor Community College.</p> <p>It is not acceptable to expect a young single female (or male for that matter) to hang around in Ashburton for more than an hour prior to the start of school. In winter time, much of that would be in the dark. Likewise, it is not acceptable for the child to be forced to miss the first hour of the school day.</p> <p>I am sure there are countless other areas with a similar problem, particularly after the council has cut funding, resulting in a reduced bus timetable on many routes, including the X38.</p> <p>I feel that a statutory requirement to provide a transport solution should be in place post 16, following the change in FTE leaving age to 18. It seems that one piece of legislation has not caught up with another, and Devon County Council are using this loophole to try and cut costs. I would hope that legislation is introduced, to require LA provision up to FTE leaving age at 18.</p> <p>In my younger daughters case (Yr 10), who will be affected by the proposal - she will not be able to drive, prior to starting 6th form, as her birthday is in August - it is not reasonable to expect her to pass a test and procure a car in a 2 week period following her 17th birthday! There is then the issue of parking in the school area which is another can of worms!</p> <p>The council suggest Parents should change their work hours to suit. A nice theory, however as an example, if a have a legal duty to be in a place of work as a responsible pharmacist during the business hours of the Pharmacy- eg 9am and 6pm, the choice is to drive my child to school and back, and stop working as a pharmacist, and presumably look for a different job, probably less well paid, meaning a reduced tax contribution to the state or indeed state support via job seekers allowance or similar; OR continue working, and have an alternative means of transporting my child. Until now that was the LA bus service. With that removed, there is no choice. There will be countless similar jobs where flexibility is not an option. Maybe we should all get jobs at the council, and enjoy such perks!</p> <p>Practically, we already pay a contribution for our eldest (yr 12) daughter to travel on the school bus. Whilst not covering the full cost of the service, it is money that the council will no longer get if she were no longer allowed to travel as a 6th former.</p> <p>In her case, 4 or 5 6th form children travel each day on the bus. That bus would still run for yr 7-11's with no reduction in cost, as it is not quite full, but a smaller bus would not be suitable, so in fact, it seems that the council would be losing money with this proposal.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidencing inability to make private arrangements • Students continuing to access contracted vehicles
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	<p>The only way this policy makes sense, is if a suitably timetabled public bus service was introduced. That would presumably require funding or incentivising by the council, so again - where is the saving?</p> <p>I would hope that the school would consider running a service for affected pupils to travel on. Obviously this could be chargeable, in a similar way to the late bus service currently operated by SDCC. Is this something every school can operate, and to every area? I doubt it.</p> <p>Please pass these comments on to the council as part of their consultation process.</p> <p>I hope they and other such comments will force a rethink.</p> <p>I have CC'ed our local MP into the email, as I feel there are issues here that he, and the government should be getting involved in.</p>	
Sue and Pete V	<p>We are writing to express our concern at proposed changes in post 16 transport. Without the provision of door to door transport our son would be unable to attend college and have access to further education and would be unfairly disadvantaged.</p> <p>Our son is 18 and currently attends South Devon College on a Level 1 course. He has a taxi to and from our home in Kingsteignton to the college in Paignton and without this provision would be unable to attend college. He has various disabilities including Worster Drought Syndrome, keratoconus (a degenerative eye condition), communication difficulties, global delayed development, asthma and is severely dyslexic. After leaving school he did a one year vocational course at the college in the Learning Opportunities Section which helped him settle into college life and with their support he has felt confident enough to undertake a Level 1 course this year. He is hoping to progress to a Level 2 course in September but unless he is provided with transport this will be impossible. Due to his medical conditions he is unable to travel independently - he would become lost or confused and may not be able to communicate with people.</p> <p>It would be grossly unfair if our son was not allowed to continue making progress in his education and training due to changes in the transport policy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specialised provision for students with SEND
Mr AR & Mrs HJ M.	<p>Having been notified of this policy change by a third party and having read through both documents, we are left feeling alarmed and dismayed.</p> <p>In particular, the policy for the 2017/18 school year would result in our daughter in being unable to</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specialised provision for students with

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	<p>complete her education to an extent that she would'nt then have the best chance of securing some kind of employment.</p> <p>She will be 19 at 31st August 2017 and will be looking to begin a new course in September 2017. She has a complex diagnosis which includes learning difficulties, resulting in her being unable to begin the course in 2016, rather she is to do an individually tailored course.</p> <p>Her English GCSE grade was an F and her final Maths GCSE grade was U at the end of year 11. She is still at Entry 1&2 for Maths and English and is not expected to be able to get up to GCSE level within the next academic year ... This would mean her leaving education without usable qualifications, this would be solely down to the changes in transport policy should this new document go forward.</p> <p>There is no way we would be able to provide transport as we live a minimum 45 minute journey from the college our daughter currently attends as what employer would tolerate an employee being at least 45 minutes late to work every day and then leaving early also? The result would be the loss of parental employment, which would result in there being no family transport anyway due to financial hardship.</p> <p>At present she depends on a taxi to get her to college and back. But it would seem that she would not qualify for a taxi should this document be approved as we have already established that she would be 19 and looking to start a new course on September 2017, due to her Learning Difficulties.</p> <p>This policy is very short sighted and far too restrictive for those who live so far from the college that provides the course that would have the best chance of our daughter succeeding. She will ultimately end up claiming Job Seekers Allowance or ESA, and probably have to attend some kind of course aimed at bringing up her Numeracy and Literacy skills, which would seem to be a failure on the part of the LA, when it comes to a young person with extra needs.</p> <p>We also feel that the lack of public awareness to this consultation, combined with the short time period for this consultation, is very underhand.</p>	SEND
Fiona C	<p>Having read through the transport policy for 201617 and 201718 the following observations can be made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students residing in rural areas have no public transport options to choose from; there are no buses or trains the use of a bicycle, motorcycle or moped is dangerous more so on rural roads especially with winter icy conditions on untreated rural roads 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact on the most rurally isolated families

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a car cannot be provided to a student who does not have a driving licence • There will be huge transport bottle necks on roads surrounding the schools with even more cars parked improperly or illegally dropping/collecting students to school • Many redundant buses being used for what purpose? • Parents don't oppose to paying for post 16 transport, but wiping it out completely is not a solution for any student who now has to stay in education until they turn 18 years old. 	
Rachel A	<p>I have read the consultation document for the proposed changes to Post 16 school transport provision by DCC and would be grateful if you could clarify a point for me. Are you proposing there will be no DCC school transport provided for students from September 2017/18? My son is currently in Y10 at South Dartmoor Community College and we plan for him to attend the school's sixth form. As we live in Bovey Tracey, there is no possibility of him getting to and from school on public transport; a bus does not run from Bovey Tracey to Ashburton. I work in Kenton and my husband is in the Royal Navy and will be working away from home. How will my son travel to and from school sixth form under these proposed changes?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact on the most rurally isolated families
Janet F	<p>I was really shocked to receive this letter concerning changes to transport, regarding my daughter SF. S is partially sighted and also has developmental delays. It would be very dangerous for her to use public transport. I have recently lost my husband to cancer, who was the main wage earner. I have worked part time for many years in Newton Abbot. I am now the sole earner with only part-time wage. Not only am I trying to live every day without my husband, and S without her dad, but if S didn't have transport I would have to give up work, which would be detrimental to both S and myself. I hope you will consider our circumstances, as S needs education and we need income.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialised provision for students with SEND
Liz J	<p>I am writing as I have just received a letter from South Devon College (Laurence Frewin – Vice Principal Corporate Services and Deputy CEO) concerning your Post 16 Transport Consultation and the significant proposed changes to the current services.</p> <p>My son MJ who is 18 years of age currently attends South Devon College and, M has special educational needs, is on the autistic spectrum and has recently been diagnosed with Crohn's disease. He is currently transported via a taxi (with other students) at a subsidised cost. I currently contribute financially to this service. This has worked well for M needs, as he has around a 25 minute journey and is dropped directly at the door of the College. Any changes to this scheme will have a dire effect on M's ability to attend College in the almost independent way in which he currently manages using the taxi service.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialised provision for students with SEND • Impact on the most rurally isolated families

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	<p>Over the past 8 months M has had several hospital admissions and has missed a great deal of the course he has been attempting to complete. His poor attendance records mean that he would like to stay on at College for at least another 12 months/24 months from September 2016 in order to have any chance of obtaining some kind of meaningful qualification if he is to have any chance of future employment. Obviously this will be subject to his health improving and he is currently undergoing regular infusions at hospital which we are hopeful will bring him into remission. If the current service was to be discontinued it would mean that M would almost certainly be unable to attend college due to the difficulties in getting there using public transport – even if this were attempted utilising a travel pass scheme or bursary scheme. Whilst the difficulty is partly due to the geographic rural nature of our home, the nearest bus stop to our home is over 1 mile away and due to M's conditions, autism and Crohn's disease, he would not be able to make this walk unaided to the nearest bus stop. In addition this journey would also mean crossing the main A381 and Myles would need at the very least someone to accompany him on the journey and ensure his safety, assuming he was well enough to make this long walk, through narrow rural lanes. I believe his safety would be highly compromised if he were to have to make this walk on his own during all seasons (it would be dark at 4.30pm during the winter months). In addition the nature of his Crohn's disease means that he can have frequent and uncontrollable urges for the toilet and as such there are no such facilities on route. The bus journey would also involve changing buses at least once and utilising public transport. Something which is outside of his current ability. Whilst this might be something he could learn with a great deal of support, in particular the toileting issues mean that the best and safest way for M to make the 25 minute journey directly to college is by car or taxi, door to door. Using a bus is not reasonable considering his conditions and due to the extended journey times involved, safety issues and the lack of available public toilets on route.</p> <p>I would urge the authority to continue the support currently offered for students like M by utilising a taxi service, I can accept that the most cost effective way to organise this will be for a drop off by 9am and a pick up at 4.30pm which I feel is reasonable. If the current taxi service is withdrawn then M will almost certainly be unable to attend College as the transport issue would be a barrier to independent learning, and I feel he would be unfairly disadvantaged by both his special needs, health issues and rural location of his home.</p>	
Heather L	<p>I have been looking at your proposed changes to the post 16 transport policy. Our daughter enters sixth form in Sept this year and it looks like she will still be eligible for travel assistance until Sept 2017 at an annual cost of £560.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuity for students already

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	<p>However, if I understand the proposed changes, she will have to look to get to college by alternative means from next year. Whilst I understand the need to review these things, it seems unfair that she will possibly not be able to use the same transport she has had since entering secondary education and be expected to look at a service bus that may not run at appropriate times and all at full cost to ourselves if we aren't eligible for assistance.</p> <p>As education is now compulsory until 18 these proposals seem exceedingly unjust. What if the only alternative is a service bus that runs at totally unsuitable times? Are we then entitled to assisted travel? We would welcome some clarification on these matters and await a response from you.</p>	receiving support
Karen K (Mrs)	<p>I am writing to express my deep concern over the proposed changes which Devon County Council are looking to make to Post 16 Transport which will affect all Post 16 students who need or normally get assistance with travel from the local authority. I am a single parent and sole carer to 3 boys all with autism and additional needs. My eldest who also has complex physical and medical needs is now at a specialist residential college in Exeter for young people with visual and sensory impairments although he previously attended Ellen Tinkham School up to the age of 19. The proposed changes DCC are looking to make in the next 2 years will not affect him but will certainly go on to affect his 2 younger brothers – both of whom have significant but very different special educational needs and 2 attend different special schools. My 12 year old attends Ellen Tinkham School in Exeter and my 13 year old attends Ratcliffe School in Dawlish. We live in Moretonhampstead which has an extremely limited bus service to Exeter and no buses to Dawlish. Like all parents, I wish all my sons to continue their education for as long as possible in order for them to achieve the best possible life chances – certainly Post 16. Both of my sons are unable to travel unaccompanied without supervision because of their behavioural issues, lack of awareness in all areas making them extremely vulnerable and communication difficulties. My youngest who is severely autistic doesn't talk and engages in obsessive, repetitive and inappropriate behaviours which could upset others and my 13 year old suffers with anxiety issues, for which he receives psychiatric support and medication from CAMHS, which also cause obsessive and inappropriate behaviours. At present, they both travel in taxis with an escort which, given their level of needs, is appropriate. Once they turn 16, I understand DCC are proposing that their current arrangements change and that families look to their own resources. I don't have any resources. We don't have a reliable bus service in Moretonhampstead and even if we did neither of my 2 sons could travel on their own and would each need an escort each way. My 13 year old will no longer attend Ratcliffe School Post 16 – however he will be looking to further his education and career prospects by attending a specialist college either in Dawlish or Bickton and neither of these 2 establishments can be accessed via public transport from Moretonhampstead. I cannot cut myself in half and transport my 2 sons in different directions at the same time and I need to be able to work so how do my sons get to their educational settings? We have lived in Moretonhampstead for many years</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialised provision for students with SEND • Impact on the most rurally isolated families

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	<p>and the environment and our home is sympathetic to my sons' autistic difficulties and needs and also to my older son's physical needs (wheelchair access, downstairs bedroom, etc) – to have to up and move would cause my sons great distress. I accept that savings need to be made and, in this respect, the increase in parental contributions and the removal of low income waiver, which will affect me, I can see are necessary. However, living in a rural area, and having 2 sons with significant behavioural/learning difficulties attending specialist educational establishments in different directions it is neither possible or practical to remove their current transport arrangements without having to end their education Post 16. Both children already share their taxis with 2/3 other young people who attend their schools so they do not travel in a taxi alone. I think DCC should look at the young people who travel alone in taxis and try to combine them with other young people who are travelling to the same destination thereby increasing the number of pick ups but reducing the number of cars and escorts which are used. Young people living in cities close to their educational establishment Post 16 should be encouraged to use public transport but only if they can cope with it or are able to access independent travel training. Obviously, it is easier for 2 parents living in the city to get their young person to college than a single parent in a rural area who has more than one child with special needs going to a specialist educational establishment Post 16 so every individual case should be judged on its merits. This will be affecting young people's and families lives and futures and Devon County Council need to consider the impact this will have on extremely vulnerable young people before sweeping changes are made. What is right for one person's situation won't be for another's. From a parent's point of view, my life as a single carer is already extremely exhausting, worrying and stressful where everything has to run like clockwork because of my sons' needs. The impact of having my sons' educational transport taken away from them once they reach 16 would be enough to tip me over the edge which would result in 3 young people having to go into expensive, specialised full time residential care and the cost of that financially to Devon County Council & Social Services would be astronomical not to mention the emotional cost it would have on each of my 3 sons being apart from each other and their mother. I know I am not the only parent who is in such a difficult situation so there could be dire repercussions throughout Devon as a result of these changes, and, ultimately, more cost to Devon County Council and Social Services.</p>	
Andrew B	<p>Dear Sir/Madam ,I read with deep concern your proposed changes for college transport . My daughter as a disability and learning difficulties . and the reason I use the current transport for her is because she is just not able to use public transport safely . the prospect of travel training her apparently was rejected by a gentlemen who works for DCC , for reasons of safety . These changes are very unreasonable as not only will it increase the number of vehicles using the road it will also put my daughter and other children and young adults in great danger , I would urge you at county hall to reconsider these changes and hope you can see the danger you will be putting these people in .</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specialised provision for students with SEND

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Yvonne C	<p>I have just read your proposed Transport Policy for Post 16 education at state schools. This would severely affect ourselves and many others in our locality as we wholly rely on the school bus service to ensure our children can continue their education at their local school. We currently pay for our son to use the school bus service which is fine but if this provision is no longer available then we do not know how he and latterly his sister who is currently in Year 10 will be able to travel to and from school.</p> <p>It seems ludicrous as it is obligatory that children should remain in some form of education until they are 18 years of age that transport for those over 3 miles from their local education provider cannot make use of a bus service that literally passes their property.</p> <p>I note that your policy has extremely limited exceptions and that the work commitments of parents is not one of them - my husband starts work at 3.30am and myself at 7.15am. He is unable to even collect the children in the afternoon and I am only able to from 5.00pm onwards. It is mentioned in the policy that those over the age of 16 should use public transport or a moped. There nearest village to us has a bus once a week that goes in the wrong direction. The idea of using a moped against is not always a practical or safe solution if you live in amongst narrow, country lanes that many use as a short cut to the local village and ignore all realms of safety. Even if a moped was a possibility we would certainly not let our children go to school through the country lanes during the winter months as there is not one route from our property that is salted by highways.</p> <p>I understand that the Council are under pressure when it comes to budgets but surely it makes sense to continue allowing parents to pay for their children to access transport passing their door. Parents do not expect this to be subsidised.</p> <p>Please reconsider your proposed policy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact on the most rurally isolated families
Wendy H	<p>The address for correspondence is the same so I hope you do not mind me raising my concerns about post 16 transport with you; perhaps you can forward it on if necessary.</p> <p>We live in Moretonhampstead and our daughter attends South Dartmoor in Ashburton and intends to stay on in the sixth form in September. Ashburton is 16 miles from our home and at present two buses take the children to school, I understand public transport is not an option as it would involve buses from Moreton to Bovey Tracey and then onto Ashburton, the latter journey alone taking 50 minutes via Newton Abbot!</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact on the most rurally isolated families

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	<p>We are very concerned that transport may not be provided, we are both working parents and to know that our daughter is on safe, timely transport locally is very important to us in our rural location. Children have to stay on in education until age 18, which we support but we need to know she can get there easily and safely given the distance involved and lack of other options.</p> <p>We would be grateful if you could ensure our comments are noted and that we are kept up to date with any developments as September will come round quickly and we need to plan as this will affect our daughter considerably. Can we seek assurance that transport will continue for those in year 11 now entering year 12 in September?</p>	
Tina B	<p>Having received the proposal letter on Friday I have to say I am rather shocked !</p> <p>The government have made the decision that these children should stay on at school until 18, therefore the transport to get them there should be available the same as the younger children.</p> <p>I am a single parent of twins and couldn't possibly afford over £1000 a year to get the children to college, I work full time and leave the house at 6am.</p> <p>Whilst I note your comments for subsidised travel in certain circumstances, this will not cover many like myself.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of statutory entitlement to free transport
Rosie W.	<p>Hello, thanks you for your letter highlighting the proposed changes to transport arrangements for post 16 education from 2017.</p> <p>I would like to make the following comments</p> <p>The rise in school leaving age to 18 that took place a couple of years ago means that all post 16s will need to continue in education unless they manage to secure one of the few apprenticeships on offer or have a part-time job/ do voluntary work and carry on with part time education. I know from experience that the opportunities for 16/17 year olds are very minimal and the wages very low even if they do get a job, so that most post 16s will need to continue in full time education as there is little provision for them to do anything else and the law says they have to. The lack of provision of A-level courses in our local area will mean that our daughter will need to travel for over an hour to Exeter every day and whilst the college should be able to offer a bursary to help with travel costs, it is unlikely that their budget will be enough to cover the proposed shortfall in which case they will no doubt change their criteria so only students from the lowest income families will be eligible.</p> <p>We are getting fed up with the way young people are penalised in this country. Not only do they get no longer get financial assistance towards the cost of attending college, they now have to pay for</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact on the most rurally isolated families • Lack of statutory entitlement to transport for post-16 students in line with RPA

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	<p>university tuition. Those that are not academic and were not lucky enough to know what career to pursue and obtain a place on an apprenticeship scheme then have no choice but to try to find work. Job opportunities are minimal for them as they have little work place experience and whilst they could potentially do volunteer work, there is no financial reward for this, so it will be up to parents to continue to support their children despite having their child benefit removed as their kids are no longer in full time education - only possible if they have a good income themselves. Young people continue to be penalised by low wages when they can work, no benefits when they can't, and having to pay full fares on public transport.</p> <p>I am therefore objecting to the proposed changes. It is wrong that the central government are reducing the budget for county councils when they have yet to be repaid from bailing out the banks following the financial crisis a few years ago - CEOs continue to be on exceedingly high salaries and receive 'bonuses' at the expense of our children's education and I think it would be wrong for DCC to support this.</p> <p>So getting rid of the college transport assistance will mean that not only will we be penalised for where we live, but also our income, and by the lack of funding to our local college so it can no longer offer A-level courses. If we are expected to pay for getting our daughter to Exeter because the government says she needs to stay in education and there are no other options for her, then it is unlikely that we will be able to afford the bus fare and she will therefore be forced to stay at home and we will presumably be breaking the law. She is too young to drive and doesn't have the finance to run a car even if she could and as we live in a rural area, opportunities for her to do anything other than go to college don't exist.</p> <p>I hope you consider the implications of this proposal carefully as it will considerably affect a large number of families which have already been affected by other government cuts and will mean that a proportion of students will no longer be able to attend college.</p>	
Helen H	<p>I am writing to express my disquiet with the way transport provisions are heading. You allow parents to choose whichever secondary school meets their child's needs but then refuse to provide transport to that school. When I complained that I had to pay for my son Pierre's transport when he started secondary school I was told to move him to a closer school!</p> <p>Since I am already paying for my son, your changes won't actually make much difference to our family. However for people on low income who have bright children, transport costs may now play a factor in whether they choose to send their child to the grammar school. This is discrimination by the back door. I believe all school transport will become private in the long term as councils struggle to balance the books but feel you should put in place support for all pupils on low income who choose to go to schools other than their nearest one.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of statutory entitlement to transport for post-16 students in line with RPA • Impact on low income families
Lisa C	I have just received the above letter suggesting changes that may be made to travel arrangements for	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of statutory

