



SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL Cabinet Report

Report of: Jayne Ludlam, Executive Director, Children, Young People and Families

Date: 19 June 2013

Subject: Home to School Transport Policy

Author of Report: John Bigley, Manager, Admissions & Access

Summary: This report provides a summary of the responses to the consultation process on the proposal to discontinue the discretionary free bus passes that are currently provided under the current Home to School Transport Policy for attendance at Catholic schools with effect from September 2013 and seeks approval on the preferred Option.

In the second consultation the Council consulted on three options numbered below

- Option 1** Withdraw all discretionary free bus passes for travel to denominational schools under the discretionary scheme from September 2013.
- Option 2** Withdraw the current provision for funding discretionary transport on a phased basis starting with entry to Reception and Year 7 in September 2013 and each subsequent year. Under this option, pupils currently receiving a pass under discretionary criteria would continue to receive it until they finish at their current school.
- Option 3.** Withdraw all discretionary free bus passes for travel to denominational schools under the discretionary scheme from September 2013 and offer the phased arrangements described below to assist families with the cost of travel for children in Years 10 and 11 during 2013/14 and Year 11 in 2014/15. These arrangements are intended to help families that would experience difficulties with the affordability of travel to school if all free bus passes were to be discontinued. This is a **new** option and further details are given at 4.6 below.

Outcome of Consultation

On careful consideration of the responses in the second consultation a further option is now being put before cabinet at Option 4 below

Option 4 Withdraw all discretionary free bus passes to denominational schools from September 2013 except for those pupils in Years 10 and 11 during 2013/14 and Year 11 in 2014/15 who meet the existing discretionary criteria namely attendance at a denominational school, adherence to a specific denomination and meeting the statutory distance criteria (see 4.2 below).

The key difference between Options 3 and 4 is that pupils do not need to satisfy the financial eligibility criteria to qualify for a free bus pass under Option 4.

Reasons for Recommendation

As a result of unprecedented Government cut-backs, the Council is facing extreme pressures on increasingly limited budgets. Over the past two years the Council has received heavy cuts to its funding from Government, and has had to find savings of around £140 million. Over the last two years the Council has found these savings whilst avoiding significant impact on visible frontline services.

This year the Council had to find a further £50 million of savings, with more cuts in the following years. Efficiency savings will not be sufficient and the Council consequently has to reduce the budgets of many frontline services.

Within these constraints, the Council's approach is to protect where possible those services provided for the most vulnerable people in our community and to examine where they spend on discretionary provision.

The Council's funding of discretionary free bus passes for travel to denominational schools under the Home to School Transport policy must therefore be reviewed in the light of the need to reduce expenditure and balanced against the Council's responsibilities to maintain vital services for the most disadvantaged. Other Councils have taken similar action to discontinue their discretionary policies in the face of such budgetary pressures.

The addition of Option 3 in the current consultation clearly signalled the Council's intention to mitigate against the loss of a bus pass for those most prejudicially affected, namely those on lower incomes and those entering Years 10 and 11. Having listened carefully to the feedback from the consultation, the recommendation to Cabinet is to approve Option 4 (set out at 11.5 below).

This recommendation acknowledges the feedback from the consultation which showed strong support for Option 2 (83%) which was a phasing of withdrawal of the discretionary free bus passes. The proposal below is a phased approach as well as being an expansion of the original Option 3. It also acknowledges that

the majority of respondents (95%) thought that a transfer to another school would be disruptive and have a negative impact on educational outcomes. This proposal eliminates the need for any student entering Years 10 and 11 in 2013/14 and Year 11 in 2014/15 to have to transfer to another school as a result of losing the bus pass.

The recommendation is made even though it represents a higher cost than Option 3 and reduced savings (see 11.7)

Recommendations

Cabinet is requested to:

Approve the phased withdrawal of discretionary free bus passes for travel to denominational schools under the discretionary scheme from September 2013 in line with Option 4 which is:

To withdraw all discretionary free bus passes to denominational schools from September 2013 except for those pupils in Years 10 and 11 during 2013/14 and Year 11 in 2014/15 who meet the existing discretionary criteria namely attendance at a denominational school , adherence to a specific denomination and meeting the statutory distance criteria.

Background Papers: Consultation Document

Category of Report: OPEN

If Closed add – ‘Not for publication because it contains exempt information under Paragraph... of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).’

* Delete as appropriate

Statutory and Council Policy Checklist

Financial Implications
YES Cleared by Laura Pattman
Legal Implications
YES Cleared by Leigh Hall
Equality of Opportunity Implications
YES Cleared by Bashir Khan
Tackling Health Inequalities Implications
NO
Human rights Implications
NO
Environmental and Sustainability implications
NO
Economic impact
NO
Community safety implications
NO
Human resources implications
NO
Property implications
NO
Area(s) affected
ALL
Relevant Cabinet Portfolio Leader
Cllr. Jackie Drayton
Relevant Scrutiny Committee if decision called in
Children, Young People and Families
Is the item a matter which is reserved for approval by the City Council?
NO
Press release
YES

Children & Young People Cabinet Member Portfolio

REPORT TITLE HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT POLICY

1.0 Background

- 1.1 On 12 December 2012, Cabinet decided, following a consultation with all those affected, to discontinue all discretionary free bus passes for pupils to attend faith schools from September 2013. A number of respondents stated that the consultation period preceding the December decision was too short and that there was not enough time to respond properly. The Council carefully considered this feedback and as a result, the proposed changes to the provision of discretionary free bus passes for pupils to travel to and from faith schools are being considered afresh following a second consultation exercise.. This report provides details of the second consultation.
- 1.2 The proposal to amend the Home to School Policy to discontinue the provision of discretionary free bus passes for travel to faith schools is in response to the urgent requirement to reduce expenditure in light of the budget settlement from the coalition Government for the 2013/14 financial year and beyond.
- 1.3 If implemented it is anticipated that the proposal to discontinue discretionary transport with effect from September 2013/14 would save the Council expenditure of approximately £250K to £300K each year (depending on the number of students that would be eligible for a pass).
- 1.4 Sheffield City Council's Home to School Transport Policy sets out the circumstances in which it will provide free transport, in the form of a bus pass, to assist pupils to get to school. Under the current budgetary pressures and in order to ensure efficiency and equity in its use of resources, the Council has decided that it would like to consider making changes to the discretionary part of the policy to be brought in for the 2013/14 school year starting in September 2013.
- 1.5 The Council has consulted on three options, details of which are provided at paragraph 4.5.
- 1.6 Many other Authorities have or will be discontinuing the provision of discretionary free bus passes for attendance at denominational schools for the same reasons. This includes the other South Yorkshire Authorities - Barnsley, Doncaster and Rotherham.
- 1.7 Families who meet "Low Income" criteria have a statutory entitlement to free transport if they wish to attend a school on grounds of religion or belief that is between 2 and 15 miles from their home address. This entitlement is unaffected by this proposal. Further, as explained below, those children with special educational needs who have a statutory

entitlement to free school transport will not be affected by these proposals.

2.0 What does this mean for Sheffield people?

2.1 This proposed amendment does not impact on a parent's right to apply for their child to attend a faith school. Any such application will be considered under the individual school's admission policy. If adopted, the proposal will mean that the majority of children attending faith schools beyond the statutory walking distance will no longer be provided with free transport to and from school.

3.0 Outcome and sustainability

3.1 At a time when the Council has to make significant cuts to the services it provides, including to the most vulnerable in our community, the Local Authority is having to examine any discretionary funding they spend to ensure they can continue to provide their statutory duties. This change of policy will enable the Council to protect other services to the most vulnerable in our community.

4.0 Main report

4.1 The legislation which places a duty on the Council to provide free home to school transport is contained principally in the Education Act 1996 as amended by later legislation including the Education Act 2002 and the Education and Inspections Act 2006. Local authorities have a duty to provide free home to school transport for eligible children of compulsory school age living in the local authority's area. The law provides an extensive definition of what is deemed to be an "eligible" child.

4.2 Section 508B of the 1996 Act sets out the duty to provide free travel arrangements for 'eligible children' to 'qualifying schools'. The Authority will continue to make arrangements for free transport where there is a statutory duty to do so. Statutory criteria are:

- Children with special educational needs who have a disability or mobility problem.
- Children who live within the statutory walking distance to school, but there is no suitable available route.

The statutory walking distances are:

- (a) for a child under the age of 8 years - 2 miles;
- (b) for a child aged 8 years and over - 3 miles.

- Children who live outside the statutory walking distances and no suitable school place is available nearer to their home.
- Children entitled to free school meals, or whose parents are in

receipt of their maximum level of Working Tax Credit.

- 4.3 In addition to its legal duties outlined above, section 508C of the 1996 Act allows Local Authorities to choose to provide free transport for a wider range of pupils. In considering whether or not to do so, section 9 of the 1996 Act requires Local Authorities to take into consideration, among other factors, the general principle that pupils are to be educated in accordance with the wishes of their parents, so far as that is compatible with the provision of efficient instruction and training and the avoidance of unreasonable public expenditure. Section 509AD of the 1996 Act requires local authorities to “have regard”, among other things, to the wish of the parent for their child to attend a school on the grounds of the parent’s religion or belief. Sheffield Local Authority has previously chosen to support families with travel to denominational schools, but there is no general statutory duty requiring local authorities to provide free transport to such schools. It is therefore open to the Council to consider whether such provision should be discontinued.

New guidance on “Home to School Travel and Transport” was issued by the Department for Education in March 2013. It states that:

*“Local authorities shall have regard to the general principle that pupils are to be educated in accordance with their parents’ wishes, so far as that is compatible with the provision of efficient instruction and training and the avoidance of unreasonable expenditure. **However, there is no general statutory duty requiring local authorities to provide free transport to faith schools.**”*

- 4.4 The total number currently receiving passes at All Saints is 369, This represents 39% of the Y7-Y11 population. At Notre Dame the total number receiving passes is 622. This represents 61% of the Y7 – Y11 population. A total of 43 passes are currently issued for primary school pupils.

4.5 **Options that the Council Consulted Upon**

The Council consulted on three options:

Option 1 Withdraw all discretionary free bus passes for travel to denominational schools under the discretionary scheme from September 2013.

Option 2 Withdraw the current provision for funding discretionary transport on a phased basis starting with entry to Reception and Year 7 in September 2013 and each subsequent year. Under this option, pupils currently receiving a pass under discretionary criteria would continue to receive it until they finish at their current school.

Option 3. Withdraw all discretionary free bus passes for travel to denominational schools under the discretionary scheme from September 2013 and offer the phased arrangements described below to assist families with the cost of travel for children in Years 10 and 11 during 2013/14 and Year 11 in 2014/15. These arrangements are intended to help families that would experience difficulties with the affordability of travel to school if all free bus passes were to be discontinued. This is a **new** option and further details are given below.

4.6 **Phased arrangements for Pupils in Years 10 and 11 (Option 3)**

In response to the feedback that was received in the first consultation, a new option has been put forward which is to change the current policy so that it provides a wider level of protection for families on low incomes where their children are in Years 10 and 11 in the next two years. The proposal is to offer a discretionary free bus pass for pupils in Years 10 and 11 where all the following criteria are met and for the interim period specified below:

1. The family has a child or children in Y10 or Y11;
2. The pupil is in receipt of a free pass under the current discretionary policy arrangements but would lose it if the Council's proposals were implemented;
3. The family is in receipt of working tax credit below the maximum rate (if a family is in receipt of the maximum rate they are entitled to a free bus pass under the statutory criteria).

These arrangements would be for an **interim period** only. They would apply to pupils starting Years 10 and 11 from September 2013 for the 2013/14 academic year and those in Year 11 from September 2014 for the 2014/15 academic year. The arrangements would then cease.

4.7 **Home to School Transport Review/Appeals Process**

Parents who wish to challenge a decision about the transport arrangements offered to their child, including questions of their child's eligibility for travel support, will be entitled to seek a review of and, if necessary, an appeal to an independent appeal panel against the decision.

The current appeals procedure has been revised in accordance with the Department of Education's March 2013 Guidance on home to school travel and transport. Details of the new review/appeals procedure are attached as **Appendix 10**.

5.0 The Consultation Process

- 5.1 The consultation period ran initially from 25 March to 21 May. It was extended to 24 May to give further opportunity for comment upon the alleged historic agreement on funded transport to Catholic schools (see 6.4 below).

The consultation was targeted at parents, carers, young people and other stakeholders who might be directly affected by any change to the current policy. The people that were invited to respond to the consultation were parents and carers of all pupils attending Years 7 to 10 at All Saints and Notre Dame High Schools and parents of all Year 5 and Year 6 pupils attending Voluntary Aided Primary Schools. Parents of any Rec-Y4 pupils currently in receipt of a discretionary free pass. In addition to parents and carers the following were also consulted:

- All Secondary and Primary Headteachers and Chairs of Governors
- Young people
- Sheffield College
- Longley Park
- Sheffield Hallam Diocese
- Diocese of Sheffield
- South Yorkshire Transport Executive
- SACRE
- All Councillors
- All local Members of Parliament
- Parishes and Bishops

This group was considered to include those who are either directly affected by the proposal, key stakeholders or those who would have an interest in the outcome.

All of those consulted were invited to respond to the consultation document either in writing or by completing a questionnaire. The Council sent approximately 3000 consultation documents to all parents with children attending All Saints or Notre Dame (current Year 7 to Year 10) parents of all children currently in Years 5 and 6 at all Voluntary Aided (Faith Primary Schools) and Parents of any Rec-Y4 pupils currently in receipt of a discretionary free pass

The consultation document and an on-line questionnaire were also available on the Council website.

- 5.2 The Council was extremely keen to offer individual parents and children the opportunity to discuss their own circumstances in private. To facilitate that there were three drop in surgeries for parents and carers to discuss their situation confidentially. They were arranged as follows:

Surgery 1	Tuesday 30 April, 5.30-7.00 PM, The Artspace, Crystal Peaks Library, 1-3 Peak Square, Sheffield. S20 7PH
	One family attended to discuss their individual circumstances confidentially.
Surgery 2	Wednesday 8 May, 6.00-8.00 PM, Town Hall Reception Room, Town Hall, Pinstone Street, S1 2HH
	One family attended to discuss their individual circumstances confidentially.
Surgery 3	Thursday 16 May, 5.30–7.30 PM Chapeltown Library Nether Ley Avenue, Sheffield, S35 1AE
	Seven families attended to receive general information about the proposals and their impact.

5.3 Responses to the consultation process

5.3.1 Note regarding small discrepancies in totals / percentages:

As none of the questions in the survey were mandatory, the numbers of respondents answering each question may differ slightly (i.e. if they skip a question either accidentally or deliberately) and may not add up to the total number of respondents by category (as in the case of 5.3.8 below where more people responded to the question about transfer than the number of respondents in receipt of a bus pass). Also, some questions allowed multiple choices, which means that counts and percentages will add up to more than 100% of the total in some cases.

5.3.2 The total number of responses received were as follows:

- 495 questionnaires received (16.4% return)
- 18 emails
- 2 Letters

All responses by email or letter are considered alongside those received through the questionnaire.

A report showing a summary of responses is attached at **Appendix 1**. A more detailed analysis of the responses by those currently in receipt of a bus pass, those not in receipt of a bus pass and other stakeholders is attached at **Appendix 4**.

5.3.3 Headline data is as follows:

Respondent:

Parent or Carer	431 (87.1%)
Young person	41 (8.3%)
Governor	4 (0.8%)
Headteacher	5 (1%)
School staff	2 (0.4%)
Other	12 (2.5%)

5.3.4 Do you currently receive a free bus pass?

Yes 307 (66.9%)
No 152 (33.1%)

5.3.5 To what extent do you agree that the Council should stop funding discretionary free bus passes for pupils attending denominational schools?

Strongly agree (48) 9.8%
Agree (17) 3.4%
Not sure (11) 2.2%
Disagree (53) 10.8%
Strongly disagree (364) 73.8%

5.3.6 Please state which (if any) of the other options you would prefer:

There were 209 responses:

Option 2 173 (82.77%)
Option 3 24 (11.48%)
Both options 12 (5.75%)

A further 98 did not tick either box indicating that they supported neither Option 2 nor 3.

5.3.7 Do you think that removal of free transport would prevent children and young people from accessing places at faith schools in future?

Strongly agree 326 (65.9%)
Agree 73 (14.6%)
Not sure 42 (8.5%)
Disagree 28 (5.7%)
Strongly disagree 26 (5.3%)

5.3.8 If free transport was withdrawn would you need to consider a transfer to another school?

Yes 151 (35.2%)
No 193 (45%)

Not sure 86 (19.8%)

5.3.9 If you did need to transfer to another school would you prefer your local catchment school?

Yes 69 (46.3%)

No 64 (43%)

Not sure 16 (10.7%)

5.3.10 Do you think a transfer to another school would have a negative impact?

Yes 185 (94.9%)

No 4 (2.0%)

Not sure 6 (3.1)

Please state what you think the negative effects could be?

Tick any that apply (multiple response)

Educational outcomes 171 (92.9%)

Religious ethos 175 (95.1%)

Curriculum match 138 (75%)

Friendship groups 171 (92.9%)

Disruption 170 (92.4%)

Other 13 (7.1%)

5.3.11 Would you/your family meet the criteria for Y10 and Y11 students?
(See 4.6 Option 3 above)

Yes 111 (26.9%)

No 302 (73.1%)

5.3.12 How would you describe your ethnicity (where indicated)?

White (387) 82.5%

Asian or Asian British (21) 4.5%

Other Ethnic Group (8) 1.7%

Mixed/Dual Heritage (24) 5.1%

Black African Caribbean or Black British (29) 6.2%

5.3.13 Do you practice a regular faith or religion?

Christian (379) 94%

Atheist (15) 3.7%

Islam (6) 1.5%

Other (3) .7%

6.0 Further responses and issues raised

6.1 The Sheffield Hallam Diocese

The full response is attached at **Appendix 2**. The issue of the “historical agreement” to which the response refers is addressed at paragraph 6.4 below. The final paragraph of the letter refers to the “absence of any consultation whatsoever on this important matter between Officers of the Local Authority and Officers of the Diocese of Hallam.” Contrary to that statement, the Local Authority recognised at the outset that the Diocese was a key stakeholder with regard to this issue. Hence the Authority has actively sought the views of the Diocese on this matter, initially in the first consultation in Autumn 2012 and subsequently in the current consultation. A full consultation pack was issued to the Diocese on 20 March ahead of the actual launch on 25 March. Officers also offered to meet with representatives of the Diocese to discuss the proposals in more detail if required.

6.2 South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive

The full response is attached at **Appendix 3**.

6.3 Summary of the key issues raised in the consultation:

Full responses are too numerous to provide in the main body of the report but further more detailed analysis is provided at **Appendices 4 and 5**. All letters and emails have been provided to the Cabinet Member for Children Young People and Families and are provided for other Cabinet Members to review in the Leader’s Office. A summary of the main themes raised by respondents is provided below. Where appropriate officer comments and perspectives are given below the view of respondents.

6.4 Issue 1 - Historic Agreement

During the first consultation, a number of respondents told us that they believed that in the 1970s and 1980s, following the closure of three Catholic Secondary Schools in Sheffield, the Council had made an agreement to continue to provide free school travel for children attending the remaining denominational schools more than 3 miles from their homes.

At that stage, as noted at page 9 of the consultation document dated 25 March 2013, the Council did not have evidence of such an agreement. During the course of the second consultation launched on 25 March 2013, the Council has been shown letters addressed in late 1984 to parents of pupils who would be transferring from primary to secondary school following the closure of St Peter’s Roman Catholic Secondary Schools in July 1985. The letters include a paragraph which state:

“ Special arrangements have been made with regard to free travel for Roman Catholic pupils from the North of the City who will attend either Notre Dame or All Saints schools and who reside over three miles from whichever of these schools is attended. The Education Committee have agreed to waive their new policy on free travel until new catchment areas have been agreed for the remaining two Roman Catholic Secondary Schools. This means whichever of the two schools your child attends, provided you reside over three miles from that school your child will be entitled to free travel until they leave the school, subject only to any further general policy change by the Education Committee.” (these letters are shown at **Appendix 6**).

The letters were shown to the Council officers in the course of the second consultation process, and the Council thought it appropriate to invite specific comments or submissions on the letters from the key stakeholders in the consultation. To this end, the Council sent letters to Headteachers of all Catholic Primary and Secondary Schools inviting comments on the letters. The Council consultation website also invited comments on the letters to be received by 24 May. A copy of the letter inviting responses is attached at **Appendix 7**. One response was received about these issues from the Headteacher at St. Marie’s Primary School. A copy of this letter is at **Appendix 8**.

As stated above, the Council has been aware since the first consultation that many parents and some key stakeholders thought that the Council had made a long-standing agreement to continue to fund school bus passes for children attending All Saints and Notre Dame following closure of three other Catholic Secondary Schools in the 1980s. The Council does not consider that the letters show that the Council agreed that it would always in future continue to provide funding to Catholic pupils attending Catholic Schools more than three miles from their homes, or that there was any agreement with respect to primary school children. The Council accepts that it has, as a matter of discretion, continued to fund free school travel for Catholic pupils attending Notre Dame and All Saints for many years, and that such funding was a benefit which the Council now proposes to discontinue. For that reason, the Council has been taken particular care to ensure that all who are affected by the proposal have had the opportunity to respond to it. The second consultation, which ran from 25 March to 24 May 2013, was launched in response to issues that emerged from the first consultation, and as a result of which the proposals before the Council were modified. It is acknowledged that there is strong opposition amongst those directly affected to the proposal to discontinue discretionary funding. The Council, considers, however, that maintaining the on-going expense of funding the discretionary free bus passes is no longer reasonable in the light of the severe financial circumstances now facing the Council, the need to implement savings by cutting back on discretionary Council services across the board while continuing to fulfil its wide-ranging statutory duties – including that of a balanced budget – and the need to ensure that Council services for

the most vulnerable members of the community are, to the best of our ability in the present circumstances protected and maintained.

The letter from St Marie's raises two issues in relation to the letters addressed to parents in late 1984:

- a) The letters state that "The Education Committee have agreed to waive their new policy on free travel "until new catchment areas have been agreed for the remaining two Roman Catholic Secondary Schools."; whereas it appears that catchment areas have never been agreed for those schools.

Because of the passage of time since the letters were sent, the Council has found no record as to what was intended with respect to "the new policy on free travel" or the proposed agreement on "catchment areas" at the time. The letters suggest that there was at the time an intention to designate a new catchment areas for All Saints and Notre Dame in the light of the closure of St Peter's (which followed the closure of another Catholic Secondary School in 1981). Given the passage of time and the lack of records covering this period, it is not clear why these catchment areas were never implemented. The current position (which has been in place for very many years) is that the Local Authority Policy makes provision for children who attend their catchment area school to receive free transport where the school in question is beyond statutory walking distance. These catchment areas are a network of geographic boundaries that cover every residential address in Sheffield and form the basis of the Sheffield Admissions Policy. The purpose is to identify a catchment primary and secondary school for every resident so as to determine their priority for a school place within the Admissions Policy.

All Saints and Notre Dame High Schools operate their own admission policies which give priority to children attending their feeder primary schools. Some of those consulted have maintained that these feeder schools should be treated in the same way as the Council's catchment areas meaning that any Catholic child attending a Catholic Feeder School, and who lives beyond the statutory walking distance from Notre Dame or All Saints should be considered as attending their "catchment area school" and therefore be entitled to free school transport under the Local Authority Transport policy. The Council does not accept that that the feeder school system adopted by the two Catholic Secondary Schools is equivalent to the catchment area system operated by the Council, or that the same considerations should apply.

- b) Agreements as to the funding of school transport for Catholic primary school children may have been reached when St Marie's relocated to its present site in around 1971/72, or around the time that St Vincent's Primary School was closed around 1989.

The Council has been unable to find any documentation relating to any

agreements as to the funding of primary school children, and no documentation has been provided to it during the consultation. The Council accepts that the proposal to discontinue the funding of school transport for Catholic children attending Catholic schools beyond statutory walking distance from their homes involves the withdrawal of a benefit, and has therefore given those affected the opportunity to make representations on this issue. In considering whether to adopt the proposal at this stage, the Council must give serious consideration to the views expressed by those affected in the course of the consultation exercise.

6.5 Issue 2 - Catchment Areas

Neither All Saints nor Notre Dame operate catchment areas. It is clear from the oversubscription criteria for each of the schools that they have feeder school arrangements instead of criteria related to catchment area.

6.6 Issue 3 – Transport Provision at Hinde House Secondary School

A number of respondents have asked why free transport is currently provided for some students who attend Hinde House Secondary School.

In the mid 1990s Park House Secondary School at Tinsley was closed. Pupils residing at Tinsley and Darnall who attended Park House were redesignated to Hinde House Secondary. There was no direct commercial bus service linking the two areas with the school and the walking route was not considered to be safe. Free transport was provided to ensure that these communities could access their new school.

This provision is currently under review and will be subject to full consultation with the local communities.

6.7 Issue 4 – Timing/ Implementation

Option 1 of the proposals would implement a full withdrawal of passes in all year groups from September 2013. This means that parents/carers with children already at our schools will need to fund transport costs that they were not aware of when they originally applied for a place at a Catholic School.

In the second consultation, of those who expressed a preference the highest proportion of respondents (88%) preferred Option 2 which would introduce the withdrawal of passes on a phased basis starting in Year 7 in September 2013 (see 5.3.6 above). Under this option, pupils currently in receipt of a bus pass under discretionary criteria would retain it until completion of Year 11. The change in policy would only apply to pupils starting at school from September 2013.

Some parents make the point that other Authorities that have discontinued discretionary provision have done so on a phased basis, ensuring that those who already attending faith schools, for whom free transport was available at the time can complete their education. If withdrawal were to be phased, parents would make an informed decision when applying for a Catholic secondary school.

The original consultation in October 2012 did alert parents to the fact that the Council was considering withdrawing the discretionary free bus passes for attendance at denominational schools. Parents of children about to transfer to secondary school were given the option of amending their preferences for a place in Year 7 in the light of this possibility.

6.8 Issue 5 - Breach of the right to education in conformity with the religious and philosophical convictions of the parents

During the first consultation parents told us that they felt that by proposing to remove the free school travel passes we were acting unlawfully as to do so would amount to a breach of their Human Rights to have their children educated in the Catholic faith.

The proposal to discontinue free transport does not prevent any parent from applying for and attending a Catholic school, or any other voluntary aided school.

Article 2 of Protocol 1 to the European Convention states:

“No person shall be denied the right to education. In the exercise of any functions which it assumes in relation to education and to teaching, the State shall respect the right of parents to ensure such education and teaching in conformity with their own religious and philosophical convictions.”

This confers a right to education; it does not confer a guarantee of study at a specific school. The requirement to respect the right of parents to educate their children in conformity with their religious beliefs does not import an obligation on the state to supply or to fund faith-based education. Case law confirms that Article 2 of Protocol 1 is not infringed simply by a refusal to provide free school transport and that there would be no infringement of this Article if the reason for not providing transport was the avoidance of unreasonable public expenditure.

The Government issued new Home to school Transport Guidance in March 2013. It confirms that *“there is no general statutory duty requiring local authorities to provide free transport to faith schools”*

6.9 **Issue 6 – Social mobility/Diversity and Difference**

It has been suggested that the proposal is at odds with the Local Authority and Government's desire to improve parental choice and accessibility. Some respondents have said that Catholic parents from deprived areas seeking to send their children to Catholic schools beyond statutory walking distance will not be able to afford to choose to send their children to Catholic schools. Concern has been expressed that the policy may create schools that are elitist, i.e. the Catholic schools will serve only those families who can afford to send their families there. It has also been suggested that the proposal goes against the City Council's environmental targets as it will force more families into using their cars to transport their children to school.

The Authority will continue to provide free bus passes to the children of parents who qualify under the statutory low income criteria. It is acknowledged that there will be financial implications for families who do not meet the statutory low income criteria.

6.10 **Issue 7 – Financial Impact**

In the first consultation parents and stakeholders told us that those most in need (financially) would be hardest hit.

As pointed out above, those most financially in need will generally fall within the statutory "low income" criteria, and are therefore not affected by the proposal. The Council accepts, however, that parents whose income are just above the statutory "low income" threshold will be most adversely affected by the proposals.

The Council has therefore responded by introducing a new 3rd option which provides for a continuation of free school travel for pupils currently (as of September 2013) are in Y10 and Y11 who are currently in receipt of a free bus pass and whose family receives the working tax credit below the maximum rate (bearing in mind that the statutory entitlement kicks in at the maximum rate.

The response to the second consultation indicated that of the two other options (excluding option 1 – complete removal from September 2013) 82.77 % said that they preferred a phased withdrawal (option 2) and only 11.48 % preferred option 3. A total of 98 respondents did not tick either option and 12 ticked both.

In the second consultation parents told us they did not agree with our costing of bus fares.

From September 2013 the cost of a single bus journey will be 70p. The cost of catching two buses a day would equate to £14 per week. Based upon a 39 week school year that would cost £546 per year for a single pupil.

It must be noted that the proposed changes to discretionary transport do not change the current services to Notre Dame and All Saints which are run on a commercial basis (“green buses”). Children attending these schools could still access these buses which undertake a single journey to and from school. On this basis the potential cost per child would be £273 per year.

6.11 **Issue 8 – Impact on educational attainment/continuity**

In the second consultation when parents were asked if they would need to consider a transfer to another school if free transport was discontinued 35.2% said YES , 45% said NO and 19.8% were not sure.

Of those responding 46.3% said that they would prefer a local catchment school and 43% said that they would not want a local catchment school (10.7% were not sure)

In the second consultation a very high proportion (94.9%) of those responding said that a transfer to another school would have a negative impact. When asked what those effects would be parents stated that educational outcomes; religious ethos; friendship groups and disruption all ranked very highly (over 90%) with curriculum match lower at 75% and friendship groups at 92.9%.

In circumstances where a parent has to consider a transfer to another school the Council would make every effort to help parents and carers get a place for their child in their catchment school or a school within the locality, although a place at the catchment school or a school within the locality cannot be guaranteed.

In the event that any parent/carer felt that they had exceptional circumstances they would be entitled to have recourse to the review and appeals procedure (see 4. 8 above)

6.12 **Issue 9 – In support of the proposal**

Of the total responses 48 (9.7%) strongly agreed with the proposed changes and 17 (3.4%) agreed.

Common themes in these responses were:

Parents of children who are not Catholic but attend a Catholic School did not feel that it was fair that some children received free transport and others did not. Others commented that parents make informed decisions. If they choose to send their child to a Catholic School they should accept the fact that they will have to fund their transport.

Others remarked that all children should receive free passes or none at all.

7.0 Financial Implications for the Council

- 7.1 The cost of providing free transport to denominational schools for the 2011/12 academic year was £275K. Of this £21K was statutory provision for children from Low Income families. Net discretionary expenditure was therefore £254K. For the 2012/13 academic year the total spent on providing free transport to date is £315K, again £21K of this supports low income families leaving net expenditure of £294K.
- 7.2 This represents a significant saving in terms of the overall budget position for the Council which Members must consider in light of the need to find a further £50M of savings in 2013/14.
- 7.3 If Option 2 were to be agreed, phasing in for new Year 7 from September 2013, based on current expenditure this would save approximately £60K in the first year. This saving would increase over the next four years until the current Year 7 leaves school at the end of the 2017 academic year. On current projections leading to an ultimate saving of approximately £300K from 2017. This does not take into account subsequent raises in the cost of bus passes.
- 7.4 There would also be a cost to option 2. For the 2013/14 academic year, estimated cost would be £240K for funding passes for what would be the Year 8 to Year 11 cohort. This would reduce by £60K each subsequent year until the current Year 7 leaves the school in 2017. The estimated full cost of Option 2 to 2017 would be £600K.
- 7.5 The cost of Option 3 cannot be determined accurately until the number of families qualifying under the criteria is known. However in response to the questionnaire 26.7% of respondents have indicated that they would qualify for a pass under the criteria outlined in Option 3. If that response is profiled across the Year 10 and Year 11 cohorts for 2013/14 currently in receipt of passes there would be an estimated cost in 2013/14 of £32K. For the remaining Year 11 cohort in 2014/15 the estimated cost would be £15K. A total estimated cost for Option 3 of £47K. Given that current expenditure is approximately £300K Option 3 would achieve a saving of approximately £270K in the 2013/14 and £285K in 2014/15.

8.0 Legal Implications

- 8.1 During the consultation process a number of arguments have been advanced as to why the Council would be acting unlawfully if it were to exercise its discretion by varying its policy as proposed in the consultation. As stated in earlier paragraphs of this report, neither the Education Act 1996 nor the Secretary of State's Guidance provides that a person choosing a denominational school is entitled to free school transport. (See in particular, paragraphs 4.1 to 4.3 above).
- 8.2 The recommendations outlined in this report provide for the

consideration of a number of possible options relating to the proposed changes to the discretionary home to school transport arrangements. When making changes to these arrangements the Council as part of their consideration of the possible options must have regard to the statutory provisions set out in the Education Act 1996 and the relevant guidance, as set out in paragraphs 4.1 and 4.3 above.

- 8.3 In addition, section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 requires the Council to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity between different protected groups, and to foster good relations between those who share the protected characteristics, and others who do not. Religion or belief are protected characteristics.
- 8.4 As pointed out at paragraph 6.8 above, Protocol 1, Article 2 of the European Convention does not oblige a State to provide free transport to faith schools.
- 8.5 As explained above, the Council does not consider that there are historic agreements which prevent it from ceasing to provide free bus passes to children attending Catholic schools beyond statutory walking distance from their homes. The Council accepts, however, that it has been funding the transport of such pupils for many years, and that it is necessary to consult those affected before taking any decision to withdraw that benefit.
- 8.6 Before making any changes to the current discretionary home to school transport arrangements, therefore, proper consideration must be given to the feedback provided in response to the consultation and the equalities impact assessment attached to this report. The Council must also take account of the requirements of disabled parents and children in the application of the changes and make reasonable adjustments where required by individual circumstances.
- 8.7 The Council will also put in place a review/appeals procedure for parents who wish to challenge a decision about:
- The transport arrangements offered;
 - Their child's eligibility;
 - The distance measurement; and
 - The safety of the route.
- 8.8 Details of the home to school transport appeals process are attached as **Appendix 10**.

9.0 Equalities Implications

- 9.1 With reference to section 149 of the Equality Act an Equalities Impact assessment has been carried out and is attached at **Appendix 9**. As there are three options being considered the potential impact will vary depending on which option is approved. It is important for Cabinet

members to read and consider this document together with the results of the consultation before any decision is taken.

