

# Agenda Cabinet

Date: Monday 4 March 2019

Time: 10.30 am

Venue: Mezzanine Rooms 1 & 2, County Hall,  
Aylesbury

## WEBCASTING NOTICE

Please note: this meeting may be filmed for subsequent broadcast via the Council's internet site - at the start of the meeting the Chairman will confirm if all or part of the meeting is being filmed.

You should be aware that the Council is a Data Controller under the Data Protection Act. Data collected during this webcast will be retained in accordance with the Council's published policy.

Therefore by entering the meeting room, you are consenting to being filmed and to the possible use of those images and sound recordings for webcasting and/or training purposes. If members of the public do not wish to have their image captured they should ask the committee clerk, who will advise where to sit.

If you have any queries regarding this, please contact Democratic Services on 01296 382343.

Agenda Item	Page No
1 <b>Apologies for Absence</b>	
2 <b>Declarations of Interest</b>	
3 <b>Minutes</b>	3 - 20
	To agree the minutes of the meetings held on 4 & 11 February 2019.
4 <b>Hot Topics</b>	
5 <b>Question Time</b>	
	This provides an opportunity for Members to ask questions to Cabinet



Members		
<b>6</b>	<b>Forward Plan for Cabinet and Cabinet Members</b> For Cabinet to consider the Forward Plan	<b>21 - 34</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Cabinet Member Decisions</b> To note progress with Cabinet Member Decisions	<b>35 - 38</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>Select Committee Work Programme &amp; Inquiry Work Programme</b> For Cabinet to consider the Select Committee Work Programme	<b>39 - 48</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>Early Help Review</b> Cabinet are asked to agree the five recommendations as set out in the report.	<b>49 - 216</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>Home to School Transport</b> Cabinet are asked to agree the three recommendation as set out in the report.	<b>217 - 362</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>Date of the Next Meeting</b> 25 March 2019.	

---

If you would like to attend a meeting, but need extra help to do so, for example because of a disability, please contact us as early as possible, so that we can try to put the right support in place.

For further information please contact: Rachel Bennett on 01296 382343

**Members:** **Martin Tett (Leader)**

Mike Appleyard	Cabinet Member for Education & Skills
Noel Brown	Cabinet Member for Community Engagement & Public Health
Bill Chapple OBE	Cabinet Member for Planning & Environment
John Chilver	Cabinet Member for Resources
Lin Hazell	Cabinet Member for Health & Wellbeing
Mark Shaw	Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Transportation
Warren Whyte	Cabinet Member for Children's Services

# Minutes Cabinet

---

Date: 4 February 2019

Venue: Mezzanine Rooms 1 & 2, County Hall, Aylesbury

Time: 10.30 am to 11.05 am

## **MEMBERS PRESENT**

Mr M Tett (in the Chair).

Mr M Appleyard, Mr N Brown, Mr W Chapple OBE, Mr J Chilver, Lin Hazell, Mr M Shaw and Mr W Whyte

## **OTHER MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE**

Mr C Harriss and Mrs A Cranmer

## **OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE**

Ms R Bennett, Mr R Ambrose, Mrs S Ashmead, Ms R Shimmin, Ms G Quinton, Ms J Hancox and Mr R Smith

## **1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were none.

Cabinet Members in attendance were Ms J Teesdale, Deputy Cabinet Member for Community Engagement and Public Health and Mr C Harriss, Deputy Cabinet Member for Planning and Environment.

## **2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were none.



### **3 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:** The minutes of the meeting held on 7 January 2019 were AGREED as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

**RESOLVED:** The minutes of the meeting held on 10 January 2019 were AGREED as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

### **4 HOT TOPICS**

**The Cabinet Member for Planning and Environment** highlighted recent media coverage in the national press on the way Buckinghamshire County Council (BCC) dealt with flytipping. BCC were highlighted as a leading authority due to its zero tolerance policy and prosecutions. It was also raised that there needed to be more of a national deterrent with higher penalties to pay if prosecuted.

**The Cabinet Member for Transportation** thanked all the teams and those who had undertaken extensive gritting which kept roads open in the recent adverse weather which was echoed by all Cabinet Members. Mr Tett also urged residents to stagger journeys in adverse weather to allow room for gritting vehicles to make their way through the traffic.

**The Cabinet Member for Children's Services** highlighted foster and adoption events soon to take place in Bucks with an adoption event in Chesham on 5 February and a fostering event in Aylesbury on 20 February.

### **5 QUESTION TIME**

There were none

### **6 FORWARD PLAN FOR CABINET AND CABINET MEMBERS**

**RESOLVED:** Cabinet NOTED the report.

### **7 CABINET MEMBER DECISIONS**

**RESOLVED:** Cabinet NOTED the report.

### **8 SELECT COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME & INQUIRY WORK PROGRAMME**

**RESOLVED:** Cabinet NOTED the report.

## **9 UNITARY UPDATE**

Mr Tett gave background to the unitary decision and updated that the Secretary of State had now announced how the implementation of the new authority would be managed as follows:

- A Shadow Executive would consist of 17 county and district members.
- It would include the Leader of the County Council, eight members nominated by the County Council and two members nominated by each of the four district councils. The chair of the Shadow Executive would be the Leader of the County Council.
- The Leader had appointed the following nominees to the Shadow Executive:
  - Cllr Bill Chapple
  - Cllr John Chilver
  - Cllr Anita Cranmer
  - Cllr Clive Harriss
  - Cllr David Martin
  - Cllr Mark Shaw
  - Cllr Warren Whyte
  - Cllr Gareth Williams

Mr Tett reminded colleagues that there must still be a focus on business as usual so not all of the current Cabinet Members were on the Shadow Executive. He also stated that a number of those on the Shadow Executive were also district councillors.

Cabinet raised and discussed the following points:

- There had been public concerns about the high number of councillors in the new authority. Mr Tett stated that he had previously expressed his disappointment in the decision to increase the number of councillors to 147. This was increased from 98 as set out in the business case following lobbying from other organisation to increase the number, although 98 had been supported by businesses representatives. Mr Tett highlighted that the increase in councillors would be an additional budget pressure of £3m over 5 years.
- Mr Whyte said that he was looking forward to working on the shadow executive and hoped that district colleagues would join the executive as quickly as possible to allow work to start. Mr Tett urged for colleagues not to wait for the outcome of legal proceedings but to work together now in the interest of residents.

**RESOLVED: Cabinet NOTED nominations chosen by the Leader for the Shadow Executive.**

## **10 DIRECT CARE AND SUPPORT SERVICES**

Lin Hazel, Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing introduced the report and highlighted the following:

- Thrift farm had been running since the 1980s and currently faced a number of challenges which included financial, accessibility and health and safety risks.
- The report set out a number of proposals which included to do nothing, identify an alternative provider or to decommission the service.

- The decision to put forward alternative proposals had not been taken lightly and she understood the concerns of service users.
- A number of organisations had already been approached to take on the site on but no official business plans had been received to date.
- Cabinet were being asked to approve a six-week consultation on the future of Thrift Farm, and to note approval of the final decision to be taken by the Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing.

Mr Tett highlighted that a large number of representations had been received in objection to the closure of the service which had all been considered by Cabinet Members. Mr Tett highlighted the difficult financial position of the County Council having lost all revenue support grants from central government, one of only two county councils in the country to have done so. This had resulted in the council making difficult decisions in order to balance the budget going forward.

Mr Tett stated that a number of valuable points had been made by service users and that he would be very supportive in keeping the service running if able to do so. Mr Tett reiterated that the report included in the pack asked for Cabinet to agree the start of a six week consultation and that no decision had yet been made on the future of the facility. Feedback had suggested that six weeks was not long enough, therefore Mr Tett proposed that the consultation be extended to eight weeks with the option of extending further if further work was required on potential options. Mr Tett also proposed that the final decision was to be taken by Cabinet. Mr Tett also asked that as much financial information to be shared, within confidential remit.

Mr Tett stated his disappointment in the response from Milton Keynes senior leadership. He said that comments made in the press attributed to the Deputy Leader of Milton Keynes council were inappropriate, inaccurate and irresponsible. Mr Tett urged the leadership at Milton Keynes Council to disassociate itself with those comments.

It was noted that Milton Keynes Council had been approached on a number of occasions and that they had commented on some aspects including purchase of the land, however it had been made clear that Buckinghamshire County Council did not have plans to sell the land.

Cabinet raised and discussed the following points:

- All Cabinet Members supported the proposal to extend the consultation to eight weeks to ensure appropriate consideration could be given to all options.
- Mr Chilver, Cabinet Member for Resources stated that he would be unable to support the recommendation to Cabinet and highlighted the following concerns:
  - Length of consultation.
  - He would want to be assured that all options had been objectively considered.
  - He would want income generation potential of the site to be explored.
  - The option of applying for Charity status and be open to more charitable funding.
  - Concerns about the distance to alternative placements should Thrift Farm close and the need to consider the quality and appropriateness of those placements.

- Mr Whyte, Cabinet Member for Children's Services, supported the concerns raised by Mr Chilver and supported the extension of the consultation period and supported the consultation findings to be reported back to Cabinet. Mr Whyte also stated that more needed to be done to engage with organisations that would potentially be interested in taking on the site.
- Mr Appleyard, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills stated that the farm currently provided work experience for 69 people and that the report was not clear on how we would support those individuals going forward. Mr Appleyard also raised the additional pressure that could be put on carers if the facility were to close and stated that the report was vague on how their needs would be met.
- Mr Shaw, Cabinet Member for Transportation urged organisations that would be interested in taking the site on to get in contact with the County Council.

Ms G Quinton, Executive Director for Communities, Health and Adult Social Care attended the meeting to respond to Members questions and highlighted the following:

- The financial position of Thrift Farm was included in the report which included income. Ms Quinton stated that staff had been very proactive in exploring options to generate more income with the support of the County Council.
- Carter Jonas, external advisor, had completed an evaluation of the site and estimated between £500k and £2m depending on lease arrangements would be required to bring it back to and maintain at an appropriate quality.
- The council had been proactive in seeking alternative providers and the opportunity was on the South East Procurement Portal to invite more interested organisations to come forward. Ms Quinton had stated that recent publicity had created more interest in the farm which was welcomed.

Mr Tett stated that officers had done a great job and the focus now needed to be on what other opportunities could be explored to ensure the farm was kept open but relieve the financial pressure on the County Council.

#### **Recommendation**

**Cabinet was asked to approve the six-week consultation on the future of Thrift Farm, and note approval of final decision by the Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing.**

**The Leader put forward the following amendments to the recommendation:**

1. The consultation should run for a minimum of eight weeks
2. Approval for final decision to be brought back to Cabinet

**RESOLVED: Cabinet AGREED the above amendments, 7 in favour and 1 abstention.**

## **11 HOUSING INFRASTRUCTURE FUND APPLICATION**

Mr Tett, Leader, introduced the report and highlighted the following:

- Government had an aggressive housing agenda with the South East as an area of high demand.
- Colleagues in the districts were under immense pressure to build more houses around the county and that this had to be supported by adequate infrastructure which had not had much support from central government.
- In July 2017, The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) announced the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) to support the implementation of physical infrastructure to support housing growth.
- The County Council's initial bid was for £204m to support the development of Aylesbury Garden Town which was successful in progressing to the development of a business case. The business case had since been refined to include only infrastructure which would enable or accelerate housing growth.
- Aylesbury also sat within the wider Oxford to Cambridge Growth corridor.

Mr R Smith, Director of Growth Strategy and Highways and Mrs J Hancox, Head of Transport Strategy, attended the meeting to answer any questions from Members and highlighted the following:

- The fund was a fantastic opportunity for Aylesbury with colleagues working with Homes England to ensure the bid was positioned well to give the council the best chance of success.
- Colleagues were working towards a deadline of 26 March 2019.
- The Cabinet report gave a good indication of the range of infrastructure, those essential and those to unlock further housing.

Cabinet raised and discussed the following points:

- The team were thanked for work in developing the bids to put forward.
- The Green Triangle, a triangle path that linked Aylesbury with Halton was raised and the need for this to be included in the bid. It was highlighted that the Garden Town programme was trying to redress the balance between car usage against cycle and pedestrian, whilst it was recognised all three were important there was a need to get a better balance. Appropriate infrastructure to give people an alternative to the car usage should be supported.
- For the link roads in the east and south of Aylesbury to be included.
- The need to support a growing town with infrastructure before expansion and for the Council to remain ambitious in their bid.
- The issue of developers being able to walk away without putting in sufficient infrastructure.
- Ensuring that travel is made convenient and safe.
- Mrs Hancox stated that they were currently testing the green infrastructure proposal and would feedback the results to Cabinet.

**Recommendation**

1. Cabinet APPROVES submission of a Housing Infrastructure Fund (Forward Funding) business case to the value of up to £200m to support the development of Aylesbury Garden Town.
2. Cabinet delegates authority to the Executive Director TEE, the Executive Director Resources and the s151 Officer to agree composition of the HIF Business Case (in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Resources and the Leader of the Council).

**RESOLVED:** Cabinet APPROVED the recommendations.

**12 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

11 February 2019

**MARTIN TETT  
LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**



# Buckinghamshire County Council

Visit [democracy.buckscc.gov.uk](http://democracy.buckscc.gov.uk) for councillor information and email alerts for local meetings

# Minutes Cabinet

---

Date: 11 February 2019

Venue: Mezzanine Rooms 1 & 2, County Hall, Aylesbury

Time: 10.30 am to 12.00 pm

## MEMBERS PRESENT

Mr M Tett (in the Chair).

Mr M Appleyard, Mr N Brown, Mr W Chapple OBE, Mr J Chilver, Lin Hazell, Mr M Shaw and Mr W Whyte

## OTHER MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

Mr D Watson

## OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Ms R Bennett, Mr R Ambrose, Mrs S Ashmead, Ms R Shimmin and Mrs K Sutherland

### 1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Mr C Harriss, Deputy Cabinet Member for Planning and Environment.

### 2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Mr B Chapple, Cabinet Member for Planning and Environment declared that his son worked in Children's Services.

### 3 HOT TOPICS

There were none.



#### **4      QUESTION TIME**

There were none.

#### **5      FORWARD PLAN FOR CABINET AND CABINET MEMBERS**

Mr W Whyte, Cabinet Member for Children's Services highlighted that the Early Help Review would be presented to Cabinet on 4 March.

Mr B Chapple, Cabinet Member for Planning and Environment highlighted that the Minerals and Waste Local Plan item would go to Cabinet in April rather than March.