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	<p>students who now HAVE to attend either education or an apprenticeship between the ages of 16-18. Not only has this been forced upon them, it seems that the proposal is that family members or friends now have to take them to the place of education, rather than them being able to apply for a concession bus pass? Does the council think that we are all 'at leisure' so able to ferry these children around? Does the council not realise that we have to work? Does the council not realise that some of us are one-parent families (through widowhood) and may have to also work shift work? We are not all free from 8 in the morning until 6 at night? Maybe a good idea would be to provide all 16-18 year olds with a bus pass or a reasonably priced weekly/monthly ticket for transport - thus enabling the coffers to be filled and the use of public transport figures to rise? This should even be extended to younger members of Devon - maybe from the age of 11 upwards? I would be happy to discuss this matter - or be 'put right'!</p>	<p>entitlement to transport for post-16 students in line with RPA</p>
Gail Y	<p>I am writing in response to the consultation on proposed transport arrangements for 2017/18.</p> <p>I currently have a son doing A levels at Exeter College and have paid £520 for a travel pass. I did accept this as my son could have gone to Petroc College in Tiverton to do his A Levels but it was his choice to go to Exeter.</p> <p>However, I have a son who will be going to college in September 2017 and would make the following comments:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The school leaving age is no longer 16 but is 18 (children have to remain in education or training until 18). 2. With the closure of Petroc College Tiverton to A Level students, there is NO provision for A levels in the Mid Devon area (we are in Cullompton). All the schools are to GCSE level only. 3. Therefore students wishing to do A levels have no choice but to travel 4. It is fundamentally not fair that students in the Mid Devon area have to pay for their schooling (by way of transport costs) when children in Exeter can walk, cycle or pay less for a travel pass. 5. Yet again students in a rural area with no provision for Post 16 education in their area (A Levels), through no fault of their own are having to bear the burden. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of statutory entitlement to transport for post-16 students in line with RPA • Impact on the most rurally isolated families
Rachael H	<p>I am in receipt of your letter dated 8 April 2016 and note that it invites me to share my views.</p> <p>I feel it is extremely unfair cutting services for post 16 students when it is a stipulation made by the government for students to remain in further education until the age of 18. It is extremely daunting for any child going on to further education let alone a child with learning difficulties and for them to have</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of statutory entitlement to transport for post-16 students in line with RPA

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	<p>the added pressure of arranging their own transport is just awful. Education for my son has been a huge struggle and one that he has not been very fond of and if he has to arrange travel himself I know for a fact he will be purposely dragging his feet and will be late on every occasion. He does not have much concept of time and I can already foresee that whatever further education he chooses will be very short lived.</p> <p>I am a working single parent and I just simply would not have the time to escort my son to his college placement. My son is currently awaiting travel training, however due to his visual impairment he does struggle with spacial awareness and dim lighting and I really do not know how he would manage on public transport.</p> <p>It makes me very sad that every single cut which seems to be made to County funding always seems to have an impact on those more needy who desperately need the extra support to be in place for them.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialised provision for students with SEND
K G	<p>Parents are expected to send their children to college post schooling. However in rural areas such as Lynton (20 miles to Petroc and a one hour journey time) at a cost of £3.20 on public transport return every day we are definitely penalised for living where we are.</p> <p>Colleges are not 'round the corner', as they are in larger conurbations. Why is it that free transport is provided for ages up to 16, but when you are over 16 you are discriminated against because of your age? Who knows.</p> <p>More cuts are forced on local authorities by central government as government misspend their income and fail to balance their books. Local authorities are soft targets as they cannot fight back. A bit of bullying going on.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact on the most rurally isolated families • Lack of statutory entitlement to transport for post-16 students in line with RPA
Dawn	<p>Thank you for the letter regarding charges for transport to school for my son, who travels now to school for which we as his parents pay for now, he is a year 10 student. It is a lot of money for which we have to find to pay for my sons /travel/education. Obviously we want the best for him and he does not go to his 1st feeder school.</p> <p>I agree on paying for so much but I do feel that there should be some kind of contribution that should be made via the school/education/council and that seems to be less and less each year.</p> <p>There is an ever increasing cost to putting your child through school at the moment and i suppose this</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact on the most rurally isolated families

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	<p>is going to increasing each year, from books, uniform, trips and travel etc.</p> <p>We live in a rural location, I do not live near a bus stop and find it really difficult at the moment to get him to the nearest bus stop on time, because the bus timetable is clear but the buses do not run everyday the same time by 10/15 minutes difference some days. Then if the bus is early then he misses the bus and I have to take him to school which is an inconvenience because I have work and get another child to get to school.</p> <p>I already pay for his travel, I would be not be happy to have to pay more for his travel than I do. I have always had to pay and never get anything for free. I think there is a lot of people out there that play the system and get a lot help when they don't need it and could do more for there own children but chose not too and think that society should pay.</p>	
Maggie S	<p>I am writing in response to the recent letter regarding proposed changes to Post 16 transport</p> <p>Please could you advise what evidence you require to confirm that there are no alternative options to transport my children to school ?</p> <p>We live rurally (EX6 7QX) with no access to a bus service. My working hours necessitate that I am in work by 8.30am This means that I would be unable to give my children a lift (in the opposite direction) to school. Equally my husband needs to be on site for work at 8.30am</p> <p>The bus would (I presume) still be coming to Higher Ashton for our younger son (currently year 7) so it would seem ludicrous if his bus is continued (which I sincerely hope it will be) for my 2 older children not to be allowed on the same bus (which is not full to capacity anyway. Please can you provide some specific reassurance about our particular bus service and whether our elder two children (currently year 10 and year 12) will be able to continue getting a lift on that bus (albeit with a substantial cost to ourselves)?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing evidence of need
Katie H	<p>Hi there as a parent currently with son in 6th form we couldn't afford bus so Tom cycled every day and I drove him when able</p> <p>I think it's herendous we have to pay so much my daughter will be in the same boat it's cheaper for me to drive than pay herendous bus fayre middle man struggled we both work long hours and it's hard to get pennies to cover it all terrible costs thanks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact on low income families
Mrs S	<p>I find it shocking & upsetting to learn of the proposal to withdraw financial support to post-16 students at the very time it is compulsory for them to remain in education. It would be a real hit to the majority of</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of statutory entitlement to

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	<p>families such as ours who's income is not low enough to get help but not high enough to cover all our needs as it is & is no where near high enough to cover this sort of cost for our two teenagers. As it would mean, on your suggestion, that one year we would have travel costs of £1120. It is just beyond us to afford this. As I am not clear if we would qualify for help through the college Bursary scheme. So the thought fills me with deep concern & dread.</p> <p>My husband takes the car early to work & I work mainly nights to make ends meet & share the car, so to transport them ourselves would be impossible.</p> <p>Please consider these points before you act.</p>	<p>transport for post-16 students in line with RPA</p>
Lee E	<p>My daughter attends Okehampton College and is currently in Year 10. We received the consultation letter via the school yesterday. I have one simple question as I am confused as to what this means for my daughter and her 6th form choice.</p> <p>She lives outside Lydford and currently gets a school bus. She has to travel into the village to get it and it is free. Will she still be able to pay for a seat on that bus post-16 or has that option been removed and will we therefore have to transport her the 8 miles to college every day ourselves?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to contract vehicles
Ruth B	<p>Dear Sirs, thank you for your letter, received through my daughters' school yesterday about the proposed cuts to the post-16 transport costs for 2017-18.</p> <p>I am only too aware of the cuts needed in local government spending at the moment, however, these particular cuts do concern me.</p> <p>I cannot see how these particular measures will be administered or measured. You state that you will support where there are no other transport options available, but how will you work that out? Such a high proportion of Devon students live in very rural areas without public bus services, so will you always expect the parents to take the children in? Would there be an assumption that they would have to find a lift somehow? How will you take into account parental working patterns or car availability? How can we demonstrate 'evidence of no alternative options' I can see this being an administrative nightmare!</p> <p>Post-16 is no longer optional, so it is just as important for these students to be able to reach their place of study as it is for earlier years.</p> <p>It is also important that this vital study time is used well. I am only too aware of how quickly these 2 years go by, & how much time the students should be giving to studying, without the stress of having to</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing evidence of need • Lack of statutory entitlement to transport for post-16 students in line with RPA • Operation of the Bursary scheme • Impact on the most rurally isolated families

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	<p>arrange lifts every night!</p> <p>Not all schools have bursary schemes & it is unfair to put the onus back on them to enable disadvantaged young people to study when their own budgets are so tight.</p> <p>I have been happy to pay a contribution to my sons transport costs (he is in post-16 study at the moment. But all out removal of transport is short-sighted. Our school bus has all our village secondary age children on it & there is room for post-16s as well. It will be uneconomical (for everyone involved, especially you, not to mention un-environmentally friendly) to have a bus with spaces leaving at the same time as lots of cars all going to the same destination. This will also have quite an impact on congestion around schools & colleges with everyone making their own way in - an issue that I am sure many other County departments will be concerned about.</p> <p>I can see that there would be an economic case for these cuts within an urban authority where public transport can fulfil the needs of post-16 students but you are talking about vast amounts of rural pupils who you will either end up helping anyway (if you can't get the measurements of need clear) or it will have a big financial & environmental impact. These are poorly thought-through proposals & I would urge you to look at the wider implications again, not to mention the real cost of these proposals versus any cost savings you may make short-term.</p>	
Mr & Mrs C	<p>Today I have received a letter informing me of the proposed changes to transport 2017-2018 academic year.</p> <p>My daughter is currently in year 10 and intends to continue with further education. If this transport isn't available this may alter her plans.</p> <p>As students now have to stay in education of some sort, without earning on an apprenticeship scheme, she would have no way of paying for this transport and we couldn't afford to pay for it. With this in mind, this would be effectively forcing her into a corner and onto an apprenticeship so she has enough funds available not only for extra books etc but for transport as well.</p> <p>I appreciate that there has to be savings made, but taking this from our young students, our future workers, is not either fair or right and when I hear that the council will match funds raised for a bronze otter in Bideford, as well as other ridiculous matters where money doesn't <i>need</i> to be spent, it certainly beggars belief.</p> <p>I certainly hope that this will be reconsidered or an agreement can be made to secure futures for our youngsters.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of statutory entitlement to transport for post-16 students in line with RPA
Sarah S	Thank you for the letter you sent regarding changes to your Post 16 Transport Policy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact on the

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	<p>I would like to provide my feedback on the subject, and request you reconsider.</p> <p>I feel that the new policy will adversely affect children living in rural areas since the public transport available is sketchy at best, and non-existence at worse. I support County Council making sensible cuts but to penalise parents and children living within very rural areas seems a mistake.</p> <p>Could you perhaps ask Post16 students for a contribution to transport costs on transport provided by the Colleges?</p> <p>I do hope you will reconsider this change.</p>	<p>most rurally isolated families</p>
Karen S	<p>I am writing in response to a letter that came home from Chulmleigh Community College. My daughter will be taking her GCSE's in the summer of 2017, it is my understanding that the law on leaving school has changed and she will need to stay in education until she is 18 (and to continue to study English and Maths should she not pass them at school). As there is no provision for this at Chulmleigh, she will need to go elsewhere, the nearest provision is Barnstaple which is 16 miles away. My older children, who did not have to continue in education, travelled to college on a subsidised pass which we paid £500 for this which I considered fair, as we were able to afford this. However I do not consider it is fair that families with children living in rural areas should be expected to provide transport and have no alternative except to pay £560 if they have no other means of transport.</p> <p>If these children have to stay in education why not give them a suitably subsidised transport pass (after all pensioners get free transport) they would then be able to use it, if they wanted or needed to, to get to areas where they could work at weekends to subsidise their education – this would make good sense giving them the opportunity to get work experience too.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of statutory entitlement to transport for post-16 students in line with RPA
Mrs K C	<p>I am writing with concern about the transport proposal for 2017-2018.</p> <p>The new government rules are that children up to the age of 18 have to be in either full-time education, on an apprenticeship or in full time employment. This changed from the age of 16. Therefore I cannot understand why transport support is not offered to children, in whichever situation, up to the age of 18 or 20 if in full time education.</p> <p>This would help children, parents and carers, as £560 a year for a term time only bus pass, to be used at restricted times, days and places is a substantial amount to afford.</p> <p>For a child to have to depend on an adult to get them to their place of education, apprenticeship or place of work is not helping a child become an independent adult.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of statutory entitlement to transport for post-16 students in line with RPA • Choice of course location • Operation of the Bursary scheme

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	<p>Not being able to afford public transport is not encouraging children to attend further education, an apprenticeship or a place of work.</p> <p>An apprenticeship wage and minimum wage are not enough to afford public transport costs at £560 per academic year and then to have to find more funds to pay for non-term time transport.</p> <p>I would propose that a weekly bus pass, wherever the child lives (discrimination towards a child's address should not be allowed as in the vast majority of cases, it is not the child's choice as to where they live), should be priced at no more than £10 a week for unlimited travel, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 52 weeks of the year. This will help all children to get to their required destination(s) at all times and help them get to other required places of education during term time when required and places of work during holiday times.</p> <p>£10, I feel after research, is an affordable amount to pay for transport for children of all financial backgrounds and in all financial situations. If a child is required to work to pay for their transport, £10 a week is an affordable amount to pay out of a low wage. I say a low wage as this is what a child of 16 - 19 receives.</p> <p>For example, children living in Exeter may only be able to study their chosen subject in Plymouth. Charging unaffordable transport fees and/or restricted times will have a great impact on whether a child continues with education or not.</p> <p>A child wishing to study aircraft engineering at Flybe at Exeter Airport, living in Stoke Canon at present has to pay £621 a year for transport costs and this is term time only. The journey also takes an hour on public transport when the actual time to get to the airport is only 20 minutes. This all adds to the discouragement of children applying for further education.</p> <p>Discouragement to enjoy further education should be avoided at all costs.</p> <p>Encouraging children to get to their required destination, to be free and able to get out and about at all times is a great need in this country. It is a fact that children spend far too long in their homes on pointless technology products from games consoles to social media sites on their mobile phones.</p> <p>Children from all levels of financial backgrounds should have the same choices and this should not be means tested. This is not a fair way of deciding whether a child should have financial support towards their transport requirements.</p>	
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	<p>For example;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A child living with one parent on benefit support will be entitled to transport support, even if the parent whom they do not live with is on a very substantial wage, however this child's friend who has both parents living at home, on an income that is low and extremely lower than the parent of his friend, will not qualify for transport support as the total income may just be £1 over the qualifying criteria. 2. Using the same situations as above; the child with the one wealthy parent may not have access to transport at home but the child with parents on a joint low income may have one car and be expected to drive their child to their chosen place of education even if this does not tie in with the parents times of work. This will cause even more financial hardship for the parents on a joint low income. 3. A child with wealthy parents will not be entitled to transport support, however the parents may not help the child financially at all. Just because parents are wealthy we should not assume that they give their child financial support. This will leave the child in a situation that could possibly discourage them from further education. <p>All children should be treated as equals and not according to the financial situation of their parents, this is highly discriminating not to mention unfair and in many cases embarrassing, for the child with poorer parents receiving support (colleagues know the parents are poor if you are receiving support and can be a little nasty) for child with parents in the middle who cannot afford to help their child with transport (therefore the child has to explain to colleagues that they have to choose a different direction in life because their parents cannot afford otherwise) and for the child with rich parents who won't help with transport costs and has to explain to colleagues that their parents won't help them.</p> <p>The above examples are real life.</p> <p>Help children have equal opportunities by making them equal.</p>	
Stuart & Carolyn A	<p>In response, can you please raise the following questions and hopefully give me some answers:</p> <p>My son is considering Post 16 education at Okehampton College where he is currently a student in Year 10. At present he catches the bus in the village of Northlew (Oke 14).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of statutory entitlement to transport for post-16 students in line with RPA

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	<p>When in Post 16 education (Sept '17), will he be able to use this service and at what cost? Currently Post 16 students are able to use this service. There is no public service bus that runs from the village of Northlew.</p> <p>Other public transport services (the nearest being at Castle Cross) will not be appropriate because they run at the wrong times for him to travel to and return from college.</p> <p>As it is now compulsory for students to remain in education until 18 years old, why does the onus fall on the parents/carer to pay for transportation?</p> <p>Do you realise how much extra traffic this will cause on the roads with this proposed policy? Many people, ourselves included, are inclined to drive our son to/from college to save the costs and being in a rural area like Devon it is not easy to share/combine travel.</p> <p>This proposed policy will increase pollution, traffic and totally ignores carbon free policies.</p> <p>At times of drop off/collection times at Okehampton College this policy will increase the volume of traffic in an area where there is already major congestion.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact on volume of traffic
Kate W and Nick D	<p>I am writing in regard to the proposed alterations to post 16 school transport from September 2017.</p> <p>We live in Drewsteignton and our children travel to Okehampton College on two buses: a mini bus travels from the village centre to a pick up point to meet with the large bus that transports them on to College. We are very happy with the way this works and hope the arrangements will continue.</p> <p>Our elder daughter is currently in year 10 and hopes to continue to Okehampton College sixth form in September 2017.</p> <p>We are concerned at the proposals which may mean the financial contribution from parents for school transportation rises to £560 per annum as this is far beyond our means as a low income household.</p> <p>Unfortunately, we do not have the capacity to take our daughter to school ourselves as our work takes us in other directions.</p> <p>There is no public transport option from the village to Okehampton College, so we are very reliant on her being able to continue to take the College bus as she does at the moment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operation of the Bursary scheme

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	<p>We would be grateful if Devon County Council could take our concerns into consideration when considering the proposed steep rise in parental contributions. We are happy to pay something towards costs but £560 is prohibitive.</p> <p>Our children are very happy at Okehampton College and we very much hope they will be able to continue to attend post 16</p>	
Nicola K	<p>Forgive my late reply have only just been handed letter from the bottom of my daughters bag. I am very distressed to hear these latest plans, i am disabled and my husband is working long hours just to keep our heads above water, as it were!</p> <p>We are currently paying £50 a month for our son to use school bus, (he's post 16) which is crippling us but the only way we can manage to get him to school, unless he cycles which is ridiculous if you had ever felt the weight of his bag!</p> <p>I think transport should be provided for free when its compulsory for them to stay in education until they are 18, yet it seems to made difficult at every step of the way and now you'll be removing it altogether! We live in a rural village where buses are very few and far between, i just don't know how we'll manage without it. Life is very hard being disabled and i don't want my daughter to suffer because of it too.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of statutory entitlement to transport for post-16 students in line with RPA • Specialised provision for students with SEND • Impact on the most rurally isolated families
Jane B	<p>This seems to be a way of trying to recoup the debt that the school has got itself into.</p> <p>The buses are already funded & running, there are spaces on the buses. This is a way of asking the 6th form students to subsidize the bus service.</p> <p>I think Bideford College will be discouraging its students to continue until the 6th form.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies of Bideford College
Neil P	<p>I am raising my concerns over the proposed changes for the school transportation for 2017-18. I understand the financial constraints on the council and why some cuts have to be made but the government are stating children are to stay in full time education until they are 18 years of age so surely the government / council should provide transport while the children are at secondary school. It can be difficult to provide for children when they go to college as a lot of children go to colleges that aren't as close as their local school so I think a contribution to their transport by parents as I do for my daughter is warranted.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of statutory entitlement to transport for post-16 students in line with RPA • Impact on volume of traffic

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	The other concerns are around congestion and pollution surely by asking people to take their children to school even with car share will lead to higher congestion on our roads and even greater pollution which for all our sakes is something we should try to avoid.	
Louise M	<p>I have been prompted to write concerning the impending changes to school transport in Sept 2017. My son at Okehampton college will be affected by this as he goes into year 12 on this date. We live in a rural area near Chagford and although there is a bus stop with local buses running to Okehampton they are not at times that would get him to school in the morning or indeed bring him home at the end of the school day. I am a single working mother and although I have a car would not be able to transport him to and from Okehampton on a daily basis.</p> <p>As he catches a school bus to and from Chagford at the moment with other post 16 students, I cannot see why this facility cannot continue as we do not require a specific post 16 bus and there are spaces on the normal Okehampton college school bus.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact on the most rurally isolated families • Continuity for students already receiving support
Tom W	<p>I have received the recent communication on changes to post 16 transport. I am a bit unsure on some aspects and would appreciate some clarification.</p> <p>My son attends Colyton Grammar and we pay a private contract bus company for his transport. I am unclear whether the price we pay is subsidised at all by DCC and could therefore increase substantially when he moves into year 12 and beyond which would present a significant difficulty for us. Could you help please?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuity for students already receiving support
Dr R B	<p>We are in receipt of your letter detailing possible changes to the transport arrangements for 16 + students.</p> <p>Your letter is very ambiguous and the details sketchy at best. It is difficult to form an opinion or ask questions about such a letter. This is the minimum that I feel as parents we need to know.</p> <p>Are you planning the following changes;</p> <p>To cease transport for all 16 + students?</p> <p>Or, maintain transport, but only with an increased contribution of £560</p> <p>Maintain transport for those that live greater than 3 miles distant, but with an increased contribution</p> <p>Maintain transport for those with Special educational needs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact on volume of traffic • Impact on the most rurally isolated families