- 9.2 The present policy accrues predominantly to the benefit of Catholic families, and so it is clear that it is Catholic families who will primarily be affected by the proposal to discontinue free home to school transport to denominational schools beyond statutory walking distance from a child's home. By definition, the pupils who will be affected by the proposals are children between the ages of 5 and 16.
- 9.3 The Authority has considered the circumstances of all students who currently receive discretionary free bus passes. Specifically all have been plotted on a map to establish whether the withdrawal of passes would impact greatly on any areas of the City. Students currently in receipt of travel passes reside predominantly in the North, North East and South East of the City.
- 9.4 An assessment of the ethnic background of students has also been undertaken. For those attending secondary schools, the majority of students are identified as "White British" (75%) and the next highest group "Other Black African" at 7%.
- 9.5 Any student that has been formally assessed to require assisted transport as a result of their disability will not be affected by these proposals.

10.0 Summary of the Consultation

- 10.1 This second consultation has provided the opportunity for those directly affected and key stakeholders to give their views about the Council's options for change to the provision of discretionary free bus passes for travel to faith schools. The confidential drop-in surgeries have provided the opportunity for individual families to discuss how the proposals may affect them directly. The questionnaire responses have provided clear and direct feedback about options presented and the potential impact on families. It has also offered the opportunity for stakeholders to set out their concerns in relation to historic agreements and the issue of catchment areas.
- 10.2 In the first consultation process held in the Autumn Term 2012 the Authority sent consultation packs to all parents of children attending Voluntary Aided Primary and Secondary Schools, approximately 7000 in total. A total of 326 (4.6%) responses were received. Many parents contacted the Authority to enquire why they had been involved in the process as they said they would not be affected by any change to the policy.
- 10.3 For the second consultation the Authority aimed to engage better with those parents who might be directly affected by the proposed changes. The Authority consulted with parents of all children attending Years 7 to

11 at All Saints and Notre Dame, parents of all Year 5 and 6 pupils at Primary Aided Schools and parents of any child attending Reception to Year 4 who is currently receipt of a free bus pass.

- 10.4 The Authority also provided a more detailed consultation document and an extensive questionnaire both in paper copy and on line. The questionnaire has enabled the Authority to undertake a wider and more comprehensive analysis of all responses.
- 10.5 A total of 515 responses were received. This represents 17% of the 3000 consultation packs that were distributed a significant increase to the 4.6% that responded to the first consultation. It is normally considered that a 10% response to any consultation is significant. Of these, 307 were from those in receipt of a bus pass, which equates to 67% of the responses received.
- 10.6 Very careful consideration has been given to all of the views expressed in the consultation and this evidence has been used to propose a way forward as set out in the recommendation below.

11.0 Reasons for the Recommendation

- 11.1 The Council's position remains that it is facing extreme pressure on limited budgets and must make efficiencies to find £50 million of savings in this financial year with more savings to be found in future years. Within these constraints, the Council's approach is to protect where possible those services provided for the most vulnerable people in our community and to examine where they spend on discretionary provision.
- 11.2 The Council's funding of discretionary free bus passes for travel to denominational schools under the Home to School Transport policy must therefore be reviewed in the light of the need to reduce expenditure and balanced against the Council's responsibilities to maintain vital services for the most disadvantaged. Other Councils have taken similar action to discontinue their discretionary policies in the face of such budgetary pressures.
- 11.3 The addition of Option 3 in the current consultation clearly signalled the Council's intention to mitigate against the loss of a bus pass for those most prejudicially affected, namely those on lower incomes and those entering Years 10 and 11. Having listened carefully to the feedback from the consultation, the recommendation to Cabinet is to reject all 3 options and to approve the new Option 4 (set out at 11.5 below).
- 11.4 This recommendation acknowledges the feedback from the consultation which showed strong support for option 2 (83%) which was a phasing of withdrawal of the discretionary free bus passes. The proposal below is a phased approach as well as being an expansion of the original Option 3. It also acknowledges that the majority of

respondents (95%) thought that a transfer to another school would be disruptive and have a negative impact on educational outcomes. This proposal eliminates the need for any student entering Years 10 and 11 in 2013/14 and Year 11 in 2014/15 to have to transfer to another school as a result of losing the bus pass.

11.5 **Option 4**

- To continue to fund a discretionary free bus pass for those pupils entering Y10 and Year 11 in 2013/14 and Year 11 in 2014/15 who currently meet the discretionary criteria namely that the pupil attends a denominational school, adheres to the specific denomination of that school and meets the statutory distance criteria (see 4.2 above). Those pupils would be required to reapply for their bus pass in advance of the next academic year.
- An appeals procedure will be available to families whose children would not qualify under Option 4. Any parent that wishes to challenge a decision about the transport arrangements offered to their child, including questions of their child's eligibility for travel support, will be entitled to seek a review of and, if necessary, an appeal to an independent appeal panel against the decision. That Council will make all reasonable efforts to ensure that appeals are heard before the new school year. The appeals procedure is set out in **Appendix 10**

11.6 This proposal would have a direct cost and would therefore impact directly on the savings that the Council will be able to make in 2013/14 and 2014/15. Based upon those currently in receipt of free discretionary passes the total anticipated cost of funding Year 10 and Year 11 students in 2013/14 would be £132K. The anticipated cost for the Year 11 students in 2014/15 would be £62K. This includes an anticipated increase in the price of a pass of 10%. The anticipated saving in 2013/14 would be £168K and £238K in 2014/15.

12.0 **Reasons for Exemption** (if a Closed report)

12.1 None

13.0 **Recommendations**

13.1 Cabinet is requested to:

Approve the phased withdrawal of discretionary free bus passes for travel to denominational schools under the discretionary scheme from September 2013 in line with Option 4 which is:

To withdraw all discretionary free bus passes to denominational

schools from September 2013 except for those pupils in Years 10 and 11 during 2013/14 and Year 11 in 2014/15 who meet the existing discretionary criteria namely attendance at a denominational school , adherence to a specific denomination and meeting the statutory distance criteria.

Author	Jayne Ludlam
Job Title	Executive Director, Children, Young People and Families
Date	19 June 2013.

Consultation on Proposed Changes to the Provision of

Sheffield

City Council



APPENDIX 1

Discretionary Free Bus Passes for Pupils to Travel to Faith Schools to be Introduced from September 2013

We would welcome your views on this proposal. It would be helpful to have the Consultation document to hand while completing the questionnaire as some questions refer to it.

All responses are anonymous.

1. Are you answering these questions as a...? Please tick one answer only.

- 431 (87.1%) Parent or carer
- 41 (8.3%) Young person
- 4 (0.8%) Governor
- 5 (1.0%) Headteacher
- 2 (0.4%) Member of school staff
- 0 (0.0%) Councillor
- 0 (0.0%) MP
- 12 (2.4%) Other

2. Please state. Type in the box

10 (100.0%)

3. Do you currently receive a free bus pass?

307 (66.9%) Yes

152 (33.1%) No

4. To what extent do you agree that the Council should stop funding discretionary free bus passes for pupils attending denominational schools (Option 1 in the Consultation document)?

48 (9.7%) Strongly agree

17 (3.4%) Agree

11 (2.2%) Not sure

53 (10.8%) Disagree

364 (73.8%) Strongly disagree

5. Please tell us why you answered this way. Type in the box.

124 (100.0%)

6. Please state which (if any) of the other options you would prefer (please refer to Section 3 of the consultation document). Tick all that apply.

226 (88.3%) Option 2

48 (18.8%) Option 3

7. Please tell us why you would prefer this/these option(s). Type in the box.

57 (100.0%)

8. Do you think that removal of free transport would prevent children and young people from accessing places at Faith Schools in the future?

- 326 (65.9%) Strongly agree
- 73 (14.7%) Agree
- 42 (8.5%) Not sure
- 28 (5.7%) Disagree
- 26 (5.3%) Strongly disagree

9. Please tell us why you answered this way. Type in the box

121 (100.0%)

10. If free transport was withdrawn, would you need to consider a transfer to another school?

151 (35.0%) Yes

195 (45.1%) No

86 (19.9%) Not sure

11. If you did need to transfer to another school, would you prefer your local catchment school?

69 (46.3%) Yes

64 (43.0%) No

16 (10.7%) Not sure

12. Do you think a transfer to another school would have a negative impact?

- 186 (94.9%) Yes
- 4 (2.0%) No
- 6 (3.1%) Not sure

13. Please state what you think the negative effects could be. Tick all that apply.

- 172 (93.0%) Educational outcomes
- 176 (95.1%) Religious ethos
- 139 (75.1%) Curriculum match
- 172 (93.0%) Friendship groups
- 171 (92.4%) Disruption
- 13 (7.0%) Other?

14. Please tell us what you think the negative effects of a school transfer could be. Type in the box.

- 12 (100.0%)

In order to qualify for Temporary Assistance for Pupils in Years 10 and 11 (Option 3), families must meet all of the following conditions:

1) Have a child in Y10 or Y11; 2) The child currently receives a free bus pass under the current discretionary policy but would lose it if the Council's proposals were implemented; and 3) The family is in receipt of working tax credit below the maximum rate (if you get the maximum rate you are entitled to a free bus pass under the statutory criteria).

15. Would you / your family meet the above criteria?

111 (26.7%) Yes

305 (73.3%) No

Equality Issues?

In assessing the proposals under consultation, the Council has a duty under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act; to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The relevant protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation (the 8 relevant protected characteristics).

We are aware that the proposals impact primarily on families who wish their children to attend Catholic schools. Our assessment is that these proposals may also impact on other faith groups and people who are disabled and we would also like to know if any particular ethnic group is likely to be disadvantaged by these proposals.

We are therefore asking you to give us information about your relevant characteristics in order to help us to consider what the effect of the proposals on different groups may be.

16. How would you describe your ethnicity?

- 390 (82.6%) White
- 21 (4.4%) Asian or Asian British
- 8 (1.7%) Other Ethnic Group
- 24 (5.1%) Mixed / Dual Heritage
- 29 (6.1%) Black / African / Caribbean or Black British

17. Are you...

- 368 (95.3%) English / Welsh / Scottish / British / Northern Irish
- 10 (2.6%) Irish
- 0 (0.0%) Gypsy / Irish Traveller
- 0 (0.0%) Roma
- 4 (1.0%) Other European
- 4 (1.0%) Other white background

18. Are you...

- 12 (57.1%) Indian
- 1 (4.8%) Pakistani
- 2 (9.5%) Bangladeshi
- 0 (0.0%) Chinese
- 6 (28.6%) Other Asian background

19. Are you...

- 2 (28.6%) Yemeni
- 0 (0.0%) Other Arab
- 5 (71.4%) Other Ethnic group

20. Are you...

- 13 (54.2%) White and Black Caribbean
- 3 (12.5%) White and Black African
- 6 (25.0%) White and Asian
- 2 (8.3%) Other mixed background

21. Are you...

- 8 (27.6%) Caribbean
- 1 (3.4%) Somali
- 4 (13.8%) Other African background
- 2 (6.9%) Other Black background
- 14 (48.3%) Black / African / Caribbean or Black British

22. Do you practise a particular faith or religion?

15 (3.7%)	Atheist / None
0 (0.0%)	Bahai
0 (0.0%)	Buddhism
0 (0.0%)	Hinduism
0 (0.0%)	Humanism
382 (94.1%)	Christianity (including Church of England, Catholic and other Christian denominations)
6 (1.5%)	Islam
0 (0.0%)	Judaism
0 (0.0%)	Sikhism
3 (0.7%)	Other

23. Which other faith or religion do you practise? Type in the box.

3 (100.0%)

24. Do you consider yourself to have a disability? i.e. do you have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term effect on your ability to carry out normal day to day activities?

37 (7.9%) Yes

432 (92.1%) No

25. Do you think that the proposed changes are likely to advance or to impede equality of opportunity and good relations between persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic and others?

207 (53.8%) Yes

46 (11.9%) No

132 (34.3%) Not sure

26. Please tell us why you answered this way.

94 (100.0%)

27. Do you think that the proposed changes are likely to remove or minimise disadvantage to any person having any of the 8 relevant protected characteristics listed above?

99 (24.9%) Yes

159 (40.1%) No

139 (35.0%) Not sure

28. Please tell us why you answered this way.

75 (100.0%)

Your responses will be taken into account when we carry out an Equality Impact Assessment which will form part of the decision-making on these proposals.

29. **Please use the space below if you would like to make any other comments about the proposal. Alternatively, you can email comments to us at admissionsconsultation@sheffield.gov.uk.**

60 (100.0%)

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. Your views will be used to inform a decision.

Diocese of Hallam Schools' Department

Diocese of Hallam Pastoral Centre, St Charles Street, Sheffield S9 3WU

Tel: 0114 2566440 Fax: 0114 2562673

E-mail: schools@hallam-diocese.com

Website: <http://www.hallam-diocese.com/schools>

Registered Charity 512021

Mr J Bigley
 Manager for Access and Admissions
 Inclusion & Learning Services
 Floor 3, Howden House
 Union Street
 Sheffield
 S1 2SH

23rd May 2013

Dear John,

Thank you for your letter of 16th May 2013 inviting a response by 24th May. We are aware that John Martin of Notre Dame High School and Alan Dewhurst of St Marie's School have both submitted evidence in relation to the issues of catchment areas and the 'historical agreement' in relation to subsidised denominational transport.

The responses from schools does indicate the deep unhappiness of the wider Catholic community to the proposed removal of the denominational transport subsidy. The responses provide evidence of the working practices and assumptions of both Local Authority Officers and representatives of schools and the Diocese of Hallam in relation to the catchment areas of our schools. The definition of 'catchment areas' in Sheffield in a way which disadvantages the Catholic Schools is deeply regrettable.

It has long been recognised that the painful and difficult decision to reduce the number of Catholic Secondary Schools serving the City of Sheffield was only possible because of the commitment of the council to subsidised transport. Again, the proposal to end the subsidy and, by definition, the agreement is deeply regrettable. The initial failure to acknowledge the existence of the agreement despite John Martin's offer to provide documentary evidence is difficult to understand. We fail to see how a consultation process which is supposed to be fair and transparent can fail to respond to the offer of the provision of evidence.

Officers of the Diocese of Hallam have always sought to maintain effective communication with Local Authority Officers over matters of common interest in the education system. In our experience, this relationship has worked well when there has been early consultation on matters of importance to Catholic Schools. The absence of any consultation whatsoever on this important matter between

"... an enthusiasm for the things of God."

Officers of the Local Authority and Officers of the Diocese of Hallam is also a matter of deep regret as many of the Officers involved have previously enjoyed close and productive working relationships.

Yours sincerely,



J. M. Conway
Director of Schools' – Secondary



J. Cape
Director of Schools' - Primary

Pupils' Admissions
Inclusion and Learning Services
Floor 3
Howden House
Union Street
Sheffield
S1 2SH

Your Ref:

Our Ref: 17-02

Ask For: David Young

Direct Line: 0114 2211 327

E-mail: david.young@sypte.co.uk

26 April 2013

Dear Sirs

**CONSULTATION DOCUMENT: PROPOSED CHANGES TO
DISCRETIONARY TRANSPORT**

Thank you for inviting South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive (SYPTe) to comment on the revised proposals to the withdrawal of free transport to denominational schools for those currently qualifying under the Sheffield City Council's current home to school transport policy. Our comments in respect of each of the options on which you are seeking views are set out below:

• **Option 1:**

Withdraw all discretionary free bus passes for travel to denominational schools under the discretionary scheme from September 2013.

SYPTe remain concerned for the additional pressure for those families who will lose the established benefit as detailed in my letter of 22 November 2012.

• **Option 2:**

Withdraw the current provision for funding discretionary transport on a phased basis starting with entry to reception and year 7 from September 2013.

SYPTe support this approach as set out in my response to the initial consultation, as detailed in my letter of 22 November 2012.

**SOUTH YORKSHIRE PASSENGER
TRANSPORT EXECUTIVE**

11 Howden Street West
SHEFFIELD S1 2SH

Telephone: 0114 276 2476
Facsimile: 0114 276 2408

sypte.co.uk

Director General
David Brown

Director of Strategy
Ben Still

Director of Transport & Education
David Young

Principal School Transport Officer
Steve Davonport

WT Reg No: 59992764



- **New Proposal Option 3:**

Offer a discretionary free bus pass for pupils from families on low income where children are in exam years in the next two academic years

SYPTE recognise that this proposal will remove the risk to children of low income families having to potentially change schools at a critical point in their education. However our preferred option remains Option 2.

Should you wish to discuss our response in more detail please contact either myself or my colleague Roy Mitchell on 0114 2211356. Please also find attached a copy of my letter of 22 November 2012.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Young', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**DAVID YOUNG
DIRECTOR OF CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE**

Denominational Transport Consultation – Summary of Survey Results

This summary report breaks down the survey responses by the following three categories:

Group 1: Parents/carers and young people who **are** currently in receipt of a free travel pass.

- **Page 2**

Group 2: Parents/carers and young people who are **not** currently in receipt of a free travel pass.

- **Page 17**

Group 3: Other stakeholders.

- **Page 30**

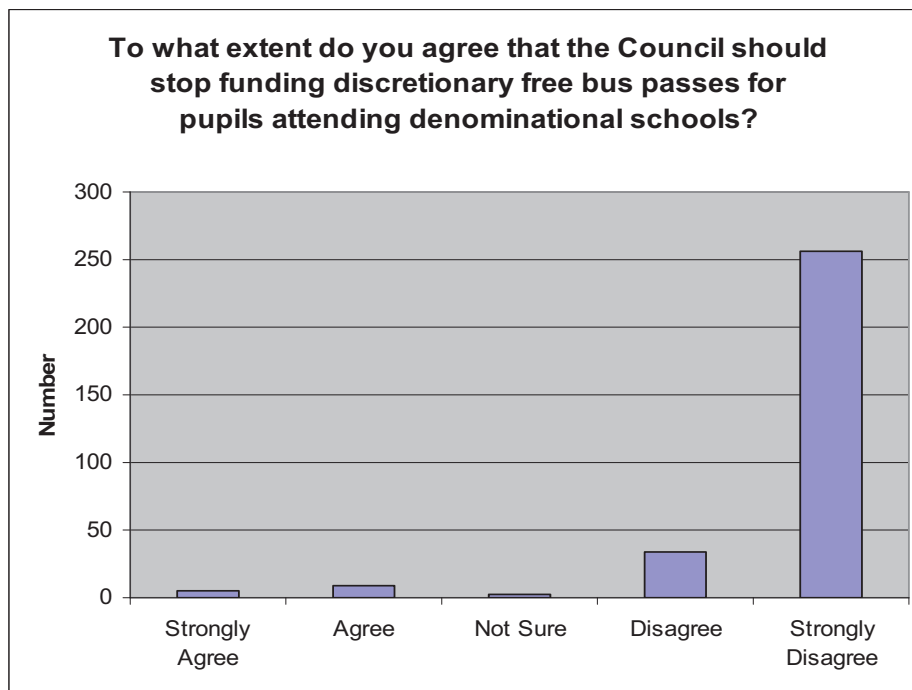
Overview of Responses for parents / carers and young people who **are** currently receiving a free bus pass (Group 1).

If a respondent indicated that they were a parent / carer or a young person, they were asked whether they currently receive a free bus pass to travel to a denominational school.

Of the 472 parents / carers and young people who completed the survey, 307 of these **do** currently receive a free bus pass.

1) Views on the Proposal

The questionnaire asked to what extent people agreed with the Council's proposal to stop funding discretionary free bus passes for pupils attending denominational schools.



- 256 of those currently receiving a bus pass strongly disagreed and 34 disagreed with the proposal.
- 14 of these 307 strongly agreed and 9 agreed with the proposal.
- 2 were not sure.

Reasons / additional comments given for response

68 respondents added comments explaining why they had answered the way they did. The following make up a selection of the most representative comments and these have been grouped under some key headings.

Agree

Unfair to fund passes to faith schools

“Free bus passes for families who choose to send their children to a school other than the local one, cannot really be considered to be a funding priority.”

Disagree

Location and number of Catholic schools / distance to travel

“I still believe that this may have an impact on some families who may send their children to the nearest school instead of the nearest faith school, thereby removing choice.”

Financial implications / effect on choice

“I, like many parents, chose to send my child before this proposal occurred and thus was not able to make an informed choice regarding the financial impact at that time and am currently faced the additional costs that will have an impact on my tight budget.”

Strongly disagree

Discrimination against Catholic families

“Discrimination against faith.”

“It is discriminatory against faith schools.”

“A pupil should not be penalised for wanting to be educated and enjoy their faith at the same time.”

“Our Christian faith is important to us and feel that by taking away our free bus pass the council is forcing some parents to send our children to a local non faith school that do not have the same faith value we many Christians feel are extremely important.”

“It is unfair - it discriminates based upon faith.”

Financial implications / effect on choice

“... the impact it will have on those families who are already overstretched because of other cuts, pension contribution increases and general price increases for food, utilities, etc.”

“This is an added expense which was not there when choosing a school.”

“With two children already at the school we would be several hundred pounds a year worse off.

Location and number of Catholic schools / distance to travel

“Local schools cannot provide the same level of religious education that the faith school can.”

“...as a practising Catholic in a large city with only two Catholic secondary schools children often have to travel more than 3 miles to attend school and are therefore entitled to a free pass.”

“There are no nearer Catholic Schools for my children to attend.”

“There isn't a Catholic school on this side of the city using the free school bus is the only way I can get my children to school.”

Effect on those who had previously made the decision to educate their child in a faith school

“Unjust to remove this from pupils already attending a Catholic School and in receipt of the zero fare pass.

“When we sent our children to the school it was on the understanding that we would have free travel - it is wrong to withdraw at this stage.”

“We were told that we would qualify for free travel. Had we realised that that would not be the case throughout, it would have changed our choice of school.”

“I feel that it is unfair to change policy on this AFTER my children have begun their education at Notre Dame High School. Had I known that the free bus passes were to be withdrawn, this might have altered my decision to send them to that school in the first place.”

Council's prior agreement to fund travel to faith schools

“The council made an agreement when St Peter's and St John Fisher's were closed, so that council money could be saved, that they would

ensure that pupils would not have to pay for transport to attend further afield Catholic schools... The council has a moral obligation to honour its promise.”

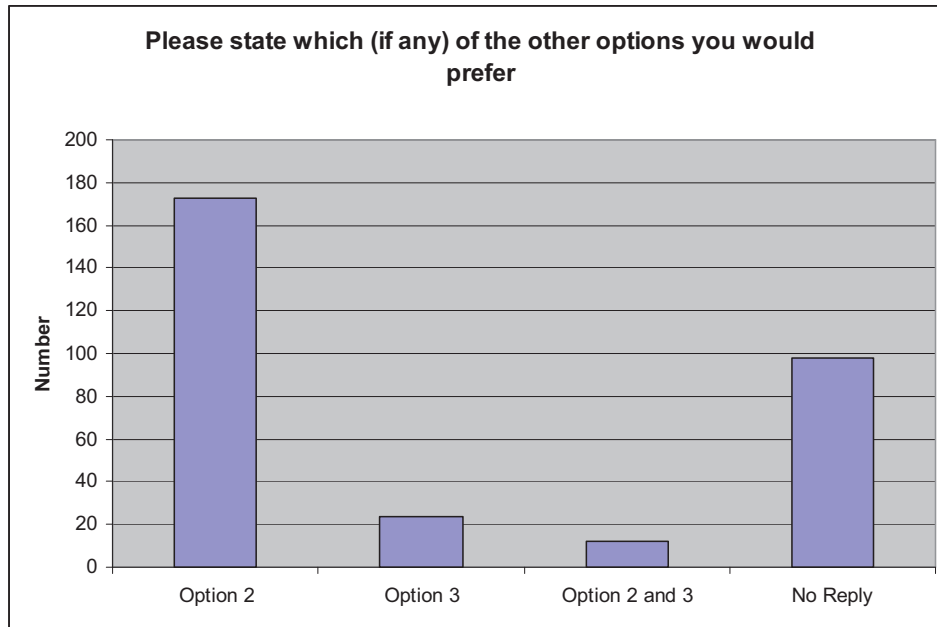
“... after the closure of St Peter’s School in the mid-1980’s... there was an agreement that Catholic families would receive discretionary transport subsidy.”

Feel that Catholic schools provide a better education

“One of the most positive features of faith schools is the diversity of pupils from different backgrounds and this is going to be highly impacted by this decision. It is divisive and discriminates against poorer pupils.”

2) Views on other options outlined in the consultation document

Those who expressed that they disagreed / strongly disagreed with the proposal, were also asked which (if any) of the other options detailed in the consultation document they would prefer.



- 209 respondents answered this question. This means that a further 98 who disagreed / strongly disagreed with the proposal did not express a preference for any other option.
- 173 respondents selected Option 2, 24 selected Option 3 and 12 ticked both options.

Reasons / additional comments given for response

50 respondents added comments explaining why they had answered the way they did.

Option 2

“This would give parents time to change preference for school choice if need to, and would also help with children already at school and maybe exam years.”

“Of the 3 options this one at least doesn't penalise families who have already made their decision to send children to a faith school, but it should only be introduced to reception / Y7 in September 2014. As for

Appendix 4 – Responses Group 1,2,3,

children starting school in September 2013 the decision as to which school they go to has already been made, before this change was agreed. It will still have the effect of potentially prohibiting the attendance of a faith school by some pupils.”

“Parents will be aware that the costs will be phased in over time. They can therefore prepare for changes and make contingencies.”

“Because this is fairer. We made the decision also based on the free transport. Some parents may have made other decisions based on this. At least with my second child I will be aware I will have to pay.”

“I would not have to move my children to another school.

“If parents were aware of the additional requirement to pay the bus fare from the outset when applying for a school then this is fair and just. To introduce this when children are already attending the school is not right.”

“My eldest daughter would still receive a pass whilst my youngest would have to pay.”

“Option 2 is the only fair option - those who have already been allocated a place at Notre Dame / All Saints did not know this was going to happen.”

“The lesser of two evils for my family, personally. I do not prefer either option in reality though.”

“This is the only option which would allow me to have a free bus pass and continue with my education at the nearest faith school which supports my religious beliefs.”

“I think it only fair to continue with the subsidy which has already been granted.”

Option 3

“This seems the fairest option proposed if this is to go ahead.”

“Option 2 shouldn't be an option. It's just a slower process in removing the passes.”

Option 2 and Option 3

“It isn't fair to move the goal posts for children already at the school.

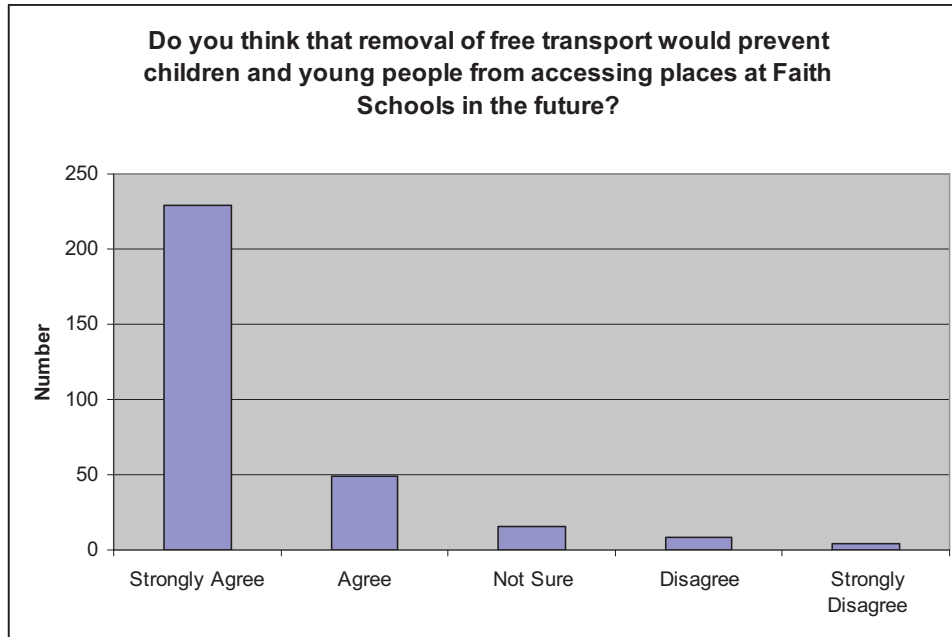
Appendix 4 – Responses Group 1,2,3,

I think Option 3 should be applied to all children starting Year 7 from September 2013 onwards, not only Years 10 and 11. It would help the current Years 10 and 11, but what about low income families currently in Years 7 to 9?

“Taking this line of action, would bring in some revenue, because those who could afford it, would pay, whilst protecting those who would really struggle to pay. I still think there should be an appeals process, whatever the outcome, for cases like the family I am helping.”

3) Views on how the proposal may affect accessing places at faith schools

Respondents were asked whether they thought removal of free transport would prevent children from accessing places at faith schools in the future.



- 306 people answered this question.
- 229 strongly agreed and 49 agreed that this would happen.
- 4 strongly disagreed and 8 disagreed that this would happen.
- 8 were not sure.

Reasons / additional comments given for response

69 of these respondents added comments explaining why they had answered the way they did.

Strongly agree

“I want my children to have access to not only an academically high achieving school but one which supports our religion, socially and spiritually, upholding good morals with which they are brought up.”

“No matter how you look at this it is discriminating.”

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“I know some students that live 15 miles away! Of course they aren't going to be able to pay for that.”

“The cost of transport for some families would be too much of a financial burden.”

“Not everyone can afford the extra expense. This would lead to only the wealthiest families being able to access the places at faith schools.”

“We can't afford extra costs every week and it's unfair that we can't send our children to a faith school because we can't afford the travel costs.”

“...the number of children in faith schools would decline and only the richest families would be able to attend them which are discrimination against poorer families and their religion.”

“I fear some families will struggle financially to meet their faith obligations.”

“There isn't a Catholic secondary school on this side of the city. Removing the free school bus will stop families getting to school.”

Agree

“If people can't afford it then they can't afford it - end of argument!”

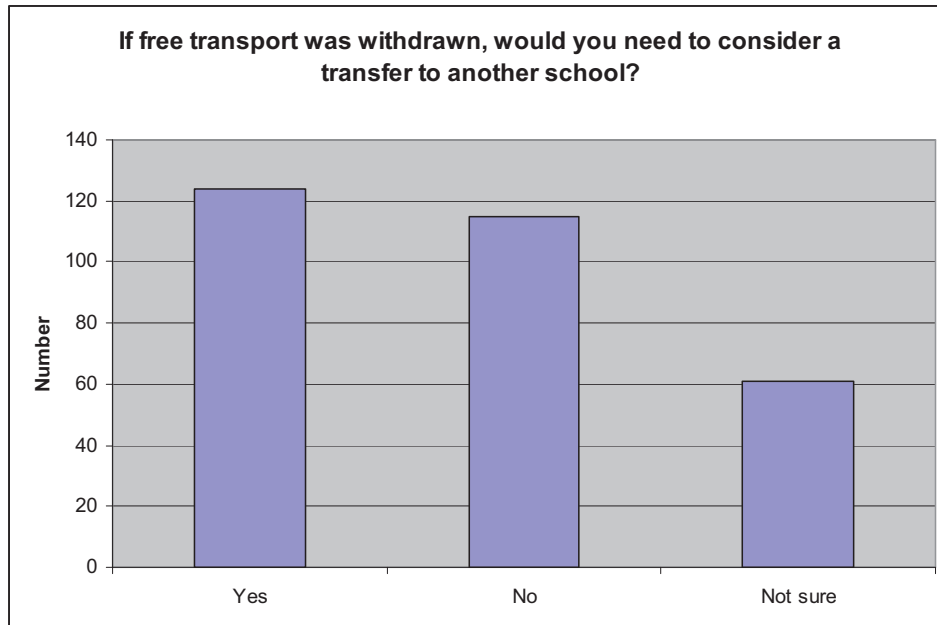
Not sure

“There may be families on lower incomes and with multiple children for whom the removal of free transport may be a problem.”

“Not if an affordable solution replaced it.”

4) Views on how the proposal may result in the need for a school transfer

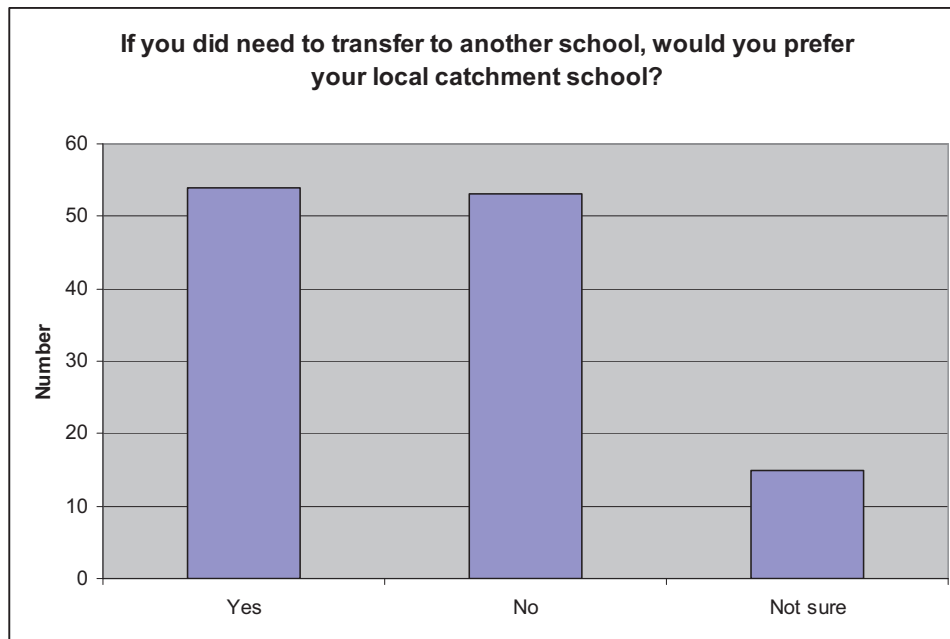
The questionnaire asked whether people would need to consider a transfer to another school if free transport was withdrawn.



- 300 responded to this question.
- 124 answered yes, 115 answered no and 61 were not sure.