**RESOLVED: Cabinet NOTED the report.**

#### **6      CABINET MEMBER DECISIONS**

**RESOLVED: Cabinet NOTED the report.**

#### **7      BUDGET SCRUTINY REPORT**

Mr Tett, Leader introduced the item by highlighting the Cabinet were asked to recommend the Council's final budget to County Council in February for the final decision. As part of the process there had been a public consultation and budget scrutiny led by the Finance, Performance and Resources (FPR) Select Committee had taken place across three days in January where each Cabinet Member was held to account for their respective portfolios.

Mr D Watson, Chairman of the Finance, Performance and Resources Select Committee and Mrs K Sutherland, Committee and Governance Manager attended the meeting to present the Select Committee's recommendations to Cabinet. Mr Watson highlighted the following points:

- Mr Watson thanked all Cabinet Members for taking in part in the budget scrutiny process and thanked supporting officers, in particular Mrs K Sutherland, Committee and Governance Manager.
- There were 10 recommendations in total for Cabinet to consider and a number of further recommendations that were portfolio focused.
- Mr Watson recognised there was little choice but to increase council tax, the need for which was reflected in salary inflation projected to be 2%, the inexorable rise in demand in Children's Services and Adult Social Care and cost inflation from outsourcing.
- There was an agreement to increase the unitary transition budget and also the Children's Services legal budget.

In relation to the 10 recommendations set out in the report, Cabinet raised and discussed the following points:

- Mr Whyte, Cabinet Member for Children's Services highlighted recommendation 5 which requested a realistic budget to be set for legal fees in Children's Services. Mr

Whyte was happy to accept the recommendations and additional money had been built into the draft budget.

- Mr B Chapple made reference to recommendation 2 and stated that in some cases due to commercial sensitivity full financial information could not be shared, for example the Energy from Waste contract being run by an external company meant that their profit and loss accounts could not be shared.
- Mr Shaw highlighted recommendation 8 and the increased budget for gully cleansing and weed management. Additional money would be spent on main town and village centres.
- Mr Chilver made reference to recommendation 3 and the requirement of a balance sheet and cash flow budgets to be prepared for a 4 year period. Mr Chilver stated that this was already prepared for the year ahead and that the new authority would need to consider how best to extend this to cover a four year period.
- Mr Tett highlighted that this would be the last budget prepared for Buckinghamshire County Council. Going forward there would be a consolidation of budgets with district councils. Decisions on the budget of the new authority would not be decided by Cabinet.
- Mr Appleyard highlighted the request for improved visibility of individual budgets such as the Skills Budget and that there was no budget for schools as the operating of skills improvement was carried out via the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). Mr Appleyard stated that all information relating to demand for school transport had been included which was welcomed by the Select Committee. Mr Appleyard also stated that the number of full time employees referred to in the recommendation was of no real consequence, but that it was more prudent to monitor the cost of the work whether that be carried out by our own staff or external bodies.
- Mr Chapple reassured that extra budget had been put into the budget for fly tipping and hoped that the new unitary authority would also save money by bringing contracts together too. Mr Tett highlighted the need to scrutinise any contracts that would go beyond next year ensuring that they did not hinder the new authority.
- Lin Hazell highlighted the budget pressures within Adult Social Care which were also a national issue. Lin Hazell stated that there were now permanent senior managers in place across the service which were becoming very effective. In relation to recommendation 6, it was confirmed that the health and wellbeing contingency budgets would be reviewed ongoing as high risk areas.

Mr Watson responded by highlighting the following:

- Over the last 5 years the Council's financial responsibilities had broadened with increased external providers and that financial reporting was yet to reflect this.
- Poor visibility of some budget areas should be tackled now rather than waiting for the new authority.
- Appreciated the increase in the roads capital budget reflecting the increase in road usage with the growth agenda.
- Please to see the increase in budget for Children's Services legal fees.
- The biggest risk facing the council was the projected increase in demand and that this needed to be looked at a local and national level.

- There was still a need to give more financial visibility in the areas highlighted including the need to keep on top of the number of people we indirectly employ.
- Delays on the Green Paper had not helped the position of Adult Social Care and appreciated the strains and risks of increased demand that could not be foreseen.
- Mr Watson stated that he would support a council tax freeze, however recognised this was not realistic given all the financial pressures of the council.

Mr Tett thanked all members of the FPR Select Committee for their work and hoped that the new authority would take on a similar process in scrutinising their budgets.

**Recommendation: Cabinet are asked to consider recommendations 1-10 as set out in the report.**

Recommendation	Agreed Yes/No
1. That additional monies should be added to the 2019-20 contingency budget, to supplement the current Unitary reserve of £7.7m. The Committee suggests that this additional sum could be taken from the County Council's share of additional income anticipated from the Business Rates Retention pilot, which all five Local Authorities in Buckinghamshire will be participating in.	YES
2. That there should be improved level of visibility in individual budget lines across all portfolios for future Budget Scrutiny Inquiries. The financial data submitted should clearly identify the major costs of running the Council e.g. Home to School Transport, the EfW plant income and costs, on street parking revenue, Skills budget, number of Full Time Equivalent (FTEs) staff, costs of agency staff/interims, key drivers of demand in Social Care and associated unit costs. A high level Budget Book to enable more transparency for Members and the Public is proposed.	IN PART
3. That a balance sheet and cash flow budgets should be prepared to support the capital, treasury investments and revenue costs over the four year period.	IN PART
4. The Committee has concerns that the root cause societal issues driving the increase of Looked After Children may continue to grow over the coming years and therefore there is the possibility that the budgeted growth in demand may not be sufficient. It is recognised that assistance from Government may be required; in the meantime a significant contingency is recommended.	IN PART
5. That a realistic figure is included in the final Children's Services budget for legal fees.	YES

<b>6. That the Health and Wellbeing contingency should be reviewed to ensure that it offsets the risk areas outlined above. A significant contingency is recommended.</b>	IN PART
<b>7. That a minimum 5% per annum uplift should be applied to this budget line to take into account inflation, growth of the asset and impact of increased traffic on the highways.</b>	NO
<b>8. That the additional funding for gully cleansing and weed management which had been added into the budget as a result of Budget Scrutiny recommendations over the past two years, should be maintained. This will prevent further decline of the asset and should be viewed as an 'invest to save'.</b>	IN PART
<b>9. That a Street Lighting Survey should be undertaken to establish the location, ownership and condition of all columns in the County, including an assessment of the current status of all lights. In addition, if a further £2m could be funded from within the Capital envelope, this should be added to fund an acceleration of Column Replacement works. The use of smart technology should also be investigated.</b>	IN PART
<b>10. That preparations for the new authority should include both the Unitary Opportunities and Future Budget Scrutiny recommendations detailed on slides 45 to 47. The opportunity that the creation of a new Council presents should not be missed.</b>	IN PART

A copy of the proposed recommendations with Cabinet's full responses had been tabled at the meeting and would be appended to the minutes.

**RESOLVED: Cabinet responded to the recommendations as set out above.**

## **8 FINAL BUDGET 2019/20**

Mr Tett, introduced the final budget report to Cabinet and highlighted the following:

- The Council's Strategic Plan and its priorities were taken into account when setting the budget.
- Members of the majority group had been involved in setting budgets within portfolio teams.
- Buckinghamshire County Council had been successful in their bid to become a 75% Business Rates Pilot area for 2019-20. The success of the bid would see the County Council and all four District Councils benefit by retaining 75% of the growth in Business Rates rather than the current 50%. A large proportion of this money was expected to go into the unitary reserves.
- The Council Tax Referendum threshold had been confirmed at 3%.
- Following lobbying of central government the draft budget included the assumption that 'Negative RSG' would be removed for 2019-20.

- A fair funding review was currently underway but little indication of the impact on Bucks at the time of the meeting.
- There was a level of risk in the budget assumptions.
- Budget Scrutiny recommendations had been taken into account.
- The Capital programme included additional highways funding now totalling £4m over 2018/19 and 2019/20 and the significant level of investment which was related to the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) bids.

Mr R Ambrose, Director of Finance and Procurement attended the meeting to answer any member's questions and highlighted the following points:

- Since the draft budget had been out for consultation a number of changes had been made following the meeting of budget scrutiny.
- The Council had received the Local Government Finance Settlement that was broadly in line with the draft budget.
- The success in the business rate retention pilot and the use of some of those funds.
- Updates from the districts included good news on a slight surplus on collection which benefitted the council by about £0.5m in 2019/20.
- Other pressures relating to transport, in particular SEND transport and additional funding had been added to ensure that it was robust.
- Mr Ambrose highlighted the appendices that accompanied the main budget report.

Cabinet raised and discussed the following points:

- Mr Chapple highlighted that negotiations for the Household Recycling Centre contract coming to end in March were still ongoing. It was anticipated that this would be extended for 3 years. Mr Chapple stated that whatever the figure be, this would be absorbed into the current budget. Mr Tett stated that there were proposals to introduce charging for some items which was regrettable but reflected the financial situation.
- Mr Whyte highlighted the prudence of some of the portfolios had resulted in significant investments in Children's Services over the next 4 years, with £10m additional investment to be added next year alone. The budget increase was welcomed and had been challenging for the council to achieve, but for the right reasons; for example further in house residential care for our looked after children. Improvements in foster care over the last few months had also been incredible with an increase of 24% over the last 12 months.
- It would continue to be a challenging budget despite increase as there were some issues you could not foresee. However, the Service was getting better at predicting demand. It was highlighted that there had been heavy investment in Children's Services with the budget increased from £38m in 2013/14 to £76m in 2019/20.
- Mr Appleyard highlighted that the growth in special needs costs were now the rate of change reaching the levels of vulnerable children and adults too. Keeping a rein on how that grows had become a significant part of the education service. Mr Appleyard stated that understanding and managing demand had to be carried out sensitively which could in itself be at an additional cost.
- Lin Hazell highlighted the need to take difficult decisions whilst still delivering quality services. One of the largest pressures within ASC were self-funders going into care too

early, running out of money and then the council having to pick up that funding. Decisions were being made not to save money but to deliver services within the budget envelope.

- Mr Chilver highlighted the Council's work in generating increased income, for example, a third of money in the Resources portfolio came from income. Every opportunity was being taken across the council to increase income.
- Mr Brown urged members not to forget the importance of Public Health and the reduction in central government funding for Public Health.
- Mr Appleyard highlighted the recent successes of Aylesbury Vale Academy now rated as 'Good' with other schools soon to hit higher performing targets which was an enormous lift to the education of those children living in Aylesbury.

Mr Tett asked Cabinet Members to confirm that due regard had been given to the Equality Impact Assessments to which all agreed this had been done.

**The following recommendations were set out in the report:**

1. **Cabinet were asked to recommend to Council the Revenue and Capital budgets as set out in Appendices 1, 2, 3 and 5 to the report.**
2. **Cabinet were asked to agree the schedule of Fees & Charges as set out in Appendix 6 to the report.**
3. **Cabinet were asked to note the Business Unit plans set out in Appendices Ai to Aiv to the report, which supported delivery of the Revenue and Capital budgets.**

**RESOLVED: Cabinet AGREED the recommendations as set out above.**

Full Council would consider the budget at their meeting on 21 February 2019.

## **9 2018/19 Q3 FINANCIAL POSITION**

Mr Tett, Leader introduced the 2018/19 Q3 Financial Position report. Mr Tett stated that there was still a firm objective to come in on budget.

Mr Chilver, Cabinet Member for Resources highlighted the following points:

Revenue

- At the end of Q3 the revenue position was a slight overspend of £120k, which had been an improvement of Q2 overspend of £200k and reflected the successful budget and financial management improvement programme.
- The portfolios with the largest overspend were Children's Social Care £4.9m, Education £1.9m and Health and Wellbeing £1.4m.
- There was a forecast underspend in the Planning and Environment portfolio of £1.5m
- Overall portfolio position was a net overspend of £7.1m but this was offset by corporate underspends of £7m which related to unused provisions and contingencies and Treasury Management savings. This gave a net forecast of £120k.

## **Capital**

- There was a net forecast capital slippage for the year of £15.9m. Main components of this figure were in the Leaders portfolio, the Local Enterprise funded schemes where the County Council were the accountable body and in Resources, in particular relating to the Aylesbury Study Centre (put on hold awaiting unitary developments) and funding for technology projects that had been put on hold pending the approval of the new Technology Strategy.
- There had been accelerated spend on school building projects in Education Capital portfolio.
- Outstanding debt had reduced from £18m to £10m since the task and finish group had been set up.

Cabinet highlighted the following points within their portfolio areas:

- Mr Appleyard confirmed that those who do not qualify for free transport largely covered the cost of providing the service and that there was an aim to make the fare totally cover the costs.
- Mr Tett highlighted the particular pressures in children's social care and health and wellbeing and the corporate contingencies that have helped to mitigate these.
- Mr Whyte highlighted the hard work of social work management teams around the looked after children population and that the numbers had steadied over the last few months which had helped. He acknowledged that it was always hard to calculate unexpected spends coming into the service and this would present budget challenges. Mr Whyte highlighted they were still progressing with the children's homes project and were still looking for additional locations in the south of the County, which not only provided a cost benefit but a benefit to the children being able to keep them in county.
- Lin Hazell highlighted pressures within Health and Wellbeing included increased service users, increased residential nursing and self-funders exhausting their own funds which then have to be funded by the County Council. Lin Hazell also highlighted that there were an increased number of cases that had more complex needs resulting in additional support required.
- Mr Tett highlighted that the slippage in the Capital programme relating to the LEP was monies held by the County Council for capital programmes commissioned for other parties, the spend of which was out of the County Council's control. Mr Ambrose confirmed that if you took the LEP slippage out of the equation and other projects that had deliberately been put on hold, overall slippage was reduced to approximately £5m and in context was relatively low.