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	<p>It is very difficult to have a view on this proposal, when we are unsure as to what Devon Transport is actually proposing. For a rural county I would suggest the Environmental impact of removing post 16 transport on our county will be substantial. Those parents with younger children on school transport will be forced on to the roads in order to deliver older children to the same school (in the case of QE). Again, where there is no rural public transport, parents will need to make arrangements to transport their children. This is another example of how the rural community is being hit with costs that those that live in cities will avoid.</p> <p>I would suggest that an environmental impact assessment would show a greater cost to the council and the county than is presently incurred, e.g. road damage, pollution, congestion and public health. I would suggest that removing post 16 transport is ill conceived at best and with potential to cost Devon (its tax payers) Millions of pounds in repairs and increased pollution levels and public health issues.</p>	
Phil S	<p>Thank you for inviting responses to your letter of 8th April 2016 regarding Post-16 Transport Policy for 2017-18. As you must be aware, after the Government's decision to, in effect, make education compulsory for 17-18 year olds, the response in Mid Devon was to remove opportunities to study A-levels by ending such at Petroc Tiverton – a move that was only realised by many parents such as ourselves by reading it in the Press.</p> <p>Faced with the prospect of their children having to travel to Exeter to study A-level maths, for example, parents are now being told it is likely there will be no assistance with transport. Please rethink this approach. Surely after removing A-level facilities from the largest town in Mid Devon and, more importantly, from the students present & future who live there, more help with transport will be required, not less? It seems very unfair that families who live in Mid Devon have services removed & then have extra costs to face on top.</p> <p>We feel we must comment on some of the 'solutions' your letter mentions which are, frankly, not reasonable. For example, you say the responsibility falls to the 'students and their families where a family vehicle or one available through friends could be used'. What in practice will this mean? Who makes the decision on whether one is 'available'? E.g. We have a vehicle but my wife doesn't drive & I would be at work nowhere near Exeter. True, we have friends who own vehicles but what authority are we expected to have over these vehicles and who will be expected to be the driver? Who will be assessing the situation? Is it fair to view two round trips totalling 80 miles per day as a 'school-run'? This requirement needs adjustment as it is unrealistic. If it is reported that a vehicle is not available then the students/parents word on the matter should be accepted.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of statutory entitlement to transport for post-16 students in line with RPA • Choice of course location • Assessing need

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	<p>We realise Councils face many pressures from so many different angles but do hope you will reflect on the proposed changes & see how these young people who seem to be having more & more expected of them, yet more and more taken from them, can be better served.</p>	
Eric D	<p>I recently received a letter regarding proposals for revised travel arrangements. It is unfortunate that these proposals coincide with the raising of the school leaving age to 18.</p> <p>Devon is a rural county with poor public transport. The bus service in our village is virtually non-existent and those buses which stop here are not at suitable times for travelling to and from school.</p> <p>My children currently attend Uffculme School. In recent years they have tried to provide a sixth form, but DCC has been opposed to the idea. Currently the closest provider of post 16 education is Petroc in Tiverton. It is not possible to get from Kentisbeare to Tiverton by public transport.</p> <p>Petroc has recently announced that it is to cease 'A' level provision. This means that anyone wishing to follow this educational route will now be forced to travel to Exeter or further.</p> <p>Removal of council provided transport will give rise to an urban / rural divide that is deeply unfair to families living in rural locations.</p> <p>Even where parents own a car and could theoretically take children to college, the reality is that this will often be incompatible with going to work. This may force families to choose between sending their child to the most suitable educational establishment or giving up work. This may then result in additional calls on local government budgets through council tax and housing benefit.</p> <p>I would therefore urge you to reconsider this proposal.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of statutory entitlement to transport for post-16 students in line with RPA • Impact on the most rurally isolated families • Choice of course location
Andy H	<p>I have a daughter in year 10 at Colyton Grammar School who will fall foul of this change and I have to say that I am deeply concerned.</p> <p>My daughter currently catches a bus to school with students from all year groups (7 – 13). Schools such as Colyton have students from a wide area so buses are more of a necessity than a luxury and one that we already pay for. I am also aware that other government funding for well performing schools such as Colyton has already been cut and this has had a detrimental effect on the schools operation that is another area of significant concern for me.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of statutory entitlement to transport for post-16 students in line with RPA • Continuity for students already receiving support

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	<p>Firstly, can you please spell out in plain English precisely what this will mean for me and other pupils and parents. Can you please answer the following questions:</p> <p>Will a bus service be available or will we be required to use public transport? If a bus is provided what will this mean in terms of additional costs? I cannot believe that this is going to cost any less than it currently does.</p> <p>Secondly, as I understand it the law for children up to 18 years of age has changed and they are now required to remain in some form of fulltime education (or other qualifying course) until what is the end of year 13. Surely, if this has changed then the law in relation to what has to be provided for post 16 students should have been reviewed and amended to reflect this change. In other words, now there is a legal requirement for students to remain in fulltime education until aged 18 then it should be a statutory requirement for the local authority/government to provide transport as the statutory school age has effectively changed. This would mean that it is not a discretionary arrangement but a statutory one so would be required to be funded.</p> <p>In general it just seems that we are still paying the same or more taxes for less services. I work in a public service organisation so fully understand the need to make "efficiencies" and do more with less but it is getting to a point where someone needs to wake up and smell the coffee as there is only so much that the public are prepared to stomach!</p>	
Barry and Gabrielle K	<p>Our daughter is currently in Year 10 at King's School, Ottery, and we have received a letter about the proposed amendments to the post-16 transport policy for 2017-18.</p> <p>We live in Tipton St John. The public bus timetable presently would be unsuitable for sixth formers because it does not operate at the right times. The 1st public bus of the day gets into Ottery at 9.25am, and on the way home the only bus they could catch is at 16.50 from Ottery - an hour and a quarter after school finishes. If I am working, I would be unable to take my daughter to school. because it would severely limit my working hours. My husband is blind and unable to drive.</p> <p>Currently she goes on the school bus, which has plenty of spaces available for sixth formers. It would be ridiculous to have a school bus with spaces, and then insist that parents have to get their sixth formers to school. That would not be a sensible proposal, surely?</p> <p>If the statutory school age is going to change, then I believe that the free school transport should change to include sixth formers as well.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of statutory entitlement to transport for post-16 students in line with RPA • Access to LA contract vehicles
Hannah	<p>Thank you for your letter issued to our son who is in Year 10.</p> <p>This letter is well written and clearly explains the changes and the need to change due to lack of</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of statutory entitlement to transport for post-

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	<p>funding, however as a parent I would like to express my view on this matter.</p> <p>As it is compulsory for post 16 to not be NEET I find this letter upsetting for all parents who will not longer qualify for support.</p> <p>My husband and I work 70 hours a week, pay a mortgage, all associated taxes, contributions, insurances, full council tax, prescriptions and receive no other allowances other than child benefit for one child as our eldest child, though still in full time education, has turned 18 and has a university place to commence in September, yet we are struggling financially. I cannot to bear to imagine how hard it must be for other families and I would hate to think that their children were to suffer because of transport costs. Surely it is basic right to support children to get to a building which can educate them.</p> <p>The cost of child benefit we receive on a weekly basis, does not cover the cost of a weekly bus pass to get our son to college. If we had a college provision within 3 miles, we would get him to walk, but we don't so we need to use public transport. It seems criminal to watch the retired population get issued with a bus pass for free and listen to them on public transport announce that they like using the bus as it saves them car parking in town. The other day I was on the park and ride and when I got on the bus at 09.30am, I was the only person who paid for a ticket, as all other's showed their OAP passes. The irony with this journey was the bus became full and I offered my seat to an elderly person, so I was paying to stand!</p> <p>If the government would like all our young people to stay in education I feel strongly that the cost of transport should be covered. I appreciate that due to a lack of funding this will not be available to all, but please support the most vulnerable children. Education is what will unlock the future of many of our young people, will provide us with a better society, teachers are amazing at supporting children to make the right choices allowing them to contribute to society and develop into well rounded individuals.</p> <p>I would fully support that they council continues to support vulnerable children and families and that they 'enlighten' the government just how hard it is to support our children, when we are working as our salaries just tip the other side of receiving support.</p> <p>I always thought if I worked I'd be able a treat or two for my hard work, but alas this is not something that our family can afford.</p>	<p>16 students in line with RPA</p>
Liz M	<p>Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed amendments to the post-16 Transport Policy for 2017-18. The requirement that young people stay in some form of learning or training should have been accompanied by sufficient funding and transport provision. Given that this does not appear</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of statutory entitlement to transport for post-

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	<p>to be the case and given the financial pressure on local authorities, I can see why Devon might be reviewing their provision. However the proposals outlined cause concern for a number of reasons and raise a number of questions.</p> <p>First, if a public service bus runs from where we live, in Chagford, to Exeter but not to Okehampton, would students be expected to attend an Exeter college rather than Okehampton College, regardless of whether this would be in their best interests? Young people in rural areas have very limited choice already. And having embarked on their studies in Exeter, rather than the nearer Okehampton, what would happen if this service were cut at a future time?</p> <p>Secondly, depending on informal arrangements such as lifts with family/friends is an unreliable means of transporting children. What if the driver were ill or the vehicle became unavailable e.g. through breakdown? How many of us know if our friends' vehicles are properly maintained or insured or whether another parent had a drink at lunchtime before collecting children? How would issues around safeguarding be resolved? And could the commitment to driving children to and from college be an obstacle to a parent being able to seek and maintain employment?</p> <p>Thirdly, from an environmental point of view, it makes little sense to encourage use of private vehicles. If there are spaces on school buses they should be filled. A financial contribution for this is, perhaps, not unreasonable from those who can afford it, although, given the requirement to stay in learning or training, there is logically no difference between older students and those pre-16 who currently do not pay. Are all school and college Bursary funds sufficient to meet the transport costs of all those in financial need? Who would make the decision as to whether a student qualifies for support?</p> <p>Fourthly, what evidence would a student have to provide that there are no alternative options? If a parent were not prepared to allow another parent to drive their child would they have a defence in law should their child fail to attend college?</p> <p>Finally, these proposals seem to impact disproportionately on those children in rural areas where there is little public transport and limited choice of post-16 education? Choices should be made on the basis of what is in the best interest of the young person rather than on what transport is available. I suspect that some rural areas of Devon already have below average progression to Third Level Education.</p> <p>This move is unlikely to help.</p> <p>I should be grateful if you would answer those questions you are able to and also pass on all of my concerns to Cabinet Members.</p>	<p>16 students in line with RPA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choice of course location • Impact on volume of traffic • Sufficiency of Bursary funds • Impact on the most rurally isolated families
K B	<p>further to a letter received via school regarding proposed changes to the transport policy - would it not be possible to divert funding from free bus passes for the over 60's - many of whom can well afford and do not necessarily use bus passes, to those youngsters remaining in further education? Of course the ideal solution would be for children to be able to attend their local secondary school (so they could walk or cycle) thus reducing the need for any transport costs at all and improving fitness!</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of statutory entitlement to transport for post-16 students in line

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		with RPA
Mrs Sarah D	<p>I have received your letter of the 8th April 2016. My son will be starting Year 12 in September 2017 having just turned 16 in the July.</p> <p>Considering the Government are making children stay in education now until they are 18 (unless they get an apprenticeship/traineeship) then I think it is unfair to make parents pay for the transport to take them to school and back. If the children are earning some money under an apprenticeship or working 20 hours a week in paid employment then they may have the means to pay to get to their place of work and back, which again depends on the apprenticeship/work they are able to get and how much they get paid, of course. I believe the following is the new rules to the education system, taken from the government website today:-</p> <p>You can leave school on the last Friday in June if you'll be 16 by the end of the summer holidays. You must then do one of the following until you're 18:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> stay in full-time education, eg at a college start an <u>apprenticeship</u> or <u>traineeship</u> work or volunteer (for 20 hours or more a week) while in part-time education or training <p>I have enough trouble getting my teenage son to school, which he doesn't seem to enjoy very much at all and now the Government are asking children to stay in education until they are 18. I left school at the age of 15, not turning 16 until late July, I then went to college in the September until the following June using a moped bought for me by my mother, which I had to maintain myself by getting a Saturday job! I then started my first full time job in September 1984, at the age of 17 and left home 2 days before starting that job – my mother never had to keep me as I was able to support myself through work. Is the new ruling above an indication that there aren't enough jobs for our 16 year olds who DON'T want to go into further education, but want to make their own way in the world of work???</p> <p>Both my husband and I work full time, so not only are we going to have to keep our son in food, clothing, shoes and uniform etc until such time he is allowed to leave the new education system, (without any assistance from the State Welfare System), the Government are cutting budgets to Council's such as yourselves with regards to transport, when in fact they should be increasing them to</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of statutory entitlement to transport for post-16 students in line with RPA

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	<p>cover the costs of the extra children now having to stay in education/apprenticeships under the new system!! It all seems a bit bonkers to me!!</p> <p>My husband has to be at his place of work by 7.30am in Marsh Barton, Exeter and I have to be at work for 9am (sometimes earlier) in Cheriton Bishop, both of which are in the complete opposite direction to A's school in Dawlish and/or Exeter College and if one of us did have to take him, our fuel costs would go up considerably along with the inconvenience to our time schedules. The alternative being public transport, paid for by us! A bit unfair as we didn't get a say about the above new legislation!! I often work away from home for my job and travel all over the south of England, which means I am not always around to take Aaron anywhere. We are both tax payers, so no doubt as we are working, we wouldn't get any help towards bus fare money we would also have to find on top of our normal outgoings just so that Aaron can go to school/college/apprenticeship/traineeship. What happens to children who DON'T want to go into any kind of further education but want to get a full time job – why is this not possible???</p> <p>If the Government wishes to keep children in the education system past the age of 16, again at the tax payers expense, then they should subsidise the transport to and from school/college so that each family subjected to this new system doesn't have to find any more money out of already stretched incomes towards the cost of transport.</p>	
Andrew B	<p>The proposed change in Devon transport arrangements will have a significant impact on students accessing post 16 education. The school bursary funds are insufficient to make up the current contribution that DCC makes towards Post 16 student transport costs. This significant shortfall will mean that many young people who currently are able to access school or college at subsidised rates will no longer be able to do so, this will deter many from remaining in education and will force them into low paid/low skill jobs with minimal training. It is disingenuous to suggest that all those who are currently supported by Devon will be able to be supported by school bursary funds in the future.</p> <p>Now that the School leaving age has been raised to 18 it is unreasonable to rely on the justification of age 16 as the limit to the local authorities requirement to support post 16 transport.</p> <p>Budget cuts should be made in areas where those affected will be more able to bare the financial impact.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sufficiency of Bursary funds • Lack of statutory entitlement to transport for post-16 students in line with RPA
Richard G	<p>I write to express my view on the policy that the Council has in respect of children in year 12 and above having to pay for transport to school. I believe that this is an unfair policy because the Government made it compulsory for children to go to full time education up to the age of 18 years and so in effect</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of statutory entitlement to transport for post-

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	<p>there is no option for children in rural areas to pay for some sort of transport. This would either be the payment direct to the County Council to be allowed on the School bus or through payment to a bus company for a public bus home. There is really no alternative to this when both parents work. This is essence means an introduction of a tax amounting to the level of the payment that is necessary to be made to get a child to and from school. From my own personal point of view it is preferable for my eldest son to use the school bus not only because it is more convenient it is also a safer means of getting to and from school not only for him but also for my younger two sons as it means that my eldest can see that they get to and from school. I appreciate that the Government has cut payments to the County Council and so there is less money available but taking money from parents in this way when they is really no valid alternative is really a cheap shot. The Council should be encouraging children to get education at a higher level not providing disincentives for children to go to school. There seems to be a climate developing where higher level education is no longer a right but something that has to be purchased. This is inherently wrong. This transport policy is ethically incorrect. It also makes little sense that my younger children can be on the same bus not making any payment sitting next to my eldest son who has to pay. If he were not there the bus would make the same journey and the seat would just be empty.</p>	<p>16 students in line with RPA</p>
Ian Y	<p>Having school transport for our daughter, to Okehampton college during her sixth form (2017-2019) is vitally important, as our son is at Exbourne primary school and therefore my wife would be unable to drop him off and our daughter at the same time. I am already at work. My daughters birthday is at the end of August and therefore she is unlikely to pass her driving test until mid 2019. This also applies to her contemporaries, that live in the village, in her school year.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessing need
Elsa F	<p>I am a year 10 student at Okehampton College and I recently received your letter regarding the proposed amendments to the post-16 transport policy for 2017-18. As a regular user of my local school bus, I have always intended to continue to use the service when I go onto sixth form, despite being put off slightly by the fare, which I was aware of as my sister, a sixth former, already uses the bus. Imagine my dismay, then, when I discovered that the price had climbed still higher!</p> <p>However, I understand that the proposed changes are not as a result of a motivation for profit or simply to inconvenience passengers, but by pressure on the budget for transport. As you say in your letter, you just want to be "as efficient as possible" and that your policies have to be reviewed. From this I gather that these changes are only possibilities, so I am sure that you will be interested in my arguments and suggestions and take them into account in order to make the most "efficient" decision. You wrote in your letter that "local authorities must provide free transport to children who are of statutory school age" and I think that this is an excellent policy. Then again, it is "statutory" that all children up to the age of 18 stay in full time education or equivalent and therefore I believe that the service should extend to all children up to the age of 18. Obviously, I realise that this is not possible as</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of statutory entitlement to transport for post-16 students in line with RPA Assessing need

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	<p>this is not government policy and it is not financially sustainable for the council, but surely it is not unreasonable to say that it is unfair that we have no choice but to stay in education (or equivalent) and yet have to pay a huge amount to get to school? Isn't English education supposed to be free? Frankly, I think that your proposition that "where a student has other sources of support, the local authority will not assist" is a little ridiculous. How many people in this area of Devon have a regular public bus service that runs perfectly in time with school hours? Or a family member or friend who can be relied on to take them to and from school every single day, without fail? Of course the local authority is going to have to "support" the majority of students travelling to school each day! I believe that to suggest that the use of the bus will only be "in cases of last resort" is laughable as it suggests that only a few pupils will have to use it.</p> <p>To me, the financial contribution seems high, too, although I will not pretend to be an expert in economics. I presume that the bus service will run as usual for the younger pupils and therefore it is not going to make a difference to the size of the bus or the number of bus drivers required.</p> <p>Furthermore, with free periods giving them extra free time, sixth form students may not use the bus regularly, choosing on some days to make other arrangements to travel home earlier than the school bus. A more sensible solution, in my opinion, would be to give the option for the post-16 students to purchase a bus pass (costing maybe £5) which would allow them to travel on the school bus and pay a small fee (perhaps £1.50) per journey to travel on the bus when they need to. Surely, if every sixth former outside of walking distance to the school took this up, it would both cover costs and be proportional to the amount of times they use the bus?</p> <p>I hope that you take my views into account and that this has been helpful to you.</p>	
Mr and Mrs W	<p>We do not agree with the proposal to remove free transport for post 16 students, as they are still in full time education and required to attend school.</p> <p>Furthermore we believe this requirement should continue due to the distances some students must travel to school due to the catchment areas they live in.</p> <p>It is vital to continue to provide this support to all school students to help fulfill their education</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of statutory entitlement to transport for post-16 students in line with RPA • Impact on the most rurally isolated families
Mrs Rachel J	<p>We live in a rural area. My child currently attend Chulmleigh Community College, which unfortunately has no 6th Form facility. Therefore my daughter will be having to travel to either Exeter or Barnstaple (a journey time of over an hour each way) to study for her A Levels when she finishes year 11 in July next year. I have received a letter dated 8th April which starts that it is anticipated that we will need to pay £560 towards the transport for her to attend.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact on the most rurally isolated families

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	<p>Whilst I appreciate that transport is expensive and has to be paid for somehow, I have to say I feel this is an excessive amount of money for people to find, especially in view of the fact that students are expected to continue in education after year 11 and also, as is the case for my daughter, there is no alternative other than Exeter or Barnstaple.</p>	
Dawn R	<p>I remember contacting the local authority when the Route 39 Free School was first mooted, expressing concern that within a few years, Devon would stop funding children's transport to attend their (nearest) local school of preference. This has not yet happened but you are now proposing to remove school transport from post-16 rural children in Devon.</p> <p>On the one hand, we have the Government saying young people need to be educationally engaged until they are 18, but on the other, Devon County Council seems to be suggesting that austerity means children post-16 should not have any transport provision. This seems to be contradictory.</p> <p>Yes, I have a car. Yes, if push comes to shove I can drive 52 miles a day to deliver my daughter to and from school. Yes, this will take a minimum of 2 hours out of my day, and yes, it is incompatible with me working. Yes, I suspect no one cares about that impact!</p> <p>Luckily, I can afford the petrol, but many cannot.</p> <p>We live 13 miles away from school in the rural hamlet of Tosberry, North Devon. Budehaven is my daughter's nearest school offering post 16 provision. While it is nearer, I do not believe that Route 39 will be in any position in a year's time to offer comparable post-16 education. Additionally, the Budehaven 6th form is deemed good by Ofsted, so it is tried and tested.</p> <p>Meanwhile, public transport to and from Hartland (our nearest village) and Bude is at best unreliable. As you can see from this, there is not really any useful public transport for school hours: http://www.visitbude.info/bus-timetables/bude-going-north-bus-timetable/</p> <p>Currently, the school bus collects my daughter for school. My belief is that if school buses are taking under-16s to school and there are spaces on the buses, then over-16s should be accommodated, as the parental 'contribution' of £560 towards transport is probably a useful extra income to maintain the said transport.</p> <p>I appreciate the statutory guidance on the subject of school transport but believe Mr. Cox should be</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of statutory entitlement to transport for post-16 students in line with RPA • Impact on volume of traffic • Route safety • Impact on the most rurally isolated families