5) Views on whether local catchment school would be preferred

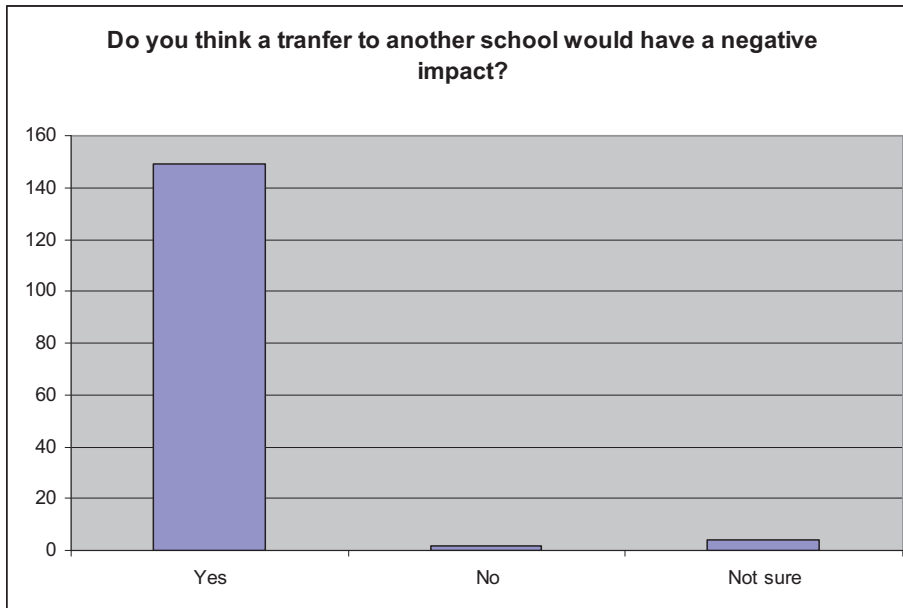
Those who had indicated that they would need to consider a transfer to another school were asked whether they would prefer their local catchment school.



- 124 answered this question.
- 54 said they would prefer their local catchment school, 53 said they would **not** prefer their local catchment school and 15 were not sure.

6) Views on whether a transfer to another school would have a negative impact

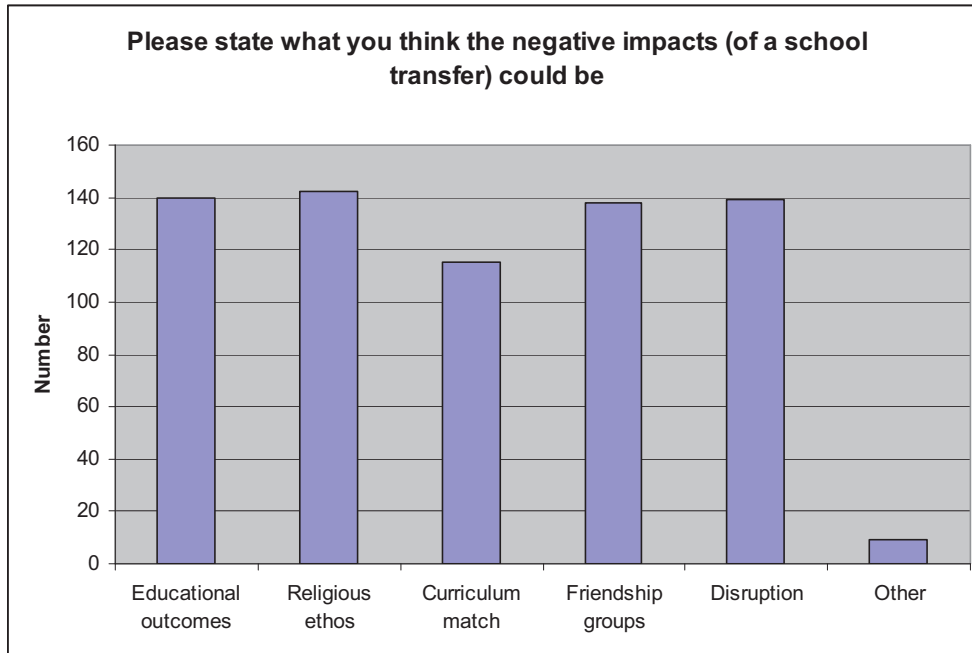
Respondents were asked whether they thought a transfer to another school would have a negative impact.



- 155 answered this question.
- 149 felt that a school transfer **would** have a negative impact.
- 2 felt that a school transfer **would not** have a negative impact.
- 4 were not sure.

Those who did feel a school transfer would have a negative impact were asked in what specific areas the effects might be. Respondents could tick more than one answer. The graph below shows that all the pre-set options received a response rate of over 90%, with the exception of 'curriculum match' (78%).

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Comments from the 9 people who ticked 'other' included:

"Not accepted, as pupils would know reasons for transfer. My daughter is very quiet and would struggle both mentally and socially."

"Transferring to another school would impact negatively on my children as starting at a new school is daunting enough in Y7 but to do this half way through Y8 would be disruptive."

"Well my local catchment school is dreadful. Poor results. Poor educational outcomes. My parents originally moved here safe in the knowledge they could afford to send me to my faith school. If they couldn't afford that, they were going to move to an area where a good catchment school was. But withdrawing the free passes is not what they anticipated."

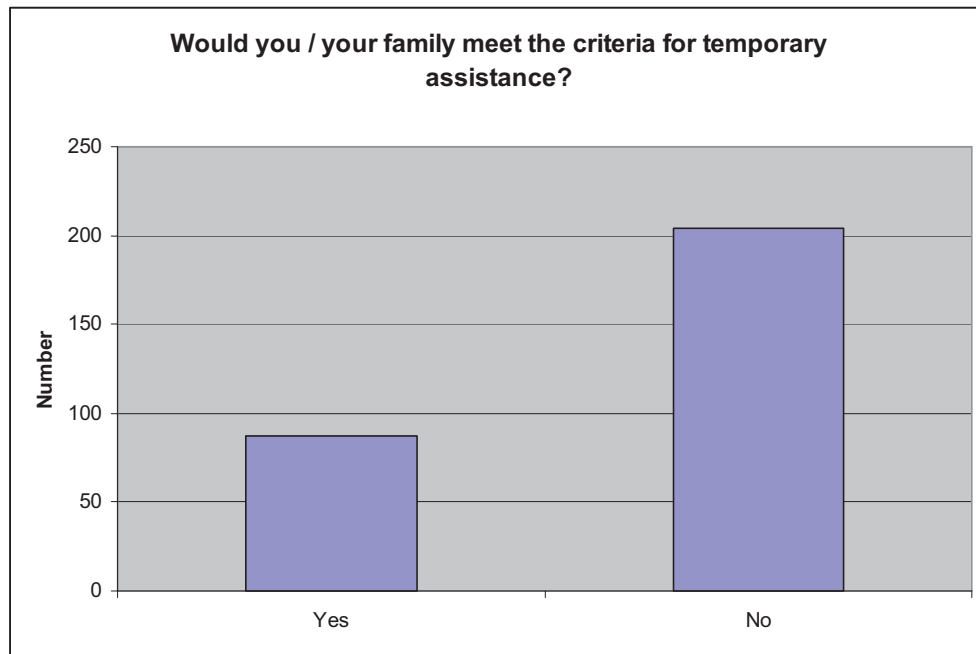
The questionnaire asked whether parents / carers and young people currently in receipt of a bus pass would meet the criteria for temporary assistance for pupils in years 10 and 11 (Option 3).

In order to qualify, families would need to meet *all* of the following criteria:

1. Have a child in Y10 or Y11
2. The child currently receives a free bus pass under the current discretionary policy but would lose it if the Council's proposals were implemented
3. The family is in receipt of Working Tax Credit below the maximum rate.

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Responses are shown in the graph below.



7) General comments

Respondents were asked if they would like to make any other comments about the proposal. A selection of these can be found below:

“As a single mother who is already under enormous financial constraint and who however does not qualify for any form of benefit I feel that the proposed changes are unfair to say the least.”

“It impinges on my rights based on my faith/religion to send my child to a faith based school of my choice where I feel that my child’s educational and faith needs will be met.”

“If these changes go ahead, it will result in families having to send their children to local schools - this will put pressure on those schools that probably will not have enough places to offer. Local primary schools have had to expand and double capacity and are still now having to increase their numbers going over the legal class size of 30 because there are just not enough places available for children in the area.”

“...for children currently in Y6, the open evenings for all other potential schools have now passed so neither children or parents have any idea what other schools are like. Children currently in Y6 have, along with parents, decided which is the best school for them to apply to and how will it affect children to now be told they may not be going to the school of their choice and may be going to a school they have never even visited?”

“For the cash saved by the Council you have put 'huge strain' on us who would like their children educated in a Christian way with an ethos of looking after those with ill health/supporting the vulnerable and those in great need.”

“I feel that this proposal will also impact on the environment as it will encourage more car usage and will clog up the already congested roads of the city. In addition the location of the two Catholic schools is on some of the busiest routes in Sheffield.”

“These questions have been deliberately worded to confuse people.”

Overview of Responses for parents / carers and young people who are **not** currently receiving a free bus pass (Group 2).

If a respondent indicated that they were a parent / carer or a young person, they were asked whether they currently receive a free bus pass to travel to a denominational school.

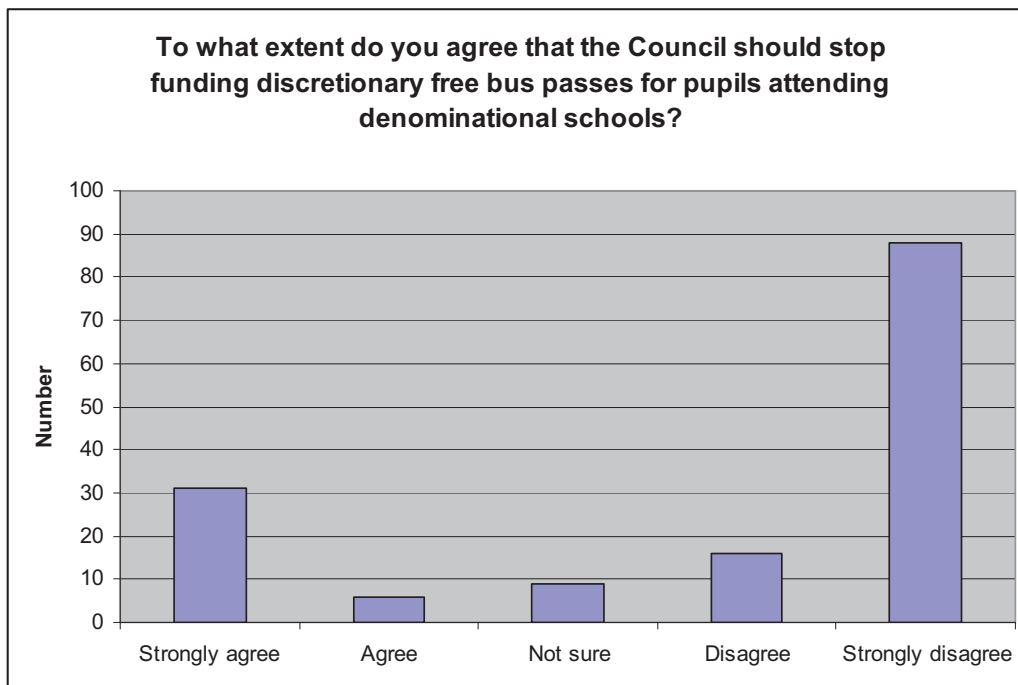
Of the 472 parents / carers and young people who completed the survey, 152 of these do **not** currently receive a free bus pass.

However, 104 of these respondents identified their religion as 'Christian' and, from many of the comments made, it was evident that, despite not currently receiving a free bus pass, this proposal could adversely affect them in the future (several talked about their children currently being at feeder schools for the Catholic secondary schools).

Overview of Responses

1) Views on the Proposal

The questionnaire asked to what extent people agreed with the Council's proposal to stop funding discretionary free bus passes for pupils attending denominational schools.



- 88 of the 152 currently **not** receiving a bus pass strongly disagreed and 16 disagreed with the proposal to remove free bus passes.

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- 31 of the 152 strongly agreed and 6 agreed with the proposal.
- 9 were not sure.

Reasons / additional comments given for response

37 respondents added comments explaining why they had answered the way they did. The following make up a selection of the most representative comments and these have been grouped under some key headings.

Strongly agree

Discrimination against non-Catholic families

“Discriminating against non-Catholic families. I have to pay for my son to catch the bus to school. Disgusted that my Council Tax pays for this to happen.”

Unfair to fund passes for faith schools

“I cannot comprehend why the Council has funded free travel for faith school pupils only in the past. This is unfair and needs to stop now that funds are so scarce.”

“Parents are making an informed choice to send their child to a school outside their usual catchment. Why should other council tax payers fund their transport just because of their religion?”

Waste of resources

“Because it’s a wasteful expenditure, and in these difficult times all resources should be directed on only essential front line services, whilst at the same time keeping council tax down.”

Strongly disagree

Discrimination against Catholic families

“I wonder if you would do this to people of non Christian faiths as it seems very discriminating.”

“...a blatant discrimination to our faith.”

“This will be unfair to, and discriminate against, parents and families who wish to send their child to a faith school.”

Financial implications / effect on choice

“I will not be able to send my children to a school of their faith.”

“I think you are penalising people’s choice to offer their children continued education in their chosen faith school.”

“This is a direct attack by Sheffield City Council on freedom to observe a faith or religion.”

“Students from less advantaged backgrounds...won’t get the opportunity to grow in the Catholic faith.”

“All pupils, whatever their financial circumstances and wherever they live should be eligible to attend a denominational school.”

“Many Catholic pupils have to travel long distances to their Catholic primary or secondary school and the removal of this grant would seriously affect parents’ ability to choose a Catholic school for their children.”

Council saves money by children going to VA schools

“The Council benefits a great deal more by the savings that are made by children attending VA schools and I believe this will cost the Council more in real terms in the long run.”

“If the religious organisation stopped providing the school, the Council would have to take over at a higher cost to the taxpayer.”

“These schools provide a public service, this should be appreciated. If the religious organisation stopped providing the school the council would have to take over at a higher cost to the taxpayer.”

Feel that Catholic schools provide a better education in the context of faith

“The denominational schools provide excellent education.”

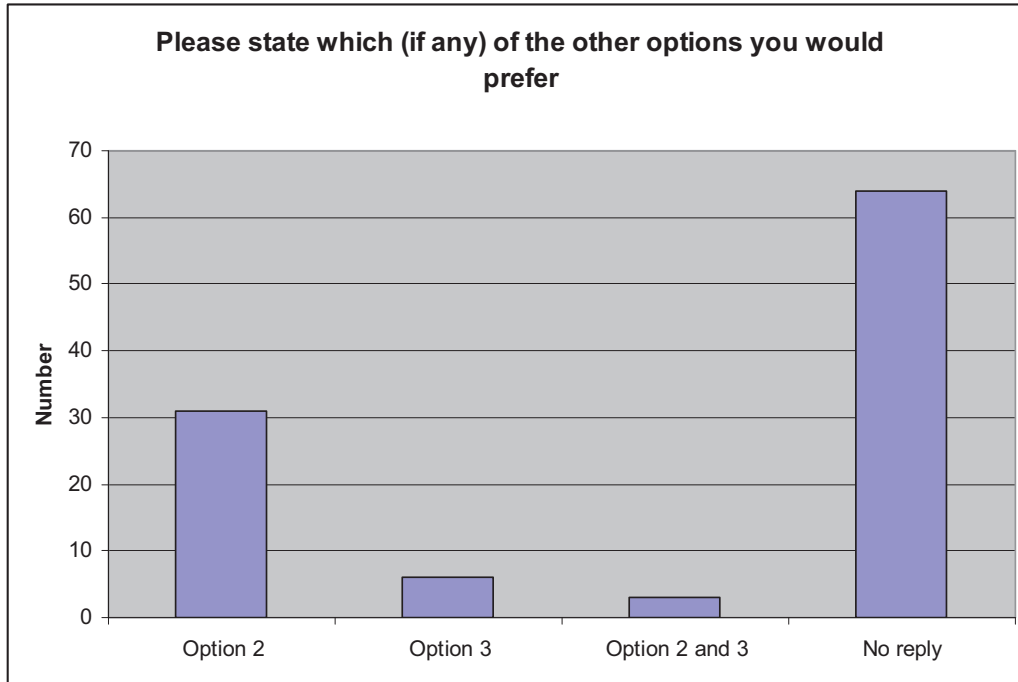
“What the Council considers a nearest ‘suitable’ school may differ considerably from what a Catholic parent considers suitable.”

Location and numbers of Catholic schools / distance to travel

“If there were Catholic schools that were easily accessible from all parts of town, then there would be an argument for removing this grant, but...there are few Catholic schools and they serve very large catchments. It is essential to use public transport for students to get to the schools.”

2) Views on other options outlined in the consultation document

Those who expressed that they disagreed / strongly disagreed with the proposal, were also asked which (if any) of the other options detailed in the consultation document they would prefer.



- 40 respondents answered this question. This means that a further 64 who disagreed / strongly disagreed with the proposal did not express a preference for any other option.
- 31 respondents selected Option 2 and 6 selected Option 3.
- 3 ticked both options.

Reasons / additional comments given for response

7 respondents added comments explaining why they had answered the way they did.

Option 2

“Families with children already in receipt of the discount will have taken this into account before sending their children to the chosen school. Families of future years’ children will be able to make their decision of school choice based upon them knowing they will have to pay for bus fares.”

“Parents need to be aware from the beginning of school of financial commitments. This would allow transition.”

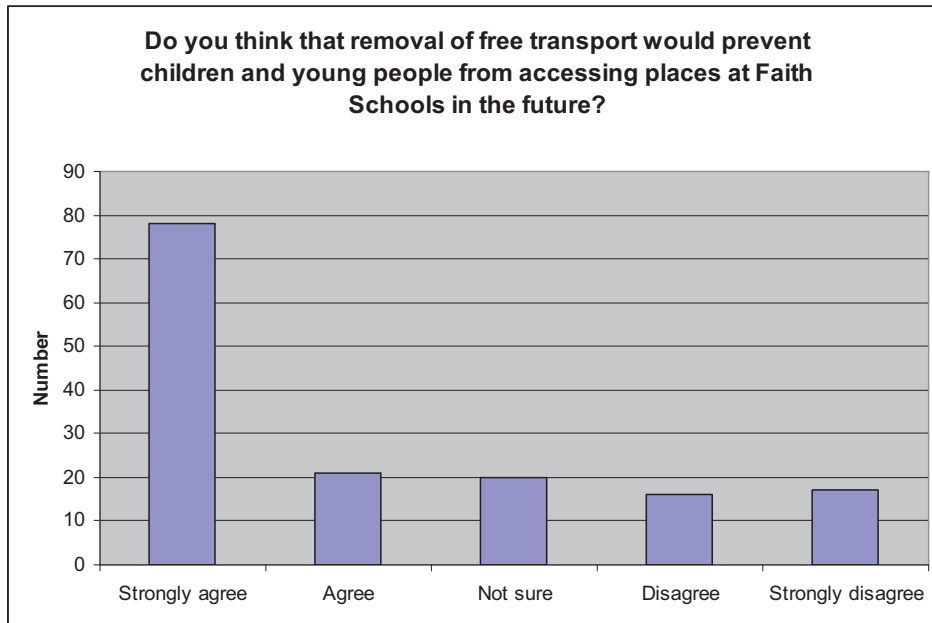
“I have 3 children taking two buses to Notre Dame. At 70p per trip, this means £2.80 per child per day which is £14 per child per week which works out to £56 per week. Even though it would be difficult to manage these fares, I wouldn't take my children to another school because I was brought up Catholic and I want my children to have the same values. Changing schools would also affect their performance and I wouldn't want to put their futures at risk.”

Option 3

“This would give some assistance to current Y10 and Y11 pupils.”

3) Views on how the proposal may affect accessing places at faith schools

Respondents were asked whether they thought removal of free transport would prevent children from accessing places at Faith Schools in the future.



- 152 people answered this question.
- 78 strongly agreed and 21 agreed that this would happen.
- 17 strongly disagreed and 16 disagreed that this would happen.
- 20 were not sure.

Reasons / additional comments given for response

32 of these respondents added comments explaining why they had answered the way they did.

Strongly agree

“The cost of public transport is so expensive now. Even for families like us who work all the hours we can there is no money left at the end of the month after paying all the bills and we simply cannot afford the bus fares. We both work full time and we do not ask for or receive any help from the Government. I will fight for my children’s right to attend a Catholic school and get there on a free bus pass. We are being punished for working and wanting our children to attend a Catholic school.”

“It would divide people based on wealth rather than beliefs/faith. This is not acceptable for state funded schools that should not be determined by affordability. The less affluent / poor Catholic parents and their children would suffer and this is wrong. Also if the decision was made to begin charging bus fares it should be made effective from the children who are beginning their school life stage, so that parents can make an informed decision rather than when they are already in Catholic education.”

“Many parents who do not receive benefits may still need to take into account the cost of the fares when choosing a school for their child. The fares for young people in Sheffield are unduly high as it is and are likely to increase during the years the child is in education. The rising costs will undoubtedly have an influence on the choice of schools.”

“Yes, parents frequently have more than one child in the school at the same time and would struggle to find £7 for each per week. Household bills continue to soar when incomes are staying the same. This is an extra amount that many families have not expected and may not be able to find.”

“Obviously. How could it not?? For the reasons stated in the first section. It targets people who are not eligible for FSM etc. the already 'squeezed middle'. We already walk 1.5 miles to school because we cannot afford the bus for 3 children every day and are not eligible for any government handouts except a child benefit. We have been fortunate in securing a house just in walking distance because we have a reasonable household income; these proposals discriminate against those who are lower-middle income earners. Incidentally, had our circumstances been different and had we been further afield and therefore reliant on school buses your suggestion to accommodate changes of school to a nondenominational one is not a viable option, we would sooner home educate.”

Agree

The responses from those who ticked and commented on this option indicate that respondents may have ticked 'Agree' by mistake or misunderstood the question as their comments seem to reflect their disagreement with the proposal.

Disagree

“I am aware that a lot of pupils want to attend faith schools but because there are not enough spaces they don't get in. For those who cant afford transport to faith schools they still can attend the local school close to them giving access to those who live close to the faith schools

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to just walk down there as there would now be spaces for them. I know of a lady who lives close to a faith school but has to go further away to take her child to school simply because she could not secure a space there.”

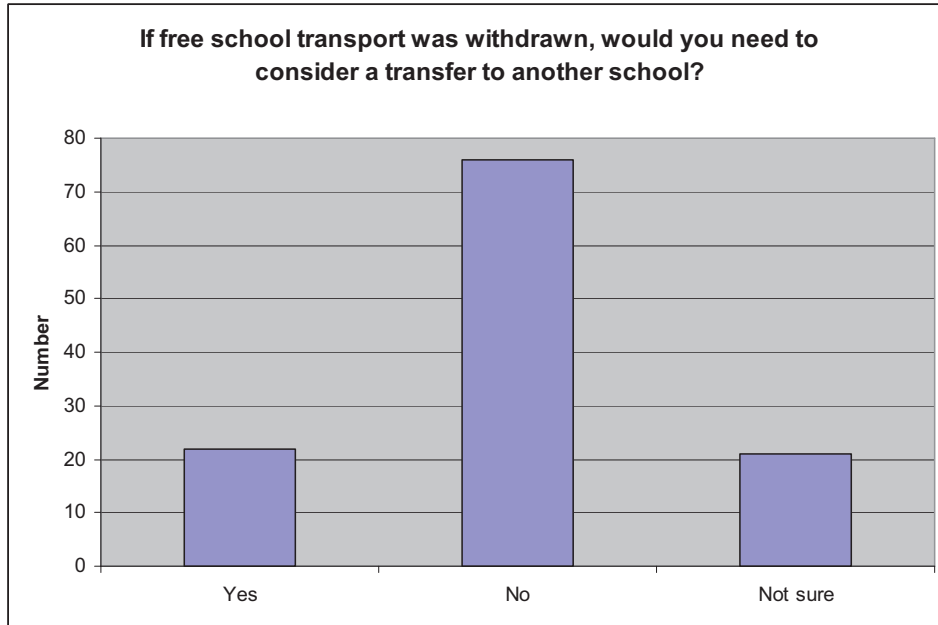
Strongly disagree

“If parents wish their child to attend a faith school then they will still send them and travel will not come into play as its parental choice. If a parent cannot afford the travel costs then their choice could be to send their child to their catchment school.”

“They can still catch bus if needed but they should be made to pay like all other children have to.”

4) Views on how the proposal may result in the need for a school transfer

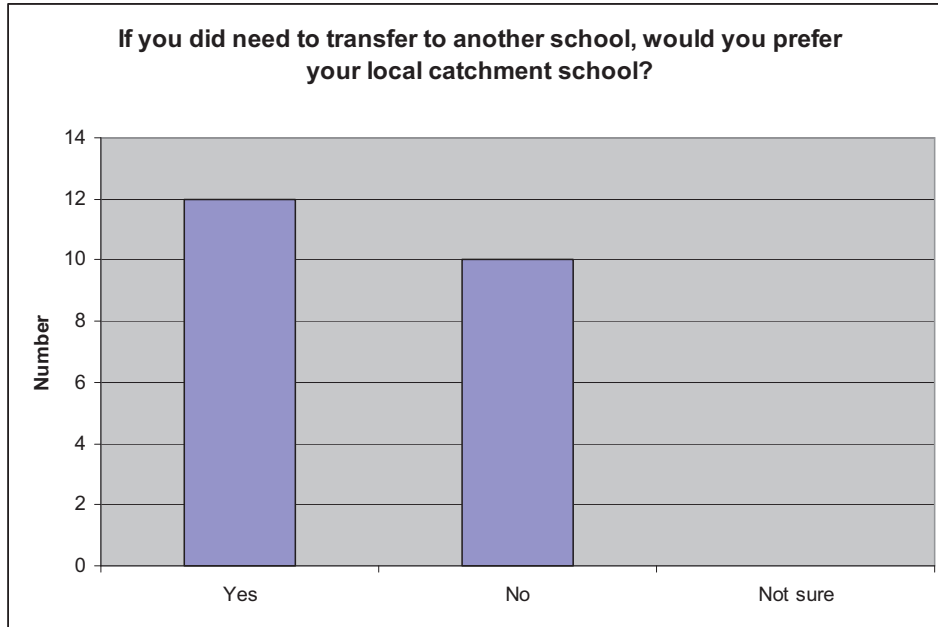
The questionnaire asked whether people would need to transfer to another school if free transport was withdrawn.



- 119 responded to this question.
- 22 said yes, 76 said no and 21 were not sure.

5) Views on whether local catchment school would be preferred

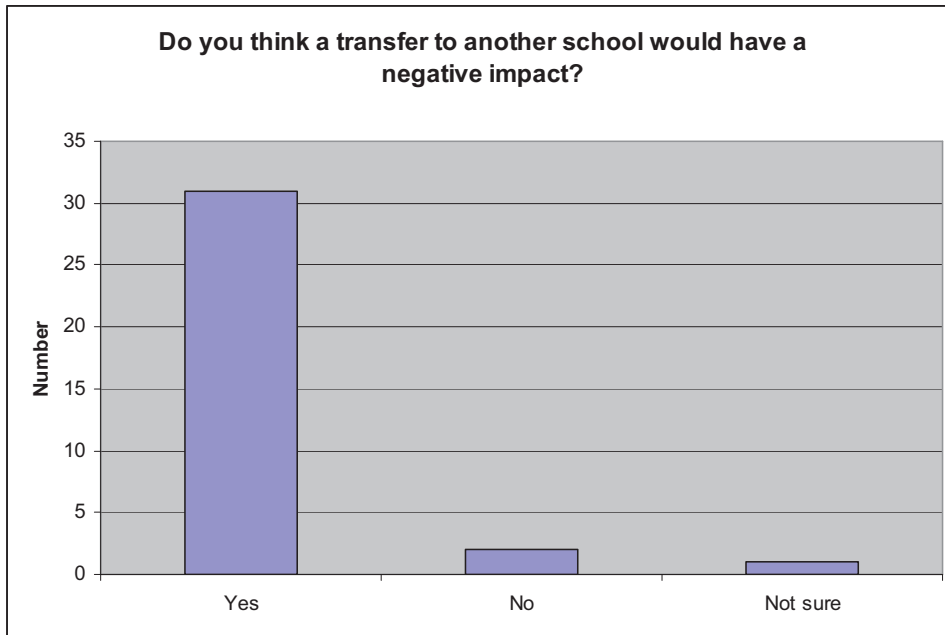
Those who had indicated that they would need to consider a transfer to another school were asked whether they would prefer their local catchment school.



- 22 answered this question.
- 12 said they would prefer their local catchment school.
- 10 said they would not prefer their local catchment school.

6) Views on whether a transfer to another school would have a negative impact

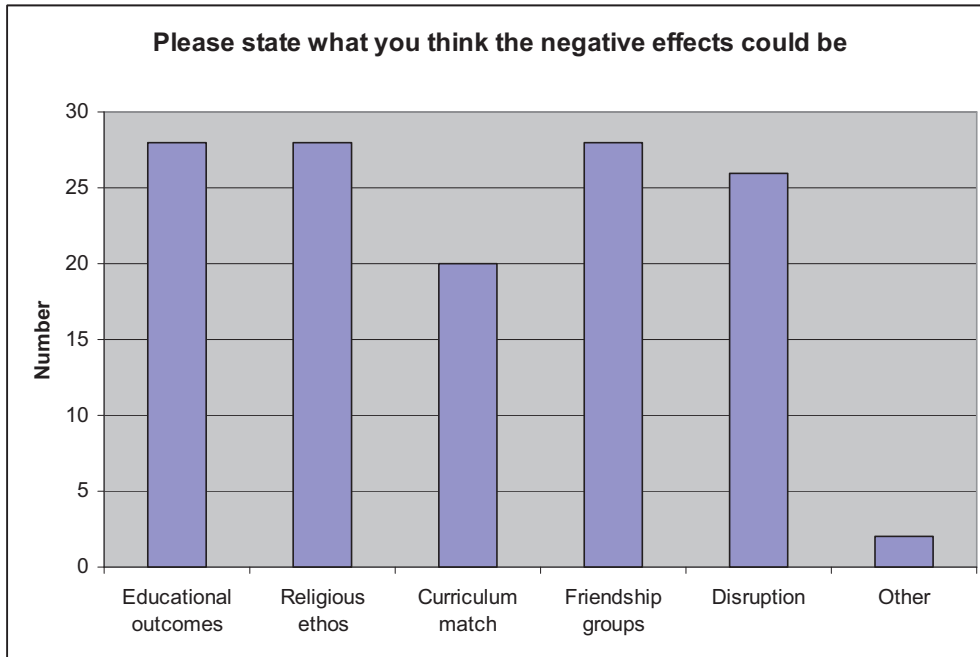
Respondents were asked whether they thought a transfer to another school would have a negative impact.



- 34 answered this question.
- 31 felt that a school transfer **would** have a negative impact.
- 2 felt that a school transfer **would not** have a negative impact.
- 1 was not sure.

Those who did feel a school transfer would have a negative impact were asked in what specific areas the effects might be. Respondents could tick more than one answer. The graph below shows how respondents answered. The three top concerns were educational outcomes, religious ethos and friendship groups (all over 90%).

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The one other comment made regarding possible negative effects was:

“Not getting the Catholic education we deserve.”

* 20 parents / carers and young people who said they do **not** currently receive a free bus pass thought they would qualify under the Temporary Assistance Scheme. This means that some people did not understand the criteria as explained in the questionnaire as one of the specified conditions was ‘your child currently receives a bus pass under the current discretionary policy...’

7) General comments

Respondents were asked if they would like to make any other comments about the proposal. A selection of these can be found below:

“I hope this has been sent to all schools and not just Catholics as before, otherwise the answers will be the same. People of Sheffield do not know this is happening. People I have spoken to did not realise this was happening.”

“The questions are constructed to give limited scope for a view in opposition to the council's intentions, for example there is no option to retain the status quo which may force some people to choose one of the options given which necessarily gives a false result; it is therefore inherently unfair. the question on whether the proposals will impede or advance equality is ambiguous and will undoubtedly generate false results which should be taken into consideration.”

“There seems to be a flawed assumption in this whole process. It assumes that all those who want to go to faith schools do so for religious reasons. This is simply not true. Often parents want to send their children to a certain faith school not because of its religious persuasions but simply because it is seen as the best school. My son goes to a faith school yet neither he nor I are religious and his mother is only in the vaguest way possible. We sent him to a Catholic school because we saw it as the best school, not because it was Catholic. When he was bullied at school (related to a disability) the school dealt with it swiftly and firmly and it's never been a problem since. This is what is important to us, not the religious side of his schooling. I think most families will happily trade one little white lie, “Yes we're a staunch Catholic family,” if it means a better education for their children. So I think a more honest question is whether free bus pass funding should continue to help give families a wider choice of schools.”

“Even though the council is under no obligation to continue with the agreement, it would be unfair to remove the free bus passes. The fact that the council can not commit themselves to what they agreed on in this past means that there is going to be a lot of mistrust between the council and the community that the council is supposed to serve.”

“The Council is clearly facing big budget cuts but should do everything it can to continue to provide any child who receives a free bus pass under the current discretionary system for as long as it can. The council should also recognise that in the past certain Catholic schools were closed and there was an understanding that free transport would be provided for those pupils who would have to travel to the remaining school when such a distance was excessive. As such, the council should not break that understanding.”

Overview of Responses for other stakeholders (Group 3).

The vast majority of respondents to the survey were parents / carers and young people (95%). The other 5% of respondents identified themselves as:

- 4 x Governor
- 5 x Headteacher
- 2 x Member of School Staff
- 12 x 'other'

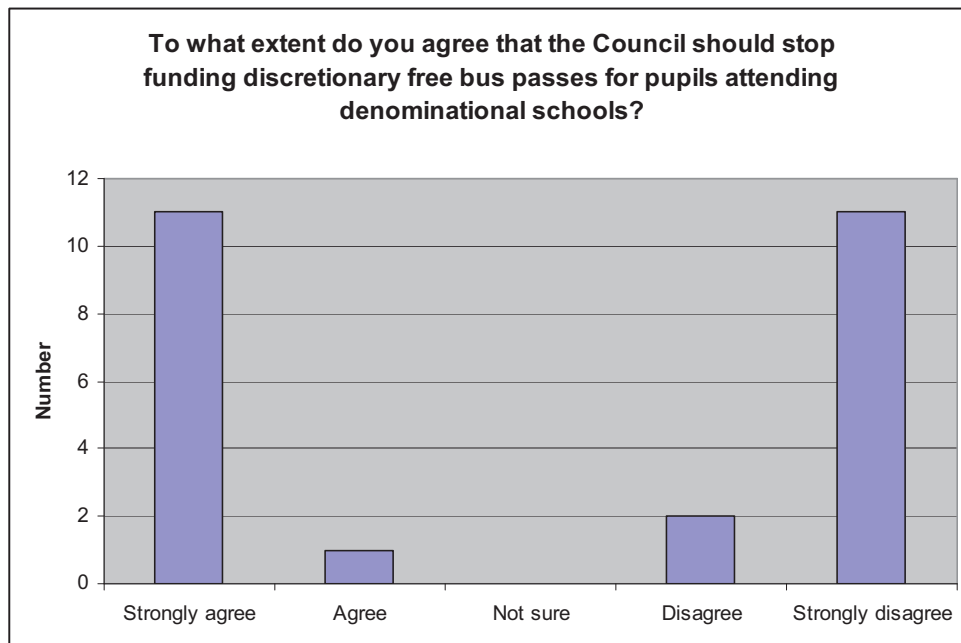
We have defined this group as 'other stakeholders' for the purpose of the report.