**The report set out the following recommendation:**

- 1. Cabinet were asked to note the Quarter 3 outturn forecast for revenue and capital budgets and discuss areas of concern.**

**RESOLVED: Cabinet NOTED the Quarter 3 outturn forecast for revenue and capital budgets and discussed areas of concern.**

**10 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

4 March 2019

**MARTIN TETT  
LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**



## CABINET/CABINET MEMBER FORWARD PLAN

Item	Description	Local Members	Member(s) / Contact Officer	Comments
<b>Cabinet 4 March 2019</b>				
Early Help Review	Decision on Early Help following public and partner consultation exercise.	All Electoral Divisions	Cabinet Member for Children's Services / Sara Turnbull	First notified 16/7/18
Home to School Transport	Report results and recommendations of public consultation following proposals to make changes to delivery of Home to School Transport	All Electoral Divisions	Cabinet Member for Education and Skills / Sarah Callaghan	First notified 12/11/18
<b>Cabinet 25 March 2019</b>				
Brexit update	Update on Buckinghamshire's Brexit preparations		Leader of the Council / Neil Gibson	First notified 13/2/19
Future Legal Services	Proposed future legal service model		Cabinet Member for Resources / Jamie Hollis	First notified 19/2/19
Property Acquisition	If required		Cabinet Member for Resources / Oster Milambo	First notified 11/10/18 Likely to include confidential appendices
Q3 2018/19 Performance Report	Quarterly report		Leader of the Council / Joanna Baschnonga	First notified 30/7/18
Support for Carers In-Depth Review	For Cabinet to discuss the recommendations made by the Health & Social Care Select Committee's in-depth review into Support for Carers.		Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing / Liz Wheaton	First notified 16/1/19
Unitary Transition Arrangements	Standing item if required		Leader of the Council / Roger Goodes	First notified 11/1/19

21

Agenda Item 6

<b>Item</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Local Members</b>	<b>Member(s) / Contact Officer</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>Cabinet 15 April 2019</b>				
Buckinghamshire Integrated Care System governance	To agree required governance for Buckinghamshire County Council's participation in the Integrated Care System.		Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing / Gillian Quinton	First notified 12/11/18
Buckinghamshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan	To seek approval to adopt the Buckinghamshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2016-2036	All Electoral Divisions	Cabinet Member for Planning and Environment / Ismail Mohammed	First notified 27/11/18
<b>Cabinet 13 May 2019</b>				
<b>Cabinet 10 June 2019</b>				
Prevent Duty	To review the Council's progress in meeting the requirements of the Prevent Duty.		Cabinet Member for Community Engagement and Public Health / Jane O'Grady	First notified 20/12/18
Q4 2018/19 Performance Report	Quarterly report		Leader of the Council / Joanna Baschnonga	First notified 30/7/18
<b>Cabinet 8 July 2019</b>				
Smarter Bucks Strategy	To note the six month update		Cabinet Member for Resources / Balvinder Heran	First notified 11/1/19
<b>Cabinet 22 July 2019</b>				
Adult Services Update	To note the six month update		Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing / Gillian Quinton	First notified 11/1/19

<b>Item</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Local Members</b>	<b>Member(s) / Contact Officer</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Children Services Update	To note the six month update		Cabinet Member for Children's Services / Tolis Vouyioukas	First notified 11/1/19

Item	Description	Local Members	Member(s) / Contact Officer	Comments
<b>February 2019 Cabinet Member Decisions</b>				
<u>Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Cabinet Member for Community Engagement and Public Health</u>				
BCC Local Area Needle and Syringe Programme for Under 18's	This is a new Buckinghamshire wide policy for the provision of needle and syringe programme for children and young people under 18 (including under 16's)		Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Cabinet Member for Community Engagement and Public Health / Cavelle Lynch	First notified 17/9/18
<u>Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing</u>				
Carers Strategy - Approval to progress to public consultation	The Council will be publishing the draft Carers Strategy 2019 - 2021 for public consultation		Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing / John Everson, Lisa Truett	First notified 4/12/18
Decision to award a contract to Carers Bucks for the provision of an Integrated Carers Support Service	Decision to award Carers Contract following tender process		Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing, Cabinet Member for Children's Services / John Everson, Lisa Truett	First notified 19/12/18 May contain confidential appendices
<u>Cabinet Member for Education and Skills</u>				
Dedicated Schools Grant and Schools Funding	The purpose of the report is to seek approval from the Cabinet Member for Education & Skills for the proposed local schools funding formula and agreement to other Dedicated Schools Grant budgets		Cabinet Member for Education and Skills / Elizabeth Williams	First notified 1/2/19

<b>Item</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Local Members</b>	<b>Member(s) / Contact Officer</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Determined Admission Arrangements 2020 entry	To determine the admission arrangements for community and Voluntary Controlled schools for 2020 entry. To agree the coordinated schemes for 2020 entry. To set the Relevant Area for 2021 entry. All are currently the subject of a formal consultation which closes on 31 January 2019.		Cabinet Member for Education and Skills / Debbie Munday	First notified 11/1/19
<u>Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing</u>				
Adult Social Care Data Quality Strategy	To approve the adult social care data quality strategy which sets out the service's approach to improving data quality and the use of data & information.		Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing / Jenny McAteer	First notified 19/12/18
Direct Payment Policy	Cabinet Member to agree the Direct Payment Policy		Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing / Marcia Smith	First notified 29/3/17
Market Position Statement for Technology – enabling people to stay connected and stay independent	A Market Position Statement (MPS) is a commissioning document describing health and social care needs, and gaps across Buckinghamshire. The purpose is to outline areas where the Council, Clinical Commissioning Groups and independent providers (including the voluntary, community and faith sector) can work together to best support our residents and achieve better health and wellbeing outcomes. This MPS focusses on potential technology solutions to enable people to stay connected and independent.		Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing / Jane Bowie	First notified 17/7/18
<u>Cabinet Member for Planning and Environment</u>				
BMWLP Local Aggregate Assessment 2017	To approve the Local Aggregate Assessment 2017 document for publication		Cabinet Member for Planning and Environment / Ismail Mohammed	First notified 8/1/19

<b>Item</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Local Members</b>	<b>Member(s) / Contact Officer</b>	<b>Comments</b>
20	Buckinghamshire County Council Culvert Policy		Cabinet Member for Planning and Environment / Jessica Dippie	First notified 10/1/19
	<p>The Culvert Policy discourages the culverting of watercourses and encourages the opening up of existing culverts.</p> <p>The policy requires applicants to consider alternatives to culverting; only applications that provide evidence that there is no reasonably practicable alternative will be granted land drainage consent (under the Land Drainage Act 1991).</p> <p>Buckinghamshire County Council are opposed to the culverting of watercourses because of the associated increased risk of flooding, maintenance requirements, difficulty in pollution detection and various other environmental impacts.</p>			
	<p>Memorandum of Understanding to support the management of Unauthorised Encampments in Buckinghamshire</p> <p>Aylesbury Vale District Council Buckinghamshire County Council Chiltern District Council South Bucks District Council Wycombe District Council Thames Valley Police</p>		Cabinet Member for Planning and Environment / David Sutherland	First notified 28/3/18
	Pednormead End flood management scheme	Chess Valley	Cabinet Member for Planning and Environment / Martin Dickman	First notified 21/1/19

<b>Item</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Local Members</b>	<b>Member(s) / Contact Officer</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Planning Performance Agreements fee schedule and increase in charges for Pre-Application Advice in relation to Planning development management function	Planning Performance Agreements fee schedule and increase in charges for Pre-Application Advice in relation to development management and BCC's role as County Planning Authority		Cabinet Member for Planning and Environment / David Sutherland	First notified 21/9/18
Rights of Way Enforcement Policy	To review and update the existing Rights of Way Enforcement Policy The document will outline the legislative powers available to the authority regarding enforcement, give details of what action our customers may expect the authority to take on illegalities found on the rights of way network.		Cabinet Member for Planning and Environment / David Sutherland	First notified 28/3/18
Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2	Key decision seeking approval of Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2		Cabinet Member for Planning and Environment / David Sutherland	First notified 10/1/19
<u>Cabinet Member for Planning and Environment and Cabinet Member for Resources</u>				
Denham Quarry Northern Extension – Summerleaze Limited	The agreed form of Lease appended to the 2010 Option Agreement allows for the continuation of working via the lateral, northern extension which is to be demised for a term of a further 8 years. This arrangement will serve to provide continuity of the revenues payable to the Council under the current tenancy for the same period. With reference to the previous decision of 15/03/2018 approval is sought from Cabinet Members on the decision reached between Summerleaze and BCC on how to regularise the situation	Denham	Cabinet Member for Planning and Environment, Cabinet Member for Resources / Marion Mayhew	First notified 16/10/18 May contain confidential appendices

<b>Item</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Local Members</b>	<b>Member(s) / Contact Officer</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Isle of Wight Farm, Denham - Proposed minimum 20MWh Gas Peaking Storage Project	Isle of Wight Farm has been identified by BCC's property consultants Carter Jonas as a site suitable for Gas Peak Power Generation Scheme. After a successful marketing exercise, a suitable Developer has been selected who at their cost will apply for planning permission and if planning consent is achieved will sign a 25 year lease with the Council. This proposal will generate an income stream for the Council for 25 years	Denham	Cabinet Member for Planning and Environment, Cabinet Member for Resources / Joanna Mitchell	First notified 19/12/18 May contain confidential appendices
<u>Cabinet Member for Resources</u>				
Budget Amendments to the Approved Capital Programme	To agree budget adjustments to the Approved Capital Programme		John Chilver / Sue Palmer	First notified 20/12/18
Renewal of Estates and Asset Management Services	Renewal of Estates and Asset Management Services		Cabinet Member for Resources / Marion Mayhew	First notified 21/1/19 May contain confidential appendices
Transfer of Land at Spade Oak, Marlow	The transfer of land held by Buckinghamshire County Council as Trustee of the Thameside Preservation Trust to new Trustees. The land was purchased with monies raised by public subscription and is to be preserved for the benefit and recreation of the public.	Marlow	Cabinet Member for Resources / Jamie Hollis	First notified 6/4/17
<u>Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Transportation</u>				
A412 Uxbridge Road / Black Park Road junction	Consultation to implement changes to the existing road layout to reduce collisions by a 'No Right Turn' ban from Black Park Road, a 'No U turns' ban for southbound traffic on the A412, a reduction in the existing speed limit for northbound vehicles on A412 from 60mph to 50mph with a reduction to one lane through the Black Park Road junction.	Iver; Stoke Poges & Wexham	Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Transportation / Trevor Bonsor	First notified 28/11/17

<b>Item</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Local Members</b>	<b>Member(s) / Contact Officer</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Asset Management Strategy 2018	Update to the existing Asset Management Strategy to include ISO55001 recommendations, reference to the Highway Services Policy and a section on innovation.		Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Transportation / Keith Carpenter	First notified 28/11/18
Beaconsfield cycleway	Proposed shared cycleway. Upgraded of existing footway, between Grenfell Road and Ledborough Lane.	Beaconsfield	Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Transportation / Adrian Lane	First notified 28/2/17
Berryfields Proposed Waiting Restrictions	Berryfields Proposed Waiting Restrictions at Aylesbury Vale Academy School & The Berryfields Primary Academy School & The Green Ridge Primary Academy School.	Stone and Waddesdon	Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Transportation / Kirk Adams	First notified 22/3/18
Chesham Town Parking Review Phase 2	Following requests Chesham Town Council, Transport for Buckinghamshire has been commissioned to address safety and parking concerns at some junctions and along some roads in Chesham. After consideration of the responses obtained from the Informal Consultation that was undertaken in July 2018, proposals for a number of restrictions such as 'No waiting at any time' (double yellow line) and shared use of "1 hour waiting" bays have been developed to assist with the concerns and we undertook the Statutory Consultation on these proposals.	Chess Valley; Chiltern Ridges	Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Transportation / Vanessa Silva	First notified 11/1/19
George Street & Market Square, Aylesbury Traffic Movement Restriction	The report will cover making the current experimental traffic regulation order into a permanent traffic regulation order.	Aylesbury North	Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Transportation / Kirk Adams	First notified 13/12/18

<b>Item</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Local Members</b>	<b>Member(s) / Contact Officer</b>	<b>Comments</b>
High Wycombe Proposed Junction Protection (no waiting at any time) restrictions	Results of statutory consultation exercise on proposals to introduce 'highway code test' no waiting at any time double yellow line restrictions at a number of sites across High Wycombe	Downley; Ryemead & Micklefield; Totteridge & Bowerdean; West Wycombe	Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Transportation / Rob Smith	First notified 22/11/18
Little Chalfont Phase 2 Parking Restrictions	Additional parking restrictions have been developed to address residents' concerns relating to commuter / inappropriate parking within Little Chalfont. These proposals have been subject to a recent statutory consultation and the results of that consultation have been collated and reviewed.	Little Chalfont & Amersham Common	Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Transportation / Paul Ahluwalia	First notified 9/1/19
Noise reduction options for Wendover	Following the local consultation in Wendover the project team is seeking a key decision on the preferred option, and to progress the project.	Wendover, Halton & Stoke Mandeville	Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Transportation / Ian McGowan	First notified 4/12/18
Reclassification Order, Bellingdon Road and Townsend Road, Chesham	A short section of Bellingdon Road and Townsend Road in Chesham are classified as B Roads. It seems that this is a historic issue which was not correctly dealt with at the time the A416 St Marys Way was constructed. This order resolves this historic issue	Chesham	Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Transportation / Keith Carpenter	First notified 2/8/17
Winter Service Policy	An overarching Policy setting out the County's approach to providing winter service in Buckinghamshire.	All Electoral Divisions	Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Transportation / Keith Carpenter	First notified 28/11/18

<b>Item</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Local Members</b>	<b>Member(s) / Contact Officer</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<u>Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Transportation and Cabinet Member for Resources</u>				
2018/19 Developer Funded Infrastructure Programme	Approval of Section 106 / Community Infrastructure Fund programme for the 2018/19 financial year.		Cabinet Member for Resources, Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Transportation / Jack Mayhew	First notified 24/5/18
<b>March 2019 Cabinet Member Decisions</b>				
<u>Cabinet Member for Education and Skills</u>				
Adult Learning Fees 2019-20	Agreement of the concessions offered and fees which will be charged by Adult Learning service for courses delivered and apprenticeships commenced in the 2019-20 academic year.		Cabinet Member for Education and Skills / Sarah Callaghan	First notified 11/2/19
Schedule of Fees & Charges 2019/20	To agree the schedule of fees and charges for the Education & Skills Portfolio for the year 2019 to 2020		Cabinet Member for Education and Skills / Elizabeth Williams	First notified 7/2/19
<u>Cabinet Member for Children's Services</u>				
Short Breaks for Children with Disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outcome of public consultation on draft Short Breaks Service Statement</li> <li>• Approval of business case and decision to go out to tender for a children's short breaks offer</li> </ul>		Cabinet Member for Children's Services / Caroline Hart, Matilda Moss	First notified 11/1/19
<u>Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Cabinet Member for Resources</u>				
Payment by Results (Troubled Families) Grant Approval 2018-2019 and future years	Payment by Results Grant Funding Approval for 2018-2019 and future years		Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Cabinet Member for Resources / Yukta Acharya	First notified 11/2/19