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	<p>looking to encourage the Government to amend this for post 16, now the leaving age has effectively been raised.</p> <p>The guidance mentions sustainable transport. I'm not sure if anyone at Devon County Council has tried cycling from Tosberry to Bude along the A39, but I'd be happy follow you in my car to see how you get on if you fancy giving it a whirl. The road is quite dangerous and generally lacks pavements. In winter, in the dark, it would be treacherous. Walking 13 miles a day x 2 is not an option. It would take far too long and the same problems apply.</p> <p>If my daughter has to rely on parental transport to and from school, it:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Diminishes her independence. 2. Means that if ever transport is unavailable she misses lessons. 3. Encourages under-achievement and low aspiration in what is one of the poorest areas of the country. 4. Means I will seriously consider leaving North Devon. 5. Adversely impacts upon my work in local tourism which brings money into this area. 6. Means more cars on the A39, as post 16 parents have to drive their children to and from school = less sustainable. <p>In short, this seems to be an unimaginative and deleterious solution. Frankly, I am surprised that Devon County Council is targeting young people in this way when there are surely other items of expenditure which might be more efficiently reduced.</p>	
Mrs T.E	<p>May I point out that it is a statutory requirement that all children continue full-time further education until the age of 18 unless they have an apprenticeship or traineeship, or can work part-time for 20 hours or more while in part-time education and training. Thus nearly all 16-18 year old's in Devon will HAVE to attend either 6th form or College. For those schools in North Devon who do not have either a 6th form or limited 6th form options this will mean a necessary trip to PETROC college in Barnstaple. We are a remote rural community here in North Devon and places such as Ilfracombe score in the top 10% of deprivation under government indicators. Ilfracombe has the most deprived ward in Devon. How you expect families to pay the full cost of transport when they have no option but to send their children to college is beyond me. As I say is is a statutory requirement. Rurality is a given here in North Devon and is beyond anyone's means to alter. To put the cost onto schools in areas where that demand would be high, like Ilfracombe is an unacceptable pressure and will disadvantage those schools and pupils. This measure is discriminatory and does not set out the conditions which a family would have</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of statutory entitlement to transport for post-16 students in line with RPA • Impact on the most rurally isolated families

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	<p>to meet to qualify for help from the local authority. Also the letter was given to the children rather than sent direct which means many parents will never see it. What is additional need also? The letter was written in confusing and complex language making it difficult to interpret. I refer to paragraph 3.</p> <p>Disgraceful way to bambozzle parents and make sure responses are low. You are slipping this cut to vital services in without proper widespread consultation and I suggest you put it to schools to make sure more parents know about these changes</p>	
Lilian D	<p>I have a 15 year old foster child at Bidwell Brook School who travels on school transport from our home in Newton Abbot. I am writing to express my concerns at the proposal to stop transport for over 16 ,she is going to require transport as Bidwell is the only school suitable for her needs. Tina is non verbal and has severe learning difficulties and would be unable to travel on public transport.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialised provision for students with SEND
Lara B	<p>After reading the proposed changes to your transport policy I was very shocked to see that some students will not be eligible for transport to and from college from 2017.</p> <p>Our daughter is currently in year 10 at Southbrook College. She has Autism, learning disability and ADHD. She has challenging behaviour and has a staff ratio of 2-1 when she is off site. We hope that next year she will attend a specialist sixth form somewhere in our area. There is NO WAY she would be able to attend sixth form without council transport. The nature of our daughter's additional need /learning disability means that it would be IMPOSSIBLE for her to use public transport and my husband and I would not be able to do the journeys without giving up work. I would be happy to make the £560 contribution (or even slightly more) but I could not contemplate our daughter not having access to transport.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialised provision for students with SEND
Jane W	<p>It is with the greatest concern that I write to you regarding the proposed changes for 16/17.</p> <p>I must offer some incite into my son J's situation. His needs are complex because although looking able bodied, he suffers from a moderate learning disability and Asperger's Syndrome. First impressions are that he is bright and clever because he talks non stop about history and Monarchy, with his party trick being when asked any year from the last 600 years, he will tell you the King or Queen and when they reigned and how long for.</p> <p>However, he cannot think for himself. Not only needing help with all aspects of self care and needing routines and forward planning, even what to wear in precise detail, insisting on a particular shirt on a certain day of the week, which if not laundered and ready to wear causes a major meltdown.</p> <p>These things may not seem relevant to venturing outside, but not being able to plan journeys, problem solve, keep himself safe <u>IS!</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialised provision for students with SEND

Responses to the Consultation on the Proposed Post-16 Transport Policy for 2017-18

	<p>J can say what time it is but his time concept is lacking, if something is imminent but not straight away he is time checking constantly then fretting it should be now, why is it not happening, he gets into a panic. He has a selective memory, if it is not history related he doesn't retain it. He cannot remember how to turn on his mobile phone, even after countless demonstrations. If someone turns it on for him he cannot hear what the other person is saying.</p> <p>J is sound sensitive, he hates motorbikes, lorries, buses. When walking the dogs near Dawlish train line if a train goes by he almost 'hits the deck', certainly crouches with his head in his hands and freezes which attracts strange looks from passers by. But we get lots of people staring at him when he gets anxious and cries out as a young child might do because he effectively IS a young child in a mans body.</p> <p>J is seriously afflicted by O.C.D currently, with an irrational fear of toilet germs which results in him being able to use only one toilet in particular at home. He will not use any public toilet or go whilst at College – South Devon, Paignton. The distances involved in getting to and from College from Dawlish means a very long time to not relieve himself. He refuses to drink more than just a few sips during a College day which is not healthy and could be impacting on his concentration, because he is not keeping himself hydrated.</p> <p>He has mentioned regularly of almost soiling himself in the Taxi home and in fact on many occasions doesn't wet himself just after getting through the door but not being able to undo his trousers in time whilst getting to the bathroom.</p> <p>Your proposal of home journeys not commencing until 4.30pm which would presumably mean mixing in with the rush hour traffic, therefore significantly extending what is already a long journey, will mean the increase in the likelihood that J will indeed wet himself in the Taxi. He would no doubt be so humiliated and mortified and this will impact on his self esteem. Not to mention we would have a very annoyed Taxi firm facing a costly and smelly clean up operation.</p> <p>The changes as proposed, given the very complex needs as I have outlined, will have a negative and detrimental effect on J's wellbeing and his limited sense of security. The actual lengthening of his time out of his home, which he currently finds a distress will only serve to compound his anxieties.</p> <p>I am the sole carer for J and for his twin brother who is also on the Autistic Spectrum. I do not have any extended family or friends and no outside assistance and as yet haven't been able to split myself in</p>	
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Responses to the Consultation on the Proposed Post-16 Transport Policy for 2017-18

	<p>two. So I was greatly offended to read the line “Parents need to get other children to and from school” not exceptional. I know of many ladies who have wide age ranges between their children. In this day and age who is deeming it reasonable to expect an extremely young child to travel alone or even an older offspring who may have developmental delays, to cope alone?</p> <p>Shocking and Shameful in equal measures.</p> <p>I would just add that the short notice of this consultation period, being notified on Good Friday right as children start the holiday, has placed an extra burden of anxiety on my family with the pressure to write within the time frame and not having access to the internet. I am convinced many other families affected by this will not have had time or energy to respond. Surely carers should be being supported and not worried out of their minds or is it a trend started by the Government.</p>	
Shanti S	<p>My son recently came home with a letter informing me of the consultation and proposed changes to school transport Post 16. I feel strongly that the current transport support is essential in rural areas. My children are currently taken to/from school by a DCC provided taxi because of our rural location, no school or public bus serves the area. When my son starts his Post 16 study, which is compulsory for him, transport to school will be critical to him being able to attend. We do not live on a public bus route, and it is over a 3 mile journey to get him to a public bus route that runs frequently enough to get him to/from college. I am not in a position commit to drive him as 9 out of the last 18 months I have been without a driving license on medical grounds. If school transport is not provided then our only option would be to have a private taxi pick him up which is unaffordable. Study at a Post 16 level requires hard work and commitment from the student, and it is only fair that this is not disrupted by poor and uncertain transport to and from their place of study. We do not qualify for benefits. Please can you confirm that DCC will still provide transport for my son Post 16 otherwise I don't know how he will continue to attend college.</p> <p>I feel free school transport for all students up until statutory school leaving age, is important to ensure equality for all. The removal of transport to Post 16 year olds effectively means that families living in rural areas are being penalised. Government Policy dictates that we now have to send our children to school/education until 18. I understand there is currently no legislation for local councils to provide transport for free, and really value the provision that Devon has offered to date. If DCC remove this service it effectively means rural families with post 16 year old children will have to pay even more to send their children to school, this is wrong.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact on the most rurally isolated families • Lack of statutory entitlement to transport for post-16 students in line with RPA

Responses to the Consultation on the Proposed Post-16 Transport Policy for 2017-18

	<p>I was made aware of this consultation because one of my children is currently in year 10, I feel that the consultation should be publicised much more widely, preferably to all families whose children currently receive free transport to school (ie Yr 7 and upwards). The proposal that parents will be required to pay for their child's post 16 school transport is very significant to rural families, and all families who will be affected by it should be made aware and offered the opportunity to give you their views and opinions.</p> <p>I urge DCC to continue to exercise discretion and to provide free transport support for its Post 16 students from 2017/2018 and onwards.</p>	
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16-19 Allocations for the 2015 to 2016 Academic Year

Institution Name	Category	Total Students	High Needs Students (included in Total Students)	Disadvantage Funding	High Needs Element 2 Funding (Includes Elements 1 & 2 at Special Schools)	Discretionary Bursary Funding	Free Meals Funding
Atrium Studio School	Studio School	24	0	£ 6,000.00	£ -	£ 2,575.00	£ -
Bideford College	School Sixth Form	229	1	£ 35,409.00	£ 6,000.00	£ 28,252.00	£ -
Bidwell Brook School	Maintained Special School	24	24	£ -	£ 240,000.00	£ 2,575.00	£ -
Clyst Vale Community College	Academy	172	0	£ 26,278.00	£ -	£ 13,706.00	£ -
Colyton Grammar School	Academy	224	1	£ 6,000.00	£ 6,000.00	£ 13,350.00	£ -
Coombeshead Academy	Academy	190	0	£ 47,614.00	£ -	£ 21,408.00	£ -
Dame Hannah Rogers School	Non-Maintained Special School	6	6	£ -	£ 60,000.00	£ 644.00	£ -
Dartmouth Academy	Academy	42	0	£ 21,434.00	£ -	£ 4,506.00	£ -
Devon County Council	Local Authority	17	7	£ 10,758.00	£ 42,000.00	£ 1,259.00	£ -
Ellen Tinkham School	Maintained Special School	34	34	£ -	£ 340,000.00	£ 3,648.00	£ -
Exeter College	General FE and Tertiary	5,334	85	£ 1,571,268.00	£ 510,000.00	£ 656,963.00	£ 97,963.00
Exeter Mathematics School	Free School	94	0	£ 12,591.00	£ -	£ 10,084.00	£ -
Exeter Royal Academy for Deaf Edu	Special Post-16 Institution (SPI)	23	23	£ 30,003.00	£ 138,000.00	£ 2,467.00	£ 823.00
Exeter Royal Academy for Deaf Edu	Non-Maintained Special School	27	27	£ -	£ 270,000.00	£ 2,897.00	£ -
Exmouth Community College	Academy	460	0	£ 78,467.00	£ -	£ 52,707.00	£ -
Honiton Community College	Academy	133	1	£ 30,572.00	£ 6,000.00	£ 13,785.00	£ -
Ivybridge Community College	Academy	619	0	£ 87,077.00	£ -	£ 42,537.00	£ -
King Edward VI Community College	School Sixth Form	292	2	£ 42,241.00	£ 12,000.00	£ 32,727.00	£ -
Kingsbridge Academy	Academy	341	0	£ 24,569.00	£ -	£ 35,983.00	£ -
Mill Water School	Maintained Special School	6	6	£ -	£ 60,000.00	£ 644.00	£ -
Newton Abbot College	Academy	225	0	£ 128,081.00	£ -	£ 35,195.00	£ -
Oaklands Park School	Maintained Special School	7	7	£ -	£ 70,000.00	£ 751.00	£ -
Okehampton College	School Sixth Form	177	0	£ 13,676.00	£ -	£ 20,914.00	£ -
Pathfield School	Maintained Special School	29	29	£ -	£ 290,000.00	£ 3,111.00	£ -
Petroc	General FE and Tertiary	3,232	139	£ 1,446,337.00	£ 834,000.00	£ 433,765.00	£ 86,196.00
Phoenix Learning and Care Limited	Special Post-16 Institution (SPI)	55	55	£ 66,007.00	£ 330,000.00	£ 5,900.00	£ 6,736.00
Queen Elizabeth's	Academy	243	0	£ 17,819.00	£ -	£ 23,426.00	£ -
Robert Owen Communities	Special Post-16 Institution (SPI)	3	3	£ 6,000.00	£ 18,000.00	£ 500.00	£ -
Sidmouth College	School Sixth Form	139	2	£ 20,995.00	£ 12,000.00	£ 15,732.00	£ -
South Dartmoor Community College	Academy	274	3	£ 35,946.00	£ 18,000.00	£ 32,767.00	£ -
South Devon UTC	University Technology College	30	0	£ 6,000.00	£ -	£ 3,218.00	£ -
Tavistock College	School Sixth Form	326	2	£ 40,356.00	£ 12,000.00	£ 27,027.00	£ -
Teign School	Academy	205	1	£ 26,006.00	£ 6,000.00	£ 18,180.00	£ -
Teignmouth Community School, Exe	Academy	196	0	£ 49,959.00	£ -	£ 27,282.00	£ -
The Axe Valley Community College	School Sixth Form	110	0	£ 9,639.00	£ -	£ 13,748.00	£ -
The Ilfracombe Church of England A	Academy	179	0	£ 63,996.00	£ -	£ 30,106.00	£ -
The King's School	Academy	232	0	£ 6,000.00	£ -	£ 14,664.00	£ -
Wesc Foundation College	Special Post-16 Institution (SPI)	44	38	£ 52,806.00	£ 228,000.00	£ 4,720.00	£ 1,465.00
Wesc Foundation School	Non-Maintained Special School	14	14	£ -	£ 140,000.00	£ 1,502.00	£ -

Impact Assessment

Version 2016

Assessment of:	Changes to Post-16 Education Transport Policy 2017-18
Service:	Education and Learning

Head of Service:	Sue Clarke
Date of sign off by Head Of Service/version:	xx June 2016
Assessment carried out by (incl. job title):	Andrew Brent, Policy and Strategy Officer (Education)

Section 1 - Background

Description:	This is an assessment of the impact of the proposed changes to the Post-16 Education Transport Policy for the 2017-18 academic year.
Reason for change and options appraisal:	<p>The proposed changes involve a shift in emphasis from the LA being a first option for assistance with transport for post-16 students to the LA being a safety net to ensure that no Devon-resident post-16 student is unable to continue in education because the absence of transport is an unsurmountable barrier. Under an amended policy, students would be expected to have made their own arrangements and if that is not possible they would be required to provide evidence that without support from the LA, he or she would be unable to continue in Further Education. Where that need is established, it would be met by the LA.</p> <p>In reviewing the policy for the 2017-18 academic year, the LA proposed two changes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increasing the contribution towards LA costs to be paid by students to £580 per annum;• For all new applications, requiring evidence from the student or his or her parent that assistance from the LA is required in order for the student to be able to continue in Further education.

The proposed changes would have no impact on the statutory requirement on the LA to support Learners with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities (LLDD).

Under the proposed policy, students would get to and from school or college either by public transport or other private arrangements (such as walking, cycling or using a private vehicle). This would be paid for by the student or parent, supported where available by funds from the college Bursary scheme.

Where that is not possible, they would be able to use a vacant seat on a LA-contracted vehicle. This would require a contribution towards LA costs, paid for by the student or parent, supported where available by funds from the college Bursary scheme. These seats would be guaranteed for the student while he or she attends the establishment from the same address.

Where a vacant seat is not available, students can make a case to the LA that there is a need for LA assistance. The LA will assess need and ask for evidence in support of the case. Where it is agreed that support is required, it will be in the form the LA considers appropriately meets that need – such as the provision of a seat on a LA-contracted vehicle, a petrol or other financial allowance to the student, Independent Travel Training. This would require a contribution towards LA costs, paid for by the student or parent, supported where available by funds from the college Bursary scheme. These seats would be guaranteed for the student while he or she attends the establishment from the same address.

Where the LA does not agree that need has been established, there would be a two-stage appeal process to ensure that the circumstances would be fully and fairly considered.

Section 2 - Key impacts and recommendations

Social/equality impacts:

1. The contribution to LA costs is required for all post-16 students. A higher contribution will be more challenging for parents and students to pay. Less well-off families who cannot access other support including from the school and college Bursary scheme may opt not to continue in further education.

The LA assists post-16 students by operating a supported travel scheme. This is chargeable to limit the financial burden on the LA. The LA provides a safety net through a two-stage appeal process. This enables families to make an individual case that a post-16 student requires assistance in addition to or in

the absence of Bursary support.

Schools and colleges are funded through a Bursary scheme to support students with learning costs including transport. The monies to do this have been available through schools and colleges since the withdrawal of the Education Maintenance Allowance in 2011. No low-income student should be unable to secure the costs of the contribution from the Bursary scheme. The LA will work with schools and colleges to seek additional funds to supplement the Bursary where this is possible and would ensure support for students in need. The LA provides a safety net through a two-stage appeal process. This enables families to make an individual case that a post-16 student requires assistance in addition to or in the absence of Bursary support.

2. The 2016-17 policy established an entitlement to support from the LA for any post-16 student who meets published criteria – with that support requiring a contribution towards the costs of the LA. A post-16 student would be entitled to LA support where he or she is:

- A Devon-resident
- Studies on a full time course
- Attends a state-funded school or college designated to provide post-16 education for the home address or the nearest available establishment providing a course necessary for the chosen career path
- Lives further than a walking distance of three miles from the establishment, unless it is evidenced that the student is unable to walk to the school or college
- is under 19 years of age on the 31 August immediately preceding the start of the academic year

Where a student is not entitled to support from the LA, he or she is signposted to the school or college for support. This would be the case where, for example, the student could attend the designated establishment or one closer to home but chooses to attend one further away from home. This arrangement means that the LA is the principal or default source of support for students who live beyond the minimum walking distance and who do not make their own arrangements for travel. Students and their families use their own vehicles or use public transport where this is more convenient or cost-effective for them. In some circumstances, the schemes operated by colleges themselves may be more convenient or

cost-effective than the support available from the LA.

Under the proposed arrangements for 2017-18, the LA would step back from this role of providing support by default. Students and their families would continue to make their own arrangements where they are more convenient or cost-effective but where that is not possible, they would be expected to approach the schools and colleges for support from the college-managed Bursary schemes. To secure support from the LA on an individual basis, students and their families would be required to provide evidence that:

- they could not make their own arrangements for travel and that
 - support from the college Bursary was not available or insufficient
- to enable the student to travel to and from school or college to remain in Further Education. The LA would have changed its role from the default provider of support to a safety net. It is expected that the LA would be required to support transport for many of the students who would receive support under the 2016-17 policy: those with the most rural isolation who are furthest from public transport or where there is no public transport option at all, those with the greatest economic hardship and those whose additional educational or medical needs require more costly specialised or individual transport. In all cases where the LA accepts evidence from the student or family that these are the circumstances, it will provide support. It is the proposal of the LA that post-16 students will continue to access Further Education and it will support them with transport arrangements where it is necessary to do so. Support would be provided to meet individual need and would be the most cost-effective means available to the LA, for instance:
- the provision of Independent Travel Training to enable the student walk or use public transport
 - access to a LA-contracted vehicle
 - financial support for fuel or otherwise to enable the student to travel, net of the LA contribution.

It would not be considered necessary to provide support where a student, for example:

- can travel by public transport – using those vehicles would be paid for by family itself, seeking support from the colleges through the Bursary scheme, particularly for those from low-income households.
- has access to a family vehicle, even where using the vehicle would be inconvenient for the family. A family would have to provide satisfactory evidence that there was no private vehicle available
- does not provide evidence that the college is unable to provide sufficient assistance through the Bursary scheme.