Those in the 'other' category included respondents who identified themselves as students and members of the general public (e.g. 'Council Tax Payer', 'Citizen'). One person identified themselves as a 'Christian living in Sheffield' and one as a representative of a refugee family.

These other stakeholders were asked fewer questions as some parts of the questionnaire would not be relevant to them (e.g. do you receive a free bus pass?, would your child need to transfer school?, etc).

1) Views on the Proposal

The questionnaire asked to what extent they agreed with the Council's proposal to stop funding discretionary free bus passes for pupils attending denominational schools.



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- 11 strongly agreed and 1 agreed with the proposal.
- 11 strongly disagreed and 2 disagreed with the proposal.

Reasons / additional comments given for response

15 respondents added comments explaining why they had answered the way they did. Given the relatively low number of other stakeholders, all of these responses have been included.

Strongly Agree

“It is discriminatory to fund free passes for children on the condition that they are part of a religion. As far as I know it is not part of any religious doctrine that a child must be educated within a religious school, if it is they should still not receive special treatment at the expense of the rest of society. There are non denominational schools that these children can attend if a school of their denomination is not within close proximity.”

“Schools are for education, not religion. The education system should be completely religion-free.”

“Those of no-faith or who do not attend a denominational school are not provided with free bus passes, so I do not see why those who choose to go to a denominational school should.”

“All school Children should be treated equally. If you choose a school outside the area then that is your choice.”

“Because there has to be cut backs in the council. If parents really want their children to go to a particular school then I'm sure they will find the money to provide bus fare.”

“Because faith is a choice - and attending a faith school is a choice not a requirement even for a member of a faith.”

Disagree

“Some would be able to afford the bus fare, but many would find £7 or even £14, if they have to change in the city centre, very difficult. If there were a school bus the cost would be restricted to £7. The family I am helping is already facing benefit capping, which will mean them finding £52 per week more towards the rent. They also have to pay council tax for the first time and may even later fall foul of the bedroom tax.”

“Whilst I understand the financial pressures why have faith schools been singled out?”

Strongly Disagree

“Because it will impact the significantly less well off families that can't afford to live in e.g. S10, but would none-the-less like their children to have an education that includes their faith. On many ways, faith is a great 'leveller', and I believe all the children benefit from being educated alongside children of many different ethic & socioeconomic backgrounds.”

“Many families we serve come from deprived areas and wish to travel to attend their desired school. Without subsidised travel they would not be able to afford to attend the school of their choice. The free bus passes support parental choice in line with national policy - removing this support is detrimental to a parent's right to choose.”

“Families should have the freedom of choice of school for their child and by stopping the funding for the discretionary free bus pass will mean that the freedom of choice is removed for some families as they may not be able to afford the bus fares.”

“This would disadvantage pupils already attending our school. Their parents have chosen this school as their designated Catholic school, since they belong to our catchment area, as defined by the geographical boundaries of the Catholic parishes. Removing these discretionary bus passes does not equate to other community schools in Sheffield who are currently given discretionary transport assistance because of historical agreements. Historical agreements with Catholic schools should be honoured by the council.”

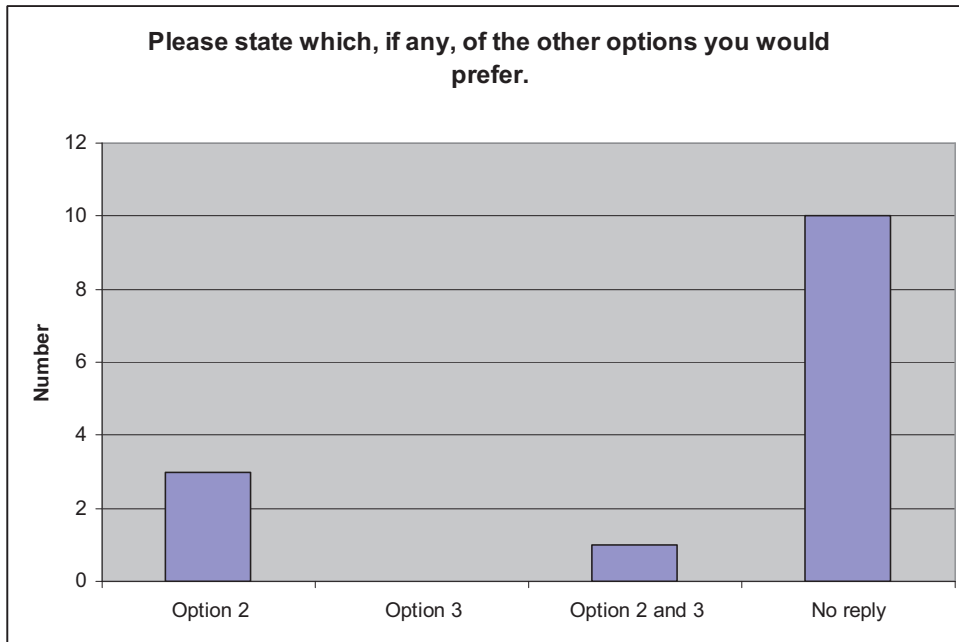
“This is discriminatory and divisive.”

“Parents will not have free choice. Our schools serve families from all over Sheffield, including less affluent areas. The socio-economic mix is hugely advantages for all families in addition to bonding same faiths across the community.”

“It is going to put extra pressure on our parents.”

2) Views on other options outlined in the consultation document

Those who expressed that they disagreed / strongly disagreed with the proposal were also asked which (if any) of the other options detailed in the consultation document they would prefer.



- 3 respondents answered this question. This means a further 10 who disagreed / strongly disagreed with the proposal did not express a preference for any other option.
- 2 respondents selected Option 2 and one selected both options (Option 2 and 3).
- Nobody ticked just Option 3.

Reasons / additional comments given for response

2 respondents added comments explaining why they had answered the way they did.

Option 2

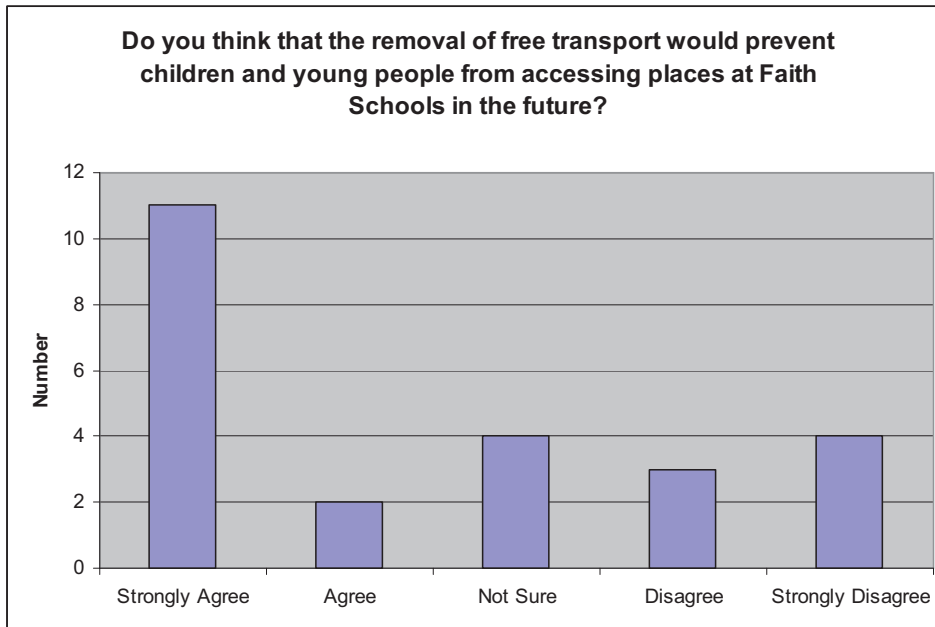
“It protects the pupils currently at our school. However, I am concerned that there is no “Option 4” - not to remove discretionary bus transport assistance, and there is no way of recording this on your consultation.”

Option 2 and Option 3

“In Option 2 children, who already receive a pass should continue with it until they finish at their current school. It isn't fair to move the goal posts for children already at the school. Bus passes would be phased out for Reception pupils and Year 7 entrants from Sept 2013 onwards. I think Option 3 should be applied to all children starting Year 7 from Sept 2013 onwards, not only Years 10 and 11. It would help the current Years 10 and 11, but what about low income families currently in Years 7 to 9? It would be unfair to put children into the situation of having to change schools, it would be unfair to Pupil Admissions, nor would it be fair to the two Denominational schools caught up in this situation. Taking this line of action, would bring in some revenue, because those who could afford it would pay, whilst protecting those who would really struggle to pay. I still think there should be an appeals process, whatever the outcome, for cases like the family I am helping. This family, after suffering persecution in S.E. Asia, was settled in Arbourthorne, where they suffered racial harassment from secondary pupils from two local catchment schools. It would obviously not be appropriate to attend one of these schools. The family are practising Christians who want their son to go to a Catholic school. He has been given a place, but without the free bus pass this would be impossible on their very much reduced income.”

3) Views on how the proposal may affect accessing places at faith schools

Respondents were asked whether they thought removal of free transport would prevent children from accessing places at Faith Schools in the future.



- 24 people answered this question.
- 11 strongly agreed and 2 agreed that this would happen.
- 4 strongly disagreed and 3 disagreed that this would happen.
- 4 were not sure.

Reasons / additional comments given for response

18 of these respondents added comments explaining why they had answered the way they did.

Strongly agree

“Parents already make sacrifices to send their children some distance to our school. With most parents having more than one school-age child this is a significant financial burden at a time of difficulty for many families. The families most affected would be those just above the threshold for statutory free transport: hard-working, working-class families - traditional labour supporters!”

“Parents who have a strong Christian faith should have the option to send their children to a faith school if they are in the catchment area of a parish that traditionally and currently sends children to a particular faith school and should not be prevented from so doing because the withdrawal of free school bus passes means they cannot afford to do so. SCC is disadvantaging Christian parents and pupils for secular and distasteful reasons.”

“Because the families that this will affect are the sorts of families that don't have two cars, who don't have the option to just bundle everyone into a car to do the school run (because the main money earner requires the use of it), and who literally couldn't afford the costs of coming by bus, especially if they have more than one child. And suddenly, they won't be able to afford a faith option. Ironically, this will also put a strain on their local community schools. Finally, the gift of faith to your child does require quite a lot of education and discussion. Without the opportunity to go to a faith school, it does make it less likely that a child will get to learn enough about that faith. And from my perspective, the gift of faith is the best gift I can give my children, to help them through the ups and downs of life.”

“See previous answer. Many families will not be able to afford to attend the school of their choice due to the high levels of deprivation that many of our families have.”

“Many children, particularly those who want to attend faith high schools, have to travel further to do this and will therefore be penalised if the removal of free transport goes ahead and this may mean that they are unable to afford to access places at Faith schools. Surely this isn't offering equal opportunities to all?”

“Bus fares would be prohibitive.”

“Families in poorer areas will not be able to afford the fares. They have told us this and are very worried about this. Many families have children catching 2 buses to school and 2 buses from school because they firmly believe in the right for religious education.”

“Sometimes I may have to think instead of giving pressure to my parents to go to nearby schools. But I have been to local school and I prefer my faith school. I value my religious beliefs and I believe that what I learn as a small child will last for ever.”

4) Additional Comments

Respondents were asked if they would like to make any other comments about the proposal. 4 comments were made.

“You state that you want to know the impact of these proposals on particular groups: In our school there are 249 pupils. 35.5% of pupils come from ethnic minority groups. There are 44 pupils who regularly use the dedicated school buses, of which 25 (56.8%) are from minority ethnic groups, with black African the most common. One can deduce from this that the proposal will disproportionately affect pupils from minority ethnic groups.”

“I think the proposal is excellent. It is about time we stood up to these so-called 'faith' schools. There should be no religion in the education system.”

“Whilst this proposal may look as if it saves money in the short term, I doubt this will prove the case in the reality of the longer term.”

“Need to improve questionnaire clarity, too wording making the question inaccessible to the majority.”

Complete list of comments made in the survey

Please note that the following represent views as expressed verbatim by individual respondents.

*These aren't broken down by **respondent** (i.e. by group) but by responses to each question.*

4. To what extent do you agree that the Council should stop funding discretionary free bus passes for pupils attending denominational schools (Option 1 in the Consultation document)?

5. Please tell us why you answered this way.

Strongly agree

1. All school Children should be treated equally. If you choose a school outside the area then that is your choice
2. Because faith is a choice - and attending a faith school is a choice not a requirement even for a member of a faith
3. Because it is only available for children of that faith.
4. Because its a wasteful expenditure, and in these difficult times all resources should be directed on only essential front line services, whilst at the same time keeping council tax down
5. Because there has to be cut backs in the council. If parents really want their children to go to a particular school then I'm sure they will find the money to provide bus fare.
6. Discriminating against non catholic family's , I have to pay for my son to catch the bus to school , disgusted that my council tax pays for this to happen ... All children should get free bus fares or all should have to pay !!
7. Getting your child into one of the best schools in Sheffield (i.e. All Saints/Notre Dame) is made easier by adopting the catholic way. I have been amazed by parents who quite openly admit to doing this just to improve their chances of securing a place even changing primary schools and suddenly changing faith. This is shown especially after leaving in y6 and these parents no longer go to church and simply forget their commitments made to the church. In some cases if the child did not get into the catholic secondary schools they would have to pay bus fares to the local secondary, not everyone lives within walking distance. I don't know of anyone in that situation that hasn't been able to pay the fares.
8. I agree because there is no reason to suspect people of faith are any poorer than anyone else. Indeed many are quite wealthy. To an average family the cost of a bus pass is not a barrier to going to a certain school. To a low income family it is and I think income should be the basis of discretionary bus passes, not one religious beliefs.
9. I cannot comprehend why the Council has funded free travel for faith school pupils only in the past. This is unfair and needs to stop no that funds are so scarce.

Appendix 5 – All Responses

10. It is discriminatory to fund free passes for children on the condition that they are part of a religion. As far as I know it is not part of any religious doctrine that a child must be educated within a religious school, if it is they should still not receive special treatment at the expense of the rest of society. There are non denominational schools that these children can attend if a school of their denomination is not within close proximity.
11. It is not the business of local government to promote religion. Improve all schools to a decent standard and the demand for religious education will fall dramatically.
12. Parents are making an informed choice to send heir child to a school outside their usual catchment. Why should other council tax payers fund their transport just because of their religion?
13. Schools are for education, not religion. The education system should be completely religion-free.
14. Those of no-faith or who do not attend a denominational school are not provided with free bus passes, so I do not see why those who choose to go to a denominational school should.
15. Unfair system. Should be income based. Aware of parents earning £40k + and live 3.1 miles who get a free pass. But what about someone who gets WTC(just below max rate earning £16200), earns a fraction, lives 2.9 miles away has to pay. Both go to church. What's fair about that?

Agree

1. I appreciate that in the current economic climate hard decisions regarding funding have to be made. Free bus passes for families who choose to send their children to a school other than the local one, cannot really be considered to be a funding priority.
2. I feel this way because if you can afford to pay for tuition for a faith school then you should not be on the welfare system.

Not sure

1. Affordable transport should be available to all children i.e. - 20p per journey not 70p. If the pass could be withdrawn in order to provide cheaper transport for all rather than just free to some then this is a fairer way of doing things. I would think this would save on the administration costs surrounding the pass. However if you do not reduce the cost of child travel then the pass should be phased out rather than just withdrawn, it is unfair to pupils already at the school to just take it away.
2. For info, we currently live just under 3 miles from the school and pay for 2 "free" bus passes each year so our children can travel on the bus daily.
3. I can't open the document and so have not read the doc as requested. Are other pupils that do not attend denominational school given the same privilege? If no then it's fair enough. If not then why not. If any young person is entitled to a free bus pass they should all be given it not some given it and some not given it because of the school they attend. It's not their fault they do not attend denominational school.

They may have liked to attend but there was no space available for them. Given pupils that attend denominational school free bus passes and not others is like rubbing in the salt. No it's not fair. To be fair give free bus passes to PUPIL or STOP IT entirely

Disagree

1. Although I do have to pay for my bus pass at the beginning of every year, it is still much easier than having to find the exact change twice a day. Also, bus journey times would be significantly increased as each person boarding the bus would have to find the correct change, hand it to the driver and wait for the driver to check the money before being able to sit down!
2. As people are already struggling at the moment with jobs and finding enough money this is going to be made more difficult as children are sent to faith schools for a reason and most are one or two buses away from where people live and should not be made to compromise on this due to the council making cuts.
3. I disagree because that just means that you don't care about people who have no father living with barely no money to get transport or buy anything expensive so i think its a good idea just to leave everything as it was.
4. I still believe that this may have an impact on some families who may send their children to the nearest school instead of the nearest faith school, thereby removing choice.
5. I understand the need for the need for the council to make cuts. However with the price of children's fares increasing then this going to put a big strain on family budgets.
6. if the council wants to scrap all free travel for school pupils very well not just faith schools
7. Option 1 makes no allowance for children already attending a faith school and in receipt of a free bus pass, who will lose it, which may have serious detrimental effect on the finances of some families. Families just above the low income threshold will probably have to reassess whether they are able to afford to send their children to their first choice of a faith school.
8. Some would be able to afford the bus fare, but many would find £7 or even £14, if they have to change in the city centre, very difficult. If there were a school bus the cost would be restricted to £7. The family I am helping is already facing benefit capping, which will mean them finding £52 per week more towards the rent. They also have to pay council tax for the first time and may even later fall foul of the bedroom tax.
9. to continue with education at denominational school transport is essential and parents & pupils should not be deterred from this
10. Whilst I appreciate savings need to be made, I, like many parents, chose to send my child before this proposal occurred and thus was not able to make an informed choice regarding the financial impact at that time and am currently faced the additional costs that will have an impact on my tight budget.

11. Whilst I understand the financial pressures why have faith schools been singled out?

Strongly disagree

1. A clear case of religious discrimination 2. Fabricated and uncosted proposal based on No actual facts (see next point) 3. No actual cost saving to the council since students would have to be bussed to other far lying schools due to over subscription of other schools in the locality should parents wish to transfer 4. Disenfranchisement of Parent and pupils right to choose 5. Deception - parents and students have not been given the opportunity to visit other schools and go though the open evenings/days to make an alternative choice despite assurances that this would be facilitated for personally by the leader of the council, in a public meeting, please refer to actual council records 6. Misinformation given to the public by the council and council members in the public hearing and in the press which if deliberate amounts to deception 7. The deliberate refusal by the council to acknowledge the historic and agreed catchment areas of the Catholic schools enshrined in actual council records and mapping. I have evidence of these records and again the council and council members refusal to acknowledge this in the public meeting amounted to deception 8. Retrograde withdrawal of funding arrangements for transport by the council for all students in yrs7-11 already accepted by the council and given places amounts to breach of faith. This proposal should at best only be proposed for current y5 who have not made applications yet so informed choices can be made 9. The disproportionate impact on families with multiple children at the faith schools 10. Undue impact on other Sheffield schools and their ability to offer places and within 3 years there is going to be a baby boom coming through the school secondary sector

Financial reasons - My son catches 2 buses each way totalling £546 per school. 2. I would have to take him to school by car instead meaning that he or my other child (who attends a different school) would be late each day. 3. If he went to his local catchment area school (Bradfield) he would still qualify for a zero fare pass. Therefore he is being discriminated against.

1. I do not consider it an unreasonable expectation for the provision of a discretionary transport subsidy to be for the duration of a child's education up to year 11. 2. I think the Council should honour the historical agreement re transport subsidy for Catholic children, initiated on the closure of three secondary Catholic Schools. 3. I consider the most suitable school for a Catholic child to be a Catholic school and should not relate to residential catchment areas which appear to be manipulated by the Council to achieve their own ends.
2. A number of reasons. a) It singles out the catholic community for removal of funding, no other form of discretionary funding is being targeted in this way. This is inequitable. Catholics are tax payers too. You are essentially asking Catholics to support other discretionary funding arrangements whilst removing any that they may have

recourse to. b) Sheffield Council are reneging on a promise made to the catholic community, when Sheffield needed to reduce the number of secondary schools, that provision would be made to ensure children in catholic primary schools across the city would retain the choice of attending catholic secondary regardless of where they lived. The proposed revisions limit the freedom of choice to those families with the money to pay the bus fares or travel costs. c) Removing the discretionary funding may lead to a longer term ghettoising of catholic communities and will probably destabilise the current social mix and integration which are strength found in our catholic schools, risking elitism. d)This proposal, and others like it, demonstrate a lack of tolerance for alternate value structures and belief systems. e) there is woeful ignorance of what faith is and why it is important for those of a faith background to seek education in a faith setting. The attempt to equate seeking a specialist technology or language school with a faith school clearly demonstrates this ignorance (Council's letter to parents October 2012). As does your excerpt 'Transport to Schools' on pg 8 of the current consultation document. The latter implies the key consideration for parents is accurate provision of the national curriculum. The key consideration for a catholic parent is to find a school which provides a value structure in keeping with the teachings of the catholic church which permeates not only all areas of the curriculum but all school life. A school which continues the values taught at home and in the parish. A school which values every individual in their community regardless of academic ability. What the council considers a nearest 'suitable' school may differ considerably from what a catholic parent considers suitable. Further, as you do not provide the option yourselves, I would like to state an option 4: retain discretionary bus passes for denominational schools. Your survey is going to give skewed results because of the questions you haven't asked and the way in which you have posed the remainder.

3. A pupil should not be penalized for wanting to be educated and enjoy their faith at the same time
4. a. with two children already at the school we would be several hundred pounds a year worse off b. when we sent our children to the school it was on the understanding that we would have free travel - it is wrong to withdraw at this stage c. it is discriminatory against faith schools
5. All pupils whatever their financial circumstances and wherever they live should be eligible to attend a denominational school. The denominational schools provide excellent education, access to which would undoubtedly improve the standards of education throughout the city. The free bus passes for pupils attending these schools ensures that access is not reserved for those pupils fortunate to live in the areas where the schools are.
6. as a point of principle I feel ALL schoolchildren should have free home to school transport but as a practising Catholic in a large city with only two Catholic secondary schools children often have to travel more than 3miles to attend school & are therefore entitled to a free pass
7. As All Saints and Notre Dame are the only catholic schools in the city, most children attending these schools as their nearest suitable school,

- will live over three miles away. Any child who lives over this distance from any school should be entitled to a free bus pass.
8. As I have chosen the catholic school because of my belief and I want my four children to be taught in a catholic environment the decision to stop the founding will definitely be against my family.
 9. As it is important to us that our children go to a faith school, as we are regular church goers but to pay for the bus fares on a daily basis starts to add up.
 10. As there is not a Faith School in the local distance, as a single parent I am stretched to be able to then find £273 for the school year, the other option is I terminate my employment apply for Job Seekers Allowance and get Free School Meals and all other benefits but I do not want to - I want to show my daughter you have to work in life and have a faith upbringing/education but at what cost ??? - I will have to look at the family budget to cover this could be as extreme as losing a family meal per day it is that concerning
 11. Because a child brought up in the catholic faith should have a right to a catholic education without being penalised financially
 12. Because I think it would put unfair economic burdens on struggling families also I don't think it should be limited to faith schools.
 13. Because it will be hard for lots of people to afford the travel costs to the faith school of their choice, which they have the right to attend. It might lead to more people using cars which will negatively impact the environment and the safety of our city. If more people start using cars, passengers on school buses will decline altogether.
 14. Because it will impact the significantly less well off families that can't afford to live in e.g. S10, but would none-the-less like their children to have an education that includes their faith. On many ways, faith is a great 'leveller', and I believe all the children benefit from being educated alongside children of many different ethnic & socioeconomic backgrounds.
 15. Because it would be discrimination against children attending a school of their faith based on their religious beliefs when the faith school is not in their local catchment area.
 16. Catholic families were promised free bus passes when the local secondary school was closed; unilaterally reversing the promise is undemocratic and discriminates against Catholics and their chance of attending a faith school.
 17. Catholic schools are being penalised. My children travel a long way to get to their Catholic School which is our only choice of school for them. They depend on the bus service and their free bus pass. We believe that we are being discriminated against because of our religious choice.
 18. Children from faith communities have specific needs which will not be met in some circumstances if this goes through
 19. Choice is part of my right as a tax payer and I wish to send my child to the School where his faith is part of his education process.
 20. Denominational schools should not be discriminated against. All pupils in Sheffield should be treated the same regardless of race, colour or creed. Also, parents who can't afford bus passes for several children

- may therefore leave their school, or choose a different one initially. This will put more pressure on other schools and leave church schools with empty places.
21. Discrimination against faith but also the impact it will have on those families who are already overstretched because of other cuts, pension contribution increases and general price increases for food, utilities, etc.
 22. Due to the fact children / families are being financially penalised for wishing to obtain a Catholic education. Schools were previously closed with the promise of funding for travel for future generations. It now seems shameful of the council that they cannot now find documentary evidence of this promise.
 23. Families should have the freedom of choice of school for their child and by stopping the funding for the discretionary free bus pass will mean that the freedom of choice is removed for some families as they may not be able to afford the bus fares.
 24. Historically the Council agreed to keep up the subsidy of school fares when denominational school were closed. Faith schools are now very limited and taking away this provision is taking away parental choice and discriminating against our chosen religion.
I feel that it is unfair to change policy on this AFTER my children have begun their education at Notre Dame High School. Had I known that the free bus passes were to be withdrawn, this might have altered my decision to send them to that school in the first place. Now they have started & are happy at Notre Dame, It would not be reasonable to unsettle them by changing schools purely for financial reasons dictated by withdrawal of the free bus passes
 25. I feel that to stop funding is extremely harsh, especially when some are only just scraping by and don't qualify to be included in the lower income bracket because we work full time and earn too much to fall in the boundaries
 26. I have 4 young children who will be attending a catholic high school and due to this I will not be able to afford to send them to the school of our faith.
 27. I have submitted a written submission that details my reasons.
 28. I strongly disagree because catholic children should continue to receive free buss passes because this was promised by the labour council in 1985 when St Peters school was closed
 29. I strongly disagree with the proposal to stop funding free bus passes for pupils attending denominational schools. I would like to contribute to the consultation regarding the proposal to remove the discretionary that helps children with transports costs to that they can go to a Catholic School. I am strongly objecting to this proposal as I believe it discriminates unfairly against students on the basis of their religion. If there were Catholic Schools that were easily accessible from all parts of town then there would be an argument for removing this grant, but as you are aware there are few Catholic Schools and they serve very large catchments and it is essential to use public transport for students to get to the schools. Many Catholic pupils have to travel long distances to their Catholic Primary or Secondary school and the

- removal of this grant would seriously affect parents' ability to choose a Catholic school for their children. I also believe this proposal discriminates against students and families based on their social and economical status. This proposal would particularly affect families who are hard stretched to meet their living costs and who live in areas that are less-advantaged. Therefore I strongly urge the council to withdraw this proposal. This proposal will increase the gap between the more well off and the less well off as students from less advantaged backgrounds will be forced to go to schools that are not their first choice and there they won't get the opportunity to grow in the Catholic faith.
30. I strongly disagree. We receive £20.00 per week for child benefit, if it costs £7.00 a week travel as well at £10.00 a week to cover lunch at £2.00 a day this leaves £3.00 a week to cover other costs. Why should I and my husband be penalised because we have chosen to work all our lives and support our children. We pay tax, national insurance etc as well as paying a pension. I am fed up with having to support other minorities that scrounge off the state and have never worked. We are a family of 5, as stated above myself and my husband have worked for over 28 years. My eldest son is supporting himself through University but lives at home so we provide a home and food etc, my second son is working part-time whilst attending college so I believe that my family provides for itself without having to lose my sons travel pass. If we all took the decision not to work and sponge off the state this country would be in a worse state than it currently is. The government and council are always targeting families that work, it is about time the benefit system was overhauled.
31. I strongly disagree with the councils stopping free bus passes for pupils attending faith schools, as in my opinion it is like being discriminated against for my faith, as I want my children to go to a Catholic school. I also worry that we also lose our current green bus service as if we did it would mean my children will travel on four buses to and from school
32. I think that it discriminates against my wish to have my children educated in a Catholic secondary school as it places a substantial financial burden on our family. With two sons in a Catholic Primary school, my expectation was that I would naturally send them to one of the Catholic secondary schools. However, this would include twice daily bus fares to either school.
33. I think you are penalising people's choice to offer their children continued education in their chosen faith school. My youngest daughter currently attends a feeder school and is due to move up to secondary next September, where her elder sister goes at this moment. Her not getting a free pass to impact our income extremely hard, plus with the increase in public transport fares and the fact that there isn't a direct bus to the school would mean me spending an awful lot on public transport. The only other alternative would be for me to take them to school in my car before I go to work, creating more traffic on the surrounding roads around the school which I'm sure are already pretty congested, surely another reason why the buses are a good idea!