<b>Item</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Local Members</b>	<b>Member(s) / Contact Officer</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<u>Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing</u>				
Care Market Pressures	Annual response to care market pressures from providers		Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing / Jane Bowie	First notified 29/3/18
Short Breaks Policy for Adults	Approval of finalised short breaks policy for ASC post consultation		Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing / Jane Bowie	First notified 21/12/18 May include confidential appendices
<u>Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Transportation</u>				
Pound Lane, Marlow existing speed table extension	As part of the development of Riverpark House, Pound Lane, Marlow it is proposed to extend the existing raised table by approximately 15.5m West bound and 6.5m East bound to enable level vehicular access to the properties' driveways	Marlow	Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Transportation / Christine Urry	First notified 2/1/19
Daws Hill Lane speed cushions	Final decision on the consultation on the re-instatement of the speed cushions on Daws Hill Lane be suspended, pending consideration of alternative traffic measures being promoted.	Abbey	Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Transportation / Paul Ahluwalia	First notified 7/2/19
<b>April 2019 Cabinet Member Decisions</b>				
<u>Cabinet Member for Education and Skills</u>				
Proposal by Chartridge School to admit 3 year old children	The governing board of Chartridge Combined School are holding a public consultation from 10 September on a proposal that from September 2019 the school admits 3 year old children into a pre-school class they are proposing to open.	Chiltern Ridges	Cabinet Member for Education and Skills / Paula Campbell-Balcombe	First notified 10/9/18

Item	Description	Local Members	Member(s) / Contact Officer	Comments
<u>Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Transportation</u>				
The Buckinghamshire County Council (High Wycombe Town Centre) (consolidation) Order 2019	<p>A Traffic Regulation Order is required to be made which will incorporate installation of Phases 3, 4 and 5 of the High Wycombe Town Centre Master Plan &amp; Alternative Route schemes.</p> <p>The effect of the Order is to prohibit right turn, left turn manoeuvres and introduce a two way traffic system in certain lengths of road where the scheme are being implemented.</p>	Abbey	Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Transportation / Ian McGowan	First notified 13/2/19
A4010/A4129 HS2 Safety Mitigation Schemes	Delivery of the HS2 Safety Mitigation scheme as agreed with the A4010 petitioning group along the A4010 and A4129 in Buckinghamshire following detailed design and consultation.	Ridgeway East; The Risboroughs; West Wycombe	Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Transportation / Joshua Tomlinson	First notified 12/12/18 May contain confidential appendices
<b>May 2019 Cabinet Member Decisions</b>				
<u>Cabinet Member for Community Engagement &amp; Public Health</u>				
Tobacco Control Strategy	A new strategy for Buckinghamshire currently in development on Tobacco Control.		Cabinet Member for Community Engagement and Public Health / Jane O'Grady	First notified 17/1/19
<b>June 2019 Cabinet Member Decisions</b>				
<u>Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Transportation</u>				
Appointments to Outside Bodies 2019/20	To approve the list of outside bodies to which the County Council appoints representatives. They will be detailed in Appendix 1 to the report		Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Transportation / Claire Hawkes	First notified 6/11/18



## Buckinghamshire County Council

Visit [democracy.buckscc.gov.uk](http://democracy.buckscc.gov.uk) for councillor information and email alerts for local meetings

**Please note the following information since the report included in the previous Cabinet agenda:-**

- 2 decisions have been published but not yet taken
- 5 decisions have been taken
- 25 decisions on the forward plan are pending for February

### DECISIONS TAKEN

Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Cabinet Member for Community Engagement and Public Health

27 Feb 2019

**CS01.19 - BCC Local Area Needle and Syringe Programme for Under 18's (Decision taken)**

The Cabinet Members:

1. APPROVED the local area policy for the provision of specialist needle and syringe programme for children and young people under 18 (including under 16) for implementation across Buckinghamshire.
2. AGREED that the local area policy attached be reviewed annually

Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing

25 Feb 2019

**HW02.19 - Decision to award a contract to Carers Bucks for the provision of an Integrated Carers Support Service (Decision taken)**

The Cabinet Members:

- APPROVED the decision to award the contract for the provision of an Integrated Carers Support Service to Carers Bucks

Cabinet Member for Planning and Environment

26 Feb 2019



## **PE01.19 - BMWLP Local Aggregate Assessment 2017 (Decision taken)**

**The Cabinet Member:**

**APPROVED the Local Aggregates Assessment 2017 report for publication, attached as Appendix**

Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Transportation

25 Feb 2019

**T04.19 - High Wycombe Proposed Junction Protection (no waiting at any time) restrictions (Decision taken)**

**The Cabinet Member:**

- a. **AUTHORISED the Director of Growth, Strategy and Highways to make the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) for the scheme outlined in this report; noting that it is slightly different to the one that was advertised during the Statutory Consultation process because it takes into account the responses received during the consultation period.**
- b. **AGREED that the TRO be made as advertised at Statutory Consultation but with the following amendments:**
  - **Removal of proposed 'no waiting at any time' restrictions on Bassetsbury Lane (map ref Area Code: AE 71)**
  - **Removal of proposed 'no waiting at any time' restrictions on Ford Street / Beech Road / Kings Square (map ref Area Code: AG 73)**
- c. **AGREED that responders to the Statutory Consultation be informed of the Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Transportation Decision**

25 Feb 2019

**T03.19 - Noise reduction options for Wendover (Decision taken)**

**The Cabinet Member AGREED to**

**Write to HS2 Ltd Undertakings and Assurances Committee seeking to amend Assurance 1861 "Wendover – roadside noise barriers" to very Low Noise Surfacing (Option 4).**

**Authorise Ian McGowan, Head of Infrastructure Projects to undertake appropriate site and materials investigation and design work to enable prompt implementation of an appropriate vLNS surfacing material, following HS2 agreement.**

**Subject to receipt of approval for a change in Assurance 1861 from HS2 Ltd, authorise Ian McGowan, Head of Infrastructure Projects to progress the implementation of appropriate vLNS with details of the material to be used and temporary traffic management arrangements delegated to the Head of Highways Infrastructure Projects and Head of Highways (Client).**

## DECISIONS TO BE TAKEN

Cabinet Member for Planning and Environment and Cabinet Member for Resources

22 Feb 2019

### **PE02.19 - Isle of Wight Farm, Denham - Proposed minimum 20MWh Gas Peaking Storage Project (Decision to be taken)**

#### **Recommendation**

- To approve the proposed Gas Peak Power Generation scheme based on the attached agreed Heads of Terms that will form a basis for Option and Lease agreement.
- To approve the recommended Developer.
- To approve that the Council enters into agreements to facilitate completion of the Lease.

Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Transportation

21 Feb 2019

### **T05.19 - Chesham Town Parking Review Phase 2 (Decision to be taken)**

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

**It is recommended that:**

- a. The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Transportation authorises the Director of Growth, Strategy and Highways to make the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) for the scheme outlined in this report as advertised during the Statutory Consultation process.
- b. That responders to the Statutory Consultation be informed of the Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Transportation Decision

For further information please contact: Rachel Bennett on 01296 382343



## **Select Committee Combined Work Programme**

### **About our Select Committees**

*This work programme sets out all formal meetings of the Council's Select Committees.*

*The purpose of Select Committees is to carry out the Council's overview and scrutiny function. Their role is to support public accountability and improve outcomes for residents through scrutinising the work of decision-makers.*

*Select Committees can carry out this function either through an in-depth Inquiry or one-off item at Committee meetings.*

*A scrutiny Inquiry is an investigation on a topic that will lead to a report and evidence-based recommendations for change to decision-makers. The key difference between one-off committee items that are not part of an inquiry and scrutiny inquiries is that Select Committees normally only make recommendations to Cabinet as a result of an in-depth Inquiry.*

*Evidence for scrutiny Inquiries may be gathered in different ways depending on the topic, this includes taking evidence at formal Select Committee meetings and/or informal meetings, visits or external research. Prior to any work commencing the Select Committee will agree an Inquiry scoping document which will outline the terms of reference, the methodology and inquiry timeline.*

*For more details about Select Committee Inquiries and guidance please see <http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/services/council-and-democracy/scrutiny/>*

[Finance, Performance & Resources Select Committee](#)

[Children's Select Committee](#)

[Health & Adult Social Care Select Committee](#)

[Transport, Environment & Communities Select Committee](#)

Date	Topic	Description and purpose	Lead Service Officer	Attendees
<b>Finance, Performance &amp; Resources Select Committee</b>				
26 Mar 2019	Budget Scrutiny 2018 - 12 month progress report	The Committee will examine a progress report on the implementation of the recommendations from Budget Scrutiny 2018 after 12 months. Members will have the opportunity to question the Cabinet Member and the Director of Finance and Procurement, before discussing and allocating a RAG (Red, Amber, Green) status for the progress of each recommendation.	Richard Ambrose, Director of Finance & Procurement	Mr John Chilver, Cabinet Member for Resources, Mr Richard Ambrose, Director of Finance and Procurement
26 Mar 2019	Business Rates Retention - Change Implications	Members will review the changes to business rates retention and how these will impact the Council and small businesses in Buckinghamshire.	Richard Ambrose, Director of Finance & Procurement	John Chilver, Cabinet Member for Resources Richard Ambrose, Director of Finance & Procurement Matthew Strevens, Corporate Finance Business Partner, Resources

07

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Description and purpose</b>	<b>Lead Service Officer</b>	<b>Attendees</b>
26 Mar 2019	Customer Update	Details to be confirmed.	Lloyd Jeffries, Director of Operations	Mr John Chilver, Cabinet Member for Resources Mr Lloyd Jeffries, Director of Customer Ms Kelly Page, Customer Experience Head of Service
26 Mar 2019	Work Programme Update	For Members to discuss the Committee's work programme.	Kelly Sutherland, Committee and Governance Manager	Committee Members

Date	Topic	Description and purpose	Lead Service Officer	Attendees
<b>Children's Select Committee</b>				
12 Mar 2019	Early Help Consultation Report	For the Select Committee to receive an update about the results of the early help consultation	Sara Turnbull, Programme Manager, Early Help, Tolis Vouyioukas, Executive Director Children's Services	
12 Mar 2019	Working together to reduce the number of Permanent Exclusions from School - 6 month recommendation monitoring	For the Committee to examine progress of the implementation of recommendations from the Permanent Exclusions Inquiry after six months. Members will have the opportunity to question the Cabinet Member and the Service Director, Education before discussing and allocating a RAG (Red, Amber, Green) status for the progress of each recommendation.	Sarah Callaghan, Service Director Education	Mr M Appleyard, Cabinet Member for Education & Skills Miss S Callaghan, Service Director, Education Mrs V Trundell, Education Entitlement Manager
11 Jun 2019	Education Standards	For the Committee to consider an overview of education standards across the County for 2018-19, the National Funding Formula and the side-by-side project.	Sarah Callaghan, Service Director Education, Tolis Vouyioukas, Executive Director Children's Services	Mr M Appleyard - Cabinet Member for Education & Skills

Date	Topic	Description and purpose	Lead Service Officer	Attendees
<b>Health &amp; Adult Social Care Select Committee</b>				
19 Mar 2019	Adult Social Care Transformation - Tier 1	For Members to examine the progress of Tier 1 Adult Social Care Transformation programme.	Jane O'Grady, Director of Public Health	Lin Hazell, Cabinet Member for Health & Wellbeing Gill Quinton, Executive Director, Communities, Health & Adult Social Care Jane O'Grady, Director of Public Health
	Health & Care Planning at locality level	Item to be developed	Liz Wheaton, Committee and Governance Adviser	Lou Patten, Chief Officer, Clinical Commissioning Group Neil Macdonald, Chief Executive, Bucks Healthcare Trust
	Mental Health services	Item to be developed	Liz Wheaton, Committee and Governance Adviser	
	The NHS Long Term Plan	The NHS published its long term plan in January 2019. This item will be an opportunity for the Committee to hear from health representatives about the implications of the plan locally.	Liz Wheaton, Committee and Governance Adviser	David Williams, Director of Strategy and Business Development, Bucks Healthcare Trust Robert Majilton, Deputy Chief Officer, Clinical Commissioning Group

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Description and purpose</b>	<b>Lead Service Officer</b>	<b>Attendees</b>
25 Jun 2019	Adult Social Care Transformation - Tier 2	For Members to examine the progress of the Tier 2 Adult Social Care Transformation programme.	Karen Jackson, Service Director (ASC Operations)	Lin Hazell, Cabinet Member for Health & Wellbeing Gill Quinton, Executive Director, Communities, Health & Adult Social Care Karen Jackson, Director of Operations
25 Jun 2019	Child Obesity Inquiry - 6 months on	For Members to receive an update on the progress on implementing the recommendations made in the Child Obesity Inquiry report.	Liz Wheaton, Committee and Governance Adviser	Lucie Smith, Public Health Practitioner
24 Sep 2019	Adult Social Care Transformation - Tier 3	For Members to examine the progress on Tier 3 Adult Social Care Transformation programme.	Jane Bowie, Director of Joint Commissioning	Lin Hazell, Cabinet Member for Health & Wellbeing Gill Quinton, Executive Director, Communities, Health & Adult Social Care Jane Bowie, Service Director (Integrated Commissioning)

#

Date	Topic	Description and purpose	Lead Service Officer	Attendees
<b>Transport, Environment &amp; Communities Select Committee</b>				
4 Jun 2019	Modern Slavery Inquiry 12 Month Recommendation Update	Members will review the implementation of the Modern Slavery Inquiry recommendations.	Faye Blunstone, Community Safety Co-Ordinator	Noel Brown, Cabinet Member for Community Engagement.
4 Jun 2019	Work Programme	For Members to agree the work programme for 2019/20	Kama Wager, Committee Adviser	Committee Members
17 Sep 2019	Work Programme		Kama Wager, Committee Adviser	Committee Members



## SCRUTINY INQUIRY WORK PROGRAMME – OVERVIEW OF SELECT COMMITTEE LIVE INQUIRIES

Inquiry Title	Inquiry Chairman	Lead Officer	Nov 18	Dec 18	Jan 19	Feb 19	Mar 19
Budget Scrutiny 2019	David Watson	Kelly Sutherland					
Support for Carers	Brian Roberts	Liz Wheaton					



Scoping



Evidence gathering



Committee Approval  
Report



Cabinet / NHS

For further information on scrutiny work please contact Kelly Sutherland, Committee & Governance Manager on 01296 382343.  
[www.buckscc.gov.uk/democracy](http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/democracy). Last updated on 22 Jan 2019



# Report to Cabinet

---

<b>Title:</b>	<b>Early Help Review</b>
<b>Date:</b>	Monday 4 March 2019
<b>Date can be implemented:</b>	Tuesday 12 March 2019
<b>Author:</b>	Cabinet Member for Children's Services
<b>Contact officer:</b>	Sara Turnbull
<b>Local members affected:</b>	(All Electoral Divisions)
<b>Portfolio areas affected:</b>	All Portfolio areas

*For press enquiries concerning this report, please contact the media office on 01296 382444*

## Summary

The purpose of this report is to seek approval to agree, following a consultation process, the partnership Early Help Strategy, proposed changes to the Council's early help services, the locations of future delivery sites, and future use of children's centre buildings proposed for closure. The details to support this paper are set out in Appendices 1-5 and as listed below:

- Appendix 1 – Consultation Findings Report
- Appendix 2 – Draft Early Help Strategy
- Appendix 3 – Service Design Proposal
- Appendix 4 – Site Locations Report
- Appendix 5 – Equality Impact Assessment

## Recommendations

1. To agree the Early Help Strategy as set out in Appendix 2.
2. To agree to establish an integrated Family Support Service that will assist children and families to deal with difficulties as early as possible, and reduce the need for statutory social care (see Appendix 3).
3. To agree to retaining 16 children's centres across the county for early years provision (as set out in Appendix 4), with the buildings also available for additional use to support families with children 0-19 (up to 25 for children with special educational needs or disabilities). These sites will be renamed as family centres to reflect their wider support role.
4. To agree to close 19 children's centres as listed in Appendix 4, and ensure their continuing use for early years and community benefit.