	<p>The proposed policy would be a needs-led service, ensuring that students who evidence that they do not have the means to get to and from college have support from the LA.</p>
<p>Environmental impacts:</p>	<p>It is possible that passengers liable to pay the increased contribution may decide that making their own way to school or college is a better option for them. This may increase the number of vehicles on Devon's road but to a very small extent. There is no reason why any post-16 student would need to change their travel arrangements because of this as monies to pay the contribution are available from the Bursary scheme. The LA will work with schools and colleges to seek additional funds to supplement the Bursary where this is possible and would ensure support for students in need. The LA provides a safety net through a two-stage appeal process. This enables families to make an individual case that a post-16 student requires assistance in addition to or in the absence of Bursary support.</p> <p>It is possible that some students would not receive support from the LA on the grounds that they have the means to use their own transport. A student provided with a with a mobility vehicle from public funds for instance would be expected to use that vehicle to travel to and from college and not access a LA-contracted vehicle.</p> <p>The LA also works with local public transport providers to help offer sustainable transport options with various tickets available from these companies, some of which will be more cost effective for the student than the LA scheme</p>
<p>Economic impacts:</p>	<p>1. The increase in the contribution is projected to raise a minimal amount for the LA but is help to reduce the financial burden on the LA minimally. An increase of £20 per student is not an insignificant sum for families themselves, particularly where a family has more than one student passenger.</p> <p>It is necessary for the LA to address the financial pressures it faces in a number of ways, including increasing fees and charges in a proportionate and measured way. The LA provides a safety net through a two-stage appeal process. This enables families to make an individual case that a post-16 student requires assistance in addition to or in the absence of Bursary support.</p>

Other impacts (partner agencies, services, DCC policies, possible 'unintended consequences'):	<p>1. The expectation is that schools and colleges will indeed allow Bursary funds to be used to support transport for their post-16 students as intended. Those funds have been available to establishments since 2011 and may be being used to support students in other ways. By diverting a proportion of the Bursary to transport costs, there will inevitably be less money available for other purposes such as learning resources and curriculum enhancement.</p> <p>The Bursary is intended to support students with costs including travel. Despite the Raising of the Participation Age, central government has not extended the statutory entitlement to free transport to post-16 students and has provided funds to establishments. It is appropriate for the LA to review whether it is able to subsidise travel in this manner and to withdraw from support where the family is able to pay for public service transport or where there is no impact on the ability of students themselves to pay.</p>
How will impacts and actions be monitored?	<p>The number of post-16 students using LA transport will be monitored.</p> <p>The LA will work with schools and colleges and public transport providers to monitor the impact of these changes.</p>

Section 3 - Profile and views of stakeholders and people directly affected

People affected:	<p>Those accessing support from the LA make up a small minority of Devon's post-16 students. Instead of automatically entitlement to support from the LA for those meeting basic eligibility criteria, any post-16 student who seeks LA support would need to provide satisfactory evidence of need for support.</p> <p>Post-16 students will either not request support because they are able to make their own arrangements, independently or with the financial support of the Bursary scheme or they will seek support from the LA and establish a need for that support. They would all liable to pay a contribution towards costs and could approach their school or college for financial support to pay the full LA contribution.</p>
Diversity profile and needs assessment of affected	<p>The contribution is applicable to all post-16 passengers, regardless of race, religion, orientation or additional need.</p>

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people:	
Other stakeholders:	<p>A number of schools and colleges have expressed their concern about an increase in demand for Bursary support that will be prompted by an increase in contributions for post-16 students. Establishments will no longer be in a position to disperse the Bursary on other student costs.</p> <p>A number of parents have questioned the need and “fairness” of an increase in contributions and have expressed concern about how they would get their children to and from college. Where those students are already in post-16 education or in current Year 11, they will be subject to the current policy of support for all eligible students. The proposed amendment would only apply to new applications for post-16 transport for travel from September 2017.</p> <p>Local public transport providers who offer alternative transport options for young people.</p> <p>Where there is a need for support, the LA will act as a safety net to ensure that all Devon-resident students can continue into post-16 education.</p>
Consultation process:	All Devon schools and colleges with children in Year 10 and above were contacted to advise them of the proposed changes. In addition to views from the establishments themselves, a letter was sent for distribution to the parents of Year 10 children as they would be the cohort first affected by the proposed change.
Research and information used:	Relevant legislation and the policies of other LAs and their contribution levels were benchmarked. The potential impact on children and students and the anticipated financial impact on the LA were modelled.

Background Analysis

This section describes how relevant questions and issues have been explored during the options appraisal.

Section 4a - Social Impacts

Giving Due Regard to Equality and Human Rights

The local authority must consider how people will be affected by the service, policy or practice. In so doing we must give due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity and
- Foster good relations.

Where relevant, we must take into account the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, sexual orientation, race, and religion and belief.

This means considering how people with different needs get the different services they require and are not disadvantaged, and facilities are available to them on an equal basis in order to meet their needs; advancing equality of opportunity by recognising the disadvantages to which protected groups are subject and considering how they can be overcome.

We also need to ensure that human rights are protected. In particular, that people have:

- A reasonable level of choice in where and how they live their life and interact with others (this is an aspect of the human right to 'private and family life').
- An appropriate level of care which results in dignity and respect (the protection to a private and family life, protection from torture and the freedom of thought, belief and religion within the Human Rights Act and elimination of discrimination and the promotion of good relations under the Equality Act 2010).
- A right to life (ensuring that nothing we do results in unlawful or unnecessary/avoidable death).

The Equality Act 2010 and other relevant legislation does not prevent the Council from taking difficult decisions which result in service reductions or closures for example, it does however require the Council to ensure that such decisions are:

- Informed and properly considered with a rigorous, conscious approach and open mind, taking due regard of the effects on the protected characteristics and the general duty to eliminate discrimination, advance equality and foster good relations.
- Proportionate (negative impacts are proportionate to the aims of the policy decision)

- Fair
- Necessary
- Reasonable, and
- Those affected have been adequately consulted.

Characteristics	Describe any needs and actual or potential negative consequences (e.g. disadvantage or community tensions) for the groups listed. (Consider how to mitigate against these).	Describe any needs and actual or potential neutral or positive outcomes for the groups listed. (Consider how to advance equality/reduce inequalities as far as possible).
All residents (include generic equality provisions):	For all parents and students, the decision to seek admission to an establishment further from home where contribution to costs is required, an increase may undermine parental preference. By becoming the provider of support as a safety net, the LA would be prompting students and their families to more fully consider how they can make their own arrangements and to approach schools and colleges for support.	<p>The LA provides a safety net through individual assessment of need and a two-stage appeal process. This enables families to make an individual case that a post-16 student requires assistance in addition to or in the absence of Bursary support.</p> <p>The LA will continue to provide advice and to sign-post students and families to help them to make their own arrangements, use public transport and to request Bursary support.</p>
Age:	The LA does not consider these changes cause any particular consequences linked to this characteristic. It is anticipated that students will travel to their establishment in the same way with the potential for limited drop-off by a small number of students who	

	are in a position to make their own transport arrangements.	
Disability (incl. sensory, mobility, mental health, learning disability, ill health) and carers of disabled people:	The LA does not consider these changes cause any negative consequences linked to this characteristic. It is anticipated that students will travel to their establishment in the same way.	Students with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities will not be disproportionately affected by the increase to the contribution. Where individual or specialised travel arrangements are required, it is anticipated that the additional costs involved will mean the LA does need to provide support. The LA provides a safety net through a two-stage appeal process. This enables families to make an individual case that a post-16 student requires assistance in addition to or in the absence of Bursary support.
Culture and ethnicity: Nationality/national origin, Skin colour, religion and Belief:	The LA does not consider these changes cause any particular consequences linked to this characteristic. It is anticipated that children and students will travel to their establishment in the same way.	
Sex, gender and gender identity (including men, women, non-binary and transgender people), and pregnancy and maternity (including women's right to breastfeed)	The LA does not consider these changes cause any particular consequences linked to this characteristic. It is anticipated that children and students will travel to their establishment in the same way.	
Sexual orientation and marriage/civil partnership:	The LA does not consider these changes cause any particular consequences linked to this characteristic. It is anticipated that children and students will travel to their establishment in the same way.	

Other socio-economic factors such as families, carers, single people/couples, low-income, vulnerability, education, reading/writing skills, 'digital exclusion' and rural isolation.	Low-income families would find any increase in fees and charges or reduction in discounts more challenging to afford. This is mitigated by the option to seek assistance from school and college Bursary scheme. Where this is insufficient and the absence of transport would be an unsurmountable barrier to attendance, students and parents may approach the LA for support.	The level of contribution is not higher in more rural, isolated areas where the actual costs to the LA may be higher. Support and advice is available from the LA which would employ officers able to assist with the process as necessary.
Human rights considerations:	There are no human rights considerations. Students have the right to continue into Further Education but that is not to a particular establishment. They also have a right to expect their transport needs are considered fairly and in line with legislation.	The LA would provide a safety net for education transport for post-16 students through individual assessment of need and a two-tier appeals process to ensure that individual circumstances are considered fairly and consistently, in line with legislation and the policy.

Section 4b - Environmental impacts

An impact assessment should give due regard to the following activities in order to ensure we meet a range of environmental legal duties.

The policy or practice does not require the identification of environmental impacts using this Impact Assessment process because it is subject to (please select from the table below and proceed to the 4c, otherwise complete the environmental analysis table):

	Devon County Council's Environmental Review Process for permitted development highway schemes.
	Planning Permission under the Town and Country Planning Act (1990).
	Strategic Environmental Assessment under European Directive 2001/42/EC "on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment".

	Describe any actual or potential negative consequences. (Consider how to mitigate against these).	Describe any actual or potential neutral or positive outcomes. (Consider how to improve as far as possible).
Reduce waste, and send less waste to landfill:	None identified.	None identified.
Conserve and enhance biodiversity (the variety of living species):	None identified.	None identified.
Safeguard the distinctive characteristics, features and special qualities of Devon's landscape:	None identified.	None identified.
Conserve and enhance the quality and character of our built environment and public spaces:	None identified.	None identified.
Conserve and enhance Devon's cultural and historic heritage:	None identified.	None identified.
Minimise greenhouse gas emissions:	It is possible that parents and students may decide to make other travel arrangements in	Parents or young people may explore other sustainable (public transport) options.

	response to the increase to the contribution or because they are in a position to do so which would negate the need for the LA to provide support. This could mean more vehicles using Devon's roads.	
Minimise pollution (including air, land, water, light and noise):	None identified other than above.	None identified other than above.
Contribute to reducing water consumption:	None identified.	None identified.
Ensure resilience to the future effects of climate change (warmer, wetter winters; drier, hotter summers; more intense storms; and rising sea level):	None identified.	None identified.
Other (please state below):	None identified.	None identified.

Section 4c - Economic impacts

	<p>Describe any actual or potential negative consequences.</p> <p>(Consider how to mitigate against these).</p>	<p>Describe any actual or potential neutral or positive outcomes.</p> <p>(Consider how to improve as far as possible).</p>
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Impact on knowledge and skills:	None identified.	None identified.
Impact on employment levels:	None identified.	None identified.
Impact on local business:	None identified.	More parents and students may look for other transport options thereby supported local transport companies and help sustain local transport services for the whole community.

Section 4d -Combined Impacts

Linkages or conflicts between social, environmental and economic impacts:	<p>None identified.</p> <p>The LA anticipates very limited impact on the actions of parents and their choices of schools and travel arrangements.</p>
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Section 5 - 'Social Value' of planned commissioned/procured services:

How will the economic, social and environmental well-being of the relevant area be improved through what is being proposed? And how, in conducting the process of procurement, might that improvement be secured?	The LA will have reduced the financial burden on the LA of the Education Transport Policy by increasing contributions and ending discounts. This will improve the economic and social well-being of the Council and Devon-residents.
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PTE/16/36

Cabinet
13 July 2016

Pollinators and Neonicotinoids

Joint Report of the Head of Planning, Transportation and Environment and Head of Business Strategy and Support

Please note that the following recommendation is subject to consideration and determination by the Cabinet (and confirmation under the provisions of the Council's Constitution) before taking effect.

Recommendation: It is recommended that Cabinet approves the Devon County Council Pollinators' Action Plan attached to this report.

1. Summary

This report seeks approval for the Devon County Council Pollinators' Action Plan, which is attached.

2. Background/introduction

The Place Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 7 March 2016 (Minute *118) considered the Report of the Head of Planning, Transportation and Environment (PTE/16/13) on the impact on pollinators of neonicotinoids, prepared in response to the Notice of Motion by Councillor Hook submitted to the County Council on 10 December 2015 and referred by Cabinet to the Scrutiny Committee. That Committee was asked to comment upon the desirability of producing a Pollinators' Action Plan through which more detailed consideration might be given to any relevant restrictions on the use of neonicotinoids on County Council property and any opportunities to support the conservation of bees and pollinators. The Committee subsequently resolved:

- (a) that the Committee welcome and endorse the principle of a Pollinators' Action Plan being produced covering the issues outlines in Report PTE/16/13 and that Cabinet be recommended to adopt and implement such a Plan at the earliest opportunity;*
- (b) that in addition Cabinet be strongly advised to take all necessary steps where possible to prohibit the use of neonicotinoids on land under the control or ownership of the County Council including existing and new tenants of the County Farms Estate;*
- (c) that the County Council engage other Councils in Devon and partner organisations to take similar action to that outlined above.*

Cabinet at its meeting on 13 April 2016 considered the above and resolved:

*'that the Scrutiny Committee's views be noted and approval, in principle, be given to the adoption of a Pollinators' Action Plan and Officers be asked to further explore the practicalities of the proposed actions at (b) above, seeking also the views of the County Farms Estate Committee as appropriate and report further to Cabinet as soon as practicable (Minutes * 13 refers)*

On the 28 April the Farms Estate Committee resolved to undertake a tenants' survey to better understand the use of neonicotinoids on the County Farms Estate and to explore potential positive opportunities to address pollination issues on the County Farms Estate through the Pollinators Action Plan in line with the objectives of the Farms Estate Strategic Review. The outcome of the tenants' survey undertaken in line with the previous decision of

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the County Farms Estate Committee was considered by that Committee on 28 June 2016 (as set out in Report BSS/16/11) in determining its response to Cabinet. The Minutes of that meeting and the aforementioned Report are also before the Cabinet at this meeting, to which Members should have regard in considering this Report.

3. Proposal

The Pollinators' Action Plan has been produced as per recommendation (a) of the Scrutiny Committee. With respect to Scrutiny recommendations (b) and (c) the Plan incorporates recommendations of the Farms Estate Committee and of relevant lead officers across the Council. The Plan sets out how the Council is already taking, and will take further, positive action for pollinators' whilst carrying out its functions.

4. Consultations/Representations/Technical data

The County Farms tenants' questionnaire was developed in consultation with the NFU, Friends of the Earth and FWAG SW. A representative of the NFU addressed the County Farms Committee on 28 June. The views and opinions of the Devon Federation of Young Farmers Clubs and the Estate Tenants Association were represented on the County Farms Estate Committee. No other parties were consulted by the Committee.

On 12 April the Leader of the Council was presented with a petition organised by The Friends of the Earth's *'Bee Cause Campaign'*, containing in the region of 3750 signatures of Devon residents, congratulating the Council in agreeing to consider taking action to reduce the impact of neonicotinoids upon bees and other pollinators.

The CEO of the Devon Wildlife Trust spoke at the 7 March Scrutiny Committee.

There has been no formal external consultation undertaken by DCC in relation to its approach to pollinators and neonicotinoids. However, there has been some informal discussion with a range of organisations and other local authorities to gather information to inform this Authority's consideration of the issue and the production of a Pollinators' Action Plan.

The proposed Pollinator's Action Plan was developed through internal consultation with Council officers from highways, country parks, grounds maintenance, planning and environment and with staff from NPS.

5. Financial Considerations

The majority of the actions within the Pollinators' Plan are already being undertaken and will have no new financial implications for Council budgets.

Officers are exploring opportunities for external funding for improved management of roadside verges, which will be of benefit to pollinators.

6. Environmental Considerations

The recommendations and the resulting implementation of the Action Plan will benefit Devon's natural environment by improving the situation for pollinators.

7. Equality Considerations

There are no equality issues arising from the recommendation.

8. Legal Considerations

There are no legal issues arising from the recommendation.

Note that there is currently a partial EC precautionary ban on the three most common neonicotinoid pesticides (clothianidin, imidacloprid and thiamethocam). The UK government has implemented this ban.

It should also be noted that the Council, as landlord, is unable to alter the terms of existing Farm Business Tenancy Agreements or existing Agricultural Holdings Act 1986 tenancy agreements, so cannot currently impose a ban on the use of neonicotinoids by these tenants, unless this is done by mutual agreement.

9. Risk Management Considerations

The proposed approach set out in the Action Plan balances the potential risks to pollinators linked to the use of neonicotinoids, the statutory duties of the Council and the rights of its tenants. This is done in the context of the very limited use of neonicotinoids on the Farms Estate and the fact that insecticides are only used on remaining Council property in exceptional circumstances for health and safety reasons.

10. Public Health Impacts

There are no public health impacts arising from the recommendations.

11. Options/Alternatives

The Place Scrutiny Committee recommended that all necessary steps, where possible, be taken to prohibit the use of neonicotinoids on land under the control or ownership of DCC. However, such action would appear to be unnecessary and irrelevant on most parts of the DCC estate, given that there is no routine use of such insecticides. Nor is it practical on the County Farms Estate given the limited used and legal constraints outlined in Section 8. Instead, a series of actions to further reduce the use of neonicotinoids by County Farms Estate tenants, along with other positive measures in support of pollinators, are proposed by the Action Plan.

12. Reasons for Recommendation

The author has prepared this report in accordance with the recommendations of the Farms Estate Committee and taking account of the recommendations of Place Scrutiny Committee, consultations with lead officers across the Council and the requirement to take forward Cabinet recommendations.

Dave Black
Head of Planning, Transportation and Environment
Rob Parkhouse
Head of Business Strategy and Support Services

Electoral Divisions: All

Cabinet Member for Community and Environmental Services: Councillor Roger Croad

Strategic Director, Place: Heather Barnes

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Local Government Act 1972: List of Background Papers

Contact for enquiries: Peter Chamberlain/Sarah Jennings

Room No. County Hall, Exeter. EX2 4QD

Tel No: 01392) 383000

Background Paper	Date	File Reference
None		

pc290616cab Pollinators and Neonicotinoids
hk 02 010716

Devon County Council

Draft Pollinators' Action Plan

2016 – 2021



Photo credit: Mike Deaton

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Introduction from Councillor Roger Croad, Cabinet Member for Community and Environmental Services



Bees, and other pollinators, are essential to food production and therefore to our lives. We are all now very aware that the bee population has been declining at an alarming rate in recent years due to a range of factors and that we must all work together to reverse this decline.

Devon County Council's commitment to protecting and enhancing the natural environment is set out in our Environmental Policy which was adopted in May 2011. As part of this commitment we have a key role to play in helping our pollinators. In terms of direct land management the Council's estate includes farms, roadside verges, Country Parks and the grounds of our offices. As a local planning authority we are responsible for writing and implementing planning policies to protect and enhance pollinator habitats and species. As a strategic authority we can play a key role in encouraging and supporting organisations and communities to take action for pollinators.

Pollinators need our help and I am therefore delighted that we have produced this Pollinators' Action Plan which sets out how we are, and will, help Devon's pollinators.

Why are pollinators so important and what are the issues?

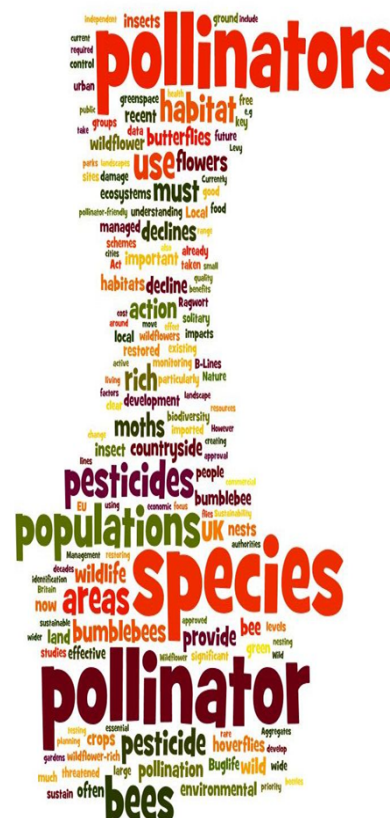
There are over 1,500 species of insect pollinators in the UK, including bumble bees, honey bees, solitary bees, hoverflies, wasps, flies, beetles, butterflies and moths. All have complex life cycles and specific needs, including food in the form of pollen and nectar and somewhere to shelter and build a nest.

The South West of Britain is nationally important for rare species of pollinators due to our combination of climate and habitat diversity. The soft cliffs of South Devon are particularly important and home to very rare species such as the long-horned mining bee. Devon is also home to very rare butterflies such as heath and marsh fritillaries.

We all rely on pollinators for food production. Nationally the cost of replacing pollination services provided by bees alone is thought to be over £1.8 billion a year.

However bee numbers are declining, not just in the UK but worldwide. In 2012 DEFRA outlined the severity of the decline of, and threat to, bees: *There has been a severe decline in the diversity of wild bees in the countryside...England has the greatest decline of anywhere in Europe. Since 1900, the UK has lost 20 species of bees. A further 35 bee species are considered to be under threat of extinction.*

Causes of the decline are complex but include disease, climate change, habitat loss and pesticide use. The Council will, in monitoring and updating this plan, take into account new research relating to the causes of declines.



The National Pollinator Strategy

In November 2014, the UK Government produced its National Pollinator Strategy in response to public and political concern about the decline in bees and other pollinating insects (see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-pollinator-strategy-for-bees-and-other-pollinators-in-england>). The strategy sets

out a ten year plan. As part of this the government set up a Bees' Needs website with advice on how to help pollinators. See <http://www.wildlifetrusts.org/bees-needs>



The Strategy includes the following outcomes:

1. More, bigger, better, joined-up, diverse and high-quality flower-rich habitats (including nesting places and shelter) supporting our pollinators across the country.
2. Healthy bees and other pollinators which are more resilient to climate change and severe weather events.
3. No further extinctions of known threatened pollinator species.
4. Enhanced awareness across a wide range of businesses, other organisations and the public of the essential needs of pollinators.
5. Evidence of actions taken to support pollinators.



The Devon Pollinator Pledge

In 2016 Devon Local Nature Partnership launched the Devon Pollinator Pledge to encourage everyone to take action for Devon's pollinators. See <http://www.naturaldevon.org.uk/>. The pledge includes five actions:

1. **Plant bee-friendly flowers.** Flowers (including on shrubs and trees) provide nectar and pollen throughout the year.
2. **Create and protect meadows and other areas rich in wild flowers.** In gardens sow an area with wild flower seed; leave it to flower and set seed before cutting.
3. **Don't be too tidy.** Leave wild corners, dead wood, walls and grassy banks undisturbed over winter to provide shelter. Leave an area to grow wild and build a 'bug hotel' in your garden.
4. **Think carefully about whether to use pesticides** especially where pollinators are active or nesting or where plants are in flower. Only use pesticides if absolutely necessary.
5. **Join up and learn more.** Support one of the many conservation organisations campaigning for, and conserving, our wild pollinators in Devon.