34. I understand that the council has to meet budget cuts but considering the large amounts of money that it already wastes (and as a lifelong citizen I have witnessed many occasions) this relatively small amount of money is penalizing a small amount of people. It will also impact on our family budgeting and make us worse off. I know we all have to take the strain but I think it very unfair when people who never work are always benefiting regardless. I also wonder if you would do this to people of non Christian faiths as it seems very discriminating. I and my wife both work but this cut would make it even harder for us.
35. I would not be able to get to school if you got rid of my bus pass.
36. In September 2013 I will have two children attending Notre Dame School this means it will cost me £14 a week to get them to school. Although I do not receive benefits this is a lot of extra money for me to find each week.
37. it is discriminatory towards pupils attending faith schools
38. It is discriminative against Catholics
39. it is going to put extra pressure on our parents
40. It is unfair - it discriminates based upon faith. Especially after the closure of St Peters School in the mid 1980's (done to help the Council reduce the cost of its Secondary provision) when there was an agreement that Catholic Families would receive discretionary transport subsidy
41. It is unfair to remove the free bus pass to those who are currently in receipt of the free bus pass. There are many other ways the council can save monies without attacking school children - cut the amount of useless and meaningless meetings and committees for a start. There are also school children who are into exam years and this is an additional stress they can do without at a critical time in their education. The council also agreed to this free bus pass after 2 catholic schools were closed, this therefore, is a gross display by the council of going back on their word to the catholic community, a position which suggests the council is totally untrustworthy.
42. It is unfair to students who have to travel more than three miles to school.
43. It puts pressure on parents in terms of finances. There's been so many cutbacks already and general house hold bills are not getting any lower. Am quite glad that one of my children may still get the benefit as he will be in Y11 from September. And my daughter will be leaving to start college. If this age bracket didn't apply (y7-y9) it would more money per academic year just to get your children educated at a desirable school, or because you want a certain type of education or a level of good education? Where do parents get a break from all this pressure. Bus fairs were just one less thing to worry about. Now it joins the list of specific uniform and school trips. What kind of future will this country have? I choose to educate my children out of the area they live in, to try and give them a better start. Schools are already over subscribed wont this make things worse? We have to think about the knock on effects of this. It's not fair. I have a son that's not due to go to go to secondary school as yet as he's only 6, but I hope that my finances will be in a better position when the time comes. Am sure that

- by the time he goes to secondary school the bus fares will be more than 70p! I feel all this needs careful consideration.
44. It would be unfair to remove the free bus passes especially to children that are already in these schools. Relocating children to near schools is not an option since this will greatly affect children's education. As a result, a lot of families are going to be left in poverty.
 45. It's a matter of sending your child/children to a faith school as you feel that is what your right should be to follow your faith in the school system. The school where your child attends is not always in your catchment area as the church where you worship may be in a different catchment area.
 46. It's unfair that my child with not receive a free bus pass when she has to travel to the other side of the city to attend the only catholic school in the area. It's discriminating against our faith.
 47. Its very hard for people with less money to pay for bus fair
 48. Local schools cannot provide the same level of Religious education that the faith school can
 49. Many Catholic pupils live very far away from the nearest Catholic school
 50. Many children who attend faith schools have to catch 2 buses to school and 2 home again, not the 1 bus each way as stated in your consultant document. This, for myself and many others means over £500 per school year per child. When I chose to send my children to a faith school I took into consideration the fact that they would qualify for a zero fare pass and therefore I felt that, with the Christian ethos of the school and the high standard of education this was the best place for my children's education. Our local catchment school is Bradfield which is over 3 miles away from my house. If my children were to move school they would qualify for a zero fare pass!! This I feel discriminates against my children. Why should my neighbours children receive a zero fare pass and mine not? If you are going to withdraw passes for faith schools it should be done across the board.
 51. Many families we serve come from deprived areas and wish to travel to attend their desired school. Without subsidised travel they would not be able to afford to attend the school of their choice. The free bus passes support parental choice in line with national policy - removing this support is detrimental to a parent's right to choose.
 52. Many families will suffer financially if the bus passes are withdrawn. Some families will be unable to fund their children's travel to school. This will mean that the students may have to leave the school which will be detrimental to their education
 53. My child attends Notre Dame and will be in yr 10 this Sep. Until now we didn't qualify for a free zero pass but since moving we now do, only to find you are trying to stop them! At 70p per journey, this really does add up over the week. For parents who are able to work full time and earn a considerable amount of money, this isn't a worry, to everyone else, it is! Why are we being penalised for our faith!
 54. My children have been in the Catholic education system since they attended nursery. When they were moving to Y7 we never considered any other school than Notre Dame which their primary was a feeder

- for. We had no worries about cost of travel as we knew as a Catholic family we would be entitled to a zero fare pass. Any Catholic child should be entitled to a Catholic education no matter which area of Sheffield they live in. We understand that when the other Catholic secondary schools were closed it was agreed that families would receive free transport so that all catholic children would be able to attend Notre Dame or All Saints.
55. My daughter is y7 at Notre Dame. The bus pass was a consideration when choosing a secondary school. I am a single parent with 4 girls & do not have sufficient income to cover bus fares for the coming years. It's an outrage! Promising something then taking it away!!!!!!!!!!!!
56. Notre Dame school as a catholic family is our CATCHMENT school. Not Stocksbridge high school. We would not receive this faith education at stocksbridge high school. My children have feed in from catholic primary school. I could understand if we attended the Catholic school All Saints as this is further away. We do live out on a limb and it is well over the three mile limit. This is direct discrimination on the grounds of faith.
57. Parents will not have free choice. Our schools serve families from all over Sheffield, including less affluent areas. The socio-economic mix is hugely advantages for all families in addition to bonding same faiths across the community.
58. Religious choice is being affected. Catholic families live in different places. They do not live in one locality. It is unrealistic to say they should attend a local school which is not of their faith.
59. Section 1.3 Objective 2 of the Smarter Choices for Travel to School Strategy 2012-2013 document states 'to provide travel choice and ensure transport is not a barrier to educational choice and attainment'. In 2012 the target to reduce car-based school journeys was missed, car-based school journeys increased. Removal of free school bus passes is not in line with the aims and targets within the Smarter Choices Strategy. Many of the children attending the two Catholic secondary schools in Sheffield live further than 3 miles from their school (due to the location of both schools being in the south of the city and the closure of the Catholic school to the north) and as such should be entitled to free transport.
60. the council benefit a great deal more by the savings that are made by these children attending VA schools and I believe this will cost the council more in real terms in the long run as many more children will need to educated at full cost to the council.
61. The council made an agreement when St Peter's and St John Fisher's were closed, so that council money could be saved, that they would ensure that pupils would not have to pay for transport to attend further afield catholic schools. As an ex pupil of St Peters, I was most upset at its closure. The council has a moral obligation to honour its promise. This was a wonderful local school, which could have been filled with local children of many denominations.
62. The council provides free transport, through law, to children to the nearest suitable school (if that school is 3 miles away for 8 year olds). In our case All Saints is the nearest suitable school withdrawing free

- transport is religious discrimination. Neither option 2 or 3 are acceptable.
63. There are only two catholic high schools in Sheffield, neither of which are in my catchment area. As such my child would have to travel by bus to either one of them. As a practicing Catholic and one who feels strongly about their child attending a Catholic school, (as he has done since primary school) and indeed as our whole family has done, I feel we are being discriminated against. I also feel that as a single parent who is not entitled to any form of benefits I am being placed at a disadvantage.
64. There is no "local" Catholic school available. This could be seen as discrimination against a person's faith. The current cost of bus fares will make this very expensive. If families stop sending their children to faith schools then the buses may be eventually withdrawn as uneconomical. The south of the city already has the "best" schools in Sheffield and this will further divide the city by withdrawing very good faith schools as an option for some parents.
65. There is no local school within walking distance which offers a catholic education
66. There isn't a catholic school on this side of the city using the free school bus is the only way I can get my children to school.
67. These schools provide a public service, this should be appreciated. If the religious organisation stopped providing the school the council would have to take over at a higher cost to the taxpayer.
68. This is discriminating against pupils who wish to attend faith schools as this is the only faith school in the catchment area. I also believe that this would cause great hardship to families in the present economical climate.
69. This is discriminatory and divisive.
70. This is not fair as i send my child to a school especially catered to their religious beliefs (Catholic) and live more than 3 miles away from the school. The children in the same position as mine should also be given the opportunity of a free pass too and from school.
71. This policy will severely pressurise the budgets in Catholic homes across the city
72. This will be unfair to, and will discriminate against, parents and families who wish to send their child to a faith school. This is a direct attack by Sheffield City Council on freedom to observe a faith or religion.
73. This will lead to a 2 tier system with children from poorer areas being unable to attend a faith school. One of the most positive features of faith schools is the diversity of pupils from different backgrounds and this is going to be highly impacted by this decision. It is divisive and discriminates against poorer pupils. Notre Dame is in the top 100 schools in England for improving attainment and it feels as though this fact is being completely disregarded.
74. This would disadvantage pupils already attending our school. Their parents have chosen this school as their designated Catholic school, since they belong to our catchment area, as defined by the geographical boundaries of the catholic parishes. Removing these discretionary bus passes does not equate to other community schools

- in Sheffield who are currently given discretionary transport assistance because of historical agreements. Historical agreements with Catholic schools should be humoured by the council.
75. to remove the discretionary free bus pass immediately without warning would mean children changing schools as the costs for multi-pupil households (like ours) would be too great
 76. Unfair process status quo not an option. Reneging on agreements made previously to protect catholic schools transport
 77. Unfair to withdraw in the middle of a child's education.
 78. Unjust to remove this from pupils already attending a Catholic School and in receipt of the zero fare pass. This is an added expense which was not there when choosing a school. There are no nearer Catholic Schools for my children to attend.
 79. We are a Catholic Family, a church-attending family, and my children must attend a Catholic school. As Catholics we cannot attend our local Secondary provision.
 80. We are a practising Catholic family and it is extremely important to us that our children receive a Catholic education as well as a Catholic upbringing. We could not consider changing our choice of school for our children. To even suggest this is blatant discrimination to our faith. To compensate for the loss of local Catholic schools it was agreed with the City council that Catholic families sending their children to the more distant Catholic high schools would receive a discretionary transport subsidy.
 81. We decided to place our child at St John Fisher Catholic School after making a fully informed decision about their education right through to secondary school. This decision had to be made at that time to ensure consistency for his specific needs having Autism and need for continuity and minimal disruption. Senco are heavily involved together with Psychologists to ensure smooth transition from the feeder school. I therefore feel I do not have a choice to change the secondary school at this late stage so am tied to having to send him to this school whether the costs are there or not. We are also Catholic and therefore wish him to receive a continual catholic school upbringing without being penalised at this late stage in his education. Had we known about the fare charges our decision would have been affected but at primary school decision time not senior school.
 82. We got the free bus pass because we live more than 3 miles away from the school. Why should this be any different now?
 83. We opted for a faith school to ensure our child received an education supported by our beliefs and values. There are no faith schools within the designated walking distance, our only option is public transport across the city.
 84. We send our child to a faith school for the religious values that faith school's stand for. Our christian faith is important to us and feel that by taking away our free bus pass the council is forcing some parents to send our children to a local non faith school that do not have the same faith value we many christians feel are extremely important.

85. we were not given warning when choosing the school- now we are in a situation where i can't afford to send my child to school but am afraid that changing school will disrupt her education
86. We were told that we would qualify for free travel. Had we realised that that would not be the case throughout, it would have changed our choice of school.
87. Well, I go to my school for my faith. My local school/s don't support my faith. In order to go to my closest choice of faith school, I have to travel across the City. It requires at least two methods of public transport each way. That's 70px4=£2.80 a day. I don't even get that much for lunch money. Sometimes struggle to get any lunch money at all as it is. That's ridiculous. No family can pay that 5x a week 40x a year. That comes to a total cost of £14 per week, which is £560 per school year! Oh, I also have a younger brother which totals it to £1120 a year. If national average salary is about £26,500 (before tax) then a family (2 parents still) average income will be £53,000 (before tax)so therefore the fare will take up a large sum of the family's income. Oh and by the way, my parents earn beneath the national average, so it's an even bigger chunk out of our income. Then think about other students, who might only have 1 parent so the chunk taken out of their income is 2x as much. Then think about those who have no choice than more than 4 methods of transport a day. THEN think of all those with MORE siblings who have to travel too. THEN think of the fare increase next April that the council want to impose (and the increases in years following). Combine ALL OF THOSE and before you know it, you're going to have many more families living in relative poverty. I thought the government was trying to tackle this problem, not increase the statistics?
88. Whilst I am currently employed, I would find it difficult as a lone parent of 3 dependent young people to swallow yet another loss to our family funds. Our essential outgoings such as heating and food costs continue to increase after my family has lost tax credits and I have not had a pay rise in 8 years. I believe I am typical of many parents in our locality.
89. You should be cutting the funding from mobility pass from people who can walk, and not from children who should have an education, which will benefit the country in the near future.
90. when I applied for my three children to attend notre- dame high school there was no mention or consultation on having to pay for school transport, the free bus pass was one of the main criteria which allowed me to make the choice of school for their further education,

6. Please state which (if any) of the other options you would prefer (please refer to Section 3 of the consultation document).

7. Please tell us why you would prefer this/these option(s).

Option 2

Appendix 5 – All Responses

1. I would not have to move my children to another school. They could continue with their studies with teachers they know in familiar surroundings with their friends with whom they have known since age 5. If parents were aware of the additional requirement to pay the bus fare from the outset when applying for a school then this is fair and just. To introduce this when children are already attending the school is not right. Some families who are not in receipt of tax credits and would not be exempt could still struggle with the extra expense and may have to remove their children from school. This could have catastrophic consequences to the children involved.
2. As a single parent who is not entitled to any form of benefits I feel that the changes would place me at a disadvantage and as stated in question 3, as a parent who feels strongly about their child attending a Catholic school I feel that the changes would adversely affect me not to mention they are discriminatory against those who want their children to attend a faith based school given that there are limited faith based high schools in Sheffield.
3. I have 3 children taking two buses to Notre Dame. At 70p per trip, this means £2.80 per child per day which is £14 per child per week which works out to £56 per week. Even though it would be difficult to manage these fares, I wouldn't take my children to another school because I was brought up catholic and I want my children to have the same values. Changing schools would also affect their performance and I wouldn't want to put their futures at risk
4. options 1 and 3 are clearly unfair to existing students
5. It is unfair to change the goalposts for those who are currently in receipt of the free bus pass during their school career i.e. currently those in year 7 or above.
6. Although I would rather the passes continued, at least option 2 does not penalize those families who have already made a choice to send their child to a faith school based on their beliefs but also based on the fact that passes were provided. At least families in the future can take this into consideration as they are armed with all the facts. Option 2 would also prevent most families from moving schools and this would cause less disruption to their education.
7. This would give parents time to change preference for school choice if need to, and would also help with children already at school and maybe exam years
8. At my children's school Year 9 children also take GCSE examinations so they would also be disrupted if you were to implement option 3. Also, any change of school due to the bus pass being withdrawn would be disruptive for any child at any age.
9. This allows continuation without any issues for those already used to having the pass + also reduces the burden for families who have more than one sibling at the school or about to start at the school.
10. This is the only option which would allow me to have a free bus pass and continue with my education at the nearest faith school which supports my religious beliefs.
11. My children take the Notre Dame bus to/from school each day. It will cost me £14 a week for my children to get to school and back. I cannot

- afford this. Bus fares will inevitably rise each year and if not enough children are using the Notre Dame bus because of cost it will probably be removed and so my children would have to take 2 buses across town at a cost of £28 a week. Option 2 is the only fair option - those who have already been allocated a place at Notre Dame/All Saints did not know this was going to happen. "Exam years" at Notre Dame start in Y9 - my Y8 child has already taken her options and will take her first GCSE exam this time next year.
12. It is unfair to expect parents to find the extra funds to pay for the bus fares now that the children already attend the school. This is an additional expense that has to be budgeted for. If parents were already aware of this before selecting the school then that is much fairer. To ask someone to start paying when they already attend the school is morally wrong. Other councils which have implemented charging have done so for pupils new to the school NOT for existing pupils.
 13. we didn't know
 14. If necessary parents could then opt to send their children to the closest local state school at the time of introduction to the school instead of having to consider moving schools halfway through their academic life.
 1. My son will be in Year 9 at Notre Dame in September and a long with the majority of the other Year 9s, will take his first GCSE at the end of the school year. So he and his peers will also be disrupted not just Y10 & 11.
 2. Financial reasons - however I would still struggle to find the extra money when my younger child moves to secondary school.
 15. I don't prefer any of the options. Travel to Faith schools should be free. My family were made a promise that they would not be financially discriminated against for wanting a catholic education. We have pursued a catholic primary education and now my children are at All Saints School. Yet from September 2013 a Catholic education can only be provided at a cost.
 16. Because it makes more sense than the other options.
 17. Because it's the best option for most families from those given. No option for status quo.
 18. Because this is fairer. We made the decision also based on the free transport. Some parents may have made other decisions based on this. At least with my second child I will be aware i will have to pay.
 19. This would be the only option where my child would be eligible for a discretionary free bus pass until finishing education. A lot of families may not earn high incomes and they would not qualify for Option 3 and to stop funding the bus pass would put additional strain on finances.
 20. My eldest daughter would still receive a pass whilst my youngest would have to pay. Although we receive benefits we wouldn't qualify with the other options and have too many outgoings to afford extra expenses every month.
 21. At least one of my child will continue to have a free pass till he finishes his school
 22. It protects the pupils currently at our school. However, I am concerned that there is no "Option 4" - not to remove discretionary bus transport assistance, and there is no way of recording this on your consultation.

Appendix 5 – All Responses

23. It's a fairer system whereby parents will be aware that the costs will be phased in over time. They can therefore prepare for changes and make contingencies
24. Although I disagree with withdrawal of the passes, I suspect that the council will withdraw them anyway regardless of what this survey tells you. This option will at least help us and our two children.
25. a. If free travel is to be withdrawn it should only be for new entrants. it is wrong to disrupt children's' learning once they have entered the school b. one of our children is entering Y9 in September and will be undertaking GCSE exams so he is no different to our son entering Y11 c. Option 3 is effectively encouraging us to move our 2nd child from Notre Dame whilst leaving is elder sibling their to enter Y11 - we do not wish to separate them
26. Families with children already in receipt of the discount will have taken this into account before sending their children to the chosen school. Families of future years children will be able to make their decision of school choice based upon them knowing they will have to pay for bus fares.
27. To move a child part way through their time at a school is disruptive and means they would no longer receive a faith based education. Parents who have yet to decide which school to send their child to can factor the cost of transport into their decision as most families attending a faith school fall outside the catchment area for that school.
28. I'd prefer for the proposal not to be so, but I find that if my first child has already qualified for a pass then she should be able to use this until her education has completely finished. I also have another child who is currently in a feeder school so under this proposal, will have to fund her transportation to and from school, but at least if one of my children continues to get free travel, then this wouldn't impact our finances as hard
29. I'd prefer for the proposal not to happen at all as this would mean my youngest not qualifying for a pass but I already have a child attending secondary school receiving a free pass and therefore, this is the only reason as she'd continue to be able to use it
30. it seems a fairer thing to do
31. I don't prefer this option but you didn't give me a choice to say NEITHER. By not giving this choice, it seems you have already made your decision to some level of withdrawing of funds.
32. then you know what you are choosing also- our income is LOWER than the income support level but because we are self employed, we do not get income support- we are POORER then many on income support
33. Because if the child is still at primary school and the parent is aware that free travel to the faith school will not be provided well in advance, they can make an informed decision of whether to send their child or make alternative arrangements to their education - my child is already in school I just cannot upset her at the age of 12-13 and move her to the local comprehensive she is settled.
34. Of the 3 options this one at least doesn't penalise families who have already made their decision to send children to a faith school, but it should only be introduced to reception / Y7 in September 2014 as for

- children starting school in September 2013 the decision as to which school they go to has already been made, before this change was agreed. It will still have the effect of potentially prohibiting the attendance of a faith school by some pupils.
35. As my child attends a catholic primary school which is more than 2 miles away from our home.
 36. Parents need to be aware from the beginning of school of financial commitments, this would allow transition.
 37. This would mean the new entrants could choose if they wish for their child to progress to that school and make the choice whilst in the position of know what to expect. Making these changes to a current pupil could cause financial stress to some families and even result in good current students doing well to leave the school and this would be extremely disruptive to their education.
 38. This would at least help some parents with another child/children due to go to Notre Dame in the coming years.
 39. The lesser of two evils for my family, personally. I do not prefer either option in reality though.
 40. Fairer for those who are already at the school
 41. This would be more equitable since parents would know BEFORE sending their children to faith schools, the full financial implication of doing so.
 42. This seems the fairest way to bring in this change. Though I do not agree with the removal of free passes, it is inline with steps taken by other councils and helps many parents who though not entitled to free meals, would still find the additional expense a hardship to prevent the upheaval of moving a child already settled in school
 43. I think it only fair to continue with the subsidy which has already been granted.

Option 3

1. This seems the fairest option proposed if this is to go ahead
2. Option 2 shouldn't be an option. It's just a slower process in removing the passes.
3. With little money coming into this working family, this additional pressure on tight resources has never been considered when children received places in this faith school; now this proposal is wrecking the educational aspirations for our children
4. I don't think it would be fair to pick and choose years in which to stop the free transport.
5. I have a child who comes under the criteria for Option 3 i.e. entering Y10 in Sept 2013
6. This option will mean that my son will get a travel pass for his final year at school, he has a career path mapped out for him and will be working part-time like his brothers when he turns 16. My children appreciate that although myself and my husband work that if they want to go to the pictures, or any other extra curricular activities they had pay for them themselves. We spend £600+ a month of food alone, it isn't cheap feeding three healthy boys.

7. It would help save money, but at the same time assist those who can least afford it
8. This would give some assistance to current Y10 and Y11 pupils.

Option 2 and Option 3

1. I prefer my child to continue his education in the present school
2. At least it is some financial help toward the cost of school travel.
3. Any financial help toward travel costs is better than nothing. I have another daughter due to start in sept 2014 so I am taking all the help I can get. Otherwise, due to cost, how am I expected to keep 2 girls at Notre Dame Catholic High School?
4. Just can't decide between the two. Either way my younger son will loose out. But as for other people currently worried about their finances I guess option 2 would be better as they will be worry free until their leaves secondary school.
5. In Option 2 children, who already receive a pass should continue with it until they finish at their current school. It isn't fair to move the goal posts for children already at the school. Bus passes would be phased out for Reception pupils and Year 7 entrants from Sept 2013 onwards. I think Option 3 should be applied to all children starting Year 7 from Sept 2013 onwards, not only Years 10 and 11. It would help the current Years 10 and 11, but what about low income families currently in Years 7 to 9? It would be unfair to put children into the situation of having to change schools, it would be unfair to Pupil Admissions, nor would it be fair to the two Denominational schools caught up in this situation. Taking this line of action, would bring in some revenue, because those who could afford it, would pay, whilst protecting those who would really struggle to pay. I still think there should be an appeals process, whatever the outcome, for cases like the family I am helping. This family, after suffering persecution in S.E. Asia, was settled in Arbothorne, where they suffered racial harassment from secondary pupils from two local catchment schools. It would obviously not be appropriate to attend one of these schools. The family are practising Christians, who want their son to go to a Catholic. he has been given a place, but without the free bus pass this would be impossible on their very much reduced income.

8. Do you think that removal of free transport would prevent children and young people from accessing places at Faith Schools in the future?

9. Please tell us why you answered this way.

Strongly agree

1. Catholics must be allowed freedom to express their faith and educate their children IN that faith. I fear some families will struggle financially to meet their faith obligations. I believe it was the Council that CLOSED Catholic schools years ago, saying it would provide free transport to the remaining Catholic Secondary schools!!!

Appendix 5 – All Responses

2. As parents that are really struggling will have to make compromises that may be a choice between this other necessities
3. Your average family who do not qualify for any of the benefits listed but struggle to make ends meet because of all the other price increases/cuts, will struggle to find the necessary funds to pay for the fares and will therefore send their child to their catchment school rather than their faith school. I have 2 children who catch 2 buses to school and 2 buses home. I am currently worried about the impact this will have on my families finances.
4. Clearly families might be forced into these choices due to budgetary constraints
5. Because parents would have to take into consideration the extra cost that they would incur and many families don't claim benefits and are just managing to get by as it is.
6. I strongly agree because if the free bus passes were removed there would be more chance of young people not coming to school and there family eventually would not be able to pay for there bus fares this usually happens to young people like me who's father is not with them
7. A lot of people wouldn't be able to afford to send them there.
8. We only have 2 Catholic secondary schools in Sheffield covering wide catchment areas, this added expense for parents would deter them from applying for their first choice school
9. This money is not around.
10. it will effect families who cant afford the extra outlay
11. It all boils down to personal finances. No house hold is the same. Having to afford to send your child to school may cause a clear divide in education in Sheffield. Better schools tend to be on the wealthier side of Sheffield. Which means buses are needed to get their. Faith schools tend to be desirable for parents seeking a good faith and academic education. Some may have to choose a school closer without that option.
12. Parents who have a strong Christian faith should have the option to send their children to a faith school if they are in the catchment area of a parish that traditionally and currently sends children to a particular faith school and should not be prevented from so doing because the withdrawal of free school bus passes means they cannot afford to do so. SCC is disadvantaging Christian parents and pupils for secular and distasteful reasons.
13. Not everyone can afford to pay £273.00 per child, per year and if you have more than one child this becomes dearer again. It is like paying for your education.
14. Not everyone can afford the extra expense. This would lead to only the wealthiest families being able to access the places at faith schools.
15. As stated previously this could have an impact and bearing on whether a family could afford to send their children to the school of their choice based on religious belief.
16. a. because it will discourage parents unable to afford the several hundred pounds a year required for buses to send them there b. this will in turn leave All Saints and Notre Dame with less Catholic and Christian children entering their schools

Appendix 5 – All Responses

17. Because most families attending faith schools don't live in the catchment area due to the lack of secondary faith schools in the city. The cost of transport will be significant for them
18. Because it will stop me being able to send my four children to our faith school in the future as I can not afford the transport costs.
19. In some cases children will need to catch two buses each way to get to a faith school and as the fares have increased again, some families will need to take this expense into account when deciding which school to choose
20. See previous answer. Many families will not be able to afford to attend the school of their choice due to the high levels of deprivation that many of our families have.
21. the cost of transport for some families would be too much of a financial burden
22. Many children, particularly those who want to attend faith high schools, have to travel further to do this and will therefore be penalised if the removal of free transport goes ahead and this may mean that they are unable to afford to access places at Faith schools. Surely this isn't offering equal opportunities to all?
23. Lack of finance, only the privileged will get the entitlement to a faith school of their choice. Moving or renting in the catchment would be too expensive.
24. I want my children to have access to not only an academically high achieving school but one which supports our religion, socially & spiritually, upholding good morals with which they are brought up. The catholic feeder school has been like an extended family, friends, loads of support. All the children look forward to starting their new school together. It will disadvantage my child & alienate her from her friends if the free travel is taken away. I already have a y7 at Notre Dame. It is so unfair that I would not be able to afford bus fares for 2 children.
25. It would divide people based on wealth rather than beliefs/faith. This is not acceptable for state funded schools that should not be determined by affordability. The less affluent/poor Catholic parents and their children would suffer and this is wrong. Also if the decision was made to begin charging bus fares it should be made effective from the children who are beginning their school life stage, so that parents can make an informed decision rather than when they are already in catholic education.
26. I think the cost of transport to faith schools would prevent a lot of children being able to attend faith schools and in time this could have a detrimental effect on our faith schools.
27. The unique Catholic ethos is very important for our family life. However, despite both parents working, it creates a really substantial burden on our family as we are not highly paid but work hard to support our family. We are not entitled to Free School Meals as we work. It seems unfair - if one of us stopped working then they would be entitled to the bus pass. I really don't know if we could afford it.
28. Some families will have to decide for financial reasons that they cannot afford to send their children to a faith school. This will lead to further

- divide between the education being offered in the north and south of the city.
29. Obviously the cost would have to be taken into account when applying for a place in a Catholic school for a lot of people. The removal of free transport could be seen as the Council discriminating against some religions.
 30. As stated before faith school places are limited and parents which are on low income and have more than one child wishing to take a place will have to now consider the extra cost of sending their child to the school of their choice. No matter how you look at this it is discriminating.
 31. they won't be able to afford it
 32. We cannot afford to pay the ridiculous bus prices as it is so how are we going to attend our feeder schools. I choose to be a catholic and my children go to a catholic school my choice you are slowly taking all our choices away. We got the pass because our feeder school was more than 3 miles away. Nothing has changed expect that Sheffield council want to fleece parents it is wrong and you should be ashamed of yourselves. I do not know how you sleep at night. If struggle to pay the bus fares for my younger daughter at present so we have no chance when she attends a secondary school. None of your options suit me none of them.
 33. Every household are facing hard times with bills going up and wages coming down. We can't afford extra costs every week and it's unfair that we can't send our children to a faith school because we can't afford the travel costs.
 34. Many parents who do not receive benefits may still need to take into account the cost of the fares when choosing a school for their child. The fares for young people in Sheffield are unduly high as it is and are likely to increase during the years the child is in education. The rising costs will undoubtedly have an influence on the choice of schools.
 35. I have submitted a detailed explanation for my reasons directly to the Pupil Admissions team
 36. As said before, parents can only choose between 2 secondary faith schools and if you don't live on their doorstep, its tough, is what you are trying to say!
 37. Yes, parents frequently have more than one child in the school at the same time and would struggle to find £7 for each per week. Household bills continue to soar when incomes are staying the same. This is an extra amount that many families have not expected and may not be able to find.
 38. Some catholic families will live a distance from the catholic schools but may be unable to afford to send their child to the school of their choice because of financial constraints. Many catholic families will have two, three or four children and the annual cost of sending them all by bus would be extortionate. If someone has a strong catholic faith it is inappropriate for money to play such a deciding factor in their choice of education.

39. Low income families will not be able to afford the travel costs. The council is fully aware of this but chooses to discriminate against low income families.
40. Parents already make sacrifices to send their children some distance to our school. With most parents having more than one school-age child this is a significant financial burden at a time of difficulty for many families. The families most affected would be those just above the threshold for statutory free transport: hard-working, working-class families - traditional labour supporters!
41. Yes definitely especially those who are just above the low income threshold.
42. Even though the parents or the student wants to attend a faith school some of the parents may not be able to afford to do so.
43. Sometimes I may have to think instead of giving pressure to my parents to go to nearby schools. But I have been to local school and I prefer my faith school. I value my religious beliefs and I believe that what I learn as a small child will last for ever.
44. Yes because Faith schools are limited, which most times requires long journeys. So if parents is on a low income, they will be force to abandon there beliefs in order to make ends meet and with bus fares going up every year parents would not be able to afford more expense. PEOPLE'S RELIGION SHOULDN'T HAVE TO BE A CHOICE.
45. Because £273 on a family/single parent is a huge amount to find and if a family/single parent has more than one child that will be a huge burden also and in most cases non affordable - only a small percentage of people have very financially secure families/grandparents that could help towards the cost - some compromise on the household would have to be made and in most cases it would be the food/consumable budget if a family wants their child to have a faith education which in this society of few morals I personally find is very important
46. the cost of the bus fares would not allow individuals a choice, but would force parent to send their children to the nearest school
47. The cost of travel will mean some families who would have sent their children to faith schools will have to look at alternatives closer to home, to reduce / remove the travel costs.
48. I know some students that live 15 miles away! Of course they aren't going to be able to pay for that.
49. Generally catholic family are large and to stop founding the transport means the family will choose a different closer school which is not catholic
50. If parents are faced with an additional bill to send their school to an 'excellent' school i.e. Notre Dame they may not be able to afford it if they fall in the category that falls just outside the criteria for qualifying for free bus passes, and that would make them choose a closer school to where they live, but one that does not have the catholic ethos that they would want their children to be educated in, which is vital. Most schools today have no religious ethos at all due to the seemingly establishment obsession with attacking the Christian faith in all areas - now children. An example is of this is the ridiculous Christmas shows at

- non Christian or non catholic schools that feature rubbish such as the X Factor and Elvis Presley - since when have they got anything to do with Christmas. There a million reasons why a catholic child SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO BE EDUCATED IN AN ENVIRONMENT IN AGREEMENT WITH THEIR FAITH, and that is why its unfair for the council to even think about removing this free bus pass for catholic children. There are not enough catholic schools in Sheffield, therefore, we and our kids have to travel to get the best education they can, and that means they should get a free bus pass as agreed with the council when at least 2 catholic schools were closed down - TRUST!!!!
51. The cost of the travel will have an impact on each family's budget.
 52. bus fares would be prohibitive
 53. Absolutely. People are struggling to manage their finances in most areas but this is felt most keenly in deprived area such as the one I reside in.
 54. People cannot afford increasing travel costs. Again this would be shameful. Families on low income would be the only people who could ultimately send their children to Faith schools. What a bizarre situation for a council who claims to oppose discrimination.
 55. strongly agree because the right to have a faith education should be upheld
 56. Faith is a choice, it does not discriminate against how wealthy the person is, I do not believe only wealthy Christians/Catholics should receive a good education and be the only ones to combine their faith and education.
 57. For parents with more than 1 child the cost of the bus fares may be too much. Many catholic families have more than 2 children.
 58. Yes, it would, particularly in these times of austerity
 59. Only those who are able to afford the cost of travel will be able to attend or who live within walking distance. I believe this is discrimination against families who want a Catholic education but don't live in the South of Sheffield. Notre Dame currently has a mix of children from all over the city and from different ethnicities and backgrounds - this will not be possible if free bus passes are removed.
 60. Many parents are struggling during this economic climate and it will be huge expenses for parents with more than one child to provide travel expenses for, leading to only the advantaged families been able to have a choice to send their children to a chosen faith school.
 61. The financial cost of transport would influence the choice of some parents who would feel that they could not afford it.
 62. Because the families that this will affect are the sorts of families that don't have two cars, who don't have the option to just bundle everyone into a car to do the school run (because the main money earner requires the use of it), and who literally couldn't afford the costs of coming by bus, especially if they have more than one child. And suddenly, they won't be able to afford a faith option. Ironically, this will also put a strain on their local community schools. Finally, the gift of faith to your child does require quite a lot of education and discussion. Without the opportunity to go to a faith school, it does make it less likely that a child will get to learn enough about that faith. And from my

- perspective, the gift of faith is the best gift I can give my children, to help them through the ups and downs of life.
63. There isn't a catholic secondary school on this side of the city. Removing the free school bus will stop families getting to school.
 64. The closure of the Catholic school to the north of the city means that children must travel long distances in order to access Catholic education, these journeys can only be made by many families because of the provision of free transport. The difficulties with transport faced by families living in the north of the city was acknowledged at the time of the school closure and so an agreement was made that children would be provided with free bus passes in order to be able to continue their education within their faith school. The removal of free transport will be a barrier to many children resulting in only those families who live on the south of the city, or have the means to provide transport to school, being able to access Catholic secondary education.
 65. Financial implication on families. It assumes that if you are a Catholic you can afford to pay for bus fares! There are fewer Catholic Schools compared to numbers in the past. These schools are the heart of the catholic community. Parents will not have the same choice options if they are financially stretched.
 66. Because - like the Council - families also have to budget with an every decreasing income. For some parents this would have a significant impact on a family's budget.
 67. Families in poorer areas will not be able to afford the fares. They have told us this and are very worried about this. Many families have children catching 2 bussed to school and 2 buses from school because they firmly believe in the right for religious education.
 68. If you can't afford to get to the school after the removal of free transport you are prevented from going. Removal of free transport will prevent children accessing places at faith schools.
 69. Cost implications for families
 70. Because faith schools are very important for the upbringing of children in today's society.
 71. Financial considerations.
 72. Because some children would not be able to afford the travel expenses and they would be forced to go to another school which does not support their religious beliefs. Also the number of children in faith schools would decline and only the richest families would be able to attend them which are discrimination against poorer families and their religion.
 73. Obviously. How could it not?? For the reasons stated in the first section. It targets people who are not eligible for FSM etc. the already 'squeezed middle'. We already walk 1.5 miles to school because we cannot afford the bus for 3 children every day and are not eligible for any government handouts except a child benefit. We have been fortunate in securing a house just in walking distance because we have a reasonable household income; these proposals discriminate against those who are lower-middle income earners. Incidentally, had our circumstances been different and had we been further afield and therefore reliant on school buses your suggestion to accommodate

- changes of school to a nondenominational one is not a viable option, we would sooner home educate.
74. Because some children may not be able to afford the travel expenses and might be forced to attend a school which doesn't support their religious beliefs. It will take away the right they have to decide which school they want to receive their education from, which is very important for their future.
75. Cost might be prohibitive
76. The cost of public transport is so expensive now. Even for families like us who work all the hours we can there is no money left at the end of the month after paying all the bills and we simply cannot afford the bus fares. We both work full time and we do not ask for or receive any help from the Government. I will fight for my children's right to attend a Catholic school and get there on a free bus pass. We are being punished for working and wanting our children to attend a Catholic school
77. Yes it would especially for those parents who would not be able to afford daily travel to their preferred choice of school and especially in light of the current economic conditions were families are under financial constraints.
78. Many parents would not afford sending their children to faith schools, which would be against what they believe
79. Long distances travelled and high cost of transport.
80. Removing free transport will be unfair to, and will discriminate against, parents and families who wish to send their child to a faith school. This is a direct attack by Sheffield City Council on freedom to observe a faith or religion.
81. For many families it would be a major financial consideration especially where the children number more than one.
82. SADLY I haven't been able to read the consultation as my PDF reader says the file is damaged, hence I didn't answer the previous question. I strongly believe that removing free transport would prevent children and young people from disadvantaged families and areas to access places as Faith Schools. The council must know the hard times we are in and families simply cannot afford everything they want to. If sending a child to a faith school is going to affect their budgets by having to pay for transport costs (which are a significant amount), then they will opt to send them to a nearer school and sacrifice the faith school upbringing. If I had to make difficult choices, naturally I want to have money to clothe and feed my children over having to buy weekly and monthly bus passes - BUT THIS SHOULD NOT BE THE CASE. People shouldn't have to sacrifice being brought up in their faith out of economic circumstances. Being brought up in a religious background shouldn't be about economic status. What we'll get is that faith schools will be full of people that can afford to live in the catchment area (that is unfair) and others who can afford the transport costs to get to a faith school (again - that is unfair and discriminates against people with faith).