5. To agree to give delegated authority to the Executive Director for Children's Services, following consultation with the Executive Director for Resources, Cabinet Members for Children's Services and Resources, to:
  - (a) authorise changes in lease agreements for those children's centres to be closed, including agreeing the final use for such buildings;
  - (b) authorise further changes in the location of the premises of children's centres if required, subject to those changes being in accordance with the Early Help Strategy, and following a consultation on the proposals.

## A. Narrative setting out the reasons for the decision

### Background

1. Early help is about supporting families to do well, stay safe and resolve problems at the earliest possible opportunity, before they become more serious. We know that current services are not reaching those families who need help the most. 15% of the families who accessed the Council's early help services in 2017/18 had an identified need for support. Only 5% of families accessing children's centres, a key part of the Council's early help services, had an identified need for support in 2017/18.
2. We know that too many children are receiving help too late. Over the last five years the Council has seen a 53% increase in children in need; 160% increase in the number of children subject to a child protection plan; and a 14% increase in the number of looked after children. Ofsted highlighted in their 2017 Inspection that early help services in Buckinghamshire need to improve their effectiveness in providing the right support at the first time to help prevent repeat referrals to children's services.
3. We also know that we need to change our services to have the most impact in helping families in need at a time when the Council has less money than ever before. The Council no longer receives any central government Revenue Support Grant. The Council has set a saving target of £3.1 million per annum to be achieved within early help services overall.
4. The County Council supports families through a wide range of services. This review is about services commissioned and/or provided by the Council where there is an immediate opportunity for improved integration and better outcomes. The services in-scope of this review include: the Family Information Service, Family Resilience Service, Youth Service, Children's Centres, and other contracted support for parents and young people.
5. The total current expenditure on in-scope services is £9.5 million per annum. The Council's support for families is much wider than these in-scope services alone. For example, the Council supports youth participation, support for children in households experiencing domestic violence and young carers with expenditure of approximately £630,000 per annum. Significant public health services to support families are also commissioned by the Council, with approximately £7.6 million per annum spent on public health nursing for families via health visiting and school nursing. These services are not in-scope of this review.

## **The Consultation Process**

6. The County Council undertook a range of pre-consultation research prior to going out to formal consultation on proposals. The Council published an options appraisal document which includes an overview of the different evidence considered, as well as a research report and a pre-consultation qualitative research report carried out by BMG Research. The qualitative research included in-depth interviews with residents and partners, as well as a workshop with both groups to ensure their views were included in the design of the proposals. Quantitative research looked at needs, population changes, and the profile of existing service users to inform the development of proposals for change (see background papers for further details).
7. In light of the pre-consultation research, the Council identified three viable options for change to the service delivery model for its early help services. The viable options identified were:
  - Option A – current model with 30-35% reduction across all early help services.
  - Option B – area-based network of family centres.
  - Option C – area-based family outreach only model.
8. BMG Research was commissioned to carry out a consultation survey on behalf of the Council to ensure a robust, fair and independent consultation process. The Council sought views in particular on:
  - The proposed aims for a Council early help service and wider partnership strategy.
  - The viable options for change and any alternative proposals.
  - The priorities for the locations of the proposed family centres.
  - The proposed Council approach for the future use of children's centre buildings which might be closed.
9. A 10 week public consultation took place between 4 October and 13 December 2018. There were approximately 848 engagements as part of the consultation process. This included: 752 survey responses received from residents (717) and organisations (35); and 31 attendees at the public meetings and 53 attendees at drop-in events; and 12 additional written responses.
10. As part of the consultation process three public meetings were held in Aylesbury, Amersham and Wycombe, as well as three drop-in sessions at children's centres. A copy of the independent consultation report provided to the Council is set out in Appendix 1.
11. Promotions of the consultation and survey included:
  - Two press releases.
  - Local radio promotion in English and Hindi.
  - Social media—62 social posts which resulted in approximately 99,000 impressions (displays) and over 1500 engagements (liked/forwarded/commented).
  - Website—215,098 unique page views of the County Council's consultation pages, as well as promotions on the Buckinghamshire Family Information Service webpages.
  - External signature promotion on all staff emails.
  - Editorial in October and November 2018 editions of the 'My Bucks' newsletter.
  - Schools Bulletin promotions.
  - Governors Bulletin promotions.

- Newsletter to all parish councils.
- Emails sent to over 4,000 early help service users.
- Flyers and posters distributed to all GP surgeries, and via electronic screens in waiting areas.
- Promotions at children's centres through communications to providers and distribution of flyers, posters and hardcopy questionnaires as required.
- Promotions at Youth Centres.
- Promotions at Citizens Advice offices.
- Promotions at Multi-cultural centres (Asian, Nigerian, Caribbean, Polish and South East Asian), Aylesbury and Wycombe, with posters and flyers distributed.
- Cascading information to religious leaders, including via churches and mosques.
- Promotions at Libraries.
- Attendance at seven Local Area Forum meetings.
- Three public meetings held in Aylesbury, Wycombe and Amersham.
- Three drop-in meetings held in Steeple Claydon, Disraeli and Iver Children's Centres targeted at children's centre service users, as well as the wider public.
- Communications to all internal Council staff via the Council's newsletter.

## **Consultation Findings and Council Response**

12. The Council has carefully considered all consultation feedback. A summary of the Council's response to the key issues arising is set out in the table below:

<b>Consultation Finding</b>	<b>Proposed Response</b>
Approximately two-thirds (66%) of respondents agreed with the aims of the Council's proposed early help service.	For Cabinet to agree to set up an integrated Family Support Service with the aims as proposed in the consultation (see recommendation 2 of this report).
The majority of respondents (52%) agreed with the Council's preferred service design option B—a network of family centres.	For Cabinet to agree that those children's centres to be closed are continued to be used for early years and community benefit (see recommendation 4 of this report).
More than two-thirds (68%) of respondents agreed with the Council's aim that children's centre buildings proposed for closure should continue to be used for community benefit, particularly early years provision.	For the new service to be named the 'Family Support Service' rather than 'early help', as it is easier to understand.  To ensure an effective communications plan is in place for launching the new service.
Some respondents asked for better communications of services to families.	As part of the implementation of a decision the Council will:  Ensure that the Council's Family Support Service can be accessed through a variety of ways: self-referral; professionals such as GPs, health visitors and schools.  Raise awareness about our services with partners and local communities.
Respondents were concerned that family support would be less accessible if children's centres were to close, in particular raising concerns about travel distances to family centres.	Improve the Buckinghamshire Family

	Information Service website, through investing in easier navigation and additional online resources, including self-help tools.
Respondents were concerned that it would be harder to identify families in need if children's centres closed.	Set-up three area teams with named officers to work with specific schools and health teams to improve the identification of families in need..
Respondents were concerned about the loss of valued universal community provision.	The new service will include a community links officer in each of the three area teams to help build community capacity.  Invest in the Buckinghamshire Family Information Service website to improve signposting to community activities and support for families.
Some respondents expressed concern about the potential impact of children's centre closures on the continuing local accessibility of health service provision.	Whilst health services are not in-scope of this review, it is recognised by the Council that in some areas where children's centres are to be closed it might be necessary for alternative local venues to be used to ensure continuity of access to universal services such as health clinics.  Through the consultation process the Council has discussed the possibility of continuing health delivery at sites to be formally closed at children's centres with respective site owners (often schools). These discussions have been positive and on many sites health service delivery is likely to continue unaffected.  Following a Cabinet decision, officers will continue to work with health colleagues to ensure effective and timely communication of information to service users.
Many respondents expressed views on proposed sites, and in particular views on retaining specific children's centres.	Some changes to site locations for family centres are proposed to reflect consultation feedback.  This includes proposing an additional 2 family centres, bringing the number of retained children's centres across Buckinghamshire from 14 to 16.

13. It is recommended to establish a new integrated Family Support Service with the aims as proposed in the consultation. This would be a significant departure from the range of current services delivered directly by the Council or contracted out. The aims would be to:

- Support vulnerable children and families to enable them to thrive and achieve positive outcomes.
- Integrate services wherever possible to create stronger partnerships which make effective use of all resources and improve family and community resilience.
- Improve access and reduce duplication to enable children and families needing support to tell their story only once.

- Evidence the impact of early help to reduce cost pressures on statutory services.

14. It is also recommended that the Council's preferred consultation proposal for the overall service design model (option B—a network of family centres) is approved. There are three key benefits of an integrated Family Support Service:

**a) Targeted support for those in need**

- Specialist practitioners in key areas: including special educational needs, domestic abuse, and parenting.
- A pro-active focus on identifying those who can benefit most from early help.
- A named key worker for each family with a support plan to co-ordinate activity to address the family needs, to achieve agreed outcomes and sustain improvements.

**b) Improved access to support**

- Residents to access services through a variety of ways: including self-referral and via professionals such as GPs, health visitors and schools.
- Open access stay & play sessions for babies & toddlers, held at family centres across the county.
- An enhanced Buckinghamshire Family Information Service website, including new self-help tools online.

**c) Better connected**

- Three area family support teams working jointly with key partners, particularly schools and health colleagues to identify and support vulnerable families.
- Each school will have named link family support worker to improve early identification and multi-agency early intervention, supporting families with emerging needs.
- Each area family support team to have a dedicated officer to develop community capacity and grow local networks, building independence and resilience.

15. It is proposed that there are 16 family centres across Buckinghamshire to support the continuing local accessibility of services. Families will also be able to access services through a variety of other ways including: via outreach work by family workers who will be delivering support in community venues and family homes, online and telephone advice services.

16. Services will be provided from the family centres to meet the needs of families with children aged 0-19 (up to age 25 for children with special educational needs). This will ensure that the buildings are utilised for supporting families with older children, as well as those with children aged 0-5 (current focus for the existing children's centres).

17. The family centres will also serve as continuing formally designated children's centres with the DfE, reflecting their continuing majority use for early years provision, alongside their wider potential use for activities to support families with older children.

18. The location of the proposed family centres has been determined according to a variety of factors. The full rationale for the determination of each family centre location and proposed children's centre sites for closure is set out in Appendix 4. The key factors considered were:

- The views of public and partners.

- The population needs of different areas.
- Population density.
- Coverage and reach across Buckinghamshire.
- Practical building considerations.

19. In response to consultation feedback, some changes to the proposed locations are put forward. It is proposed to increase the total number of family centres across Buckinghamshire from 14 to 16, with additional family centres (retained children's centres) at Hampden Way, Wycombe and at the Ivers. The rationale for these additional sites is to effectively meet local needs, as well as to maximise the accessibility of family centres.
20. A further change is proposed in High Wycombe. The Council originally proposed to close Disraeli Children's Centre and retain Hamilton Rd Children's Centre as part of the preferred service model option. Following further consideration, it is proposed to instead retain Disraeli Children's Centre and close Hamilton Rd Children's Centre. Consultation feedback indicated strong local support for retaining Disraeli Children's Centre. In addition, evidence on the usage figures showed that Disraeli Children's Centre had more than double the number of unique families in 2017/18 in comparison to Hamilton Rd Children's Centre. Given the relative proximity of the centres (1 mile/20 minutes by foot/10 minutes by bus: google maps), and a desire for an overall geographical spread of centres across Buckinghamshire, it is proposed that only one out of these two centres is required.

21. See table below for summary of site changes following the consultation:

<b>Children's Centre</b>	<b>Consultation Preferred Option</b>	<b>Cabinet Proposal</b>
Hampden Way	Close	Retain
Ivers	Close	Retain
Hamilton Rd	Retain	Close
Disraeli	Close	Retain

## B. Other options available, and their pros and cons

22. As set out above, the Council consulted on three viable options for change to its early help services, as well as seeking views on alternatives. The Council considered retaining the same services with no change and this was ruled out from further evaluation prior to the public consultation, as it would not be possible to deliver the Council's ambitions for the new service in supporting families in need nor achievable within the reduced resources available.
23. Option A (retaining the current service model, including all 35 children's centres, with a third reduction in spend across all current early help service areas) is not recommended. This is because evidence indicates that it is highly likely that outcomes for children and young people would not improve.
24. Option C (an outreach only model) is also not recommended. Whilst this model would help ensure resources are targeted at those most in need, it would mean the Council would not have any fixed local delivery sites. There has been strong feedback from the most recent and previous consultations on early help that maintaining a local fixed presence in communities is valued and an important part of a preventative model.

25. A summary of the pros and cons of each of the service design options is set out below:

	<b>Pros</b>	<b>Cons</b>
<b>Option A— Retaining same early help services but less 30-35% service activity/spend.</b>	Maximises the number of fixed buildings in local communities across Buckinghamshire.	A reduction in targeted support to which would lead to overall worse outcomes for children and families.  Increased waiting times for families to receive help and increases pressure on statutory social care services.
<b>Option B— A network of family centres</b>	Family centres would offer support to families with older children not just 0-5 years.  Resources targeted at families in need to prevent problems becoming worse.	A risk that those communities where a children's centre is closed that services would be less accessible without alternative arrangements being put in place to mitigate this risk.
<b>Option C—Area outreach model (targeted support only, no open access)</b>	Maximises resources for targeted support.	The lack of any fixed buildings in local communities as a central point for service delivery may lead to missed opportunities for building strong community resilience and partnership working.