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Devon County Council was the first organisation to sign the Devon Pollinator Pledge and this Action Plan sets out how the Council is working to help pollinators.

Action Plan

A The County Council Estate

A1 County Farms Estate

Devon County Council owns 69 farms covering 3892 hectares. Approximately 80% of the Estate is grassland. The remainder is largely wheat, barley, maize and winter forage crops. The Estate aims to provide people with a way into farming with a view that, within a reasonable timeframe, they secure an independent livelihood from agriculture. All farms are let by Farm Business Tenancy Agreements under the Agricultural Tenancies Act 1995.



Pollinators are important for agriculture but agriculture is also important for providing pollinator habitat across our countryside. Crops provide food for pollinating insects but only over a short period of time and so other food sources from flowers in hedges, margins, grasslands and woodlands are needed for the rest of the year. Breeding and overwintering habitats such as grassland, hedge banks, ditches, pools, dung-rich pasture and bare ground are also vital.

Actions

1. Tenants are encouraged to sign up to the Devon Pollinators Pledge.
2. Identify and promote and/or develop new best practice case studies demonstrating how the Estate is used to support pollinators.
3. Identify and promote training opportunities for tenants around alternative means of pest control such as Integrated Pest Management Plans.
4. Identify and promote the use of alternative non neonicotinoid pesticides used on maize, wheat,
5. Barley and winter forage crops (noting that a survey has shown that there is currently very limited use of neonicotinoids on the Estate).
6. Promote voluntary measures to tenants such as those set out in the Campaign for the Farmed Environment.
7. Identify County Farms more likely to be eligible for the Countryside Stewardship Scheme and discuss the merits of an application with the tenants.
8. Identify and encourage positive management of County Wildlife Sites on the Estate.
9. Include recommendations for pollinators in the environmental review which is undertaken when County Farms are re-let.

Examples of Campaign for the Farmed Environment Voluntary Measures:

- Manage hedges on a two or three year rotation.
- Plant trees where appropriate.
- Leave cereal headland unsprayed and/or unfertilised.
- Uncultivated field corners create habitat for pollinators.
- Provide a legume and herb rich temporary grass to provide enhanced food supplies and habitat.
- Provide fertiliser free permanent pasture.
- Create a beetle bank – grass mounds that run through the middle of large fields.
- Sow a wildflower or a pollen and nectar mix to provide food and energy.

A2 The highways network

The Council is responsible for 13,000 kms of roads (this excludes all the motorway and trunk roads which are managed by Highways England, and roads in Plymouth and Torbay) as well as public rights of way and cycleways. This network includes nearly 2000 hectares of highway verge.



Devon's verges (with adjacent habitats such as hedges, trees and ditches) provide habitat of huge value to pollinators. According to Plantlife verges across the UK are home to over 700 species, 45% of our native flora. 87 of these species are under threat. Many of Devon's verges are full of wildflowers such as bluebells, red campion, stitchwort, ox-eye daisy, violets and early purple orchids. These flowers are appreciated by both pollinators and people! Verges of exceptional wildlife value in Devon are designated, by the Council, as 'special verges'.

The Council has a duty to maintain the highway network so that it is safe to use and has a programme to ensure that vegetation and trees do not cause an obstruction to the highway or threaten the safety of users. As part of this the Council carries out grass-cutting on verges that are essential to maintaining visibility, such as at junctions, laybys and the inside of bends. Hedge management is the responsibility of the adjacent landowner. The Council does however cut some hedges in visibility areas. The Council is also encouraging communities to work together to manage verges via the Highways Community Road Warden and Self-Help Scheme. More information on this can be found at

<https://new.devon.gov.uk/roadsandtransport/maintaining-roads/trees-and-vegetation/grass-cutting/>.

[The Council has a highways weed control / clearance policy which ensures that weed control only takes places where essential to prevent damage and obstruction to the highway network e.g. controlling growth on carriageways and in drains. The Council and its contractors do not use insecticides during routine highways functions.](#)

Actions

1. Integrate wildlife guidance into the information pack for Community Road Wardens and the Self-Help Scheme in order to help communities manage verges for pollinators.
2. Continue to apply the Council's weed control / clearance policy.
3. Continue to provide highways hedgerow management advice for landowners via the Council's website.
4. Extend the use of the Council's Environmental Appraisal toolkit to highways maintenance projects and activities.

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A3 Country Parks and other countryside sites

Devon County Council is responsible for two Country Parks (Stover near Newton Abbot and the Grand Western Canal near Tiverton) as well as a number of smaller sites such as Knapp Copse Local Nature Reserve in East Devon. In addition to being valuable for wildlife these parks are an important countryside recreational resource for local residents and visitors. The Council has an ongoing commitment to improve the environment at these Parks. Note that the majority of parks and public open spaces across Devon are managed by District and Town Councils.



Actions

1. To continue to manage the Country Parks for wildlife, including pollinators.
2. To continue to promote understanding of wildlife, including pollinators, through running activities and events.

A4 Grounds maintenance

Devon County Council owns or leases a number of properties across Devon some of which have gardens and/or small areas of green space. The most significant of these is County Hall in Exeter. There is no routine use of insecticides through the Council's grounds maintenance programme. Insecticides are only used in exceptional circumstances e.g. controlling wasps nests for health and safety purposes.



Actions

1. Increase the value of our grounds for pollinators where appropriate e.g. plant bee friendly plants, manage hedges for wildlife, leave wild corners and dead wood.

B The County Council's planning functions

Devon County Council is the Minerals and Waste Planning Authority for most of Devon. The Council is responsible for determining planning applications relating to minerals and waste development as well as those relating to the Council's own functions e.g. roads and schools. Note that planning applications for residential development and business needs are dealt with by local district, borough and city councils. Plymouth City Council, Torbay Council and the two National Parks are responsible for all planning applications in their areas.



Devon County Council is also responsible for minerals and waste planning in Devon. The Devon Waste Plan was adopted in 2014. The Devon Minerals Plan will be adopted in 2017. Both plans contain policies to protect and enhance pollinator habitat and species in line with national planning policy guidance and achieve a net gain for wildlife proportionate to the nature and scale of the proposal.

Actions

1. Implement planning policy to protect and enhance pollinator habitat and species. Where appropriate work with developers to ensure net gain for pollinators.
2. Continue to ensure that planning officers have access to in-house ecological expertise and up to date ecological data from Devon Biodiversity Records Centre.

C Community Leadership

There's lots of great work going on across Devon to improve the situation for pollinators. Devon's farmers are managing meadows, field margins and hedges. More and more people are managing their gardens for insects. Partnership projects which are benefitting Devon's pollinators include:

Blackdown Hills AONB's *Natural Futures Project*

Devon Wildlife Trust and Exeter City Council's *Exeter Wild City Project*

Buglife's *Torbay's Buzzing Project* and *South Devon B-Lines Project*

Devon Wildlife Trust's *Northern Devon Nature Improvement Area*

The Dartmoor Meadows Project

As a strategic authority covering the county of Devon the Council has a key role in encouraging and supporting others to carry out actions which will benefit pollinators, including communities.

Actions

1. Continue to support the Local Nature Partnership's Pollinators' campaign through providing the Partnership's secretariat which oversees this work.
2. Through our engagement in a wide range of other environmental partnerships, especially those for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the North Devon Biosphere Reserve, support new projects and activities which benefit pollinators.
3. Encourage and support community groups and businesses to help pollinators e.g. through libraries, schools, youth groups and parishes.

FARMS ESTATE COMMITTEE

28 June 2016

Present:-

County Councillors

Councillors C Chugg (Chairman), J Brook, A Dewhirst, R Julian, R Rowe and J Yabsley

Co-opted Members:-

C Bellew (Devon Federation of Young Farmers Clubs) and C Latham (Tenants Representative)

* 9

Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 28 April 2016 be signed as a correct record, subject to the amendment of Minute *8(a) to read "*New Ford Farm, Rockbeare*".

* 10

Items Requiring Urgent Attention

There was no item raised as a matter of urgency.

* 11

Revenue Monitoring 2016/17 (Month 2) and Revenue Monitoring (Final Outturn) 2015/16

The Committee received the Report of the County Treasurer (CT/16/62) on the County Farms Estate Revenue Monitoring 2016/17 (Month 2) and Revenue Monitoring (Final Outturn) 2015/16. Members noted that for the 2016/17 financial year and as a result of insurance budgets being centralised, the target surplus had been revised to £362,000. The Final Outturn for 2015/16 remained unchanged and showed a net surplus of £325,000 compared to the target surplus of £337,000.

* 12

Capital Monitoring 2015/16 (Final Outturn) and Capital Monitoring (Month 2) 2016/17

The Committee received the Report of the County Treasurer (CT/16/63) on the County Farms Estate Capital Monitoring 2015/16 (Final Outturn) and Capital Monitoring (Month 2) 2016/17, noting that:

(a) the Final Outturn at 2015/16 remained unchanged showing expenditure of £1,284,000 and scheme slippage of £771,000, and a net underspend of £19,000 against the capital programme of £2,074,000.

(b) the approved Capital Programme for 2016/17 totalled £1,671,000 which together with scheme slippage of £771,000 for 2015/16 would result in capital spending of £2,442,000 in 2016/17.

* 13

The County Farms Estate - Annual Report 2015/16

The Committee received the Report of the County Treasurer (CT/16/64) incorporating the 25th Annual Report of the County Farms Estate.

The Annual Report 2015/16 covered the Committee's functions and financial and Estate management performance and highlighted notable Estate achievements and events.

* **14 Management and Restructuring Issues**

(Councillor Yabsley declared a personal interest in “(a) Beara Down Farm, Bratton Fleming” by virtue of being a member of the North Devon Council Planning Committee).

The Committee considered the Report of the Head of Business Strategy and Support (BSS16/09) on County Farms Estate management and restructuring issues.

(a) Beara Down Farm, Bratton Fleming (Minute *FE/128, 9 February 2012)

It was **MOVED** by Councillor Brook, **SECONDED** by Councillor Julian, and

RESOLVED

(i) that the Beara Down farmhouse, buildings and some land extending in total to 15.84 acres or thereabouts and more particularly described as OS 9089 and Pt's OS 7200, 9793 and 0005 be relet on a further Farm Business Tenancy Agreement to the existing tenant for a term commencing 25 March 2017 and expiring 25 March 2018, subject to terms being agreed;

(ii) that the 26.05 acres of land or thereabouts forming part Beara Down Farm and more particularly described as OS 0800, 0805, 1500, 3122, 4425 and 5625 be relet on a further Farm Business Tenancy Agreement to the existing tenant for a term commencing 25 March 2017 and expiring 25 March 2024, subject to terms being agreed.

(b) Land at Combefishacre Farm, Ipplepen (Minute *FE/5(a), 28 April 2016)

It was **MOVED** by Councillor Julian, **SECONDED** by Councillor Yabsley, and

RESOLVED that the 11.18 hectares or thereabouts of land at Combefishacre Farm, Ipplepen be advertised to let in internal competition between the tenants of Bulleigh Elms Farm, Ipplepen; Lomans Farm, Broadhempston; Fairfield Farm, Denbury; Coppa Dolla Farm, Denbury; Buckridge Farm, Denbury and Cobberton Farm, Dartington on a five year Farm Business Tenancy commencing 25 March 2017, subject to terms being agreed.

* **15 Pollinators and Neonicotinoids (Cabinet Minute *13, 13 April 2016)**

[NB In line with the spirit of the Council's Public Participation Scheme and at the invitation of the Committee a Mr Hartfield (NFU) attended and spoke to this item in support of the view that there was no evidence to support prohibiting the use of neonicotinoids.]

The Committee considered the Report of the Head of Business Strategy and Support (BSS/16/11), which set out the findings of the County Farms Estate tenants' questionnaire on the use of neonic pesticides on the Estate.

The Committee noted that the Cabinet on 13 April 2016 had previously asked this Committee for its view on potentially prohibiting “the use of neonicotinoids on land under the control or ownership of the County Council including existing and new tenants of the County Farms Estate” as part of a wider Pollinators Action Plan, the production of which had been agreed, in principle, with a decision on the final content of the Plan to be determined by Cabinet in light of this Committee's views.

It was **MOVED** by Councillor Brook, **SECONDED** by Councillor Yabsley and

RESOLVED

(a) that Cabinet be advised:

(i) that there is currently limited use of neonics on the County Farm Estate;

- (ii) that a prohibition on new tenants using neonics would have limited benefit;
- (iii) that training opportunities for tenants on alternative means of pest control such as Integrated Pest Management Plans should be promoted;
- (iv) that tenants should be encouraged to sign up to the Devon Pollinator Pledge, which has been endorsed by the National Farmers' Union;
- (v) that the Estate should be used to implement the initiatives set out in the Report of the Head of Business Strategy and Support (BSS/16/11), namely:

(A) *Tenants be encouraged to sign up to the Devon Pollinators Pledge to:*

- (1) *plant bee-friendly flowers. Flowers (including on shrubs and trees) provide nectar and pollen;*
- (2) *create and protect meadows and other areas rich in wild flowers. In gardens sow an area with wildflower seed, leave it to flower and set seed before cutting;*
- (3) *leaving wild corners, dead wood, walls and grassy banks undisturbed over winter to provide shelter. Leave an area to grow wild and build a 'bug hotel' in your garden;*
- (4) *think carefully about whether to use pesticides especially where pollinators are active or nesting or where plants are in flower. Only use pesticides if absolutely necessary;*
- (5) *join up and learn more. Support one of the many conservation organisations campaigning for, and conserving, our wildlife in Devon;*

(B) *Identify and promote and/or develop new best practice case studies demonstrating how the Estate is used to support pollinators;*

(C) *Identify and promote training opportunities around alternative means of pest control such as Integrated Pest Management Plans;*

(D) *Promote voluntary measures such as those set out in the Campaign for the Farmed Environment;*

(E) *Identify County Farms more likely to be eligible for the Countryside Stewardship Scheme (CSS) and discuss the merits of an application with the tenants, particularly in the two Facilitation Fund Project areas of the Avon Valley and Torridge Headwaters;*

(F) *Identify and encourage good environmental management of County farms falling within a County Wildlife Site;*

(G) *Identify and promote the use of alternative non neonic pesticides used on maize, wheat, barley and winter forage crops.*

- (b) that the Cabinet should also invite/support further research/investigation into the science of neonic pesticide use.

* 16

Bicton College - Update from Dr Phil Le Grice, Principal of Bicton College

The Chairman indicated, with the support of Members present, that Dr Le Grice would be invited to attend the next meeting.

* 17 **Future Meetings**

RESOLVED that an additional meeting be held on Thursday 15 September 2016 at 10.30am.

* 18 **Exclusion of the Press and Public**

RESOLVED that the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of Schedule 12A of the Act, namely information relating to, and which was likely to reveal the identity of, tenants and information relating to the financial or business affairs of tenants and the County Council and, in accordance with Section 36 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, by virtue of the fact that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

* 19 **Holdings and Tenancies etc.**

(An item taken under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 during which the press and public were excluded, no representations having been received to such consideration under Regulation 5(5) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012)

(Councillor Yabsley declared a personal interest in “(a) Middle Yeo Farm, Down St Mary” by virtue of family connections).

The Committee considered the Report of the Head of Business Strategy and Support (BSS/16/10) on requests for landlord's consent to tenants' proposed improvements.

It was **MOVED** by Councillor Brook, **SECONDED** by Councillor Julian and

RESOLVED

(a) Middle Yeo Farm, Down St Mary

that landlord's consent be granted for a 60' x 40' and 15' to eaves galvanised steel portal framed general purpose shed with concrete apron at Middle Yeo Farm, Down St Mary subject to the physical improvement being written down in value to £100 on a straight line basis over a life expectancy of 25 years;

(b) North Hele Farm, Buckland Brewer

that landlord's consent be granted for a 60' x 22' painted steel portal framed cubicle shed for up to 32 cows at North Hele Farm, Buckland Brewer subject to the physical improvement being written down in value to £100 on a straight line basis over a life expectancy of 20 years;

(c) Markhams Farm, Ide

that landlord's consent be granted for a 60' x 30' and 15' to eaves galvanised steel portal frame extension to the landlord's cubicle shed and covered feed yard and constructing a 70' x 30' and 15' to eaves galvanised steel portal framed covered feed yard at Markhams Farm, Ide subject to the physical improvement being written down in value to £100 on a straight line basis over a life expectancy of 25 years.

***DENOTES DELEGATED MATTER WITH POWER TO ACT**

The Meeting started at 10.00 am and finished at 11.03 am

Pollinators and Neonicotinoids

Report of the Head of Business Strategy and Support

Please note that the following recommendations are subject to consideration and determination by the Committee before taking effect.

Recommendation

That the County Farms Estate Committee advises Cabinet that:

- a) There is currently limited use of neonics on the County Farms Estate.
- b) A prohibition on new tenants using neonics would have limited benefit.
- c) Training opportunities for tenants on alternative means of pest control such as Integrated Pest Management Plans should be promoted.
- d) Tenants should be encouraged to sign up to the Devon Pollinator Pledge, which has been endorsed by the NFU.
- e) The Estate should be used to implement the positive actions set out in paragraph 4.7 of this report.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The County Farms Estate Committee were asked by Cabinet to consider resolution 13 made at its meeting on 13 April 2016 in response to a report by Scrutiny Committee (PTE/16/3).
- 1.2 At the County Farms Estate Committee on 28 April 2016, it was agreed that a survey of tenants of the County Farms Estate would be undertaken to better understand the use of neonicotinoids on the Farms Estate. (PTE/16/22)
- 1.3 This report sets out the findings of the tenant's survey and a number of positive measures and initiatives for consideration.

2. Legal Implications

- 2.1 DCC as landlord are unable to alter the terms of existing Farm Business Tenancy Agreements or existing Agricultural Holdings Act 1986 tenancy agreements, and are therefore cannot currently impose a ban on the use of neonicotinoids for these tenants, unless this was by mutual agreement between the tenant and DCC as landlord.

3. Tenants Consultation

- 3.1 The short questionnaire attached at Appendix A was developed in consultation with Devon County Council's Ecologist who in turn consulted the NFU, Friends of the Earth and FWAG.
- 3.2 71 questionnaires were sent out to all occupiers of County Farm land.

3.3 The summary results of the survey are:

36 questionnaires returned (51%), representing 4,459 acres (46%) of the Estate (The Farms Estate currently totals 9,619 acres). This represents 0.35% of the net farmable acreage in Devon (1,255,661 acres).

- 3.3.1 Those 36 tenants who responded farm a total of 5,654 acres with an additional 1,195 acres which is privately owned or rented.

In terms of impact, a voluntary or imposed ban on the use of neonics on the County Farms Estate would, on its own have little material effect. At only 9,619 acres in size (0.8% of Devon's net farmable area), the benefit would be extremely low.

- 3.3.2 Of the total 5,654 acres farmed, 4,488 acres (79%) is grassland where it is understood neonics are highly unlikely ever to be needed.

- 3.3.3 Of the total 5,654 acres farmed no oil seed rape is grown (where the likelihood of needing to use neonics and impact on pollinators is arguably highest)

- 3.3.4 Of the total 5,654 acres farmed 991 acres (17%) are used to grow maize, wheat, barley and winter forage crops where the need to use neonics may exist but where the questionnaire results indicate the majority of tenants (9 out of 14 or 64%) growing such crops are already using non-neonic means of pest control.

In terms of the maize, wheat barley and winter forage crops grown by County Farms Estate tenants responding to the survey, the total 991 acres recorded only represents 0.08 % of Devon's net farming acreage. Prohibiting the use of neonics on this area would arguably make no tangible difference in Devon.

- 3.3.5 Only 5 of 36 (14%) tenants responding to the questionnaire use neonic means of pest control.

- 3.3.6 Of the 5 tenants currently using neonics, only one said they would voluntarily cease using them. 4 of the 5 said they would not.

- 3.3.7 Of the 36 tenants who responded 21 (58%) said they would sign up to a voluntary suspension on the use of neonics but it should be noted that nearly all of those who said they would sign up to the voluntary initiative do not use neonics anyway.

- 3.3.8 Of the 36 tenants who responded 12 (33%) said they would be interested in a free training event on Pesticides and initiatives such as Integrated Pest Management Plans.

4. Conclusions

- 4.1 It is evident from the feedback obtained from the tenants questionnaire that the nature of the predominant cropping and use of the Estate would suggest that a significant majority of its tenants would never need to use neonics.