Agree

Appendix 5 – All Responses

1. Parents would have to consider whether they could afford the extra money to send their child or whether they were able to take them themselves.
2. financial pressure on families particularly with more than one child would definitely make more parents consider their local feeder schools as an option-assuming there are spaces available at these schools
3. It will stop the young people from lower income households attending these schools not the well off households.
4. Those who can afford it would go, but those who couldn't afford it, wouldn't be able to go. Faith schools were intended for everyone who wanted to be educated in a Christian school, not just the better off. Parents have the right to choose a school on the grounds of Religion and Belief. Pupils living in the northern half of the city are at a disadvantage, because they have to travel to the south of the city to find a Christian School. (There were two in the north - De La Salle and St Peters - the former was rebuilt as All Saints on Granville Road and the latter was closed to make way for Parson Cross College.
5. Families on low incomes will be paying £7 a week for one child at least, which they may not be able to afford.
6. I feel that some families will have to compromise their beliefs over financial difficulties and therefore only choose schools closest to them, which is a disgrace
7. Because I feel that some families, including my own, would probably have to think again and place finances first, rather than following their beliefs
8. it will put people off going to a good faith school and sending them to a nearer but not so well achieving school
9. If people can't afford it then they can't afford it - end of argument!
10. Clearly it would be a discouragement to travel and thus a discouragement to attend and may, in some circumstances, become the determining factor.
11. Due to the cost of travel (the cost of a bus pass has increased over the years at the school from £143.99 to £229.12 and is likely to increase again next year) and is expensive to fund e.g. for more than one child at a time at secondary school if a nearer school is a cheaper option.
12. Some people are quite rich so they could get there but others might not be able to pay to get there and some people get more than 1 bus to school.
13. Despite the council's assurances support will be available for low income families, many families are not entitled to free school meals, but little better off than those who are. These families will have to seriously consider the impact of sending their children to a school in the face of rising travel costs. 70p may not sound a lot, but it adds up to £7 a week for one child, £14 for two children, which is a significant amount of money if you are on a low income. The council has stated those in receipt of 'the higher level of working tax credit' will receive help, yet, there on the government's own tax credit website there is no distinction between one type of working tax credit and another so it is hard to understand exactly what the council actually means!
14. The cost could just be too much for some families

15. There is also a chance that the removal of (free) bus passes would lead to a decrease in the number of people actually attending school therefore decreasing the education levels of young people and harming their ability to earn money in the future. If more people were to become unemployed the council would be paying out more in job-seekers allowance and unemployment benefit while losing money through loss of income tax.

Not sure

1. I think if parents feel strongly enough about wishing their child to attend a faith school they will find a way and if this facility is removed may network with other parents to provide the transport in a variety of ways.
2. Personally, I feel that the excellent education that my daughter gets at Notre Dame outweighs the cost of getting her there. However, there may be families on lower incomes and with multiple children for whom the removal of free transport may be a problem.
3. I can't speak for other people's actions and reasons but if people genuinely want their children in a faith school they will place them there. As always, people will bear whatever they have to.
4. People could move house, or prioritise travel costs if attending such a school meant enough to them
5. Not if an affordable solution replaced it.
6. Parents will send their children to faith schools if they feel that the would benefit from it. Taking away the bus pass would just make the parents more determined to take their children there. But, faith schools would lose a large proportion of students.

Disagree

1. Those who REALLY want their children to attend such schools will happily pay regardless of their circumstances. It is not for the ratepayer to assist.
2. If you believe in your faith you go wherever. You go to the best school. Most people are not aware of the passes until after they have applied/

Strongly disagree

1. The council made a request for the support of the Catholic Church in Sheffield to close a number of faith schools to rationalise places across the city. This was supported by the Church based on a verbal contract with the then council that funding for school transport would be supported by the authority. In essence the current proposal to withdraw funding for transport is a breach in contract. It will also undermine parental choice since families who live a long distance away from school especially when there are multiple siblings will be gravely disadvantaged and their right to choose enshrined in law will be taken away.
2. If parents wish their child to attend a faith school then they will still send them and travel will not come into play as its parental choice. If a parent cannot afford the travel costs then their choice could be to send their child to their catchment school.

Appendix 5 – All Responses

3. The removal of free transport for children of faith wanting to attend faith schools may make it harder for them to access these schools. However it would make it no harder for children of no faith wanting to attend faith schools. The right to a free travel pass should be based on parental income not faith.
4. Denominational schools should help these students. All other families have to pay for school travel anyway.
5. If the church wants the buses they should pay
6. If they are so committed to this form of exclusive education they should find ways to fund the transport.
7. they can still catch bus if needed but they should be made to pay like all other children have to
8. Children can walk, cycle, or get lifts or travel independently. Furthermore, considering the often religious fervour of these elements, they will be more motivated to make their own independent travel arrangements.
9. This has always caused problems as there are so few Catholic High Schools in Sheffield, personally I believe that as Catholics we are a minority in Sheffield but nothing is being done to address this problem. Some children have to catch two mode of transport increasing their fares from £7.00 a week to £14.00 is this fair, I don't think it is.
10. If parents want a religious education for their children then they should pay for it directly.
11. No. Not at all, as I have said either all should pay or none ... Discrimination !!!!!
12. Absolutely not, other parents find the money to pay for bus fares each year. We all have financial challenges especially in this climate but priorities need to be made and education is paramount. After all we are talking a small amount of parents that will be affected but a large amount already have to pay bus fares and have never had any help. I do agree however that low income families should receive help.

14. Please tell us what you think the negative effects of a school transfer could be.

1. At Notre Dame GCSEs are taken through Y9, Y10 and Y11 with exams at the end of each year. My older child will have completed his 2nd GCSE in a couple of weeks. He would be unable to fall into the same pattern at another school - assuming there were places available there.
2. Community
3. Exams
4. exclusion from peer groups
5. I have one daughter at Notre Dame. My next daughter will go in sept 2014. It is clear that as a single parent I can't afford to pay £12 PER WEEK ON FARES. If my younger daughter is forced to go to a different school due to cost, she will be disadvantaged educationally, both should be given the same chance. Siblings should be together, it is safer when travelling & she is of nervous disposition. Having an older sister there is her safety net. Friends will be very divided & will become clear that only the more affluent children in her primary class will go.

- What happens to the rest! EDUCATION/SCHOOL IS A DECISION WHICH AFFECTS THE REST OF YOUR LIFE!
6. Isn't it obvious the negative effect that transferring a child from a school where he/she is happy and settled to then transfer them to a school where they do not know anyone. The possibility of bullying could arise when other pupils find that their school is not the child's first choice of school and also, friendships have already been established.
 7. My daughter is at a very delicate age and I believe it is important that as she has moved house and seen her parents be divorced in the last few years I think it may even go as far as an eating disorder but the financial cost would be such a burden to my already stretched budget - the only possibility i could do is use the money for bus fares on petrol and take her to school myself as the £7 would be better in my fuel tank but would be putting another car on the congested roads
 8. Not accepted, as pupils would know reasons for transfer. My daughter is very quiet & would struggle both mentally & socially. We were just 'on a roll' academically & proud of her achievements then this has to happen. CHILDREN HAVE FEELINGS!
 9. Not getting the Catholic education we deserve.
 10. Please tell us what you think the negative effects of a s...
 11. The community and family that has developed This stopped our isolation
 12. Transferring to another school would impact negatively on my children as starting at a new school is daunting enough in Y7 but to do this half way through Y8 would be disruptive.
 13. Well my local catchment school is dreadful. Poor results. Poor educational outcomes. My parents originally moved here safe in the knowledge they could afford to send me to my faith school. If they couldn't afford that, they were going to move to an area where a good catchment school was. But withdrawing the free passes is not what they anticipated.

25. Do you think that the proposed changes are likely to advance or to impede equality of opportunity and good relations between persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic and others?

26. Please tell us why you answered this way.

Yes

1. The proposals are clearly discriminatory against Christians.
2. they will impede choice of low income families
3. The proposals will impede equality of opportunity based not only on religion but also social cohesion since the faith schools are not selective and intake of students is from all social and economic backgrounds. The proposal will disadvantage the poor and lower middle earners. This is unfair.
4. yes it will impede equality of opportunity between the classes. Only the well off will be able to afford to send their children to Notre Dame. The current system welcomes all children regardless of class. This will

- inevitably change if multi-pupil households cannot afford transport costs
5. Because this is direct discrimination on faith education, be the person catholic or any other religion. People have a right to choose how there children are educated and the charge will create an inequality of opportunity. 95% of all children at the school have to catch a bus to school.
 6. Impede equality of opportunity. This would discriminate against families on the grounds of affordability excluding families from poorer backgrounds.
 7. Impede. Discrimination against persons with a certain religious belief, whereby potentially removing the option for them to attend a school which matches their beliefs. There is no equality here as it will all come down to money and affordability.
 8. Impedes those wishing their children to be educated in a catholic ethos.
 9. This question is poorly written as it posits a positive and negative outcome then asks for a yes or no answer. I have answered yes in that I believe it will advance quality of opportunity and good relations between persons with the relevant protected characteristic and others. This is because I believe it may allow a greater mixing of children of faith and no faith and hence encourage a greater level of understanding between the two groups. It will also end a practice which discriminates in favour of those with faith.
 10. Everybody should attend schools together, just as the Act quoted states as its aim. It is faith schools which go against the aims of the Act and should be considered illegal. Religion should not be in the education system, adults can choose to go to a religious organisation in their free time if they wish to. To have religion in schools can only be divisive.
 11. Because other groups still receive transport provided by the council. This group of people also attend schools outside their catchment area in the best educational interests of their child, how is this different from parents wanting to send their child to a faith school for their child's best educational interests
 12. Some Anglican schools serve areas where families use English as an additional language and have proportionally high BME communities. Some of these communities, such as the Somali community for example, will have less choice to access faith school education if free travel is eliminated.
 13. This is likely to impede rather than advance. Again it comes down to being discriminated against due to your personal work ethic to provide for your family.
 14. Yes, if poor families are having to cough up 10 quid or more (depending of how many children they have) they will have to make do with scraps and "hand me downs" and will not get as much of an opportunity to buy any "luxuries".
 15. My son has recently been diagnosed with epilepsy.
 16. It seems to be a particular assault on the Catholic way of life. It seeks to prohibit Catholics from accessing a Catholic education system. It is

- very divisive in that it would encourage Catholics (particularly those on low income who would not be entitled to free bus fare under the new proposals) to attend the nearest school rather than supporting Catholics to access a uniquely Catholic education system. The Catholic schools (primary and secondary) in Sheffield are held in high regard for the quality of education and ethos they promote. Working Catholic parents who are just above the income threshold would be therefore denied the equality of opportunity that higher earning Catholic parents could ensure for their children.
17. The proposed changes discriminate against people on low incomes; the reason for this is that although they would receive free bus passes, the other children will be aware that they receive free bus passes because they are on low incomes. This can be humiliating and embarrassing for the children and their parents. My son has a disability, I don't know if he would be entitled to a free bus pass but I know at age 14 that he would be embarrassed to be seen as being any way different to his peers. I am sure the Council will know that children can be very cruel and anyone who is seen to be different can be seen as a potential target for being discriminated against/bullied.
 18. Discrimination
 19. The question is not clear but if you mean does it create divisions then yes- being able to go to a decent school should be a right through no fault of our own we live in a poor area but we work very hard- as does my daughter at school and truly we value her opportunity she cannot go to the local school- the only one within walking distance because girls of Caribbean decent get bullied by the Asian boys- they do- they are made to feel cheap- a good education is her life line we don't have much money and even though we may qualify for a bus pass under the criteria of working tax credits- sometimes we just miss the highest rate by £10 or something
 20. We are being penalised for being catholic. You are clearly discriminating against us and something should be done about this.
 21. Our daughter, of mixed race, is happy and accepted where she is. The local school to where we live would not provide her with such an environment.
 22. A slightly odd question - You have to answer "Yes" if you think they will or will not impede! I think they will impede.
 23. There is likely to be fewer parents of other faiths or no faith selecting a denominational school as the school of choice for their child. This in turn will impede the opportunity for pupils in the denomination schools to form relationships with pupils of other faiths or no faith.
 24. I have a daughter on the SEN register in our local catholic primary school where she has attended since starting school. We attend the church to which the school is attached and I wish to present my daughter for her First Holy Communion next academic year. This will be a commitment to her faith and will be one she shares with many of her classmates. The natural step after primary school for her is to transfer to the catholic secondary school attended by her older siblings to continue her studies with her friends in a school which reflects our family beliefs. I will struggle to find her bus fares but will go without

- other items rather than not send her to the faith school. The things I will have to do without are likely to be things not essential to my children but essential to me such as prescription costs for my medication. I believe it is unfair that I should have to continue to make more and more sacrifices and believe that there are other parents in a similar position as me. These are people who work hard to provide for their children and find that each month their income buys less. We do not live in the affluent part of the city where the school happens to be situated and have no choice but to pay the cost of fares for our children to travel across the city if we want our children to attend the faith school.
25. Question is very badly phrased...not all Catholics necessarily have a university degree in English language! Yes, forcing people to choose a school based on financial constraints goes against all equal opportunity guidelines and is not demonstrating inclusivity.
 26. This is discrimination against Christian families.
 27. It could impede choice thereby equality of opportunity and in turn effect good relations. I do also understand that the benefits of the free travel for faith schools may seem unfair to some. Clever question - gets us to contradict ourselves!!
 28. I think it will impede the equality of opportunity those who wants to go to faith schools.
 29. In faith school I have like minded friends. It will impede my right as a religious person to attend religious school.
 30. We are a very tolerant nation but many people myself included are feeling that we work and are taxed to the end - services are less and budgets down but many people see people arriving from other countries and received the help in some cases they need but I am feeling that if you work and I must add I am only slightly over the low income threshold and if you are not claiming help under the Asylum Act of 1969 then you are pushed to the limits and feel that no one cares and no one listens too you - its a shame then people have to wonder why this awful extreme parties manage to make in roads with families and I have recently read in the national newspapers that the government are encouraging local authorities to take up the relevant funding but they are not doing so then making potential decisions like this and make the ordinary folk into political footballs
 31. children of the same faith who attended the same primary school will be broken up and split across different schools within the catchment areas
 32. People who would like to send their children to a faith school may not be able to afford to due to the cost of ravel.
 33. You have no idea of some of the harassment us Catholic teenagers get off other non-Catholic teenagers. Sometimes it's just nasty. Really lowers self-esteem and encourages self-hatred. Then people start to deny themselves and their religion. Then their families may dislike them for that too. Then they have nobody. Which results in depression, or even suicide. It does happen, I'm not making it up.
 34. It is outrageous that one faith gets special treatment: All should be treated equally.

35. It will make the catholic people to not feel protected and actually discriminated
36. It is direct religious discrimination based on the fact that it is Catholics who are being targeted in a grossly offensive way!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
37. This is likely to impede equality of opportunity for parents living in poorer areas to attend a faith school. This is not only likely to impact on Catholic children and parents as children from other faiths also prioritise Notre Dame/All saints.
38. Impede
39. again, only families that are not currently struggling with finances will be able to afford to send their children to faith school
40. Yes, it will impede equality. In the school for which I am a Governor, we have children from a multitude of different cultural backgrounds & socioeconomic circumstances, yet all united by one faith. It is wonderful to see these children work and play together, finding out and celebrating our differences. I hope that all the children will develop into rounded individuals, who are accepting and tolerant of differences. If you remove the school bus support, you will turn our wonderfully multicultural school into one populated by the children of the white middle classes. Please don't do that - there is something special going on here!
41. Restricting access to education in Christian schools will not help to develop or maintain good relationships across different groups. Catholic families were told that their children would still be able to access Catholic education when the Catholic school in the north of the city was closed, it is unfair to now block it to those families who live 'in the wrong area' or cannot afford additional travel costs. Allowing children from all areas of the city to gather in shared education benefits the whole community. The Catholic community is spread widely throughout the city but the schools are both on the south of Sheffield. Removing free travel to the schools would discriminate against the Catholic children as they will have no option of attending a school of their own faith.
42. Removing free transport will impede equality of opportunity for Catholic children to access a faith school as the distances to be travelled are too great for many families to manage without access to free school buses.
43. Religious choice is being affected. This proposal is against free choice for Catholic Schools-choice is being limited due to financial constraints for families.
44. Because money will have to be a major consideration when a family wishes to send their child/children to a Catholic Faith school - so denying 'equal opportunity' to bring up / school your child in an environment that meets requirement based upon faith.
45. Catholic/faith families would be forced to make choices against their first preference in some cases.
46. Catholic children were promised free transport to a Catholic school (if they live more than 3 miles from the school) after the closure of a local secondary school as the two remaining Catholic secondary schools situated a long distance from many of the family homes. Deciding to

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- renege on this promise now and distorting the reasons that Catholics have free transport will impede good relations between different groups within our local area.
47. Children will not be able to attend a faith school
 48. Everyone is supposed to have equality in this Country
 49. Yes it would impede
 50. It is discrimination against personal faith and religious beliefs.
 51. Because no child should be denied the opportunity of attending a faith school of their choice because their parents cannot afford the travel expenses.
 52. Equality of opportunity impeded : Lack of Access to Catholic Schools for Catholic Children on financial grounds
 53. People especially those practicing their faith and who would like their children to be taught in schools that emulate their morals and values based on their religion/faith will be discriminated against.
 54. Yes, because as a catholic parent I wish to send my child to a catholic school, yet this policy means that it will prejudice parents who struggle to be able to afford the additional costs, especially as my child's school is on the opposite side of town (as is the other catholic secondary school). Therefore, the school is easily accessible if you live close by, or have sufficient income, and often these two things are closely related a Notre Dame is based in a rather affluent area of the city, but there is no equivalent school in the North of Sheffield, where, on average, the average income is much lower.

No

1. It can only impede; this consultation is stressful. the uncertainty and potential change will add to this
2. People of a wealthier background will still place their children in these schools but others on lower incomes may be denied the opportunity to send their children there.
3. Removing free passes for those going to denominational schools merely puts them on an equal footing with those going to 'normal' schools. I do not see why those wanting to go to a denominational school should be given opportunities that others do not have. Keeping this benefit impedes the equality of the vast majority.
4. No one is preventing children from attending school; nevertheless, attending a specific school which has a religious bias can hardly be a right which is itself reliant upon a special state subsidy. If parents deem that children require religious indoctrination they can ensure they attend churches and other faith establishments in their own time.
5. Faiths divide, not unite. Joint schooling promotes better relations.
6. The proposed change relates to private choices not community relations
7. Why can't Catholics pay 70p each way to school like I have to pay for my son , if that is their school of choice that is fine , no one is questioning that , not all Catholics that go to Notre dame are practising Catholics .. It's all about getting their kids in the best schools ,plus if bus fares are free it's win for them , ...

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8. Because they remove choice from a specific group of families with a specific religious belief

Not sure

1. This does not need to impede equality of opportunity or good relations. The whole city is facing budget cutbacks that affect people and schools of all characteristics. If a school is truly inclusive in every sense parents can feel that their child's personal needs and cultural/ethnic/faith background can be met in an open and inclusive way with strong community cohesion. Many of us work very hard to help our children appreciate all abilities and backgrounds and learn together.
2. The question doesn't make sense. It is not a yes or no answer.
3. Do not understand the question. You should make it clearer.
4. Not sure this question is worded correctly. Should we be answering yes or no to advance or yes or no to impede. I think it will have a negative effect because I feel this discriminates against people of faith.
5. I find this question impenetrable and impossible to answer. This consultation is not meaningful and cannot really be about equality when questions are written in such jargonistic and unclear language. Surely this will be open to a legal challenge? How on earth could someone for whom English is not their first language hope to unpick this question and answer it meaningfully?
6. This question makes no sense it does not have a Yes/No answer as you have asked 2 different questions -- Likely to Advance or Impede???
7. the question is ambiguous, there isn't a yes or no answer to "advance or impede"
8. They would impede equality of opportunity if only the better off and those in the south of the city could access the schools because of the cost of bus fares. If, however, Option 3 were offered to all pupils, those on low incomes would not be excluded from having the Christian education they would like, because they couldn't afford the bus fares.
9. I don't understand the question- please use plain English
10. I think it's highly unfair children who go to church schools get free travel- that should only be for children attending special needs schools. It is discrimination against other children who go to state schools!
11. Answers do not correspond with the question I feel the changed would massively impede equality as people wishing their child to attend a faith school would be divided by wealth which cannot be equal rights
12. I consider myself to be an intelligent person but this is a ridiculously phrased question. What on earth is it supposed to mean! I consider that children will be disadvantaged by this proposal. It seems to me that you are withdrawing an opportunity for some children to receive an excellent education at two of the best schools in the city because they cannot afford to live in the affluent south of the city where the best state schools are located.
13. This is a poorly worded, and a somewhat loaded question in my opinion. In fact it is two questions rolled into one so to offer a simple yes or no doesn't allow one to answer each question separately. The

term "equality of opportunity" is a very non-specific nebulous term allowing a wide range of interpretation. Ultimately though it seems to me any reduction of free transport can only act to limit a family's choices. It can never increase their choices. Therefore it can only act to limit equality of opportunity. But this is a complete red herring and why I see this loaded question. Any cuts in spending can only have negative effects. That is both obvious and inevitable. The real question is whether such cuts are acceptable despite their negative impact. For the second question I can't imagine a change in school transport policy will have much affect the relations between people. If it leads to more children from religious families mixing with those of non religious families then relations have the chance to grow which is not possible if they're isolated from each other. Having said that there is already a mixture of belief and non-belief at both faiths non-faith schools and that will no doubt continue regardless.

14. This question is incorrectly worded for a yes/no response. Yes, I think that it would impede equality of opportunity and no, I don't think it would advance equality of opportunity and good relations.
15. Question doesn't make sense!!
16. Don't really understand the question.
17. ?????? What does this mean
18. Your question is laughably contradictory, how can one tick either yes or no? How can it advance and impede at the same time? As I have already stated the proposed changes will be an impediment to equality of opportunity; it will give rise to ghettoising of catholic communities because, despite the fact the proposer places no value on faith, those with a faith background do and would therefore seek to ensure they were in an area where a denominational education was available; this consultation process has already been detrimental to relations of people with a protected characteristic and others, in my experience, because you have presented it as a sector of the community getting more than their due from the public purse and being treated preferentially to others which is simply not the reality. You have, in my view, made the catholic community a scapegoat and a target for religious-inspired hatred. As equal members of society primarily, but as voters and as taxpayers, we have an equal right to have our views heard and acted upon, your proposals suggest you do not hold the same view.
19. I do not understand the question
20. Did not understand the question
21. I do not understand the question
22. The above question is very poorly worded and ambiguous as it gives two alternatives "advance" and "impede", so it is not clear that answering 'Yes' refers to either advance or impede. It is a disgrace that Sheffield City Council includes such a question in a survey as important as this is.
23. I do not think they would be advanced instead impeded.
24. I don't really understand the second question. I am filling out this questionnaire because I have strong views on this proposal but I am not affected by it. Thankfully (and Thanks to God in my views) I have

been fortunate enough to buy a house in the catchment for the Catholic Schools that I want my children to attend. I don't need to use public transport as we can walk to the school. But I am concerned for Catholic (and all other faiths) that because they don't have the money, the jobs etc... To be able to afford transport to school, they won't be able to be brought up in their faith.

No response ticked

1. How do we tick this box??? It is asking 2 different questions "advance" or "impede". What happened to plain English grammar? Or is that part of the plan too, word it so no one understands the questions??!!!
2. I consider myself to be fairly intelligent but that question doesn't make sense. If you are going to send out a survey, at least have the common sense to ask questions in a way people can understand.
3. This question is ambiguous - of course the changes will impede equality of opportunity
4. Poorly worded question!!!
5. Not sure as i could not access the document to be read before reading this. It should have been made available in word doc as not everyone has access to PDF or adobe or whatever
6. Silly question, this question would not win any plan English awards
7. I did not answer this question because it does not warrant a 'yes' or 'no' answer. My answer is it impedes equality of opportunity.
8. This question does not make sense with the answer options provided.

27. Do you think that the proposed changes are likely to remove or minimise disadvantage to any person having any of the 8 relevant protected characteristics listed above?

28. Please tell us why you answered this way.

Yes

1. people have their choices removed due to finance reasons, this is outrageous
2. In terms of religion and beliefs. It covers not just Catholics but families of other faiths as well. You send your child there for a good rounded education. You want to send your child to a religious school because of what you belief in. Not just for the education you want the whole package. Personally any way.
3. I believe the removal of free travel passes for children with a religious denomination will allow for greater mixing of children from different religious and ethnic backgrounds and hence foster a greater level of understanding. I believe this will help to minimise disadvantage in the form of discrimination.
4. Everyone is treated equally.
5. See previous answer.
6. Children won't be able to be brought up in the faith of choice and will have to go to a local school with children of different religions and

Appendix 5 – All Responses

morals. This is exceptionally unfair. The council have other ways they can cut funding and a child's education shouldn't be affected.

7. Yes - because it impacts on religion or belief - these children will be at a disadvantage
8. Because some people are in a too high of an income bracket to receive a free bus pass but not high enough income to actually pay for the fares.

No

1. This discriminates against faith and takes away a person's right to choose a school on faith grounds.
2. Again, another question that I cannot understand
3. How can stopping funding for a travel pass remove disadvantage? Do you want me to walk the children to schools? I have a disability pass.....but they can't get there...except on foot! The laws have been around to ensure we are not discriminated against....but this looks like a penalty to my home position.
4. How can removing financial assistance remove or minimise disadvantage to anyone?
5. Rather than stop disadvantage they will increase disadvantage due to the discrimination in the proposal which is specifically discriminatory to religious and lower economic families. There is a clear policy by the council of protecting free public transport to other non faith schools whilst not protecting it to the faith schools in question. This is discrimination.
6. Notre Dame is a faith school that allows all practising religions to integrate as one and have the same opportunity of education. People with disabilities may find it harder to get to the school
7. It all boils down to whether someone can afford the fares. It has nothing to do with the age, pregnancy, race, sexual orientation etc
8. Can't see that this is really a relevant question looking at the 8 protected characteristics. The only characteristic which is relevant is religion and belief. In my opinion would be increasing disadvantage to people of a certain belief as you are actually removing the option for these children to attend the school which matches their beliefs by asking them to pay for the transport. In some cases families will no longer be able to send their children to the school of their choice due to this issue making that choice cost prohibitive. Other children in the city are being provided with free transport and these are not being targeted i.e. children from High Green attending Stocksbridge High School. This is discrimination that you are only targeting denominational schools.
9. The proposed changes do not protect those wishing to practice a religion, in this instance Catholic.
10. Catholics will be disadvantaged if they have to pay to get to their faith schools.
11. On the contrary, to have everybody treated equally is very important, the proposed changes are a step towards a more equal society and the aims of the Act quoted. Faith schools should not have an unfair advantage over everybody else.

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12. As previous question, this relates to religion and belief, either provide free transport or more faith schools within catchment Areas in the city to make faith schools more accessible to those wishing to attend, who have already demonstrated their commitment to faith to gain access to the school.
13. As stated in the last response.
14. No. People will still learn from their parents the tenets of their faith and their attitudes to others. Faith schools reinforce rigid doctrines: mixed schools are better placed to teach equality and acceptance but cannot entirely correct home attitudes.
15. These changes are only going to affect families such as mine that actually work. I don't know the statistics but I bet there are more families claiming benefits than having both parents working. I do understand how lucky we are as a family but believe me this is through hard work.
16. No disadvantage is caused in any cases
17. The changes will disadvantage people.
18. Which 8 characteristics? I reiterate that people will be disadvantaged if they cannot afford to pay the fares of any group or minority
19. As a Catholic parent of children in primary school, my children would still be hugely disadvantaged. My eldest son will go into Year 6 next year and we will be looking at which secondary school to send him to. I would naturally want his younger brother to also attend the same school. The proposal to end free school passes is essentially an attack on our right to choose to have our sons educated in a Catholic secondary school. The cost of the free school passes is minute in comparison to the huge damage it will inflict on our religious community.
20. Your changes are clearly against the Catholic faith. I thought we lived in a democracy where everyone's opinion counts and we had a voice. Thanks to Sheffield City Council we have nothing and our children are being held as pawns in your stupid games. If I can't afford to send my child to school because of this go ahead and prosecute me it's all of SCC's doing anyway.
21. Removing a choice to attend a much loved school is not going to remove disadvantage!
22. Because the proposed changes do not advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and do not foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. The proposed changes do exactly the opposite and impact adversely on minority groups.
23. See last question
24. Catholic pupils will be disadvantaged by the proposed changes.
25. Quite the reverse - Its causing disadvantage on grounds of religion or belief.
26. As per my belief I wanted to send my children to faith schools. By making this proposal you are making my life hard to find extra penny either by over working or depriving our standard life.

Appendix 5 – All Responses

27. Because of this proposal my parents may have to over work so I will get less time with my parents. I may have to live on beans on toast everyday.
28. Any subsidies should be available to all children regardless of faith
29. See Q14.
30. This is religious discrimination!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
31. I think these proposals are likely to increase disadvantage to parents who want a faith based education for their children who are experiencing poverty. At a time when we are trying to improve attainment for the most disadvantaged and at a time when it is proven that Notre Dame does this the decision to withdraw passes is short sighted.
32. They will increase disadvantage.
33. It will increase it
34. You will simply be penalising the poorer families, many of whom come from ethnic minorities.
35. Removing free bus passes will not help.
36. Catholic families will be disadvantaged by the removal of free school bus passes. Removal of free transport when the only Catholic schools are many miles away becomes a barrier to educational choice (it is a removal of choice) and as such is discriminatory to Catholic families who have no school available within a reasonable distance.
37. The wording of this question is difficult to understand. It will be a disadvantage to Catholic children and Catholic families if we have free bus passes withdrawn.
38. Catholics were promised that their access to a faith school would not be restricted; removing free transport for those children living further away from the schools will put them at a real disadvantage. Catholic families will be disadvantaged simply for living in the wrong area and trying to follow their faith.
39. Everyone should have equality
40. Because everybody is equal and this should be respected.
41. Because it is likely to increase disadvantages by removing freedom of choice from lower earners who hold religious beliefs.
42. Everybody should be treated equality with regards to their faith and religious beliefs.
43. Proposal 2 has the potential to minimise the disadvantage to children currently attending a catholic school, but not for those due to attend in September 2013, whilst option 3 only helps a minority in year 10 and above and ignores the fact that Notre Dame, at least, begins working towards GCSEs in year 9 .
44. This is a badly worded question that could confuse parents.

Not sure

1. As with many of these things the way changes are communicated and the information that is relayed will be crucial and will contribute to whether people feel 'disadvantaged' or not. As a disabled person I am disadvantaged but if others support in ways they can I am content that I am supported AND we have to recognise the changing circumstances in so many aspects.

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2. Again, I do not understand the question
3. Do not follow this question!! If I read it correctly though I think the proposals will heighten disadvantage rather than minimise it!
4. I don't understand this question either. This is consultation is not open or fair.
5. Having read this question at least 10 times I am still not sure what you are asking, meaning the only response I can give is 'Not Sure'. I am not sure you can use this questionnaire to assess opinion when it makes little sense but perhaps that was the intention?
6. as before
7. Again, other badly worded questions - have you guys never heard of plain English! How can removing attendance at a faith school not disadvantage someone based on their faith!
8. I'm not sure what the 8 protected characteristics are?? Speaking personally one of the worrying aspects of removing free bus passes for me personally is that my son has adhd. This means that he is very unorganised; on occasions he has missed the bus and has had to catch two buses to school. He knows how to do this as I have shown him what to do. Due to his condition if say, he missed the bus to school and had to catch two buses to school he would have to pay two bus fares to get to school. Therefore, he would have used all his bus fare just getting to school. How does he get home from school with all his bus fare gone? I could not trust him to give him extra money; he has no organisation skills and could easily just spend any money on sweets etc, therefore, stranded again with no money to get home. These are my personal concerns and as such I feel as if the Council would be discriminating against people with disabilities.
9. The question is very hard to understand!
10. I don't understand the wording of the question.
11. Have no idea what this question is referring to. I am disgusted that the wording of these questions has not been thought out more carefully to enable all sections of the community to answer. I am an educated person with a university degree and am at a loss to comprehend. Parents of children with English as a second language are attempting to read, understand and answer these same questions! The practice of equal opportunities encompasses all aspects of life including this questionnaire!
12. I think this means: Do you think that removing free bus passes to faith schools will help someone with any of the 8 relevant protected characteristics? If we're talking about children then I don't see any link here with any of the protected characteristics other than religion. And even that is questionable since most children are too young to have made up their minds about their religious beliefs. Many, perhaps most, only conclude this process as adults. So if child has to go to a non-faith school I don't think it will help or harm them unless of course that school is a less good school overall (which in some cases is true).
13. I think it is a bad idea to remove this concessionary arrangement or at least if any charges need to be implemented look at the costings more closely - £7 per week is just too much for any family to cover (per child)
14. I believe Catholic/Christian families are being discriminated against.

15. What 8 relevant protected characteristics?
16. SADLY I haven't been able to read the consultation PDF, my PDF reader says the file is damaged and hence I don't understand the last question. I would like to be given the opportunity to read the consultation if it can be sent to me in again via email (jacqueline diaz niето@hotmail.com) and then I can answer these questions.

No response ticked

1. Re word this so it makes sense to Joe-Public!! Do not go ahead with the proposed changes to cut free bus travel to Catholic Schools.
2. Again poor question
3. Option 3 applied to all pupils would minimise disadvantage, not remove it.
4. pls read last write up
5. Ditto
6. what 8 proposed characteristics??
7. Can't see the characteristics

29. Please use the space below if you would like to make any other comments about the proposal. Alternatively, you can email comments to us at admissionsconsultation@sheffield.gov.uk.