26. In the consultation survey, respondents were invited to suggest any alternatives to the viable service design options identified by the Council in two free text questions. The detailed analysis to these questions is set out in the Appendix 1. In response to a general question on any alternatives, the key themes were: a desire for no cuts to be made to children's centre provision; a request for increased/expanded services; a concern in regard to the accessibility of future services if children's centres close; suggestions in regard to finances, such as cutting staff costs and increasing income.
27. A further question invited respondents to comment upon any alternative ideas for the delivery of savings. The top themes were: identifying new sources of income/funding; making efficiencies and reducing staff costs.
28. The Council is committed to ensuring a balanced budget is delivered, as well as ensuring value for money from early help services and therefore considers that changes to early help services are vital to improve outcomes for vulnerable children and families. In response to suggestions relating to efficiencies, management efficiencies are built-into the design of the staffing model to deliver the proposed service.
29. Some respondents suggested delaying a decision until after the new Unitary Council is formed. This is not considered advisable. Acting now to improve early help services is part of the Council's Ofsted improvement journey. Delaying a decision would mean that the County Council would be unable to fulfil its duty of care to improve outcomes for children and families.

### C. Resource implications

30. The resource implications of this decision are that the Council's new integrated Family Support Service will be enabled to deliver services to meet the needs of families within the available resources identified in the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan.

Implementation of the new service model from September 2019, and continuation of the current savings plans will deliver £2.5 million savings in 2019/20 and thereafter £3.1 million year-on-year. The total annual revenue available budget for the Family Support Service is £6.6 million.

31. The set-up costs are estimated to be approximately £350,000 for the Family Support Service, covering ICT, minor building works and staff training. These costs will be met from within the available budget for the service.

#### **D. Value for Money (VfM) Self-Assessment**

32. Prior to the consultation the Council considered the value for money of the options for change as part an options evaluation (see background papers). The evaluation criteria for service options reflected the need for efficiency, economy, and effectiveness in service delivery.

33. The service design model as set out in Appendix 3 to this report provides the best value for money out of the options for change. Nationally there is strong evidence, particularly from the Early Intervention Foundation, that investment in specific targeted early interventions with children and families leads to improved outcomes and reduces longer-term cost pressures on statutory social care.

#### **E. Legal implications**

34. There are various duties that are relevant to this decision and the most relevant are highlighted below.

35. Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 which requires the Council and partner agencies to make arrangements for ensuring that their functions are discharged, having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

36. Statutory guidance in the DfE Working Together to Safeguard Children Guidance 2018. This guidance sets out that early help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later. Effective early help relies upon local organisations working together to:

- Identify children and families who would benefit from early help.
- Undertake an assessment of the need for early help.
- Provide targeted early help services to address the assessed needs of a child and their family which focuses on activity to improve the outcomes for the child.

37. Section 2B of the National Health Service Act 2006 which places a duty on the Council to take such steps as it considers appropriate for improving the health of the people in its area. Such steps include provision of services or facilities designed to promote healthy living, and provision of information and advice. Having an integrated and effective early help services for children and families supports this overarching public health duty.

38. Under the Childcare Act 2006, the Council has various duties in relation to pre-school and primary school aged children:

- Section 1 places a duty on the Council to improve the wellbeing of children aged 0-5 and to reduce inequalities between them.

- Section 3 requires the Council to ensure that early childhood services are provided in an integrated manner, in order to facilitate access to maximise the benefit to young children and their parents.
- Section 4 places a duty on relevant partner agencies to work with the local authority to improve wellbeing and secure integrated childhood services.
- Section 5A requires the Council to secure, so far as reasonably practicable, sufficient children's centres in its area to meet local need.
- Section 5D requires the Council to consult on any significant changes made to children's centre provision within the local area.

39. Statutory guidance on these duties is provided in Sure Start Children's Centres Statutory Guidance 2013. Children's centre services may be provided on site or advice or assistance may be provided on gaining access to services elsewhere. The guidance confirms that children's centres are as much about making appropriate and integrated services available, as it is about providing premises in particular geographical areas. The core purpose of children's centres is to improve outcomes for young children and their families and reduce inequalities between families in greatest need and their peers in (1) child development and school readiness, (2) parenting aspirations and parenting skills and (3) child and family health and life chances.

40. In relation to the sufficiency duty, the guidance makes clear that the local authority should ensure that a network of children's centres is accessible to all families with young children in their area and within reasonable reach of all families with young children in urban and rural areas, taking into account distance and availability of transport and that centre services should be targeted at families at risk of poor outcomes through effective outreach services, based on analysis of local need. There is a presumption against closure of children's centres and where closure is proposed, the outcomes for children, particularly the most disadvantaged, should not be adversely affected. In determining arrangements locally the guiding considerations should be value for money and the ability to improve outcomes for all children and families, especially families in greatest need of support.

41. Under the Education Act 1996, s.507B the Council has a duty to secure, so far as reasonably practicable, sufficient educational leisure-time activities and recreational leisure-time activities and facilities for the improvement of well-being of young people aged 13-19 years (up to 25 years for those with a learning difficulty or disability).

42. The Council's approach has been informed by the need to ensure a fair consultation process. Case law has confirmed the followed principles:

- Consultation must be at a time when proposals are still at a formative stage.
- The proposer must give sufficient information for any proposal to permit intelligent consideration and response.
- Consultation must be for a sufficient time to allow respondents to properly respond.
- Consultation results must be taken into account by the final decision-maker.

## F. Property implications

43. The proposed 16 family centre sites at retained children's centre sites have been assessed by property services as suitable for delivering services and are all DDA compliant. The rationale for the site choice is set out in Appendix 4.

44. During the consultation period preliminary discussions have taken place in regard to the potential possible future uses of those children's centres which are to be designated. Appendix 4 sets out the Council's proposed next steps for each of these buildings in light of this engagement.
45. As part of the implementation process the Council's property services will lead in taking forward changes to lease arrangements and continuing community engagement in relation to all 19 sites proposed for closure as children's centres, as part of its corporate landlord function.
46. The recommendations include delegated authority to the Executive Director for Children's Services, following appropriate consultation, to authorise any changes in lease terms for those buildings that are no longer to be used as children's centres, as well as further changes on the location of children's centres. This delegation enables the future opportunity to consider changes where they may benefit service users, if for example improved alternative local premises become available. The use of delegated powers would be taken in accordance with the Council's Constitution.

## **G. Other implications/issues**

47. Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 states: (1) A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:
  - (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
  - (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
  - (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. (...)

(3) Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:

  - (a) remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
  - (b) take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
  - (c) encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

(4) The steps involved in meeting the needs of disabled persons that are different from the needs of persons who are not disabled include, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities.

(5) Having due regard to the need to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:

  - (a) tackle prejudice, and
  - (b) promote understanding
48. An equality impact assessment has been completed and is set out in Appendix 5. Potential positive and negative impacts have been identified in regard to the protected

characteristics of age, disability, gender, pregnancy and race. Key mitigations include: ensuring that service changes are communicated effectively, to alleviate any concerns over the changes, so that service users are aware of how they can access family support services; as well as ensuring that the impact of the new Family Support Service is monitored to enable services to be locally tailored and improved.

49. Following a Cabinet decision, a staffing consultation will take place with in-house and provider staff affected. It is anticipated that the staffing consultation will start in April 2019 and that the new service will go live in September 2019.
50. Current providers of services in scope of this review will be formally notified of the termination of contracts for those services where required, to implement the decisions set out in this report.
51. It is anticipated that those buildings identified for closure as children's centres would be available for alternative use from September 2019.

#### **H. Feedback from consultation, Local Area Forums and Local Member views**

52. The feedback from the public consultation has been summarised earlier in this report.
53. Consideration has been given to three petitions relating to this decision:
  - A petition signed by 42 residents, received 13 December 2018, entitled "We the undersigned are concerned that the current proposals favoured by Bucks County Council leave Totteridge and Micklefield with no family centre".
  - A petition signed by 356 residents (at 13 December 2018 end of consultation date) and 521 residents (10 January 2019), entitled "Save Buckinghamshire Children's Centres: Delay decision – a new council should decide in 2020".
  - A petition relating to a previous decision on early help (ended 16th Oct 2017) signed by 2272 residents, entitled "We ask you to keep all 35 Children's Centres in Buckinghamshire open".
54. All Member divisions are impacted by the proposed changes. In the pre-consultation research phase (June-September 2018) a cross-party Member working group was formed and which has subsequently met monthly to assist the Cabinet Member for Children's Services in overseeing the consultation and the development of proposals for change. This group comprised: Mr Clare; Mr Williams; Mr Lambert; Mrs Ward; Mrs Macpherson.
55. All Members have been engaged and kept updated on the Early Help Review through all Member face-to-face briefings held in June and September 2018. In addition, written updates have been provided at County Council meetings and the Children's Select Committee has been kept informed.
56. The consultation has been promoted to all Local Area Forums (LAFS) through providing a written summary as part of the County Council's regular update at LAF meetings, as well as through officers attending seven LAF meetings to provide a presentation on the proposals and answer any questions (North West Chilterns; Waddesdon; Beeches; Missendens; Wexham and Ivers; Amersham; Wendover).
57. As part of the consultation process all Members have had the opportunity to raise any issues directly with the Cabinet Member for Children's Services or officer team. This is

in addition to the other engagement opportunities at County Council meetings, LAF meetings, All Member Briefings, and through the opportunity to submit formal responses to the consultation survey.

58. In addition to the Member involvement to date, further involvement will follow a Cabinet decision and include:

- A written communication to all Members to inform them of the outcome of the Cabinet decision, alongside an invitation to contact the relevant officers if Members wish to discuss any local issues including the arrangements for future use of buildings in their division.
- Ongoing updates to all Members about the service through the Cabinet Member's Blue Book update to full Council.

#### I. Communication issues

59. The Cabinet decision on the future model for early help services will be communicated to the current providers, staff and partner organisations following a decision.

60. A key part of the implementation work to ensure that the new Family Support Service goes live in September 2019 is ensuring that there are effective countywide and local communications about the new service. Following a Cabinet decision, officers will be working to develop, with local communities, effective communications about the new service overall and in particular the information about what services are available at family centres.

#### J. Progress Monitoring

61. The new integrated Family Support Service will be launched in September 2019. The effectiveness of the new service will be monitored through performance reporting as part of normal management processes within Children's Services. The Cabinet Member for Children's Services will receive regular updates on progress and the Children's Select Committee as required.

#### K. Review

N/A

---

#### Background Papers

28 September 2018 – Decision taken to go out to consultation on the Early Help Review  
<https://democracy.buckscc.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=9120>

Full responses to the early help consultation survey open questions.

#### ***Your questions and views***

*If you have any questions about the matters contained in this paper please get in touch with the Contact Officer whose telephone number is given at the head of the paper.*

*If you have any views on this paper that you would like the Cabinet Member to consider, or if you wish to object to the proposed decision, please inform the Democratic Services Team by*

*5.00pm on Friday 1 March 2019. This can be done by telephone (to 01296 382343), or e-mail to [democracy@buckscc.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@buckscc.gov.uk)*



# Consultation Findings Report

## Early Help: Consultation Findings Report

Prepared for: Buckinghamshire County  
Council

Prepared by: BMG Research

---

# **Early Help: Consultation Findings Report**

**Prepared for: Buckinghamshire County Council**

**Prepared by: BMG Research**

**Date: January 2019**

---



**Produced by BMG Research**

**© BMG Research Ltd, 2019**

**[www.bmgresearch.co.uk](http://www.bmgresearch.co.uk)**

Project: 1614

Registered in England No. 2841970

Registered office:

BMG Research  
Beech House  
Greenfield Crescent  
Edgbaston  
Birmingham  
B15 3BE  
UK

Tel: +44 (0) 121 3336006

UK VAT Registration No. 580 6606 32

Birmingham Chamber of Commerce Member No. B4626

Market Research Society Company Partner

The provision of Market Research Services in accordance with ISO 20252:2012

The provision of Market Research Services in accordance with ISO 9001:2015

The International Standard for Information Security Management ISO 27001:2013

Interviewer Quality Control Scheme (IQCS) Member Company

Registered under the Data Protection Act - Registration No. Z5081943

A Fair Data organisation

Cyber Essentials certification

The BMG Research logo is a trade mark of BMG Research Ltd.

## Table of Contents

Executive Summary .....	1
About this consultation .....	1
Views on the Council's draft Early Help Strategy .....	1
Views on the service design options .....	1
Views on proposed centre closures and alternative building use.....	2
Key themes .....	2
1    Introduction .....	3
1.1    Background .....	3
1.2    About the consultation .....	3
1.3    Methodology .....	4
1.4    Public meetings and drop-in sessions .....	5
1.5    Additional information and responses .....	5
1.6    Approach to analysis and reporting .....	5
1.7    Promotion of the questionnaire.....	6
2    Council's aims and priorities .....	7
2.1    Early Help Strategy.....	7
2.2    Views on Early Help Strategy .....	8
3    Views on the Council's proposed options .....	13
3.1    Option A: Current model (less 30-35% reduction across all services) .....	13
3.2    Option B: Network of family centres – the Council's Preferred Option .....	17
3.3    Option C: Area-based family outreach model.....	24
3.4    Preferred options .....	29
3.5    Alternative suggestions .....	33
3.6    Future use of buildings .....	39
4    Preferences for location.....	41
4.1    Aylesbury Vale district .....	41
4.2    Wycombe district .....	42
4.3    Chiltern & South Bucks district .....	43
4.4    Priorities by respondent group and characteristics.....	43
5    Public meetings and drop-ins .....	44
5.1    Key themes from discussions .....	44

## [Early Help: Consultation Findings Report](#)

5.2	Specific queries and gaps in the information provided .....	45
5.3	Comments regarding alternatives.....	45
6	Additional views and comments .....	47
6.1	Support for children's centres .....	47
6.2	Considerations for which centres to retain .....	48
6.3	Preferences for options .....	49
6.4	Other comments .....	49
	Appendix 1: Profile of respondents .....	50
	Appendix 2: Current use of services .....	60
	Appendix 3: List of participating stakeholder organisations .....	66
	Appendix 4: Additional responses from stakeholder organisations .....	67
	Appendix 5: Residents' questionnaire.....	68

## Executive Summary

The following executive summary provides an overview of the key findings from research conducted by BMG Research as part of Buckinghamshire County Council's public consultation exercise on its early help services.