- 4.2 DCC as landlord has no legal means to prevent the very low proportion of existing tenants who currently use neonics on wheat, barley, maize or winter forage crops, from doing so.
- 4.3 Whilst as landlord, DCC could impose a contractual ban on the use of neonics in all future Farm Business Tenancy's, the very limited use of neonics and the low number of new tenancies granted each year suggests that such action would result in a very small/negligible benefit.
- 4.4 Where new entrants take over a farm it is likely they will continue operating the holding under a similar cropping regime to that of the former tenant suggesting an increase in neonic use following change of tenancy is unlikely.
- 4.5 To seek to impose a ban on the use of otherwise legally available pesticides in all new FBT's is felt to be unnecessary.
- 4.6 However, there are beneficial measures that the Estate could facilitate to support pollinator numbers, diversity and habitat. Such initiatives should include:
- (i) Tenants be encouraged to sign up to the Devon Pollinators Pledge to:
 - (a) Plant bee-friendly flowers. Flowers (including on shrubs and trees) provide nectar and pollen.
 - (b) Create and protect meadows and other areas rich in wild flowers. In gardens sow an area with wildflower seed, leave it to flower and set seed before cutting.
 - (c) Leaving wild corners, dead wood, walls and grassy banks undisturbed over winter to provide shelter. Leave an area to grow wild and build a 'bug hotel' in your garden.
 - (d) Think carefully about whether to use pesticides especially where pollinators are active or nesting or where plants are in flower. Only use pesticides if absolutely necessary.
 - (e) Join up and learn more. Support one of the many conservation organisations campaigning for, and conserving, our wildlife in Devon.
 - (ii) Identify and promote and/or develop new best practice case studies demonstrating how the Estate is used to support pollinators.
 - (iii) Identify and promote training opportunities around alternative means of pest control such as Integrated Pest Management Plans
 - (iv) Promote voluntary measures such as those set out in the Campaign for the Farmed Environment
 - (v) Identify County Farms more likely to be eligible for the Countryside Stewardship Scheme (CSS) and discuss the merits of an application with the tenants, particularly in the two Facilitation Fund Project areas of the Avon Valley and Torridge Headwaters.
 - (vi) Identify and encourage good environmental management of County farms falling within a County Wildlife Site
 - (vii) Identify and promote the use of alternative non neonic pesticides used on maize, wheat, barley and winter forage crops.

5. Consultations/Representations/Technical Data

- 5.1 The views and opinions of the Devon Federation of Young Farmers Clubs and the Estate Tenants Association will be presented by the two co-opted members to the committee.

- 5.2 By invitation of the Farms Committee a representative of the NFU with specialist knowledge of neonics will be address the Committee at the next meeting.
- 5.3 Committee members may be aware of the current public campaign, led nationally by Friends of the Earth, supported by a range of other organisations, relating to pollinators and neonics. On 12 April a petition relating to this campaign was presented to DCC calling on it to ban the use of neonics on its property.
- 5.4 There has been no formal consultation undertaken by DCC in relation to its approach to pollinators and neonics. However, there has been some informal discussion with a range of organisations and other local authorities to gather information to inform this Authority's consideration of the issue and its planned production of a Pollinators Action Plan.
- 5.5 No other parties have been consulted and no other representations for or against the proposal have been received.

6. Considerations

- 6.1 Sustainability issues are being considered at a national (and EU) level in relation to the impacts of neonics and the need for any further regulatory control over their use. In 2014, Defra published a National Pollinator Strategy, setting out collective approaches in support of bees and other pollinators in England.
- 6.2 The author is not aware of any financial, carbon impact, equality, legal, risk management or public health issues arising from the recommendations in this report.

7. Reason for Recommendation/Conclusion

- 7.1 The Author has prepared this report in accordance with the County Farms Estate Strategic Review (2010) and the requirement to take forward Cabinet recommendations (see Section 1 above).

Rob Parkhouse
Head of Business Strategy and Support Services

Electoral Divisions: All

Local Government Act 1972: List of Background Papers

Contact for enquiries: Dan Meek, NPS SW Ltd

Tel No: 01392 351066

Background Paper	Date	File Ref.
1. Cabinet Notice of Motion: Protection of the Bee Population http://democracy.devon.gov.uk/CeListDocuments.aspx?MID=620&RD=Agenda&DF=13%2f01%2f2016&A=0&R=0	13 January 2016	PTE/16/3
2. Pollinators and Neonicotinoids http://democracy.devon.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=163&MId=275&Ver=4	28 April 2016	PTE/16/22

TREASURY MANAGEMENT STEWARDSHIP ANNUAL REPORT 2015/16

Report of the County Treasurer

Please note that the following recommendations are subject to consideration and determination by the Committee before taking effect.

Recommendation: that the Committee notes the report and considers whether it wishes to make any further comments to Cabinet.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The County Council has adopted the CIPFA (Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy) Code of Practice for Treasury Management in the Public Services. A revised Code of Practice was published by CIPFA in November 2011 and a revised Policy Statement and Treasury Management Practices (TMPs) were agreed by Council in February 2012. The Treasury Management and Investment Strategy for 2015/16 was agreed by Council in February 2015 and forms part of the published budget book.
- 1.2. Revisions to the Treasury Management and Investment Strategy were supported by the Committee and approved by Cabinet in October 2015. As a result:
 - Barclays were brought back onto the Council's counterparty list;
 - Leeds Building Society and Coventry Building Society were added to the Council's counterparty list;
 - The Treasury Management Strategy now permits investment of up to £30 million in the CCLA (Churches, Charities and Local Authorities) Property Fund. An initial smaller investment of £10 million was made on 31st October 2015 in-line with Cabinet approval.
- 1.3. The Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) policy on provision for repayment of external debt and internal borrowing was revised following consideration by the Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee in January and approval by Cabinet and the Council in February
- 1.4. The purpose of this report is to show the outturn position, review performance and inform members of any key matters arising from the Council's Treasury and Debt Management activities during the 2015/16 financial year. The report also includes an update on the 2016/17 Strategy. This report, together with any comments offered by this committee, will be considered by Cabinet on 13th July.

2. Minimum Revenue Provision

- 2.1. Each year the Council has a statutory obligation to charge to the revenue account an annual amount of Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP), that is a charge to make provision for the repayment of the authority's external debt and internal borrowing. The charge is based on the historic borrowing required to fund the Council's capital programme.
- 2.2. During the year the MRP policy was reviewed, and the method for calculating the pre-2008 element of the charge was changed from charging 4% per annum on a reducing balance method to basing the charge on the asset life method. This means that the MRP will be charged in equal instalments over the life of the asset benefiting from the capital spend.

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This brings the policy for pre-2008 borrowing in line with the policy for post-2008 borrowing. The change was considered by the Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee in January and was agreed by Cabinet and the Council in February.

- 2.3. As a result of the change in policy the MRP charge for 2015/16 to make provision for the repayment if the Council's external debt and internal borrowing was £11.9 million less than the budget. As anticipated in the Medium Term Financial Strategy this sum has been added to the Budget Management Reserve with the intention that it will be used in 2017/18 to help protect services.

3. Treasury Management Outturn Position 2015/16 - Borrowing

- 3.1. The overall aims of the borrowing strategy are to achieve:
- Borrowing at the lowest rates possible in the most appropriate periods;
 - The minimum borrowing costs and expenses;
 - A reduction in the average interest rate of the debt portfolio.
- 3.2. The Medium Term Financial Strategy assumption was that no new long-term borrowing would be required, although this would be kept under review. This has been made possible by the current capital financing regime, whereby the Government now provides capital grants rather than supported borrowing, and prudent management of the capital programme.
- 3.3. Active treasury management and the maintenance of levels of liquidity aim to avoid the need for short term borrowing. Cash positions are monitored daily and modelled over a monthly horizon to ensure that anticipated liquidity levels are forecast accurately.
- 3.4. However, the identification of temporary shortfalls in available cash meant that short-term borrowing was required for brief periods during September and October. Four loans totalling £14.4m were undertaken from other local authorities, each for a 30 day period at an average rate of 0.30%. The total amounts borrowed were not required for the full term of each loan and we were able to invest the surplus funds at a higher rate resulting in a small net gain to the authority. No further short-term borrowing was required during 2015/16.
- 3.5. In accordance with the Medium Term Financial Strategy, no long term borrowing was undertaken during this financial year. Instead all borrowing required to fund capital expenditure was met from internal cash balances. This position will be kept under review, but the expectation remains that no new external borrowing will be required during the three year period.
- 3.6. No opportunities arose during the 2015/16 financial year to repay outstanding debt without incurring substantial premium penalties, which would negate any benefit of repaying the debt. The Public Works Loan Board (PWLb) sets premature repayment rates, and where the interest rate payable on a current loan is higher than the repayment rate, the PWLB policy imposes premium penalties for early repayment. With current low rates of interest these penalties would be of a significant cost. Therefore it will only make financial sense to repay debt early if the PWLB changes its current policy, or if interest rates rise and cancel out the repayment premiums.
- 3.7. At 31st March 2016 the level of long term debt stood at £507.85m as detailed in the table below.

Analysis of Long Term Debt

	Actual 31.03.15 £'m	Interest Rate %	Current 31.03.16 £'m	Interest Rate %
Fixed Rate Debt				
PWLB	436.35	4.99	436.35	4.99
Money Market	71.50	5.83	71.50	5.83
Variable Debt				
PWLB	0.00		0.00	
Money Market	0.00		0.00	
Total External Borrowing	507.85	5.11	507.85	5.11

- 3.8. The long term debt figure presented in the Statement of Accounts for 2015/16 is £511.386m (£3.54m greater than the figure stated above). This difference is due to an accounting standard adjustment which requires us to record the value of our long term debt at its Net Present Value in the Statement of Accounts. The LOBOs (Lender Option Borrower Option) have stepped interest rates and are revalued annually based on the effective interest rate for the duration of the loan. This revaluation has the effect of smoothing the stepping of the interest over the life of the loans.

4. Treasury Management Outturn Position 2015/16 - Investments

- 4.1. The overall aim of the Council's investment strategy is to:
- Limit the risk to the loss of capital;
 - Ensure that funds are always available to meet cash flow requirements;
 - Maximise investment returns, consistent with the first two aims;
 - Review new investment instruments as they come to the Local Authority market, and to assess whether they could be a useful part of our investment process.
- 4.2. The investment performance of the County Council's cash continues to be affected by the low interest rates introduced as part of the measures used to alleviate the global credit crunch. Interest rates have also been impacted by the introduction of banking regulations requiring banks to hold higher levels of liquidity to act as a buffer.
- 4.3. The rates on offer during 2015/16 and going forward into 2016/17 continue to be low and the returns on the County Council's cash investments are forecast to remain at the current low levels for the foreseeable future; however, the Treasury Management Strategy will continue to ensure a prudent and secure approach.
- 4.4. Revenue lending during 2015/16, including the use of term deposits, call accounts and property funds, earned interest of £1.139m against a full year budget of £0.950m. The interest figure quoted is the return from the Council's Treasury Management activity and is different from the figure presented in the Statement of Accounts which also includes interest generated from a number of other sources.
- 4.5. The interest earned equated to an investment return of 0.76% against a full year budget target return of 0.65%. This was achieved and interest income was higher than budgeted, partly due to higher levels of cash being invested than anticipated when the budget was set, and also the addition of the CCLA property fund to the approved list of counterparties.
- 4.6. All lending has been carried out in accordance with the Council's Treasury Management Strategy and with institutions on the list of approved counterparties.

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- 4.7. The following table shows the County Council's fixed and variable rate investments as at the start and close of the financial year:

Schedule of Investments

	Maturing in:	Actual 31.03.15 £'m	Interest Rate %	Current 31.03.16 £'m	Interest Rate %
Bank and Building Society Deposits					
Fixed Rates					
Term Deposits	< 365 days	50.00	0.84	73.80	0.60
	365 days & >	0.00		0.00	
Callable Deposits					
Variable Rate					
Call & Notice Accounts		80.76	0.59	45.00	0.84
Money Market Funds (MMFs)		0.00			
Property Fund		0.00		10.00	4.67
All Investments		130.76	0.69	128.80	1.00

- 4.8. The figure as at 31st March 2016 includes approximately £14.6m related to the Growing Places Fund (GPF). This figure was approximately £15.9m as at 31st March 2015. Devon County Council is the local accountable body for the GPF, which was established by the Department for Communities and Local Government to enable the development of local funds to address infrastructure constraints, promoting economic growth and the delivery of jobs and houses. The Council is working in partnership with the Local Economic Partnership, and interest achieved on the GPF funds, based on the average rate achieved by the Council's investments, will accrue to the GPF and not to the County Council.

5. Prudential Indicators

- 5.1. Linked to its Treasury Management Strategy, the County Council is required to monitor its overall level of debt in line with the CIPFA Code of Practice. Part of the code requires consideration of a set of Prudential Indicators in order to allow the Council to form a judgement about the affordable, prudent and sustainable level of debt.
- 5.2. The purpose of the indicators is to demonstrate that:
- Capital expenditure plans are affordable;
 - All external borrowing and other long term liabilities are within prudent and sustainable levels;
 - Treasury management decisions are taken in accordance with professional good practice.
- 5.3. Three Prudential Indicators control the overall level of borrowing. They are:
- **The authorised limit** - this represents the limit beyond which any additional borrowing is prohibited until the limit is revised by the County Council. Revision may occur during the year if there are substantial and unforeseen changes in circumstances, for example, a significant delay in achieving forecast capital receipts. In normal circumstances this limit will not require revision until the estimate for 2017/18 is revised as part of the 2017/18 budget setting process.
 - **The operational boundary** – this indicator is based on the probable external debt and other long term liabilities during the year. Variations in cash flow may lead to occasional, short term breaches of the Operational Boundary that are acceptable.
 - **The upper limit for net debt** - the Council needs to ensure that its gross debt does not, except in the short term, exceed the total of the Capital Financing Requirement.

5.4. During the Budget process, the following Borrowing Limits were set for 2015/16:

- Maximum borrowing during the period (Authorised Limit) £807.2m.
- Expected maximum borrowing during the year (Operational Boundary) £782.2m.
- Underlying Borrowing Requirement to Gross Debt - £133.4m under borrowing.
- Maximum amount of fixed interest exposure (as a percentage of total) 100%.
- Maximum amount of variable interest exposure (as a percentage of total) 30%.

5.5. Members are asked to note that during 2015/16 the Council remained within its set Borrowing Limits and complied with the interest rate exposure limits.

6. 2016/17 Update

- 6.1. The Medium Term Financial Strategy assumes that, over the three year period, no new long-term borrowing will be required. This is still envisaged to be the case, although this will be kept under review.
- 6.2. The PWLB policy of imposing premium penalties for the early repayment of long term debt means there is little potential to repay further debt during the current financial year.
- 6.3. Forecasting future interest rates is difficult as the factors affecting interest rate movements are outside of the Council's control. Whilst short term rates are generally linked to the Bank of England's Base Rate, long term rates are determined by other factors, e.g. the market in Gilts. The County Council retains an external advisor, Capita, who forecast future rates several years forward. Similar information is received from a number of other sources.
- 6.4. The general consensus among market commentators is that any future interest rate rises will be slow and gradual. Capita's view is that the Bank of England is likely to maintain the current 0.5% rate until December 2016 in order to continue to promote growth and employment.
- 6.5. The UK recovery since mid-2009 has been relatively slow by historical standards, but still faster than most other G7 economies over the period. The Government has maintained its tight fiscal policy stance but the more recent downturn in expectations for economic growth has made it more difficult to return the public sector net borrowing to a balanced annual position within the period of this parliament. This will impose some drag on the UK economy, but the private services sector should be strong enough to offset this in terms of GDP and jobs growth.
- 6.6. Consumer spending is likely to be the main driver of UK growth this year, helped by continued low energy and food prices. However, the risks to growth are weighted to the downside in the short term due to international risks, particularly in relation to emerging markets, as well as uncertainties relating to the EU referendum. But there are also upside possibilities if the global environment improves and productivity growth rates accelerate in the UK.
- 6.7. The global outlook remains mixed with a gradual pick-up in the US and the Eurozone, but a slowdown of growth in China, continued recessions in Russia and Brazil, and increased volatility in financial markets.
- 6.8. As a result of concerns about the Eurozone crisis, the Council have been cautious about using Santander, due to the bank's Spanish parent company, although they have continued to meet the criteria to remain on the counterparty list. The bank has a UK banking licence and is therefore assessed as being a UK bank and a separate entity from the Spanish parent company. During April Santander's credit rating was upgraded by Moody's from A1 to Aa3. This results from an analysis of the bank's balance sheet structure at the end of 2015 and its near term funding plan, which indicates that Santander UK's deposits are likely to face very low loss-given failure. Santander will now therefore be actively considered for term deposits, subject to them offering competitive rates.

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- 6.9. For 2016/17 it has been assumed that the interest rate earned on lending to banks and building societies will be 0.65% p.a. and the yield from investment in the CCLA Property Fund will be 4.5%. The rates offered by the majority of banks have not improved over the last year, but the targets we have set are thought to be achievable.

7. Summary

- 7.1. No long term borrowing was undertaken during 2015/16. Four short-term loans totalling £14.4m were undertaken from other local authorities, each for a 30 day period at an average rate of 0.30%. It is not envisaged that any new long term borrowing will be required over the next three year period but this will be reviewed annually.
- 7.2. No opportunities arose during the 2015/16 financial year to repay outstanding debt without incurring substantial premium penalties, which would negate the benefit of repaying the debt.
- 7.3. Investment income of £1.139m was achieved in 2015/16 against a full year budget of £0.950m. This represented a return of 0.76% against a full year budget target return of 0.65%. Successful prudent management of the Council's short term cash reserves has delivered a surplus of £0.189m for the 2015/16 financial year.
- 7.4. As a result of the change in policy the MRP charge for 2015/16 to make provision for the repayment if the Council's external debt and internal borrowing was £11.9 million less than the budget.

Mary Davis

Electoral Divisions: All

Local Government Act 1972

List of Background Papers - Nil

Contact for Enquiries: Mark Gayler / Dan Harris

Tel No: (01392) 383621 Room G97/G99

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

7 June 2016

Present:-

Group A: Christian and Other Religion and Belief Communities (with the exception of the Church of England)

Ms M Hext (Methodist rep) Mr K Denby (Humanist rep) , Ms J Taylorson (Buddhist rep), Ms H Hastie (Bahia'i rep), Mr R Halsey (Jewish rep), Mr B Lane (URC rep) and Mr R Nathwani (Hindu rep)

Group B: The Church of England

Mr M Dearden; Ms T Wilson and Ms P Hammett,

Group C: Teachers' Associations

Ms L Clay (NASUWT) ,Mr J Goody (ATL), Mr E Mihas (FE), Ms W Harrison (NUT) Ms S Shute (NATRE Sec) Ms G Winnall (NATRE Primary)

Group D: The County Council

Councillors P Colthorpe, A Hannan, M Squires and R Younger-Ross

Co-opted Members

Mr J Roberts

Advisor

Mr E Pawson

Apologies:-

Ms N Nation, C Walmsley, C Hulbert, T Pritchard, Cornish, Walshe, J Berry, C Channon, T Griffiths, G Langtree, J Marshall and G Teece

1 Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 10 February 2016 be signed as a correct record.

2 Matters of Urgency

There was no item raised as a matter of urgency.

3 Devon SACRE Membership

Mr Pawson welcomed new members to their first meeting Helena Hastie ((Baha'i Rep) and Mr Edgar Mihas (FE Rep) and reported on current vacancies and members discussed the representation of the Sikh and Buddhist faiths. In view of the lack of attendance by the Sikh representative at meetings Mr Pawson would make contact with Sikh community representatives about a proposed nomination of a recent convert who was active nationally but not involved locally and report to the next meeting. Ms Jude Taylorson was attending as an observer for the Buddhist Community and indicated her willingness to serve as a member for the time being pending any further nomination. Generally, attendance was positive and that Devon SACRE was active and working well.

RESOLVED that Ms Jude Taylorson be appointed as the Buddhist Representative.

4

Annual Report

The Council considered the draft SACRE Annual Report for 2014/15 which, when ratified, would be forwarded to the DfE and NASACRE. The report covered:

- the Devon Agreed Syllabus review process and assessment;
- GCSE examination results 2014 - an interpretation;
- school monitoring visits, Monitoring Ofsted inspections for RE and SMSC;
- SACRE Constitution review;
- SACRE membership;
- professional support for RE;
- Holocaust Memorial Day 2015;
- Interfaith Focus: Faith and Belief visitor training
- Interfaith conference on British values
- SACRE working groups and publications
- working with other agencies
- training and Continuing Professional Development; and
- Collective worship.

Salient points in the draft Annual Report included the following:

- GCSE Religious Studies exam entry trends across Devon Schools and academies from 2011 to 2015: there had been a drop of entry from 2014 to 2015 which required further consideration as to the reasons, attributable possibly by the declining number of specialist teachers and decline in the number of short course entries
- 2015 GCSE Religious Studies entries as percentage of the cohort 2015
- Religious Studies Full Course (which required further checks and analysis before final publication of the Report)
- concerns about: compliance time allocation or low examination entry/pass levels for Education: the quality of learning and study time for Religious Education which may have contributed to a reduction in examination results in the A* - C grades; those schools which were not offering students their statutory opportunity to study Religious Education at Key Stage 4; and the difficulty for schools in maintaining standards when the new, more challenging GCSEs were introduced; issues relating to the narrowness of the syllabus for GCSE RE confined to two religions; schools not offering GCSE but which would argue were compliant
- SACRE's intention to work with Ofsted to improve the teaching of RE.

The draft Report remained subject to comments by SACRE Members before ratification and submission.

RESOLVED that the draft Report be noted and any comments be submitted to Mr Pawson by Monday, 13 June 2016 for consideration.

5

Interfaith Focus: Faith and Belief Training, Interfaith Conference

Mr Roberts reported on Faith and Belief training workshops organised by the Devon Faith Belief Forum with SACRE, in collaboration with the Devon Faith Belief Forum at the Exeter Community Centre, designed to help build people's communication skills amongst Devon's diverse faith and belief communities. There was a plan to create a database of names of potential visitors for teachers as a useful resource for schools and community organisations. Ms Taylorson commented on this example of effective interfaith and community work.