1. • Currently there is a real mix of children attending school. There are children from families across the board from all areas of the City creating diversity, helping to promote tolerance and understanding. My feelings are that should this proposal be implemented there would be a real change in the makeup of the school. You would no longer see the diverse mix of people, but a more divided school. Education in the state sector should be the same for all learners irrespective of wealth, background or geographical location. As a Catholic community the school strives to serve the common good i.e. service to all. This is at odds with what is being proposed making it impossible to achieve what is at the very heart of Catholic values. As a consequence of this, you would see children moving from Y6-Y7, not to their feeder Catholic High School, but to their local community High School. Potentially without their friends with whom they have probably been at school with since they were 5 years old. The transition to High School is difficult enough. Let us please not add to their anguish by forcing through this change and removing the option, from potentially hundreds of children, of attending their school of choice which caters for their needs and beliefs, based purely on costs. • The journey on the bus is enjoyable for my children and I assume for others. This is a time where they can catch up with friends and maybe do some homework. But it is more than that; it gives my children a sense of responsibility, independence and a sense of belonging and helps with social skills and bonding. Implementing these changes would result in many families being unable to afford the additional cost and children missing out of this experience. • The introduction of fares would mean a reduction in the

number of children using the bus. This would have an impact on profitability and ultimately viability. There could be a real danger that the service would be withdrawn. This would remove parental choice as certain schools would no longer be an option. In my case the journey from Stocksbridge to Notre Dame would involve the cost of two buses and impossible journey times during the rush hour. The situation would be untenable making the possibly of my children attending the school of my choice impossible. The alternative would be an 11 mile drive to school which would be unworkable and not really an option worth considering. Not only would it prove costly in monetary terms, it would also impact the environment due to increased traffic on the roads especially around school times. Travelling on one bus would be the option of choice being the safer and more eco-friendly method of transport. Funding needs to remain in place in order to safeguard this valuable service, to ensure that children in the present and in the future will have the freedom of choice to attend the faith school of their choice irrespective of income or geography. • You may feel that that this change will have little impact to the number of children catching the buses. I disagree. Maybe not for the children already attending, but definitely for children who are yet to make the move to High School. I feel this will have a huge bearing on numbers. I go back to the question of viability of the service. If parents are forced to send their children to the local community High School, there is are no guarantees of gaining a place. Already the schools in Sheffield are under a huge strain with many schools being oversubscribed year after year. The children who are no longer able to attend their designated Catholic feeder school would have to attend their local community School. Are you going to increase capacity in these schools? I doubt it as this would have huge cost implications. Has this been considered? The alternative would be to bus the children to the next nearest school which could accommodate them, and who would pay for this? It would have to come from the council's budget. Interesting scenario, I have a feeling of déjà-vu! Has anyone thought about this during the proposal talks? • Currently there are children who travel to Stocksbridge High School by bus who live in High Green /Chapelton. Ecclesfield is the catchment school for these children but even though their local High school is not oversubscribed they exercise their right of parental choice to send their children to Stocksbridge. After a recent telephone call to the Councils offices, I was informed that some of these children travel under a zero rate pass. It begs the question therefore, as to whether they been targeted also as the letter seems to imply that this relates only to Denominational Home to School transport? If this is the case and they have not been targeted, there is definitely a clear case of discrimination here, targeted against children attending faith schools as their situation is no different to this one. • Families are already struggling to make ends meet. Some will accept and pay up; some won't be able to pay up and will have to make the difficult decision of withdrawing their child from the school, or not applying in the first place. Bearing in mind that the child may have attended that school for maybe four years. This is wholly unacceptable. Others will have to make sacrifices elsewhere by

cancelling their child's football coaching, gymnastics or music lessons for instance. This would be unthinkable. You are only young once and children should be given every possible opportunity to thrive and participate in the things they love to do. Being told they can no longer attend their favourite club or music class after years of practice and exams is a tragedy. You may think that I am over dramatising here, but this will be the cold hard reality of what will be played out in many houses across the City as a consequence of what it is being proposed. At the end of the day it will be the children who will suffer for the overspending and incompetence of the past. • Once again this seems to be an attack on hard working families by asking them to shoulder the burden of financial mismanagement in the past, and to find hundreds of extra pounds each year, sometimes thousands. For instance my brother has four children, three of which currently attend St Ann's Catholic Junior School in Stocksbridge. His intention was to send his children to Notre Dame to continue with their Catholic education, but in light of the recent proposals this option is looking increasingly slim. He is a hard working citizen, who pays his taxes, contributes to the economy, and does the best he can for his children. He earns a decent wage but is not eligible, or ever claimed for, any state benefits. Saying that, he would not be in a position to pay over £1000/year for bus fares should the zero rated pass be withdrawn. It is extremely likely that he would no longer be able to send his children to Notre Dame due to the cost implications. I suspect this will be the case for the majority of people, who would find it extremely difficult to find the extra money required, especially if they had a large family. As stated before, you would probably find that the only people who would be in a position to attend the Catholic High schools would be the rich, the poor and local children who could walk to school. This surely cannot be acceptable and fair; this sounds more like an Independent school rather than a school which relies on the public purse to educate its children.

2. A child brought up in the catholic faith is entitled to choose a catholic education. Any barriers to this such as the proposed removal of bus passes is demonstrating discrimination and needs to be re-evaluated. Cuts should be made elsewhere where they will not damage an individual's free choice to a catholic education.
3. a labour council was voted in to act for the people, this is not acting for the people and I will vote appropriately next time
4. As a single mother who is already under enormous financial constraint and who however does not qualify for any form of benefit I feel that the proposed changes are unfair to say the least. Not to mention ABOVE ALL that it impinges on my rights based on my faith/religion to send my child to a faith based school of my choice where I feel that my child's educational and faith needs will be met.
5. Can you please email a copy of the consultation as I can't read the PDF posted online? I will then be able to answer the questions that I have answered 'Not Sure'. My email address is:
JacquelineDiaznieto@hotmail.com I would also like to say that thankfully (and I do give thanks to God) i have been able to study and get a good job to support my family and I don't need to apply for free

travel to school. I was brought up in London by very working class parents (cleaner and bus driver) and I benefited from free travel to my nearest Catholic School. I grew up in strong faith, trusting in God and this gave me the perseverance to continue studying to better myself. Hence I am eternally grateful to the council where I grew up for providing me with free travel to get to my Catholic School. I continue to actively practice my faith (at St Vincent's Catholic church in Crookes) and I want my own children to grow in the same faith that I grew up in and also I want that same opportunity to be given to all children of all economic backgrounds. If they want to attend faith schools but don't have the means, I believe they should be supported. Faith can only be a good thing for society and for the council.

6. children are the future and should be given every opportunity affordable, any disruption in their education has a lifelong consequence, continuity is vital for them to fulfil their potential and staying within their peer group and attending their school of choice should not be put at risk by punitive financial considerations, free travel to school is vital.
7. Even though the council is under no obligation to continue with the agreement, it would be unfair to remove the free bus passes. The fact that the council can not commit themselves to what they agreed on in this past means that there is going to be a lot of mistrust between the council and the community that the council is supposed to serve
8. Families have made a commitment to their faith and their children's education. Decisions are made with the promises and information available and families have settled their children into schools with the understanding that the free transport promised will be provided. To then remove the free transport is moving the goal posts half way through and is unfair to the children. Parents do not want to cause disruption and distress to their children, especially in academic years leading directly to exams, and will struggle financially rather than move children to different schools. The financial hardship will be significant for some families, a long term, unexpected financial demand in order to maintain the educational stability for children; they will be disadvantaged because of their faith. There are a lot of Catholics and they have votes too.
9. Firstly I fail to see how this document can be used to assess opinion when it is so poorly worded on questions 14 & 15, it seems little or no thought has been used in its planning. I received 3 identical letters with this questionnaire, costing the council 3 lots of postage, printing and SAE's. Another parent received 6 letters for her twins again resulting in wastage of council funds and I know speaking to other parents they have also received duplicate letters. Its hard to see how you can justify removing funding a child's right to a religious education whilst clearly showing such incompetence and waste in the most basic admin functions, perhaps if the council paid more attention to detail in these areas they would save the money they need without affecting a child's basic right to an education. You state that the council will try to accommodate a request for local school places for those children who will need to move schools; will the new school be expected to provide

- the same standard of Religious Education? By forcing a parent to choose between finding additional funds for their Catholic child to attend their faith school and having to attend a non faith school is clearly discriminatory. You are asking parents to choose between religion and money? You have stated that you will not discriminate against those with disabilities but are discriminating against those with religious beliefs which are clearly a contradiction in terms and cannot possibly be acceptable in legal terms.
10. Have already emailed and you have ignored comments thus far.
ALSO THE LABOUR COUNCIL HAS TO MAKE CUTS DUE TO LABOURS GROSS INABILITY AND INCOMPETENCE WITH PUBLIC FINANCES SINCE 1997!!!! STOP PLAYING POLITICS WITH CHILDRENS FUTURES BY BLAMING THE COALITION GOVERNMENT, IT IS YOUR OWN PARTY WHO ARE TOTALLY TO BLAME FOR THE ECONOMIC SITUATION WE ARE IN NOW!!!!!!
 11. Hinde House School is retaining their discretionary transport subsidy to the school when Park House closed a number of years ago. In the 1970s, the Catholic sector rationalised its Secondary School provision, closing three of its five secondary schools to remove surplus places. This action was extremely painful, especially for those families in the catchment areas of the schools that were to close (St Peter's, St John Fisher, St Paul's / De La Salle). It was done with the support and co-operation of the Local Authority, who assured the Catholic community at the numerous meetings held, when explaining the closure of their local Catholic school that free transport would be provided for students from these areas so that they would always have access to a Catholic secondary school. This agreement will no longer be honoured for the Catholic community if this proposal goes through but will be retained for non denominational schools.
 12. Hundreds of children travel many miles in order to attend Catholic schools. Removal of free transport to school for these children will stop them being able to go to the Catholic schools meaning hundreds of extra families will need to be squeezed into local schools. All Saints and Notre Dame have increased their capacity, particularly on the closure of St Peter's to the north, to take children from all across the city, how local schools are going to find spaces for all the children who can no longer travel to the Catholic schools doesn't seem to have been thought through.
 13. I am becoming more and more frustrated at the way in which your average family is being penalized from all angles. My husband and I work hard to support our children and try to set them a good example by showing them that the way forward is to study hard and stand on your own two feet by doing the best you can to work no matter what the job is. The younger generation are cottoning on to the fact that "it pays" to be on benefits. I know this is a rant of a middle aged mum of two but as stated I could cry with the frustration. I know that cuts have to be made but please please what more can we give you than we already have. My husband and I haven't had a pay rise, we are having to pay more pension contributions, our shopping bill is escalating and

- I'm worried about the utility bills. I am just the voice of many mums out there who don't know where this will all end.
14. I am concerned about the safety of the current service. There seems to be no limit to the number of pupils on a bus. Earlier this month the 782 broke down in Walkley and all the students were asked to get onto the 780 which was already full. Who is monitoring this?
 15. I am sure the money could be saved in other ways, for instance councillors and all people who are paid to much and waste tax payers money on travel and other things themselves claiming money that they should not claim and do not need they want to live in the normal working families shoes who when have paid mortgages and bills do not have any money left as it is without having to worry about more to pay out, no wonder this state is like it is.
 16. I am utterly appalled that you have wasted yet more money on sending this questionnaire to me, not once but twice for the same child. I know of people that have received this form 3-5 times when they have only 2 children. This money could have been spent on bus passes for the children.
 17. I feel strongly that this proposal is very targeted at the Catholic community in Sheffield who will be most affected by it and it may well negatively impact on the year 7 enrolment figures in our Catholic secondary schools. The council would do well to heed the real concerns of our Catholic population in Sheffield.
 18. I feel that this proposal will also impact on the environment as it will encourage more car usage and will clog up the already congested roads of the city. In addition the location of the two catholic schools is on some of the busiest routes in Sheffield. As a Labour voter I am appalled that such an unfair and targeted proposal has been put forward and I am disgusted that the Council is being so narrow minded, Is it one person in particular who has a dislike for our faith?. Look again, assurances were made.
 19. I fully appreciate cuts have to made and fortunately we could manage but I am concerned for some families who really may see this as a barrier to sending their children to All Saints when they live within walking distance of Meadowhead. (St Thomas of Canterbury families.) Could this have a knock on effect for oversubscription to Meadowhead?
 20. I hope the Council comes to the right and just decision in supporting all the children who attend faith schools, so that they can happily continue with their education without having to worry about the financial costs of attending them.
 21. I hope this has been sent to all schools & not just Catholics as before , otherwise the answers will be the same , people of Sheffield do not know this is happening People I have spoken to did not realise this was happening ,
 22. I sincerely hope you know that many people would be happy to pay for their bus pass as non-Catholics do , however the main issue for the majority of people is having to fumble around for difficult amounts of lose change daily while carrying large, heavy bags and while holding up the queue!

23. I think that Sheffield City Council has withdrawn or minimized enough of its services since well before the recession to save money, including making electrocutions and others redundant! But taking away from families of true faith, who would struggle to send their child to a faith school without the aid of a pass is by far the lowest of the low in my opinion.
24. I think that the council must save money through the support that parishes give to their faith schools. I also think that if we didn't have faith schools we would struggle to accommodate all the children at local schools. I therefore think it is only fair that the council provides free travel.
25. I think the proposal is excellent. It is about time we stood up to these so-called 'faith' schools. There should be no religion in the education system.
26. I think this is ridiculous, why should certain kids get free travel and not others? My children are Christian but go to state school and we have to pay for them on buses etc. i certainly wouldn't expect free travel for them- nor would i take it. You cannot treat different 'groups' of people differently- this is why there is so much anger and hatred in today's society. should be one rule for all and that's it- special needs children should be the only ones not charged as they can't help being sn nor help the fact they need to go to special school. church schools are a parents choice so parents should be made to pay travel like other parents have to...simple as
27. I understand that cuts are having to be made but it should not be at the expense of children's education. If these changes go ahead, it will result in families having to send their children to local schools - this will put pressure on those schools that probably will not have enough places to offer. Local primary schools have had to expand and double capacity and are still now having to increase their numbers going over the legal class size of 30 because there are just not enough places available for children in the area. Also I would like to point out that the letters were sent out twice to each child - how is this helping to save money when I receive 4 copies of the same thing.
28. I want to object to the withdrawal of free bus transportation for children attending Catholic secondary schools because as a practising Catholic family I want to bring my children up in the Catholic faith, so sending my children to a Catholic school is the obvious choice for us. I feel that the Council are discriminating against our religious beliefs by cutting free bus travel. At the end of the day why ANYONE should be discriminated against for their religious beliefs. Shouldn't we be proud to live in a City where multi religious beliefs are recognised and respected? I already have one child at Notre Dame and one due to attend in September 2013. Many other families are in this position and we are now faced with the dilemma of leaving one or more at Notre Dame (not paying bus fare at the present time) and sending one to the local comprehensive because of the cost of bus travel, indeed you stated in your letter to parents that we may now want to reconsider which school to apply for. Also, for children currently in Y6, the open evenings for all other potential schools have now passed so neither

children or parents have any idea what other schools are like. Children currently in Y6 have, along with parents, decided which is the best school for them to apply to and how will it affect children to now be told they may not be going to the school of their choice and may be going to a school they have never even visited? Another point to consider is over subscription of local schools if children that would normally apply to the Catholic schools are forced to apply to their local comprehensive because of financial restraints. If here was an influx to the local comprehensive of children who had previously attended a Catholic school, there could be resentment from the children already established at the local comprehensive and this would undoubtedly lead to bullying and discrimination. Is it fair that wealthier parents are able to send their children to the school of their choice when less fortunate parents are not? Also, the children who are still eligible for free bus passes i.e. on benefits will be obvious to all the other kids; making them stand out from the other children. Parents who really cannot afford to pay these bus fares, particularly parents of more than one child may feel under pressure to continue to send their children and will be putting themselves under financial pressure to keep their children happy. An important point to consider is if parents decide to drive their children to School - the congestion on Flood Road is already diabolical, imagine even more traffic – an accident waiting to happen? How can a parent tell a child that they are not going to continue at Notre Dame School and that they will have to try and get them into another school, this is bad enough for children presently in Y6 but what about children having to leave a school they love because of Council cutbacks? Surely this would have a profound detrimental effect on children's' education and consequently their academic achievements. Another point to consider is if parents were withdrawing children from Notre Dame and placing elsewhere whole new uniforms would have to be bought. Everyone in the city has suffered because of financial cutbacks, we understand that this has be done; many of us do not have annual pay rises any more, we have accepted fortnightly emptying of bins, we back on to a park and we know that the grass will not be cut as regularly as previously etc etc. We understand that we have to make sacrifices and accept this but please do not punish our children because they do not understand why their lives could be turned upside down and their education disrupted. I have tried to shield my children from what is being proposed, I do not want to upset them and especially my child who is in Y6 who is looking forward to moving on to Notre Dame where we have been for a visit. She has never been to Ecclesfield School, which would be our alternative option if we were not Catholics. Lastly, on a personal level, I would just like to say my husband and I are not wealthy nor are we on benefits, we both work hard; please do not put another burden on us, we pay our Council Tax as do most other people, please do not stretch us any further it is hard enough as it is to make ends meet! We do not wish our children to suffer, how can we tell our children they may not be attending the school our neighbours' children will be attending just because they are financially better off than we are because, at the end of the day, if this

proposal is enforced that will be the situation for many people. I hope you will take all of the above points into consideration. I want to object to the withdrawal of free bus transportation for children attending Catholic secondary schools because as a practising Catholic family I want to bring my children up in the Catholic faith, so sending my children to a Catholic school is the obvious choice for us. I feel that the Council are discriminating against our religious beliefs by cutting free bus travel. At the end of the day why should ANYONE be discriminated against for their religious beliefs. Shouldn't we be proud to live in a City where multi religious beliefs are recognised and respected? I already have one child at Notre Dame and one due to attend in September 2013. Many other families are in this position and we are now faced with the dilemma of leaving one or more at Notre Dame (not paying bus fare at the present time) and sending one to the local comprehensive because of the cost of bus travel, indeed you stated in your letter to parents that we may now want to reconsider which school to apply for. Also, for children currently in Y6, the open evenings for all other potential schools have now passed so neither children or parents have any idea what other schools are like. Children currently in Y6 have, along with parents, decided which is the best school for them to apply to and how will it affect children to now be told they may not be going to the school of their choice and may be going to a school they have never even visited? Another point to consider is over subscription of local schools if children that would normally apply to the Catholic schools are forced to apply to their local comprehensive because of financial restraints. If there was an influx to the local comprehensive of children who had previously attended a Catholic school, there could be resentment from the children already established at the local comprehensive and this would undoubtedly lead to bullying and discrimination. Is it fair that wealthier parents are able to send their children to the school of their choice when less fortunate parents are not? Also, the children who are still eligible for free bus passes i.e. on benefits will be obvious to all the other kids; making them stand out from the other children. Parents who really cannot afford to pay these bus fares, particularly parents of more than one child may feel under pressure to continue to send their children and will be putting themselves under financial pressure to keep their children happy. An important point to consider is if parents decide to drive their children to School - the congestion on Fulwood Road is already diabolical, imagine even more traffic – an accident waiting to happen? How can a parent tell a child that they are not going to continue at Notre Dame School and that they will have to try and get them into another school, this is bad enough for children presently in Y6 but what about children having to leave a school they love because of Council cutbacks? Surely this would have a profound detrimental effect on children's' education and consequently their academic achievements. Another point to consider is if parents were withdrawing children from Notre Dame and placing elsewhere whole new uniforms would have to be bought. Everyone in the city has suffered because of financial cutbacks, we understand that this has been done; many of us do not have

annual pay rises any more, we have accepted fortnightly emptying of bins, we back on to a park and we know that the grass will not be cut as regularly as previously etc etc. We understand that we have to make sacrifices and accept this but please do not punish our children because they do not understand why their lives could be turned upside down and their education disrupted. I have tried to shield my children from what is being proposed, I do not want to upset them and especially my child who is in Y6 who is looking forward to moving on to Notre Dame where we have been for a visit. She has never been to Ecclesfield School, which would be our alternative option if we were not Catholics. Furthermore, I would like to comment on the short notice given regarding this proposal, we received a letter during the half term holiday; this gives parents very little time to put their view across. Lastly, on a personal level, I would just like to say my husband and I are not wealthy nor are we on benefits, we both work hard; please do not put another burden on us, we pay our Council Tax as do most other people, please do not stretch us any further it is hard enough as it is to make ends meet! We do not wish our children to suffer, how can we tell our children they may not be attending the school our neighbours' children will be attending just because they are financially better off than we are because, at the end of the day, if this proposal is enforced that will be the situation for many people. I hope you will take all of the above points into consideration.

29. In the "Consultation Document", the City Council states that "326 responses (approximately 5% of those invited to respond), were received from the last consultation, which suggests that the Catholic community are not too concerned about losing the free transport. What you fail to include are approximately 3000 responses that were made via written petitions and over 800 electronically via your website! 1. Unlike most Councils considering this action, Sheffield is proposing to remove the discretionary transport subsidy to children already attending a Catholic school rather than applying the removal of the subsidy to those children who apply to attend Catholic schools in the future. This appears particularly unfair and in legal terms may be counter to the "legitimate expectation" a person might have i.e. an expectation that the provision that exists would be continued. 2. In relation to the two Catholic high schools, working with the Council, the Diocese closed three secondary schools to reduce the cost of secondary provision in the City. To compensate for the loss of local Catholic schools, which was very painful for many parishes, especially as these parishes had contributed to the building costs of these schools, it was agreed with the City Council that Catholic families sending their children to the more distant Catholic high schools would receive a discretionary transport subsidy. Although the Council claims they have no evidence of such an agreement, extracts from Sheffield City Council documents were quoted to the officers and members of the Council, during a meeting at the Town Hall on the 24th January 2013, when they reviewed the earlier decision to remove free bus passes for all pupils. Offers of copies of these documents were made but not taken up by them. 3. The Council also say that, even if they

had proof of this "agreement", they have "no obligation to continue". This is particularly disappointing as it calls into question the trust and confidence that we can have in the Council. There may be no legal obligation but there is certainly a moral obligation and, if changes to an agreement are necessary, these changes should be decided via discussion with those involved. 4. The Council will continue to offer the statutory transport subsidy where children attend catchment area schools. The nature of the catchment areas of community schools in Sheffield does not mean that they are necessarily the 'nearest suitable school', which is the legal definition with regard to provision of transport subsidy. For many Catholic parents the nearest suitable school is the nearest Catholic school, though the Council chooses not to accept that a Catholic school is the suitable school for a Catholic child. In addition, although Sheffield City Council does not accept that Catholic schools have catchment areas, Council officers have used the term 'catchment area' to describe the parish or parishes which link with a particular Catholic school and in the "historic agreement", mentioned in point 2 above, the Council's documents actually mention "having to change the catchment area of Notre Dame to include the previous catchment area of St Peter's as it closes". It seems the Council can determine the catchment areas of their own schools, ignoring the statutory requirement, yet are denying that the catchment areas agreed with the Catholic community ever existed. Even today Council documentation uses the term "catchment" to decide e.g. which Catholic primary school a child should attend! 5. An official from the Council confirmed that a "free bus" is provided for pupils to attend another school in the City "because when their local school was closed the parents were given an assurance that one would be provided". This apparently does not come from the discretionary transport fund. 6. Many of you will know only too well that we find ourselves in difficult economic circumstances and we all acknowledge the challenges faced by Sheffield City Council in balancing the books. However, there are aspects of this particular proposal to remove discretionary transport subsidy for Catholic families which appear too many to be unfair for the reasons outlined above.

30. In the 1980's when the Catholic school to the north of Sheffield was closed, the community was promised that their children would be able to access Catholic education by using school buses and free school bus passes. It is unfair and unjust, to withdraw that promise after the school has been converted into different usage and the children have no option of a Catholic education in the north of the city. Is there the school capacity in the north of Sheffield to take the numbers of children who currently travel across the city to the two Catholic secondary schools?
31. It is wrong and I feel like the council are not taking student's faith into consideration. If my children have to move school because of this it will cause a great impact on them. Do not do this, if you are going to take the bus passes away do it gradually, let the children who have the passes keep them!!!!

32. It just seems an unfair system and when you look at the figures it proves it.
33. It's always the single parents & working class families that have to suffer. Why penalise the children from a good education in a school which upholds our beliefs. We are practising Catholics, my children alter serve, they love the close connections between church & school life. It will split friends, the church community & cause upset to many families who only want the best for their children. IT'S THE CHILDREN WHO WILL SUFFER!!! Please, Please, PLEASE rethink & keep our free bus passes as promised when we took the decision to choose Notre Dame High School for our children.
34. It's discriminating against Christians because if Catholics want to go to a Catholic school they might need to travel long distances.
35. It's discrimination. However, sometimes I think the travel companies shouldn't have that subsidy from the government/council to give out free travel though. They should provide it or less. That's where cuts should be made! If they remove free passes, I think people will try to find alternative ways of travelling, so the companies will just lose revenue anyway. It's called greed! They are too greedy, make cuts on them! Not members of the public. Aren't you governors supposed to encourage spending to boost the economy? Well this is doing the opposite, you realize that right? Yours, from a 16-year-old high-school boy at Notre Dame, where I have been given one of the best educations I could have asked for, including my Christian ethos, Mark Wills
36. its unfair for people who wont be able to pay
37. Need to improve questionnaire clarity, too wording making the question inaccessible to the majority
38. One wonders how much of the proposed £250,000 saving is being spent on not one but two half baked consultations which do nothing more than tick boxes on a local council checklist!
39. Perhaps if the consultation had been done properly back in October, the Council would have saved some money by not having to send out hundreds of questionnaires with postage paid envelopes in.
40. Sadly I have little confidence in my response having any impact on the council's decision. A generation of children will ultimately lose their right to choosing a Faith education as a result of this decision and the Council will continue to proclaim it fights injustice.
41. Some of the questions in this survey are very badly worded and should not have been included in the form in that state.
42. Stop this discrimination based on ideological party political philosophy which is aimed at serving the interests of secular atheism and ideology rather than being focused on serving the needs of the real people of Sheffield. This is especially so when the wasteful nature of the council is constantly highlighted in the media in relation to political and ideological financial support for 'pet projects.' rather than supporting the future of Sheffield through supporting the children and families who will be bringing the prosperity to the city in the future.
43. The City Council appear to be denying the statutory transport subsidy to children who attend catchment area schools, where their nearest

suitable catchment area school is a denominational school. The nature of the catchment areas of community schools in Sheffield does not mean that they are necessarily the 'nearest suitable school', which is the legal definition with regard to provision of transport subsidy. For many Catholic parents the nearest suitable school is the nearest Catholic school, though this Council chooses not to accept that a Catholic school is the suitable school for a Catholic child. The catholic secondary schools in Sheffield offer some of the very best educational opportunities to pupils both catholic or not but who come from low income families from the other side of the city. These pupils will be robbed by the City Council of the opportunity of experiencing a first class education if their parents are denied the choice of denomination school as a result of the proposal. The educational standards in Sheffield and South Yorkshire are ignorantly worse than in other areas. I would like to see the City Council increasing access for pupils to the outstanding schools from a wider area rather than discouraging parents from choosing the best schools for their children. Whist everyone realises the financially times are difficult the City Council should not be looking to penalise children and damaging the long term prospects of the pupils of Sheffield in this way.

44. The Council appears to be discriminating against persons who wish to send their children to faith schools which are treading on very stony ground.
45. The Council have acted in a high handed and cavalier fashion as evidenced by the need to conduct a second consultation. They have presented a set of proposals that only allow for a predetermined outcome i.e. the ceasing of discretionary free bus passes for faith schools. It is just the time-scale over which this will be achieved that is being debated.
46. The Council is clearly facing big budget cuts but should do everything it can to continue to provide any child who receives a free bus pass under the current discretionary system for as long as it can. The council should also recognise that IN THE PAST certain catholic schools were closed AND THERE WAS AN UNDERSTANDING THAT FREE TRANSPORT WOULD BE PROVIDED FOR THOSE PUPILS WHO WOULD HAVE TO TRAVEL TO THE REMAINING SCHOOL WHEN SUCH A DISTANCE WAS EXCESSIVE, AS SUCH THE council SHOULD NOT BREAK THAT UNDERSTANDING.
47. The impact is greater on my family as we have a child in year 8 and one in year 5 who will go to Notre Dame. This is a horrendous amount of money to afford to get the catholic education my children deserve.
48. The proposal is outrageous and cannot go ahead. It is discriminatory at worst, bad management at best. Look through your history documentation of the council closing Catholic Schools, look at the page where it says the council will close some of the Catholic Secondary schools, but will provide FREE bus transport to all requiring it, to access the Catholic schools that the council have chosen to remain open!!
49. The questions are constructed to give limited scope for a view in opposition to the council's intentions, for example there is no option to

- retain the status quo which may force some people to choose one of the options given which necessarily gives a false result; it is therefore inherently unfair. the question on whether the proposals will impede or advance equality is ambiguous and will undoubtedly generate false results which should be taken into consideration
50. There seems to be a flawed assumption in this whole process. It assumes that all those who want to go to faith schools do so for religious reasons. This is simply not true. Often parents want to send their children to a certain faith school not because of its religious persuasions but simply because it is seen as the best school. My son goes to a faith school yet neither him nor I are religious and his mother is only in the vaguest way possible. We sent him to a Catholic school because we saw it as the best school, not because it was Catholic. When he was bullied at school (related to a disability) the school dealt with it swiftly and firmly and it's never been a problem since. This is what is important to us, not the religious side of his schooling. I think most families will happily trade one little white lie, "Yes we're a staunch Catholic family," if it means a better education for their children. So I think a more honest question is whether free bus pass funding should continue to help give families a wider choice of schools.
51. These questions have been deliberately worded to confuse people.
52. This has been a hastily conceived policy. Please consider changing it. For the cash saved by the Council you have put 'huge strain' on us who would like their children educated in a christian way with an ethos of looking after those with ill health/supporting the vulnerable and those in great need. This jeopardises our support network
53. This proposal is unfair and discriminating against our beliefs. There isn't a catholic secondary school in our area and as a working family with 5 children we are already struggling with costs/ bills and debt spiralling out of control. How are we supposed to find an extra £550 pound a year for bus fares because of our beliefs when people who can't be bothered to go to work get free school dinners/ bus passes.
54. We are a catholic family, we have four children. Our annual income is a little above the minimum required to get free pass and when the decision takes place will affect us a lot. Nowadays I would have never thought that anybody could ever give up the religious school education because there is not financial help for the families
55. We have a second child due to go to this school in September 2014, which will mean double the bus fares. We feel that it is unfair to charge bus fares for young people to travel to a school just because of their faith, but it is very important to us that our children go to a Catholic School.
56. WHATS WRONG WITH THE POLICIES OF THIS GOVERNMENT??? BRIGHT STUDENTS, THE FUTURE OF BRITAINS ECONOMY. ALL PARENTS WANT THEIR CHILDREN TO ACHIEVE TO THEIR ACADEMIC POTENTIAL. WE`RE BEING FORCED INTO TAKING AWAY THE BEST EDUCATION FOR MY CHILD OVER THE PRICE OF A BUS FARE! IT`S UPSETTING FOR US AS A FAMILY, SOMETHING OUT OF OUR CONTROL! AS A SUPPLY TEACHER, MY INCOME HAS BEEN JUST OVER 13K. I HAVE FOUR

DEPENDANT CHILDREN LIVING AT HOME. HOW AM I EXPECTED TO PAY FOR TWO CHILDREN TO GO TO NOTRE DAME AN EXTRA £12 PER WEEK OUT OF MY INCOME? IT SIMPLY ISNT POSSIBLE. NOW, I DONT KNOW WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS FOR MY CHILDREN. SLEEPLESS NIGHTS, WORRY, UPSET, THAT'S ONLY THE START. AT LEAST DELIVER WHATS BEEN PROMISED BY LETTING PUPILS / SIBLINGS GO THROUGH THE SYSTEM WITH THE ZERO PASSES. THE DECISION AFFECTS 2 MANY STUDENTS & HAS DIRECT IMPACT ON FAMILIES.

57. Whilst this proposal may look as if it saves money in the short term, I doubt this will prove the case in the reality of the longer term.
58. You are hitting out at honest, hard working, tax paying people who only want the education for their children that they deserve.
59. You need to revise free mobility pass, and stop attacking our CHILDREN.
60. You state that you want to know the impact of these proposals on particular groups: In our school there are 249 pupils. 35.5% of pupils come from ethnic minority groups. There are 44 pupils who regularly use the dedicated school buses, of which 25 (56.8%) are from minority ethnic groups, with black African the most common. One can deduce from this that the proposal will disproportionately affect pupils from minority ethnic groups.

HMTGND IX 6



Drayton - for your approval please

R5572

To the parents of
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Education Department
Chief Education Officer
G M A Harrison, CBE MA
PO Box No. 67
Leopold Street
Sheffield
S1 1RJ

Telephone 0742-26341 Telex 54243

If telephoning, please ask for extension *325* and then M *Slamford*
Your reference Our reference Date

Dear Parents

CLOSURE OF ST PETER'S RC SECONDARY SCHOOL - JULY 1985

The arrangements for the transfer of pupils on the closure of the school are the same as those which applied to the pupils who transferred in September 1984. These are given below.

A place has been reserved for _____ at Notre Dame School from September 1985 and the Headteacher, Sister Marie Philippa, will be contacting you to explain the arrangements for entry.

...
... If you do not wish to accept this offer of a place at Notre Dame and would prefer a place at All Saints' School for _____ I should be glad if you would indicate this on the enclosed form. It is important that the number of children wishing to attend each school is known as soon as possible and I enclose a stamped addressed envelope for you to return to me. Your form together with the forms from other parents stating their preferences will then be considered on behalf of the appropriate Governing Body.

Should you decide that you prefer a place in a (non-Catholic) County Secondary School, the Education Committee is prepared to consider an application from you and you should indicate this preference on the attached form. An application form for this purpose can be obtained from the Headteacher of St Peter's RC Secondary School or from the Education Department (Pupils' Administration Division). The completed application form should be returned to the Education Department by Friday 8 February 1985.

Special arrangements have been made with regard to free travel for Roman Catholic pupils from the North of the City who will attend either Notre Dame or All Saints' schools and who reside over three miles from whichever of these schools is attended. The Education Committee have agreed to waive their new policy on free travel until new catchment areas have been agreed for the remaining two Roman Catholic Secondary Schools. This means that whichever of the two schools your child attends, provided you reside over three miles from that school your child will be entitled to free travel until they leave the school, subject only to any policy change by the Education Committee.

Discussions are at present taking place between the Diocese of Hallam Schools' Commission and the Education Authority over the provision of special buses. It is being proposed that one vehicle should start from both the Stocksbridge and High Green areas and go direct to the two sites of Notre Dame School provided there are sufficient pupils travelling to make these arrangements viable.

continued ...

It is hoped that this will ease the travelling problem of pupils from these areas, together with some who live close to these areas and who live on the routes of the buses into the city. Further details will be made available to you as soon as a decision has been made.

Please note that a child may not travel on a special bus and also have a free travel pass to use the normal service buses.

If you need assistance in making your choice, please contact the Headteacher of your child's present school or the Headteacher of Notre Dame or All Saints' Schools,

Mr A Allen	St Peter's RC School Morrall Road, S5 9AJ	Tel: 460003
Sister Marie Philippa	Notre Dame RC School Fulwood Road, S10 3BT	Tel: 302537
Mr J P Kelly	All Saints' RC School Granville Road, S2 2QB	Tel: 24851

I should be grateful if you would acknowledge receipt of this information by completing the slip below and returning to your child's present school as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely

Chief Education Officer

KB

I have received the letter "Closure of St Peter's RC Secondary School - July 1985".

Signed

Parent/Guardian of

PLEASE TEAR OFF THIS FORM AND RETURN IT TO THE HEADTEACHER OF ST PETER'S RC SECONDARY SCHOOL.