This includes findings from engagements with 848 residents and stakeholder organisations in Buckinghamshire, including: a survey (completed by 717 residents and 35 representatives of stakeholder organisations) using a combination of online and paper questionnaires; public meetings (with 31 attendees) and drop-in sessions (with 53 attendees); and additional written responses submitted by eight residents and four stakeholder organisations.

### About this consultation

Early help is about supporting families to do well, stay safe and resolve problems at the earliest possible opportunity, before they become more serious. The County Council's early help services in the scope of this consultation include:

- **Universal services:** Buckinghamshire Family Information Service; children's centres.
- **Targeted services (children and families in need):** Connexions; Early Help Panels; Families First; Family Resilience; Barnardo's support for parents; Youth Services.

Following pre-consultation activities, three viable options were developed by the Council to be consulted on with residents and partners:

- Option A – Current way of providing services but with a 30-35% reduction in all services
- Option B – Network of 14 family centres (Council's preferred option)
- Option C – Family outreach only

### Views on the Council's draft Early Help Strategy

The Council provided an overview of its aims and priorities for early help as well as links to supporting documentation for residents and partners to consider. Around two-thirds (66%) of respondents indicated they agree with the Council's aims and priorities for its proposed Early Help Service, including a quarter (26%) who strongly agree. Only one-sixth (15%) disagree, while a similar proportion (15%) neither agree nor disagree.

Those in agreement with the Council's aims and priorities for early help are more likely to be stakeholders (94%), whilst parents and carers are the least likely to agree (60%).

### Views on the service design options

Following provision of an overview of the three service design options and the option to review additional supporting information, respondents were first asked about their views on each option in isolation, then about their preferences from amongst these three viable options. Respondents were subsequently given the opportunity to suggest alternative options.

The following table summarises the findings from these questions, showing that over one-half of respondents agree with the Council's preferred Option B. This was both the option respondents are most likely to agree with in general (52%), and the preferred option out of the three viable choices (58%). It should be noted that several residents expressed concern about choosing between the three options, and felt the Council should provide further alternatives, including no change, something else, or none of the above.

	% agreeing with this option to deliver early help	% selecting this as their preferred 'viable' option
Option A– Current way of providing services but with a 30-35% reduction in all services	21%	26%
Option B – Network of 14 family centres (Council's preferred option)	52%	58%
Option C – Family outreach only	9%	6%

Whilst only one-fifth of respondents (21%) agree with Option A, over one-quarter (26%) selected it as their preferred option. Notably, whilst Option B was the preferred option amongst all respondent groups, residents and particularly parent/carers are significantly more likely than others to prefer Option A (27% and 31% respectively). Respondents are also significantly more likely to prefer Option A if they are children's centre users (33%), as such this group are less likely to be supportive of Option B overall (53%).

Option C was unpopular and considered to be unfeasible by the majority of respondents, with only 6% preferring this; however, Family Resilience Service users and non-users of early help services are more likely to prefer this (14% and 11% respectively).

### **Views on proposed centre closures and alternative building use**

Whilst views are split given the number of children's centres under consideration, the centres seen as the top priority for retention in the three districts are: in Aylesbury Vale, the Aylesbury (Southcourt) Children's Centre (10%); in Wycombe, Mapledean Children's Centre (6%); and in Chiltern/South Bucks, the Ivers Children's Centre (5%).

Overall participants in this consultation are not happy at the idea of any children's centres being closed at all, and strongly preferred the Council to consider finding ways to maintain current levels of service, or improved levels of service.

More than two-thirds (68%) of respondents agree with the Council's aim that children's centre buildings proposed for closure should continue to be used for community benefit, including 33% who strongly agree with this aim. Several respondents want the Council and its partners to work closely with community groups to ensure sufficient information and support is made available to those wanting to access buildings and develop activities and services within these.

### **Key themes**

Whilst this consultation aims to understand preferences for early help services as a whole; significant emphasis was placed by participants on children's centres, as these are the services most respondents were aware of, 67% of them having used these.

Both residents and stakeholders who participated in this consultation (including 47% of those responding to open response questions and those who attended public events), were keen to emphasise the value and impact of early help. Nearly one-third (30%) of survey respondents stated a preference for services to be improved, and one-quarter (25%) emphasised the importance of access to children's centres both in terms of the services and professional staff, but also the local buildings where these could be found.

Nearly one-third (30%) of respondents explicitly stated in open responses that they did not want to see cuts to the early help services and 23% stated they wanted the Council to further expand services. As such there was also a view that the Council could do more to generate the funding needed through: exploring further payment models for services (such as renting out children's centre buildings, or asking for donations or fees for certain sessions); identifying efficiencies in the Council's services, staffing levels, and pay; further lobbying to central government; further applications for grants and partnership opportunities with charities; and delaying the decision for early help until the establishment of the Unitary Council in 2020.

## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Background

This report has been produced by BMG Research on behalf of Buckinghamshire County Council to summarise the feedback gathered in its public consultation exercise on the Council's early help services.

Early help is about supporting families to do well, stay safe and resolve problems at the earliest possible opportunity, before they become more serious. Early help encompasses a range of services and functions, some of which the Council is responsible for and looking to improve. Services are offered according to the needs parents and children are experiencing, with some being provided on a universal basis, and others being provided on a targeted basis. Need is assessed by support workers once parents or children access services and are used to determine how best to provide appropriate support. The threshold levels of need for different services range from 1 – Universal Services to 4 - Statutory Intervention, Acute/Child Protection. The following bullet points summarise the early help areas; however, those in italics were not in the scope of the consultation:

- **Universal services:** Buckinghamshire Family Information Service; children's centres; *Health Visitors; School Nurses; GPs; and Schools.*
- **Targeted services (children and families in need):** Connexions; Early Help Panels; Families First; Family Resilience; Support for parents (through Barnardo's); Youth Services; *Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service; Health Visitors; School Nurses; Family Nurse Partnership; Barnardo's 'RU Safe'; Social Care; and Police.*

The Council believes that early help services are currently not working as they should be, and that too many children are receiving support too late. Additionally, the Council is facing financial pressures and as a result has identified a savings target of £3.1 million from within early help services overall.

### 1.2 About the consultation

The County Council undertook a range of pre-consultation research as part of the review of early help services. The Council has published an options appraisal document which includes an overview of the different evidence considered as part of the decision to go out to public consultation, as well as a research report delivered in-house and a qualitative research report by BMG Research (these papers are available to view at [www.bucks.cc.gov.uk/earlyhelp](http://www.bucks.cc.gov.uk/earlyhelp)).

The qualitative research included in-depth interviews with residents and partners, as well as a workshop with both groups to ensure their views were included in the design of proposals.

Pre-consultation research was carried out as part of the review of early help services. Quantitative research conducted by the Council looked at needs, population density and changing demand to identify where support should be targeted. Qualitative research was conducted by BMG Research which included in-depth interviews with residents and partners, as well as a workshop with both groups to ensure their views were included in the design of proposals.

This information was used to inform the development of proposed aims against which the Council would refocus its support for families in a new Early Help Service, specifically:

## Early Help: Consultation Findings Report

- Supporting vulnerable children and families to enable them to thrive and achieve real, positive outcomes.
- Integrating services wherever possible to create stronger partnerships which make effective use of all resources and improve family and community resilience.
- Improving access and reducing duplication to enable children and families needing our support to tell their story only once.
- Evidencing the impact of early help to reduce cost pressures on statutory services.

The Council ruled out an option of ‘no change’ as this is not a financially sustainable way to keep providing early help services to meet the needs of children and families effectively.

Therefore, three viable options were developed by the Council to be consulted on:

- Option A – Current way of providing services but with a 30-35% reduction in all services
- Option B – Network of 14 family centres (Council’s preferred option)
- Option C – Family outreach only

This consultation allowed the Council to engage with residents and partners to understand their views on the Council’s aims for its early help service and the three options developed, as well as any alternatives.

### 1.3 Methodology

BMG was commissioned by the Council to deliver a questionnaire through which resident and partner views would primarily be captured, as well as attending public consultation meetings and drop-in sessions to ensure the questions and views raised in these were captured. In total there were 848 engagements from residents and stakeholder organisations in Buckinghamshire including: via the survey (completed by 717 residents and 35 representatives of stakeholder organisations) using a combination of online and paper questionnaires; public meetings (31 attendees) and drop-in sessions (53 attendees); and additional written responses submitted by eight residents and four stakeholder organisations.

#### 1.3.1 Questionnaire

The questionnaire was available online and on paper to allow all residents in Buckinghamshire to participate. The questionnaire was designed by BMG in partnership with the Council and consisted of a combination of non-mandatory quantitative questions with the inclusion of four open response questions.

The online survey was made available to all via an open link and publicised through the Council’s website, social media, children’s centres, youth services, and libraries. In addition, over 4000 emails were sent out to residents who had engaged with early help services (including children’s centres) as well as representatives of partner organisations. Additionally, paper copies of the questionnaire were sent to every children’s centre and every library within Buckinghamshire, alongside information about the consultation and freepost envelopes so that these could be returned.

Children’s centres, libraries and the general public were provided with details to contact BMG Research or the Council directly if they required any support completing the questionnaire, including translation services, to request additional paper copies, or to confirm parental consent arrangements if a respondent was under 16.

In total, 752 responses to the questionnaire were received, including 717 residents and 35 representatives of stakeholder organisations. Of these responses, 709 were received online and 43 via post. Further information about the demographics of respondents and their use of early

help services can be found in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 of this report. Information about participating stakeholders can be found in Appendix 3.

## 1.4 Public meetings and drop-in sessions

Buckinghamshire County Council held three public meetings for this consultation; this included a meeting during the day with a crèche provided. These meetings were convened on:

- Thursday 8 November 2018, 7pm – 8:30pm, Aylesbury (attended by 4 people)
- Monday 12 November 2018, 7pm – 8:30pm, High Wycombe (attended by 17 people)
- Monday 19 November 2018, 1pm – 2:30pm, Amersham (attended by 10 people)

The public meetings were attended by the Cabinet Member for Children's Services, council officers and representatives from BMG Research. Each meeting included a presentation delivered by the Head of Early Help, followed by questions from members of the public. The presentation provided a summary of:

- the purpose of the consultation;
- what early help is and which services (universal and targeted) are within scope;
- pre-consultation work conducted;
- key drivers for changing the Council's Early Help services;
- the three options being consulted on, with particular focus on Option B, the Council's preferred option;
- locally specific information for each local area, particularly which centres in the local area the Council proposes to keep open under Option B; and
- the Council's plan for alternative uses for children's centre buildings.

In addition, three informal drop-in sessions were also arranged at children's centres, attended by council officers and representatives from BMG Research. These were held on:

- Wednesday 28 November 2018, 11am – 12:30pm, Steeple Claydon Children's Centre (attended by 13 people)
- Friday 30 November 2018, 9am – 10:30am, Disraeli Children's Centre (attended by 25 people)
- Monday 3 December 2018, 11:45am – 1pm, The Ivers Children's Centre (attended by 15 people)

## 1.5 Additional information and responses

Some stakeholder organisations and residents opted to submit their views to BMG outside of the questionnaire or forum format. Typically this involved freeform email and written information, and where relevant, supporting information. A total of 12 emails or letters were received by BMG in this way, comprising 4 from stakeholder organisations and 8 from residents. These were analysed alongside open response questions to the survey. The responses received from stakeholder organisations are published in Appendix 4 with their consent.

## 1.6 Approach to analysis and reporting

This report provides a summary of the key findings from the analysis of the responses to the Buckinghamshire County Council Early Help consultation.

The data from the surveys was imported and analysed by BMG exploring responses based on respondent type (resident or stakeholder), and other key factors (such as district of residence, demographics, service use, distance travelled to children's centres, or option preferences) where bases were sufficiently large for reliable analysis to be undertaken (with a minimum 20

## **Early Help: Consultation Findings Report**

responses). Differences are included based on these factors where questions are comparable and where these are statistically significant.<sup>1</sup>

Tables and graphs are all labelled with a sequential ‘Figure Number’ and title. All tables and graphs have clearly labelled base sizes (for all sub-groups) and textual definitions of bases. The total of percentages shown in a table may vary slightly from 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

Open response questions were used to generate code-frames to understand and quantify key themes wherever possible, and these are highlighted in this report. It should be noted that as analysis was conducted using open response data provided by respondents, it only represents the information provided. As such, whilst we indicate scale of experience among respondents, this cannot be considered as exhaustive.

Every effort was made to ensure people were aware of the consultation and to support access to complete the survey. The purpose of the survey was to enable all residents and stakeholder organisations the opportunity to inform the development of proposals for service changes. Given this approach a representative sampling approach was not applied and weightings are not used in this report. As such, the findings in this report should not be considered as representative of all users of early help services, or the population of Buckinghamshire as a whole.

### **1.7 Promotion of the questionnaire**

The Council was responsible for promoting participation in the consultation process and undertook wide-ranging communications to encourage residents and partner organisations to complete the survey.

This included promotions via the press; social media; radio; website; My Bucks newsletter; parish council newsletters; schools and governors bulletins; emails sent to over 4000 early help service users; flyers and posters distributed to all libraries and children’s centres; promotions via GP surgeries, youth centres, multi-cultural centres, churches and mosques.

In addition to the three public meetings and three drop-in events, officers attended seven Local Area Forum (LAF) meetings to provide a presentation on the proposals and answer any questions (North West Chilterns; Waddesdon; Beeches; Missendens; Wexham and Ivers; Amersham; Wendover).

---

<sup>1</sup> Independent t-tests were conducted at the 95% confidence level to identify where findings were statistically significant.

## 2 Council's aims and priorities

### 2.1 Early Help Strategy

Respondents to the survey were shown the following description of the Council's proposed aims and priorities and also referred to the consultation website for further information.