Mr Pawson indicated that a Directory of Visitors was being compiled for Schools which would be available on the Devon Belief and Faith Forum website.

Mr Denby also reported on the BHA accredited courses available from this Autumn.

Mr Pawson explained that planning was underway for a conference in Interfaith Week, 2016, with the theme 'Not in God's Name' as part of the PREVENT Agenda. Ms Spence referred to the success of last year's conference and requested that School Governors should also be invited.

6 Learn/Teach/Lead Religious Education (LTLRE)

Mr Pawson reported on SACRE's annual conference arranged for 20th/21 October 2016 at St Mellion, Cornwall for teachers and others, details of which would be publicised shortly.

Ms Wilson, the Project Lead, reported on work taking place with Schools through the local hubs on implementation of assessments without levels following SACRE's commitment to support and contribute to LTRE's project (rather than develop its own scheme) which was achieving national recognition. Mr Denby also referred on the BHA on-line resource for teachers: <https://humanism.org.uk/education/teachers/>

7 Working Group: Assessment Project

Mr Roberts reported on:

- the importance of financial support available from SACRE for the project involving 15 people with the LTL RE programme and support from Dr Barbara Winterskill (ex-HMI)
- the need to engage RE teachers in the training programme outside of their teaching commitments
- the complex governance arrangements in schools and the different practices of schools in their assessment of RE teaching and learning
- materials being developed for use by schools and the work of the Diocese in this respect relating to the syllabus and exemplars of good practice
- teaching and assessment issues throughout the 4 Key Stages (including the loss of a clear syllabus and assessment framework for KS 3) and the lack of guidelines particularly for KS 1 teaching, the need for further dialogue and the importance of sharing good practice
- the difficulties involved from pupil transition from primary to secondary
- the lack of government guidance and the need for a flexible approach and to avoid a prescriptive formula, bearing in mind the rapidly changing school environment.

The Chair thanked Mr Roberts for his update and noted that this remained a work-in progress for the SACRE Working Group.

8 The Place of Non-Religious Worldviews in the RE Curriculum

The Council received a paper by Dr Satvinder Juss on a ruling by the High Court in November 2015 entitled 'Legal guidance on what it means for local authorities, academies, schools, teachers Agreed Syllabus Conferences, and SACREs'. The guidance said that The High Court had ruled that the Department for Education had made 'an error of law' in its specification of content for the new GCSE Religious Studies (RS) for English schools. The error was in asserting that teaching the new RS GCSE would meet the legal requirements for the provision of Religious Education (RE) in general. The High Court said this assertion was unlawful because statutory RE in schools without a religious character must be 'objective, critical and pluralistic' and a syllabus that covered religions in detail but did not give pupils the opportunity to learn similarly about a nonreligious worldview such as Humanism would not meet this requirement.

A second paper by the Chair of NASACRE and Chair of AREIAC was circulated questioning the guidance and assertions that to include minority religions and exclude Humanism would *almost* be unlawful; and to require syllabuses to study Humanism if a minority religion was not studied. The legislation they suggest was clear that RE syllabuses must reflect the fact the religions must be studied were in the main Christianity and the principal religions represented in Great Britain and these were to be determined by each Agreed Syllabus Conference.

Mr Denby in introducing the Guidance paper and surrounding issues asked that SACRE provide further written guidance to Schools stating that the new Devon Syllabus for RE (agreed with Torbay and Plymouth SACREs) met current legal requirements with its element of Non-Religious Worldviews. Other members indicated that it was not necessary to write directly to schools specifically on any one aspect of the Agreed Syllabus as it currently did provide for learning about Non-Religious World Views (and supported by resources available from the BHA).

RESOLVED that in the SACRE News-Letter to schools (and other partners) reference be made to issues highlighted by the High Court Judgement and indicating that in this SACRE's view the Agreed Devon Syllabus for RE does meet current legal requirements.

9 **Understanding Christianity**

Mr Pawson and Ms Wilson reported on new learning resources available for teachers produced by Paul Coulter available on the website: <http://www.understandingchristianity.org/>

Mrs Wilson reported on a paper, circulated at the meeting, covering a set of material and training resources to enable pupils from 4 to 14 to develop an understanding of Christianity and the identified 8 core concepts and details of each unit of 'core learning' and their aims and outcomes.

10 **Educational Excellence Everywhere: the Implications of the Government Plans for Academies and the Future of SACREs**

This item was deferred to the next meeting pending publication of the White Paper.

11 **Educating Ourselves**

The Council received a presentation from Gerry Winnall on her article published in RE Today entitled 'Wandering and wondering' on her initiative in an urban Exeter School allowing her class of 5-6 year olds, after registration, a short time for outside reflection and sanctuary by 'wandering and wondering' and appreciating the flora and fauna (in an urban setting). Members commended the initiative and approach and the benefits for the children and their teacher at the start of a busy school day.

In line with such an initiative Councillor Younger-Ross reported on grants available from the Groundwork Trust (Tesco Bags of Help scheme) for Community groups which could be used for Schools to create peaceful and external quiet green sanctuaries for children and staff. Further details available:

<http://www.groundwork.org.uk/News/groundwork-to-administer>

12 **National Developments**

This item covering the following was deferred to the next meeting:

- Religious Education Council
- REC Commission: teacher recruitment, PR Group, All-Party
- Parliamentary Group (APPG), RE Quality Mark
- National Association of Teachers of Religious Education (NATRE)
- New Examination Specifications, Teacher Surveys

13 Holocaust Memorial Day 2017

Mr Pawson reported that, following the success this year, planning for 2017 was underway and details would be reported to the next meeting.

14 Remembering John Hull

Mr Pawson referred to the death of John Hull in July 2015 aged 80, a distinguished and inspirational academic and teacher of Religious Education both nationally and internationally.

15 SW SACRE Conference (Monday, 7 March)

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

16 Dates of Future SACRE Meetings

RSOLVED that future meeting be held on Tuesday, 1 November; Wednesday, 8 February 2017; and Wednesday, 7 June at 10.00 am at County Hall, Exeter

The Meeting started at 10.00 am and finished at 12.40 pm

DEVON EDUCATION FORUM

22 JUNE 2016

Present:-

Schools & Academies Members

Primary School Head teachers

Mr A Dobson	Marwood Primary
Mr J Stone	Denbury Primary
Mr P Walker	Sidmouth CE Primary

Primary School Governors

Mrs A Blewett	Kings Nympton Primary
Mr M Dobbins	Exmouth Marpool Primary
Ms M Wallis	Whimple School
Mr A Walmsley	First Federation (<i>Academy Member</i>)

Secondary School Head teachers

Mr D Chapman	The Dartmoor Federation
Mr R Haring	Ivybridge CC
Mrs J Phelan	Cullompton CC (<i>Substitute Member</i>)

Secondary School Governors

Mr I Courtney	The Dartmoor Federation (Chairman)
Ms J Elson	Exmouth CC (<i>Academy Member</i>)
Mr M Juby	Braunton Academy

Nursery School

Mrs S Baker	Westexe
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Special School HeadTeacher

Ms C May	Pathfield School
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Special School Governor

Mrs F Butler	Marland School
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Alternative Provision

-

Non-Schools Members

Ms B Alderson	Teachers Consultative Committee
Ms G Rolstone	Early Years Private, Voluntary & Independent Providers
Mrs T de Bernhardt Dunkin	16-19 West England School & College

Observers

Councillor James McInnes	Cabinet Member – Children, Schools and Skills
Mrs A Mayes	Standards Committee Monitoring
Mrs R Saltmarsh	Standards Committee Monitoring

Apologies

Mr J Bishop	Broadclyst Primary School (<i>Academy Member</i>)
Mr P Mantell	Exeter Diocesan Board of Education
Mr M Shanks	Coombeshead CC (<i>Academy Member</i>)

1 Minutes

DECISION:

that the minutes of the meeting held on 16 March 2016 be signed as a correct record.

2 Matters Arising from the Last Meeting and Report back on Issues Raised with Cabinet

The Cabinet Member - Children, Schools & Skills reported on continued lobbying for LA funding on the government white paper on school organisation and on academisation.

3 Membership

DISCUSSION:

The following membership changes were noted:-

Resignation of Mrs Paulette Furnival - DAG Primary maintained
Election of Mr Alex Walmsley - DAG Primary academy (new position, see minute 9(b))
Schools Member (maintained) secondary school governor - new vacancy

Election of Mrs Bronwyn Cashere - Special School Headteacher wef 1 September 2016
Election of Mrs Cherie White - Special School Headteacher substitute member wef 1 September 2016

Election of Mrs Maggie Carter - Special School Governor substitute member.

Appointment of Mr Wilson Forster - Early Years Private, Voluntary and Independent substitute member.

DECISION:

that Mrs Paulette Furnival be thanked for her service to the Forum.

ACTION:

County Solicitor (Fiona Rutley)

4 Head of Education & Learning Update

DISCUSSION:

The Head of Education & Learning reported (summary tabled) on:-

(a) Persistent Absenteeism

This covered School data on 600 pupils on a part-time timetable /pupil with 30+sessions of absence during the Spring Term 2016 (breakdown by phase, SEN, pupil premium, gender, completion of part time timetable, reasons for absence(significant number of anxiety/other mental health/psychological issues)).

Discussion and points raised included:-

- The attention of schools and governors would be drawn to recent statutory guidance duty on governing bodies to support young people with physical and mental health medical conditions and recent advice on mental health and behaviour in schools
- Long gap in attendance and coming to the attention of the LA where medical needs were not being supported
- Timely and early solutions required including part time timetables, on line learning
- Importance of linking professionals early on to stop the downward cycle and increased absenteeism
- Schools becoming overwhelmed with the sheer numbers of young people affected and assistance sought from Devon Partnership Trust
- DASH concerns around GPs/CAMHS raising expectations of young people on what schools could provide, as well as the increasing number of vulnerable children receiving Elective Home Education (EHE)
- 42% rise in young people receiving EHE, safeguarding around EHE. Special Educational Needs families in EHE due to time lag waiting for services
- very positive Early Help 4 Mental Health support and training in primary schools, but concern at the suspension of parental support (further data requested eg to measure interventions success)
- year 6 absenteeism increase
- Bideford learning community early help resilience programme (vulnerable pupils and anxiety)
- lack of help for young people over summer school holidays
- significant pressure on high needs block funding.

DECISION:

that a further report be made to this Forum on Elective Home Education (EHE)

ACTION:

Head of Education & Learning (Sue Clarke)

(b) Education & Learning Performance (Quarter 4 - 2015/16)

This covered Attainment and Attainment Gaps, Closing the Gap, Inclusion, Ofsted Outcomes and Overall Performance.

Discussion and points raised included:-

- Gap closed significantly in Keystages 2 and 4
- Significant improvement of take up of early years funding for 2 year olds
- Significant improvement in closing the gap for children in need and looked after children
- Ofsted baseline data measure for Children in Care and national benchmarking database
- Significant improvement in Keystage 5
- 94.7%/ 97.7% primary/secondary first preferences met and 98.6%/99.6% respectively one of preferences met in normal schools admissions round outperforming nationally as well as a high number of in year admissions
- Special Educational Need & Disabilities (SEND)moving SEN statements to EHCPs needed better shared assessment and a multi agency approach to shorten timeframes in collecting information back from agencies and providers as some statutory timeframes not being met
- Devon was a top LA for tracking attendance/persistent absenteeism with year 11 increase due to legal action now being taken up to April/May
- Ofsted outcomes overall % of primary, secondary and special schools judged good or outstanding increased (to 90%) over last five quarters and consistently better than nationally.
- Overall performance showed Devon LA had almost reached the top 10% LAs nationally.

DECISION:

(i) that Sue Clarke, Head of Education & Learning on her retirement, formally thanks all staff in Devon schools for their support and their continued work for young people in Devon.

(ii) that the Forum formally acknowledge Sue's work over her career in Devon and in the last five years as Head of Education & Learning.

ACTION: -

5 Finance Update

DISCUSSION:

The Forum considered the report of the Head of Education & Learning and County Treasurer (DEF/16/04). There was a correction to the last paragraph of paragraph 1.1, schools carry forward balances, comparing with £20.9m (instead of £20.4m), a net increase of £2.8m (instead of £2.3m).

The Forum also noted the respective minutes of the Schools Finance Group (SFG) of 11 May 2016.

The report (DEF/16/04) covered:-

- DSG (Dedicated Schools Grant) and Schools Funding Outturn 2015/16
- Allocation of carry forward from 2015/16 and
- Mutual Fund Update.

In relation to members' comments:-

- the DASH underspend of £157,000 was planned for leadership and induction programmes;
- it was noted that there was ongoing work relating to how future funding may be used to address the pressures on the high needs block.

DECISION:

(a) that the DSG 2015/16 outturn position (subject to Statement of Accounts sign off) be noted;

(b) that the allocation of the carried forward under spend from 2015/16 as set out in section 2, table 5 of report DEF/16/04 be approved as follows:-

Budget Line	Amount £'000	Notes	Decision*
Mainstream School balances	21,248	Automatically carried forward in Individual School budgets	2.2 noted
Total School balances	21,248		
De-delegated budgets	1,012	Roll forward 2015/16 underspend into 2016/17	2.3 noted
Total de-delegated budgets	1,012		
Growth Fund	2,188	Planned strategy to build sufficient revenue budget to cover start up and diseconomy costs of new and expanding schools.	2.4 approved
Local Learning Communities	35	Some residual costs and issues re new fund codes/collaborative working set up.	2.5 approved
Emotional, Psychological	25	Academic year funding for	2.6 All to note

and Social Wellbeing		Schools Mental Health coordinator	(Historic commitment)
Phase Associations	252	Roll forward 2015/16 underspend into 2016/17. DAPH (£83k); DASH (£157k) & SHAD (£12k)	2.7 approved
Total centrally retained budgets	2,500		
Special School Balances	1,897	These are school's balances and are automatically carried forward	2.8 noted
Alternative Provision	48	Additional payment required if medical placements remain high in 16/17 and increase in Top up rate	2.9 noted
Money Following Excluded Pupils	420	Funding to be carry forward for new initiatives for retaining pupils in mainstream education and to avoid exclusions. Introduction of White paper and uncertainty of funding in the future and exclusions still remaining LA responsibility	2.10 noted
Early Help	238	Phased spend of the Early Help budget. £7k other minor variations	2.11 noted
Hospital Education	24	Specialised training for hospital staff and additional support in North Devon	2.12 noted
Atkinson Unit	58	Schools Admin Assistant and agreed funding for JE temporary 2 year contract	2.13 noted
Primary Support Partnerships	300	Expenditure takes place over an academic year.	2.14 noted
Nursery Plus	15	Not all schools had claimed for the Summer, Autumn or Spring Term expenses.	2.15 noted
Total High Needs	3,000		
Delay in implementation of reduction in 2 year old provider hourly rate	70	Carry forward requested originally related to a two year plan. The £70k will be required for fund the 2 nd year of protection.	2.16 approved
Free School Meals	6	Low take up of FSM's. £6k carry forward required for Spring term funding	2.17 approved
Growth funding for MNU's on new school sites	230	Growth plan spans financial years. Only 1 new school in 15/16, therefore carry forward required.	2.18 approved
Early Years Pupil Premium	50	15/16 Ring fenced grant – DfE have confirmed can be spent in 16/17	2.19 approved
Total Early Years	356		
Total Carry forward requested	28,116		

***(Vote: all phases maintained and academy, PVI on the above).**

(c) that it be noted that SFG would consider responses to any LA proposal regarding unallocated carry forward (£1.010m) and refer recommendations to this Forum;

(d) that the year-end Mutual Fund position as set out in section 3 of the report be noted.

ACTION:

County Treasurer (Julian Dinnicombe) and (c) Head of Education & Learning (Heidi Watson-Jones)

6 Financial Intervention Panel (Schools), FIPS - Annual Report 2015/16

DISCUSSION:

The Forum received the report of the Head of Education & Learning and County Treasurer (DEF/16/06). FIPS was an officer group scrutinising budgets and recovery plans of schools at financial risk at an early stage, also considering requests and signposting schools to support strategies for long term financial viability planning. The report also contained an analysis of submissions and outcomes for 2015/16.

With a challenging fiscal environment and the prospect of the National Funding Formula, significant changes to the way in which schools were funded and a cash flat DSG settlement, the role of FIPS had become much more proactive.

7 Step Change Young Carers

DISCUSSION:

The Forum considered the report of the Head of Social Care Commissioning (DEF/16/05) regarding new rights under The Children and Families Act for care and support for Young Carers under the age of 18 and LA duties to assess and identify young carers and their support needs.

The most recent census showed around 4,700 carers aged 0-24 in Devon (2,628 of which were aged 0-18. This figure was likely to be a significant under estimate with further work to identify the full numbers .

Devon was one of six trailblazers across the country for the Step Change Project ,ending March 2016 with a report due to be published in July 2016. A main recommendation for Devon was to improve joint working between adult and children's services to better identify and support young carers whose cared for had a learning disability, mental health issue, substance misuse issue or were physically unwell.

The report also detailed work with schools and colleges including Devon Carers as part of a national pilot in relation to Young Carers in schools awards.

DECISION:

that the Head's Liaison Group be requested to consider representation from DASH, DAPH, DAG and SHAD or other educational provision on the Young Carers Partnership Steering Group .

ACTION:

Head of Education & Learning (Heidi Watson-Jones)

8 Early Help 4 Mental Health (EH4MH)

DISCUSSION:

The Forum received the Newsletter (April 2016) from the Director of Public Health on the first six months of the EH4MH initiative; School Support & training; Direct support to young

people through Young Devon and Xenzone (via KOOTH.com) on-line counselling and support) and Parenting Support. The impact so far had been good, although parenting support had been suspended due to Public Health grant reduction but Children's Centres continued to deliver a range of evidence-based parenting programmes.

It was noted that schools and children centres were encouraged to work with their local partnership steering group (rather than Local Learning Community) .

ACTION: Director of Public Health (Virginia Pearson)

9

Standing (and other) Groups

(a) The Forum received the following minutes of its standing groups:-

(i) School Finance Group (SFG)

Minutes of the meeting held on 11 May 2016 (considered under Finance Update minute 5 above).

(ii) Schools Organisation, Capital and Admissions (SOCA)

(replacing Schools Organisation and Policy Forum and the Local Admissions Forum)

DISCUSSION:

Devon had reviewed its charging for conversion costs in line with other LAs. Actual costs were in the region of £12,00-15,000 per conversion, estimating on current projections a total of £3.9m - £5m which the LA did not have the funding for.

The Forum was also mindful of its minute 697(b), 25 June 2014:-
that costs relating to asset transfer for LA maintained schools transferring to Academy status after 1 April be met by the individual school on the basis that the costs can be met from start-up support grant provided by the Education Funding Agency to the convertor school specifically to help with costs of converting;

DECISION:

that the LA's intention to request a contribution of up to £8,000 from all schools converting to academy status to support LA costs, from funds released to their academy conversion be noted.

(b) DEF Proportionality

DECISION:

that the amendment to the DAG composition on the Forum to 3 maintained primary governors and 1 primary academy representative* (instead of 4 maintained primary governors) to reflect primary academy pupil numbers be noted.

**academy representation not necessarily restricted to principals, senior staff or governors (EFA Code)*

ACTION:

County Solicitor (Fiona Rutley)

10 Post 16 Education & Skills Draft Vision for DCC 2016-2020

DISCUSSION:

The Forum considered the report of the Head of Education & Learning (DEF/16/07) Post 16 Education and Skills draft vision, that DCC wanted to ensure with all its key partners in education, further education, higher education, employers and businesses that every school leaver was given the maximum opportunity to achieve their fullest potential in work and employment. Post 16 Employability and Skills had resurfaced as a national and local priority. The report set out DCC's six point action plan.

Discussion and points raised included:-

- LA duty to promote participation and tracking NEETs (Not in Education, Employment & Training) to support young people
- DCC's unique position linking all providers and the holder of young people's data
- Vulnerable NEET young people currently included 96 young mothers and 140 young people with learning disabilities out of 1002 (approx. 2000 pa but large proportion NEET for a part year only)
- single accountable body to be established with three work streams (qualifications, employment & training and community living & learning (voluntary sector)
- Local Enterprise Partnerships and devolution plans lack of emphasis on post 16
- vulnerable young people tended to prefer small sixth form provision
- financial constraints and sustainability of school 6th forms due to national funding change
- 6th form provision was affecting some parental year 7 secondary transfer preferences
- support required for small business apprenticeships
- there was not a shortage of apprenticeship vacancies but high calibre vacancies were not easy to fill
- work plan smart approach
- sector by sector approach in compiling vision document.

DECISION:

that a further report be brought to this Forum on apprenticeship levy and funding and the impact on schools.

ACTION:

Head of Education & Learning (John Peart/Kristine Norton)

11 Correspondence

-

12 Dates of Future Meetings

Wed 19 October 2016
Monday 16 January 2017
Wed 15 March 2017.

13 Mr Ian Courtney MBE, Chairman

DISCUSSION:

Mr Ian Courtney MBE, Chairman was attending his last meeting of the Forum.

DECISION:

that Mr Ian Courtney MBE be formally thanked on behalf of the Forum and Devon County Council for all his work as Chairman over recent years and for his support given through the Devon Association of Governors and National Governors Association.

ACTION:

County Solicitor (Fiona Rutley)

The Meeting started at 10.00 am and finished at 11.50 am

The Schools Forum web is www.devon.gov.uk/schoolsforum