Copy to: Monseigneur Sullivan, The Presbetry, St. Marie's Church, Norfolk Street Sheffield 115E

for information

To the parents of

Education Department

Chief Education Officer
G M A Harrison, CBE MA

PO Box No. 67
Leopold Street
Sheffield
S1 1RJ

Telephone 0742-26341

Telex 54243

If telephoning, please ask for extension 298 and then Mr. Freeman

Your reference

Our reference SE/P/PJF

Date December, 1984.

Dear Parents,

Transfer to Secondary School - September, 1985.

You will already know that St. Peter's R.C. Secondary School is to close in July, 1985. The arrangements for transfer to secondary school for children in this year's J4 age group who normally would have been offered St. Peter's School for their secondary education are the same as those which applied to Roman Catholic children from the north of the city who transferred to secondary school in September, 1984. These are given below.

I am writing to let you know that a place has been reserved for at Notre Dame School (Lower School - Cavendish Street) from September, 1985 and the Headteacher, Sister Marie Philippa, will be contacting you to explain the arrangements for entry.

If, however, you do not wish to accept this offer of a place at Notre Dame and would prefer a place at All Saints School for I should be glad if you would indicate this on the enclosed form. It is important that the number of children wishing to attend either school is known as soon as possible and I enclose a stamped addressed envelope for you to return the form to me. Your form together with the forms from other parents stating their preferences will then be forwarded to the appropriate Governing Body.

Should you decide that you prefer a place in a (non-Catholic) County Secondary School, the Education Committee is prepared to consider an application from you and you should indicate this preference on the attached form. An application form for this purpose can be obtained from the Headteacher of your child's present school or from the Education Department (Pupils' Administration Division). The completed application form should be returned to the Education Department within six weeks of the receipt of this letter.

Special arrangements have been made with regard to free travel for Roman Catholic pupils from the North of the City who will attend either Notre Dame or All Saints schools and who reside over three miles from whichever of these schools is attended. The Education Committee have agreed to waive their new policy on free travel until new catchment areas have been agreed for the remaining two Roman Catholic Secondary Schools. This means that whichever of the two schools your child attends, provided you reside over three miles from that school your child will be entitled to free travel until they leave the school, subject only to any further general policy change by the Education Committee.

Continued/.....

Discussions are at present taking place between the Diocese of Hallam School's Commission and the Education Authority over the provision of special buses. It is being proposed that one vehicle should start from both the Stocksbridge and High Green areas and go direct to the two sites of Notre Dame School.

It is hoped that this will ease the problem of travelling of pupils from these areas, and some who live close to these areas and who live on the routes of the buses into the city. Further details will be made available to you as soon as an agreement has been made.

Please note that a child may not travel on a special bus and also have a free travel pass to use the normal service buses.

If you need assistance in making your choice please contact the Headteacher of your child's present school or the Headteachers of Notre Dame, All Saints or St. Peter's Secondary Schools, who are:

- | | | |
|-----------------------|--|-------------|
| Sister Marie Philippa | Notre Dame R.C. School,
Fulwood Road, S10 3BT. | Tel: 302536 |
| Mr. J. P. Kelly | All Saints R.C. School,
Granville Road, S2 2QB. | Tel: 24851 |
| Mr. A. Allen | St. Peter's R.C. School,
Morrall Road, S5 9AJ. | Tel: 460003 |

Enclosed also with this letter are copies of the Local Education Authority brochure 'An Educational Partnership', the purpose of which is to explain to parents the policies of the Authority, and the booklet of Notre Dame School, where a place has been reserved for your child.

I should be grateful if you would acknowledge receipt of this information by completing the slip below and returning it to your child's present primary school as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,

G. M. A. Harrison

Chief Education Officer.

ST.

I have received the letter "Transfer to Secondary School" together with the Local Education Authority brochure "An Educational Partnership" and the booklet of Notre Dame school, at which a place has been reserved for my child.

Signed

Parent/Guardian of

PLEASE TEAR OFF THIS FORM AND RETURN IT TO THE HEADTEACHER OF YOUR CHILD'S PRIMARY SCHOOL.



The Permanent Under Secretary,
Department of Education and Science,
Elizabeth House,
York Road,
LONDON.
SEL 7PH

Education Department

Chief Education Officer
G M A Harrison, CBE MA
PO Box No. 67
Leopold Street
Sheffield
S1 1RJ

Telephone 0742-26341

Telex 54243

If telephoning, please ask for extension 242 and then Mr. Millard

Your reference

Our reference MJM

Date 4th June, 1980

Dear Sir,

Sheffield Local Education Authority
St. John Fisher Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Secondary School

It is proposed, following consultations with the Roman Catholic Diocesan Authority, the governors, staff representatives and parents, that this Authority should cease to maintain St. John Fisher Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Secondary School on 31st July, 1981. A draft Section 13 Notice is enclosed.

The reason for this proposed closure is a general fall in the number of children attending, and expected to attend Roman Catholic secondary schools in this Authority. The total capacity of the four Roman Catholic secondary schools amounts to 420 places in each year group. In September, 1980, 366 pupils will be admitted to these schools (falling to 236 in 1986) as follows: Notre Dame 141; All Saints' 116; St. Peter's 75; and St. John Fisher 34. In considering which school to close the Diocesan Authority and this Authority have taken into account: the spare capacity at All Saints' School; the possibility of further space becoming available given a slight adjustment to the All Saints' catchment area in favour of Notre Dame School; and the ease with which pupils in the present St. John Fisher catchment area would be able to travel to All Saints' School. It is proposed, therefore, to incorporate the St. John Fisher catchment area into that of All Saints' and transfer those children attending St. John Fisher in July, 1981 to All Saints' as from September, 1981. The outcome of parental choice on admissions at present also suggests the appropriateness of the closure of St. John Fisher: of 75 children in the St. John Fisher catchment area due to transfer to that school in September, 1980 only 34 have elected to take up the place offered at St. John Fisher. Other parents have preferred to opt for All Saints' School. In the proposed new admission arrangements parents will continue to have the opportunity to choose alternative schools wherever possible.

The proposal then is to close St. John Fisher by September, 1981. In order to ensure continuity of education for the present S3 year group the St. John Fisher curriculum would be maintained at All Saints' School until July, 1982 and this Authority will be providing additional staffing support where necessary.

The St. John Fisher building is likely to continue to be used as an annexe of All Saints' in 1981/82. Thereafter this Authority may be interested in purchasing the building and site as part of a major sports development associated with the Sheffield City Polytechnic.

I shall be grateful for your consideration of this matter in order that the Section 13 Notice can be published by 1st July of this year.

Yours faithfully,



Chief Education Officer

Enc.

ME

LOCAL EDUCATION AUTHORITY

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN in accordance with the provisions of Section 13(3) of the Education Act 1944 (as amended) that the City of Sheffield Metropolitan District Council, being the Local Education Authority, propose to cease to maintain St. John Fisher Roman Catholic Secondary (Aided) School on 31st July, 1981.

1. As from September, 1981 the catchment area of All Saints' Roman Catholic (Aided) School will be extended to incorporate the present St. John Fisher catchment area and Roman Catholic children who would normally transfer to St. John Fisher from primary schools will from that date be admitted to All Saints' School.
2. Pupils in years 1 - 4 at St. John Fisher School in the school year 1980/81 will have the opportunity to transfer to All Saints' School in September, 1981 where the standard and continuity of their education will be maintained.
3. Parents are reminded that they have the right to opt for schools other than All Saints' and wherever possible the Diocesan Authority and this Authority will seek to meet such requests.

The Managers or Governors of any voluntary school affected by the proposals, or any ten or more local government electors for the area in which the schools are situated, or any local education authority concerned, may submit objections to the proposals by a letter addressed to the Permanent Under Secretary of State, Department of Education and Science, Elizabeth House, York Road, London SE1 7PH, which should reach him within two months after the first publication of this notice.

Date

Signed G. M. A. Harrison
.....
Chief Education Officer

(ICB/LP)

Section 13(1) and (3) of the Education Act 1944 as amended by Section 16 of the Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1953, the Secretary of State for Education and Science Order 1964 (SI 1964 No. 490) and the Education Act 1968, provides as follows:

"(1) Where a local education authority intend:-

- (a) to establish a new county school;
- (b) to maintain as a county school any school which at the time being is not such a school; or
- (c) to cease to maintain any county school or any voluntary school;

or where a local education authority intend to make any significant change in the character, or significant enlargement of the premises, of a county school, they shall submit proposals for that purpose to the Secretary of State."

"(3) After any proposals have been submitted to the Secretary of State under this section, the Authority or persons by whom the proposals were submitted, shall forthwith give public notice of the proposals in the prescribed manner, and the managers or governors of any voluntary school affected by the proposals or any ten or more local government electors for the area and any local education authority concerned may within two months after the first publication of the notice submit to the Secretary of State objections to the proposals."

Children, Young People and Families Service

Inclusion & Learning Services,
 Floor 3, Howden House, Union Street, Sheffield S1 2SH



Enquiries: John Bigley, Manager, Admissions & Access
 Tel: 0114 273 4097 Fax: 0114 273 5701
 Email: john.bigley@sheffield.gov.uk
 Web Site: www.sheffield.gov.uk

All Headteachers of Catholic Primary Schools

16 May 2013

Dear Colleague

Home to School Transport Consultation Special Arrangements from the 1970/80s Update

The Council is at present engaged in a consultation on the issue of ceasing to provide free bus travel to primary and secondary school pupils who attend denominational schools more than 3 miles from their homes. The consultation began on 25 March and was scheduled to be completed by 21 May 2013. This is the second consultation to be conducted on this issue. The object of this second consultation is to respond to issues that emerged from the first consultation, and to ensure that all those who wish to comment on the proposals have a proper opportunity to do so

During the first consultation some people told us that in the 1970s and 1980s they believed that following closure of Roman Catholic Secondary Schools the Council made an agreement to continue to provide free school travel for children attending the remaining denominational secondary schools more than 3 miles from their homes.

The Council's position on a "historical agreement" is set out at page 7 of the consultation document dated 25 March. The position being that the Council did not have evidence of such an agreement and that the Council was under no obligation to continue funding free school travel as it was discretionary.

Since the consultation document was published, and in the course of this second consultation, the Council has been shown letters sent to parents of pupils transferring from primary to secondary schools in the mid-1980s which say:

" Special arrangements have been made with regard to free travel for Roman Catholic pupils from the North of the City who will attend either Notre Dame or All Saints schools and who reside over three miles from whichever of these schools is attended. The Education Committee have agreed to waive their new policy on free travel until new catchment areas have been agreed for the remaining two Roman Catholic Secondary Schools. This means whichever of

the two schools your child attends, provided you reside over three miles from that school your child will be entitled to free travel until they leave the school, subject only to any further general policy change by the Education Committee.”

The Council has looked at the letters in question, and does not consider that they show that there was an agreement that the Council would always continue to provide such funding to Catholic secondary school pupils or that there was any arrangement with respect to primary school children. The Council considers that it has continued to fund free bus travel for Catholic pupils as a matter of discretion, and not obligation

In addition, the Council commissioned special busses, sometimes referred to as green buses, to meet the needs of students travelling from the far North and South East of the city to Notre Dame and All Saints, and these arrangements are not affected by the present proposals.

Before making its final decision the Council would like to give you a further opportunity to tell us if there is anything else you think we need to know about the “special arrangements” made in the 1970/80s. We appreciate that it is a very long time ago but we consider that it is important to have all the relevant information available to us before making a final decision.

We have put back the closing date for consultation to 5 pm on **Friday 24th May** to give further time for you to comment on the “special arrangements”.

To ensure we get your comments as soon as possible we ask you to contact us by telephone on 273 4097 or email admissionsconsultation@sheffield.gov.uk or either write to us at the following address marked “Home to School Transport Consultation”

Pupil Admissions Team
Inclusion & Learning Services
CYPF
Floor 3
Howden House
Union Street
Sheffield
S1 2SH

Please note that the date for Cabinet to make the final decision is now 19 June 2013.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Bigley', with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

John Bigley
Manager for Access and Admissions
Inclusion & Learning Services
Children, Young People and Families

Diocese for Sheffield & Hallam
Cc Notre Dame
All Saints
All RC Primary Schools

Bigley John

From: A.Dewhurst [A.Dewhurst@stmarieslearning.co.uk]
Sent: 16 May 2013 17:36
To: Bigley John
Subject: RE:Transport Consultation

Dear John

I have just received the e-mail from Nichola Furniss with regard to the consultation about denominational transport support for faith schools. I note that we are asked to respond directly to you following receipt of the attached documents, and I am therefore doing so.

I have read the historical documents from 1984 and 1985, and the council's response to the contents of these documents. In my opinion, the council's response is entirely predictable, because it has only one focus - to stop funding transport for Catholic pupils attending faith schools. Furthermore, its response is very simplistic, and does not attempt to explore the nuances of the statements contained within the documents. My reading of these statements is very different to that of the council.

Firstly, we have no explanation of the references in the documents to the "new policy on free travel" at that time: What was the policy? How had it changed? What was being waived?

Secondly, it is quite clear to me that the council was agreeing that parents (the recipients of the letter that is) could choose either All Saints School or Notre Dame School in this instance, and have free travel if they lived more than three miles away from whichever one they chose, "until new catchment areas have been agreed for the remaining two Roman Catholic Secondary Schools". Obviously the intention thereafter was to designate a new catchment area for each school, redefining where those who would have normally gone to St Peter's, or one of the other original Catholic secondary schools.

"until new catchment areas have been agreed" - this would seem to be the crucial phrase within the whole of the letter. The council is stating in that letter that free transport would continue, to either school, until an agreement had been made about which primary schools were in the "catchment areas" for each secondary school. Where is this agreement on Catchment Areas? Presumably the council did not leave such a matter undone for 25 years or more? The letter is plainly pointing out that each remaining Catholic secondary school would have a "catchment area". And, presumably once that was sorted out, pupils living more than three miles from their catchment area Catholic school, would be eligible for free transport to the school, in the same way that any other pupil is, who lives this distance away from their catchment school. We have been led to believe by the Council that Catholic schools have never had catchment areas, and yet here is a document from Sheffield Corporation Education Department confirming their existence.

My third point is with reference to the sweeping comment that there is no evidence that the council made any commitment to primary school pupils. Not in this document, perhaps, because it is about the transfer of pupils from primary to secondary school at a time of change. It would be correct to say that there is no reference within the document to assistance with transport for primary age pupils, but one would not have expected to find any in this context. That does not mean that historical agreements have never existed. In the case of this school, agreements would have been discussed at the time the school moved from Edmund Road in Sheffield 2 to the present site in Sheffield 10 around 1971/72,

or around the time that St Vincent's Primary School closed around 1989. I understand that it would not be in the council's interest to unearth any documents relating to these events.

I would also like to comment about the online questionnaire that has been set up for this phase of the consultation, and that I have accessed as a parent and as a headteacher. In my view, there is little to commend the design of this consultation device, because it does not give those opposed to the removal of transport assistance adequate opportunity to voice their opposition. Two examples: firstly, when stating a preference for one of the three options for removing transport assistance, there is no opportunity to say "none of these", because I am opposed to all of the options and don't want to give the impression that I back any of them. Secondly, there is the following question:

"Do you think that the proposed changes are likely to advance or to impede equality of opportunity and good relations between persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic and others?"

"Advance or impede" - surely these are opposites wherein one makes a choice between the two, and yet the choice of answer is only "Yes" or "No". Nonsensical! It somehow sums up the consultation process.

One last area that is worth noting, and I have explained this in my online response, is that in our school pupils from black and minority ethnic backgrounds are disproportionately affected by the proposed changes. Labour party members please take note.

I would be grateful if you could forward this e-mail to whoever is collating the responses for the consultation.

yours

Alan

Mr A Dewhurst

Headteacher
St Marie's School, A Catholic Voluntary Academy
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Fax: 0114 2303509

Email: a.dewhurst@stmarieslearning.co.uk

St Marie's School Trust is an exempt charity and a company limited by guarantee, registered in England with Company Number 8181858 and has a registered office at St Marie's School, Fulwood Road, Sheffield S10 3DQ

and is part of the Umbrella Trust of Our Lady Seat of Wisdom with Company No. [08180450](#).

or other document supplied with this e-mail

Sheffield City Council

Equality Impact Assessment



Name of policy/project/decision: Denominational Transport

Status of policy/project/decision: New

Name of person(s) writing EIA: John Bigley – Manager, Admissions & Access

Date: 19 June 2013

Service: Inclusion & Learning Services

Portfolio: Children, Young People and Families

What are the brief aims of the policy/project/decision?

Following Central Government funding reductions the Council is facing extreme pressures on increasingly limited budgets. Over the past two years the Council has had to find savings of around £130 million.

In 2013-14, the Council must find a further £50 million of savings, with more cuts in the following years. Efficiency savings will not be sufficient to achieve this and the Council consequently has had to reduce the budgets of many frontline services.

Sheffield's Home to School Transport Policy currently provides discretionary free transport where a parent has applied for a school on grounds of religion or belief. Sheffield has previously chosen to support families with travel to denominational schools, however there is no general statutory duty requiring local authorities to provide free transport to faith schools. The Council can therefore consider whether such discretionary provision should be discontinued.

Given that the Council cannot afford to continue funding discretionary free transport for attendance at faith schools, its second consultation set out three options:

- Option 1** Withdraw all discretionary free bus passes for travel to denominational schools under the discretionary scheme from September 2013.
- Option 2** Withdraw the current provision for funding discretionary transport on a phased basis starting with entry to Reception and Year 7 in September 2013 and each subsequent year. Under this option, pupils currently receiving a pass under discretionary criteria would continue to receive it until they finish at their current school.
- Option 3.** Withdraw all discretionary free bus passes for travel to denominational schools under the discretionary scheme from September 2013 and offer the phased arrangements described below to assist families with cost of travel for children in exam years during 2013/14 and 2014/15. These arrangements are intended to help families that would experience difficulties with the affordability of travel to school if all free bus passes were to be withdrawn. This is a **new** option please see below for more details.

1. The family has a child or children in Y10 or Y11;

2. The pupil is in receipt of a free pass under the current discretionary policy arrangements but would lose it if the Council's proposals were implemented;
3. The family is in receipt of working tax credit below the maximum rate (if a family is in receipt of the maximum rate they are entitled to a free bus pass under the statutory criteria).

The Consultation was undertaken between 25 March and 21 May 2013 and we consulted the following stakeholders:

- Parents of all current Y7-Y10 students attending All Saints and Notre Dame
- Parents of all current Y5 and Y6 pupils attending Aided Primary Schools
- Parents of any Reception-Y4 pupils currently in receipt of a discretionary free pass
- All Secondary and Primary Headteachers and Chairs of Governors
- Sheffield College
- Longley Park
- Sheffield Hallam and Sheffield Diocese
- South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive
- SACRE
- All Councillors
- All local MPs
- Parishes and Bishops

Background to proposal

Following Central Government funding reductions the Council is facing extreme pressures on increasingly limited budgets. Over the past two years the Council has had to find savings of around £130 million. In 2013-14, the Council must find a further £50 million of savings, with more cuts in the following years. Efficiency savings will not be sufficient to achieve this and the Council consequently has had to reduce the budgets of many frontline services.

The Council currently provides discretionary free bus passes for pupils to attend faith schools where they meet specific criteria. The Authority is not required to make such provision. A number of other Authorities including those in south Yorkshire have already withdrawn such provision.

In terms of the proposed withdrawal Sheffield consulted over the period 25 March and 21 May 2013.

The Cabinet is being asked to consider three options ranging from full withdrawal to two phased introductions. The potential impact on different characteristics defined as being protected under the Equality Act 2010 may be different based on which option is approved.

Under the [Public Sector Equality Duty](#), we have to pay due regard to: "Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations." [More information is available on the council website](#)

Areas of possible impact	Impact	Impact level	
<p>Age</p> <p>Free bus passes are currently provided for pupils of statutory school age. In 2011/12 a total of 1029 free passes were issued for pupils attending faith schools.</p> <p>Of this number 74 qualified under the statutory low income criteria and therefore would not be affected at all</p>	<p>This is an age specific proposal, and all of those who receive the free bus passes at issue are between the ages of 5 and 16.</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>The proposal directly impacts on statutory school aged children of between 5 and 16 years old.</p> <p>Feedback from the consultation highlighted that 65.9% of responses strongly agreed that the removal of free transport would prevent children and young people accessing places in faith schools in the future.</p> <p>However, 45.1% of responses would not consider a transfer to another school if free transport was withdrawn, though 19.9% were unsure.</p>
<p>Disability</p> <p>Any child that has a disability that requires them to receive assisted transport to and from school would not be affected by this proposal as the statutory duty on the Council in such circumstances would remain.</p>	<p>Neutral</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>If the child or young person attends their nearest appropriate school, either mainstream, Integrated Resource or Special School, which is named in their Statement of Special Educational Needs and that school is outside of the Statutory walking distance they will qualify for statutory transport assistance.</p> <p>Therefore, pupils meeting these criteria would not be affected by these proposals.</p> <p>Assisted Transport (taxi, specialised vehicle) will be decided on an individual basis, depending on the level of the child's needs.</p>
<p>Pregnancy/maternity</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>This proposal has no impact on this category.</p>
<p>Race The current Y11 cohort would not be affected by these proposals.</p> <p>Of the remaining pupils who are</p>	<p>Neutral</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>A mapping exercise has been undertaken to identify the residences of the "Other Black African" students to establish whether or not this would impact on a specific area of the City. The evidence confirms that there is no direct impact on any one part of the City</p>

<p>currently in receipt of passes an analysis of ethnic background has been undertaken.</p> <p>There are 15 different ethnic backgrounds identified.</p> <p>The most significant impact is on the “White British” group who make up 75% of current recipients.</p> <p>The next largest ethnic group in receipt is “Other Black African” at 7%.</p>			<p>than any other.</p> <p>390 (82.6%) of responses to the consultation were from respondents describing their ethnicity as being white. Of this 368 (95.3%) were White UK. The largest number of BME responses 14 (48.3%) under the came from the grouping of Black/African/ Caribbean or Black British with 4 (13.8%).</p> <p>The two largest numerical groupings of responses broadly mirror the two largest affected groups.</p>
<p>Religion/belief Currently in Sheffield free denominational transport is predominantly accessed by Catholic children as the only denominational secondary schools in Sheffield are Catholic.</p>	<p>Negative</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>382 (94.1%) of those who responded to the consultation described themselves as Christian.</p> <p>The proposed changes would directly impact on a limited number of families. Just over 1000 pupils currently receive free bus passes to attend denominational secondary schools, approximately 3% of the whole secondary school population.</p> <p>The provision is currently accessed by Catholic children as the only denominational secondary schools in Sheffield are Catholic. Hence the proposal affects only Catholic families.</p> <p>The majority of passes (94.8 %) are provided for pupils attending All Saints and Notre Dame Secondary Schools with a smaller number (5.2 %) provided for primary school pupils.</p> <p>In their responses to the consultations, some parents of other faiths (including non-Catholic Christians) have stated that they consider the present policy to be unfair because its effect is to treat Catholic families more favourably than families of other faiths and/or beliefs.</p>

			<p>The proposed change will not impact on families who meet the statutory “low income” criteria as the statutory requirement to provide free transport on grounds of, inter alia, the parents’ religion or belief remains.</p> <p>See also the discussion in relation to the faith sector, below.</p>
Sex	Neutral	None	This proposal has no impact on this category.
Sexual orientation	Neutral	None	This proposal has no impact on this category.
Transgender	Neutral	None	This proposal has no impact on this category.
Carers	Neutral	None	This proposal has no impact on this category.
Voluntary, community & faith sector	Negative	High	<p>There are direct implications for Catholic and Church of England schools, families and both Diocesan Bodies. There may be a perception of discrimination against families wishing to attend Faith schools on grounds of religion or belief.</p> <p>The Diocese of Hallam and Notre Dame School have explained that their understanding of the organisation of Catholic provision in the city was based on an expectation that Catholic pupils attending the Catholic primaries would be able to transfer to the Catholic secondary schools.</p> <p>They make the point that if the free bus passes were withdrawn, it would be unequal for those Catholic families living three miles or more from a Catholic secondary school because they would not have zero fare bus pass to assist with their travel to secondary school. Their view is that this would result in a narrower social intake at the Catholic schools which are located closer to the more</p>

			<p>affluent residential areas of Sheffield.</p> <p>Families with children already attending a denominational school applied for places under the current policy criteria. Many Catholic families would therefore be faced with a change in provision from that available at the time they applied to attend the school in the first year. One impact of this proposal could be that some Catholic families can no longer afford to send their children to a Catholic School.</p> <p>Families that are defined as “Low Income” would however continue to retain their statutory entitlement to free transport.</p> <p>One option being considered by the Council to mitigate the impact on families is the on-going provision of funding for Y10 and Y11 pupils under Option 3.</p> <p>The Department for Education issued new guidance on Home to School Travel and Transport in March 2013. The guidance states clearly that</p> <p><i>“There is no general statutory duty requiring local authorities to provide free transport to faith school”</i></p> <p>Any child that does no longer qualify for a free pass may still use the dedicated buses and pay the minimum fare, currently 70p a journey.</p>
<p>Financial inclusion, poverty, social justice:</p>	<p>Negative</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>The proposed change will affect the Catholic community in particular, particularly with regard to their ability to access a place at a Catholic School if that is their preference, or their expectation.</p> <p>However, it is important to note that there will be no impact on families that meet the statutory “low income” definition as described above. i.e. where the child is eligible for Free School Meals or the family is in receipt of the Higher rate of Working Tax Credit . Families meeting these criteria will still qualify for free transport on the grounds of religion and belief. In 2012/13 there were a total of 57 passes allocated under low income criteria.</p> <p>There is a financial impact upon families that currently receive free transport, if it were to be withdrawn. Following the consultation exercise held in the Autumn Term 2012 many parents responded who were just</p>

			<p>outside the “Low Income” criteria who raised concerns that they would not be in a position to fund transport to enable their child or children to continue attending their current school.</p> <p>In recognition of this potential difficulty one of the options that the Council consulted upon is for students in Years 10 and 11 who are currently in receipt of a free bus pass to retain their entitlement if the family is in receipt of Working Tax Credit at anything below the higher rate (Option 3).</p> <p>Any child that no longer qualifies for a free pass may still use the dedicated buses and pay the minimum fare, currently 70p a journey.</p> <p>Families who are currently in receipt of free transport may have to consider the current school placement of their child if they cannot afford to pay for transport. This may be perceived as divisive in that only those that can afford to pay for transport can continue to attend denominational schools. Responses to the questionnaire indicate that 151parents (35.2% of those responding) may consider transferring their children to other schools if the free passes are withdrawn.</p>
Cohesion:	Low	None	<p>Analysis of the geographical distribution of pupils currently in receipt of discretionary free bus passes shows a wide spread predominantly in the North, North/East and South/South East of the City. It is not therefore anticipated that this proposal would have any significant impact on social cohesion.</p>
Other/additional:			

Overall summary of possible impact (to be used on EMT, cabinet reports etc):

- **What is the proposal?**

We are consulting on 3 Options which are confirmed above on page 1.

- **Why do it?**

The provision is discretionary and is therefore not a statutory requirement. At a time of unprecedented pressures on the Council's budget it must consider all elements of discretionary expenditure in order to protect front line services to the most vulnerable.

- **Is it in line with regional/national developments?**

Yes. Many Authorities have already withdrawn this provision including our South Yorkshire neighbours Barnsley, Doncaster and Rotherham.

- **Which groups it will affect adversely?**

The most direct impact of withdrawing the discretionary free bus passes would be on Catholic pupils attending Catholic schools. Currently around 1000 pupils receive passes. Catholic children who meet the statutory low income criteria will not be affected by these proposals and will retain their statutory entitlement to travel to any school between 2 and 15 miles from home on grounds of religion or belief.

- **Who was Consulted?**

- Parents of all current Y7-Y10 students attending All Saints and Notre Dame
- Parents of all current Y5 and Y6 pupils attending Aided Primary Schools
- Parents of any Rec-Y4 pupils currently in receipt of a discretionary free pass
- All Secondary and Primary Headteachers and Chairs of Governors
- Sheffield College
- Longley Park
- Sheffield Hallam and Sheffield Diocese
- South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive
- SACRE
- All Councillors
- All local MPs
- Parishes and Bishops

- **What did consultees say**

The consultation was targeted at those with an interest in the proposals. The wider public were able to respond via the Council web site. It is therefore not surprising that the majority of respondents were against the proposed changes.

A total of 495 questionnaires were completed and received, 17 emails and 2 letters. Of those responding by questionnaire the majority were from parents or carers (431, 87.1%) and young people (41, 8.3%). A full analysis of responses is provided at Appendices 1, 4 and 5 to the main Cabinet report.

Of those that responded 66.9% currently receive passes and 33.1% do not. A total of 364 (73.8%) strongly disagreed with the proposed changes and 9.7% strongly agreed.

- **How much of consultation feedback helped in reshape of EIA**

The responses were carefully considered. The Authority thoroughly investigated whether there would be any detriment to any specific part of the City or on any minority group through a mapping exercise as explained in this report and concluded that there was no evidence of such detriment.

- **Impact implication on other services/portfolios**

The assessment of travel passes is undertaken by the Customer First Team. Colleagues have been fully briefed and will be notified of any change to the current policy criteria.

The Council's Transport Manager has also been kept informed though these proposals are not expected to impact on the current contractual arrangements of those providing transport to All Saints and Notre Dame.

- **What has/can be done to mitigate/any future action to be taken.**

Option 3 makes provision for students in Years 10 and 11 where families are on any element of Working Tax Credit outside the highest rate.

If you have identified significant change, med or high negative outcomes or for example the impact is on specialist provision relating to the groups above, or there is cumulative impact you **must** complete the action plan.

Review date:

Q Tier Ref

Reference number:

Action plan

Area of impact	Action and mitigation	Lead, timescale and how it will be monitored/reviewed
Religion and Belief	<p>To provide summary information on the proposed change as not all families will be affected.</p> <p>To provide information on the appeals process and on alternative schools to affected families.</p> <p>Option 3 seeks to mitigate by making provision for students in Years 10 and 11 where families are on any element of Working Tax Credit outside the highest rate.</p>	<p>Information will be provided by the Schools Admissions Service from June 2013.</p> <p>First point of contact information will be updated as necessary.</p>
Faith and Community	<p>To provide summary information on the proposed change as not all families will be affected.</p> <p>To provide information on the appeals process and on alternative schools to affected families.</p> <p>Option 3 seeks to mitigate by making provision for students in Years 10 and 11 where families are on any element of Working Tax Credit outside the highest rate.</p>	<p>Information will be provided by the Schools Admissions Service from June 2013.</p> <p>First point of contact information will be updated as necessary.</p>

Area of impact	Action and mitigation	Lead, timescale and how it will be monitored/reviewed
-Select-		
-Select-		
-Select-		
-Select-		
-Select-		
-Select-		
-Select-		
-Select-		
-Select-		
-Select-		

Approved (Lead Manager): **Date:**

Approved (EIA Lead Officer for Portfolio): **Date:**

Sheffield City Council Home to School Transport Appeals Process

The following two stage home to school transport review/appeals process will be implemented for applicants who do not meet the statutory eligibility criteria and have been refused assistance with transport to a school.

The parent/carer who wishes to challenge a decision about the transport arrangements offered to their child, including questions of their child's eligibility for travel support, the distance measurement and the safety of the route, will be entitled to seek a review of and, if necessary, an appeal to the Admissions Committee against the decision.

Stage one:

Once a decision has been made to refuse Home to School Transport, a parent/carer will receive a letter from Customer First informing them that:

They have **20 working days** from receipt of the local authority's home to school transport decision, to make a written request asking for a review of that decision.

The written request should detail why the parent/carer believes the decision should be reviewed and give details of any personal and/or family circumstances the parent believes should be considered when the decision is reviewed.

Within **20 working days** of receipt of the parent's written request, a senior officer will review the original decision and send the parent a detailed written outcome setting out:

1. The nature of the decision reached;
2. What factors were considered;
3. How the review was conducted (including the standard followed e.g. consideration of eligibility criteria, qualifying schools, Road Safety etc. if appropriate);
4. Information about other departments and/or agencies if they were consulted as part of the process (if appropriate);
5. The rationale for the decision reached;
6. Information regarding further escalation of the appeals process to stage two (if appropriate).

Stage two:

The parent/carer has **20 working days** from receipt of the local authority's Stage one decision to make a written request to escalate the matter to stage two where an

Admissions Committee will meet and consider the individual circumstances. The parent/carer should submit detailed reasons for the appeal, together with any supporting information/documents.

The Terms of Reference for the Admissions Committee is set out in the Council's Constitution. The Committee have delegated authority to determine appeals against decisions to refuse transport. This means that the Committee has discretion to consider any case that does not fall within the Council's Home to School Transport Policy. The Committee is experienced with regard to school transport legislation guidance.

Within **40 working days** of receipt of a request for escalation, the Committee will consider representations from the parent and Local Authority officers. At this stage of the process the parent/carer is welcome to attend the appeal to support their case in person, if they wish to do so. For those who do not wish to attend, the appeal will be determined on the basis of the written material submitted.

Before reaching their decision the Committee will look at all the available information and documentary evidence and reach a considered view in light of their discretion.

The Committee will consider whether there are any exceptional educational, financial, medical, physical, family or social circumstances. The Committee will also consider the reasons for choosing a particular school. **[Please insert any other factors you feel are relevant]**

Once a decision has been reached the parent/carer will receive a detailed written outcome of the appeal setting out:

1. The nature of the decision reached;
2. What factors were considered;
3. The rationale for the decision reached;
4. How the review was conducted (including consideration of eligibility criteria qualifying schools, road safety assessments etc, if appropriate);
5. The guidelines and standards followed (including statutory duties, DFE guidelines, road safety assessments);
6. Information about other departments and/or agencies that were consulted as part of the process (if appropriate);
7. If refused, information about escalation to the Local Government Ombudsman (see below).

Complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman/Judicial Review

The decision of the Committee is final and there is no further appeal, unless there have been significant and material changes in the parent's circumstances that

require a new decision about their application, e.g. medical reasons or they have moved house.

Where an appeal is unsuccessful at Stage two, appellants will be notified that they have the right of complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman, only where complainants consider that there was a failure to comply with the procedural rules or if there are any other irregularities in the way the appeal was handled.

If the complainant considers the decision of the Admission Committee to be flawed on public law grounds, the complainant may also apply for judicial review.

This document will be published on the Sheffield City Council's website and paper copies will be provided with refusal letters.

June 2013

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