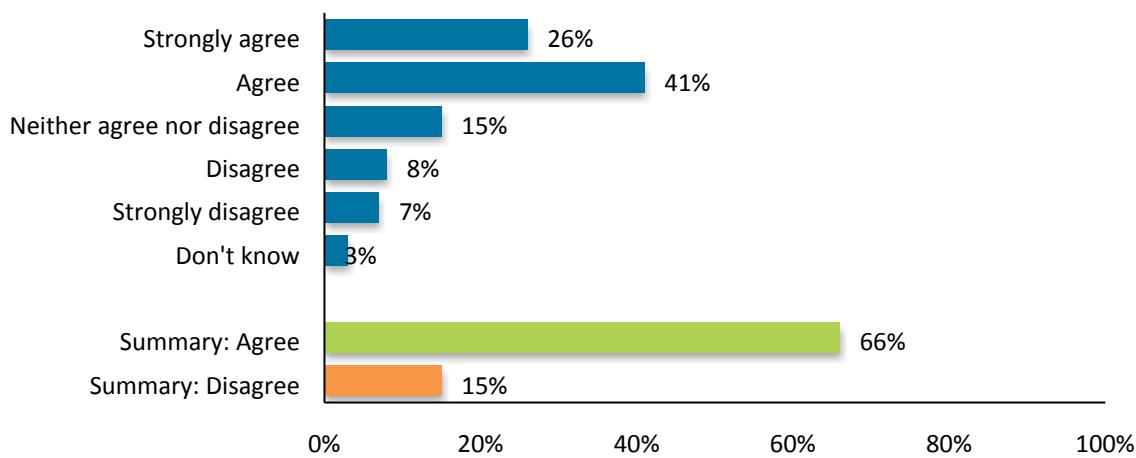
The Council's Early Help Service is designed to have clear responsibilities and to deliver support to families in partnership which enable improved outcomes for children and families, as set out in the draft partnership Early Help Strategy which can be found at [www.buckscouncil.gov.uk/earlyhelp](http://www.buckscouncil.gov.uk/earlyhelp)

The Council is proposing to refocus its support for families in a new Early Help Service with the following aims:

- Supporting vulnerable children and families to enable them to thrive and achieve real, positive outcomes.
- Integrating services wherever possible to create stronger partnerships which make effective use of all resources and improve family and community resilience.
- Improving access and reducing duplication to enable children and families needing our support to tell their story only once.
- Evidencing the impact of early help to reduce cost pressures on statutory services.

Two-thirds (66%) of respondents agree with the Council's priorities for its Early Help Service, including a quarter (26%) who strongly agree. Almost one-sixth (15%) disagree, while a similar proportion (15%) neither agree nor disagree, and 3% did not know.

**Figure 1: To what extent do you agree with the Council's proposed aims for its Early Help Service?**



Q6. Single answer allowed. Residents and stakeholders. Sample base=747

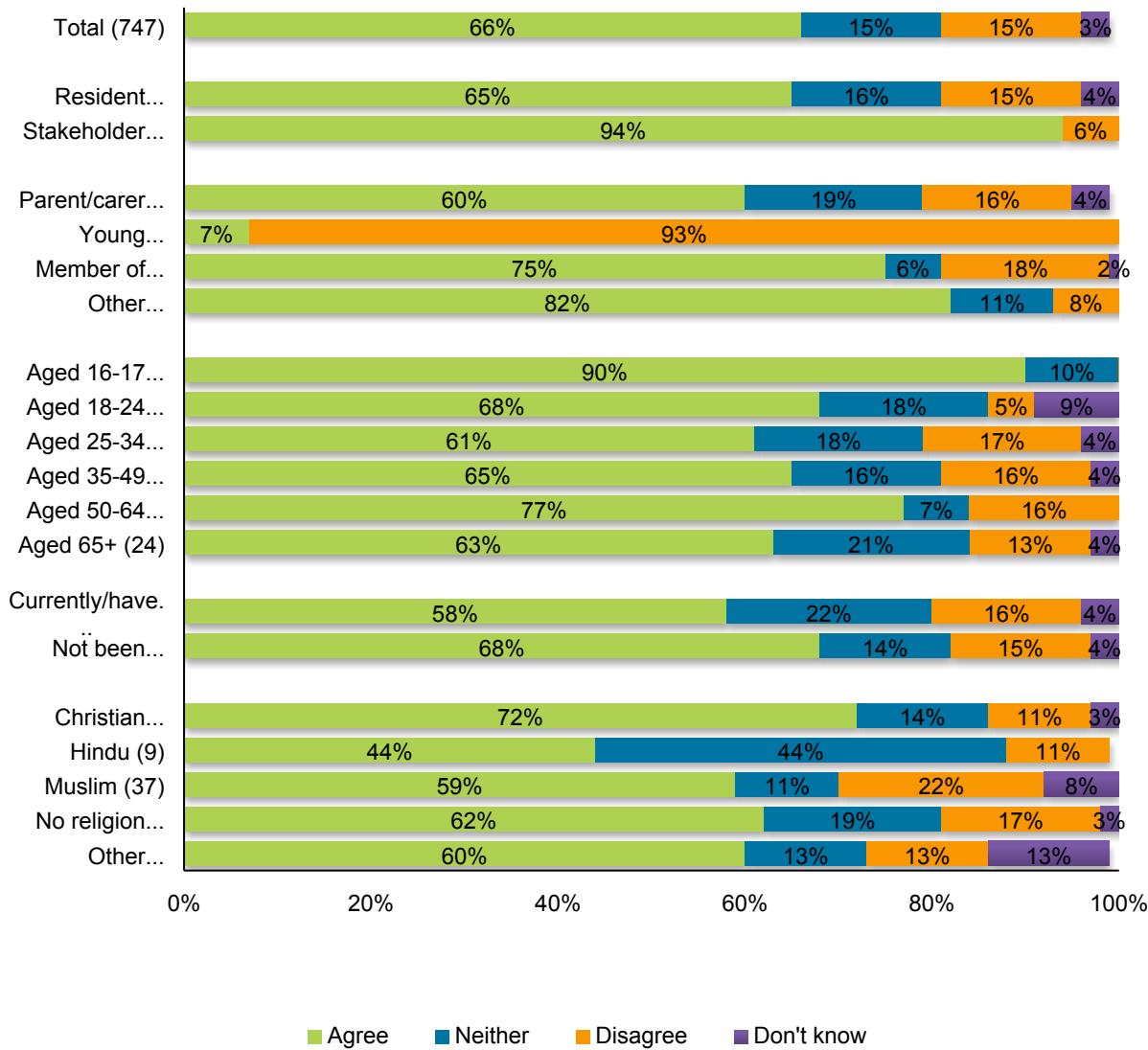
The total of the percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

Stakeholders are significantly more likely than residents to agree with the Council's proposed aims for its Early Help Service, with 94% of stakeholders expressing that view compared to 65% of residents. Parents and carers are the least likely to agree with those aims, with 60% doing so. Those aged 50-64 are the most likely to agree with the aims (77%), and those aged 25-34 are the least likely to do so (61%). Agreement is significantly higher among those identifying as

## Early Help: Consultation Findings Report

Christian (72%), and significantly lower among those who are currently pregnant or have been within the last year (58%).

**Figure 2: To what extent do you agree with the Council's proposed aims for its Early Help Service? (by demographic and respondent groups of interest)**



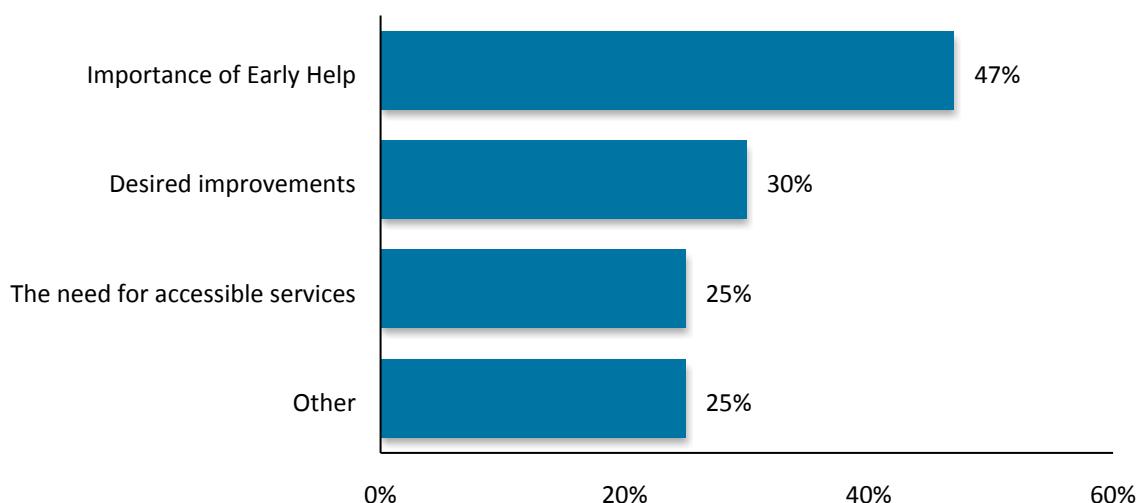
Q6. Single answer allowed per respondent. Sample base shown in parentheses.

The total of percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

## 2.2 Views on Early Help Strategy

Many respondents (333) provided additional comments regarding their views on the Early Help strategy. Most often, these comments concerned children's centres, and in particular respondents noted the importance of the Early Help service and its effect on their life; the need for services to be accessible; improvements they would like to see; as well as a range of other points which are discussed further in this section.

**Figure 3: Do you have any other comments on what the aims of the Council's Early Help service should be?**



Q7. Open text response, subsequently coded into categories. Comments may fall into several categories. Sample base: 333

### 2.2.1 The importance of early help services

Just under half of those providing comments (47%, 158 respondents) stressed the importance of early help services, often sharing personal stories about the support offered by the children's centres, and the specific classes and services they and others have benefitted from:

*"I am a regular user of the children's centre for my little girl for weigh in clinic and stay and play. At one session the service reached out to over thirty plus children from varying backgrounds. This is a vital service for the community."*

Around one-sixth of the respondents (16% of those providing comments, 56 respondents) expressed their view that children's centres offer vital support for vulnerable people and children, with examples of this including support that had been provided to those that have faced issues such as mental health conditions and post-natal depression.

Some (14%, 48 respondents) explicitly stated that the Council should retain early help services as they stand currently or that the Council should not be reducing services or closing centres, questioning the need to make any changes, with several expressing the view that the Council should not be reducing any services or closing any centres:

*"I cannot support any proposal that includes closing Children's Centres. In rural areas these are a vital outreach to new mothers, in particular the access to midwives for first time mothers is crucial, as well as meeting other new mums and sharing concerns, worries and also joys. I honestly don't know what I would have done in the first year of my baby's life without our local children's centre."*

*"keep all the current children's centres open with drop-in service available and stay and play sessions and other activities going on there."*

Around one-tenth (10%, 32 respondents) talked about the importance of children's centres in improving a child's life chances and development, often noting that children's centres improve a child's life chances by dealing with any issues early, and that they will therefore be able to thrive and get off to a steady start in life. Some discussed the wider lifelong and societal benefits that this will bring:

## Early Help: Consultation Findings Report

*"Families with young children need support. It is a major developmental stage for children and their parents need all of the support available to build the future generation as many of the conflicts and violent cultures we see, hear and live in are from children living in impoverished areas and who have disorganised attachments to their parents."*

Similarly, a few respondents talked about impacts further down the line such as at school and when the individual joins the workforce.

A few (8%, 25 respondents) feel that children's centres need to reach more people and that their services should be available to all rather than limited to or targeted towards those deemed 'in need':

*"It should not be closed to families who do not fit in the category or 'vulnerable'. As a middle class parent, I would not be entitled to any additional free support under many definitions but children's centres were and are invaluable for both of my children."*

*"Please don't only focus on vulnerable children and poor families. All new parents need help, especially where maternal mental health issues are at play – those are universal issues for which all should have easy access."*

Others (around 6%, 20 respondents) noted that children's centres perform an important function in providing a social space for parents, allowing them to meet other parents with similar concerns and receive informal support, especially as having a new baby can be a lonely and isolating experience:

*"Children's centres are one of the best ways to connect to local parents and to provide activities to do together. Community is key in helping parents not to feel lonely."*

One stakeholder organisation further noted the impact centres can have on the wider family, and expressed their concern that issues will escalate in the absence of effective support, and therefore require more serious and costly intervention later on; this concern was also shared by four other respondents:

*"This help is definitely given at a much earlier stage than it would be under any of your proposed models. It therefore prevents an escalation of issues and is therefore a financial saving to the authority and more importantly prevents families going into ruin. For example, giving support to a local family being evicted and made homeless; supporting families to come off benefits and return to work."*

### 2.2.2 Improvements to existing services

Just under a third (30%, 99 respondents) made suggestions on improvements they would like to see to the current services. Most commonly, this concerned an expansion in the resources available within the service, which was mentioned by around one-tenth of respondents (11%, 38 respondents). Often these comments specifically mentioned funding:

*"To better fund those services that are made available to families - not spreading itself so thinly that services are struggling."*

In addition, a few individuals (4%, 14 respondents) talked about an expansion of resources but spoke specifically about particular sessions and activities they would like to see introduced or made more frequent.

Others (7%, 23 respondents) stated that they would like to see more pro-activity in engagement with families, and support being offered more quickly than is possible at the moment. A few (5%) would like to see more cohesion and communication across various services, sites and individuals, or expressed a desire to see the centres better integrated into the community:

*"As a community representative, I believe that the centres & children services in general need to be more integrated with the community & be put to better use. There are several community companies / charities operating in Bucks that could offer real Early help to families & individuals. There needs to be more community cohesion!"*

Several (3%, 10 respondents) feel that further assistance should be available to those with specific needs:

*"My disabled [young child] has been asked to leave his preschool after [a short period of time] there because they cannot fund his 1:1. There should be groups run for disabled children and their families to support them. Rainbows runs in Aylesbury but that is the only one."*

One individual questioned how 'telling your story only once' would work in practice, with another disagreeing with the principle, preferring to tell their story directly:

*"You say 'only tell a story once.' I don't like that I want workers to hear my story from ME. I want my voice heard, I don't want my story to become Chinese whispers."*

### **2.2.3 Support must be local and accessible**

Around a quarter of those providing comments (25%, 82 respondents) mentioned that key priorities should include accessibility of the support. Where this was expanded upon, individuals typically identified three different aspects to the broader issue of accessibility: the requirement for local support (noted by 33% of those mentioning accessibility, 27 respondents); ensuring the centres can reasonably be accessed by local residents using public transport (21%, 17 respondents); and appropriate opening hours (7%, 6 respondents). Around half of those discussing accessibility did not expand upon this.

Where comments were made around ensuring centres can reasonably be accessed by public transport, individuals often noted that some people without access to a car, particularly those in villages, could find it too difficult, time-consuming or costly to access a different centre in the event that their local centre closed, expressing scepticism that travelling elsewhere would be feasible:

*"Improving access should bear in mind that some people don't drive or don't have access to a car. Closing children's centres but saying "oh you can come to [other children's centres]" doesn't work unless you can get there by car. Isolating new mothers is not helpful and children suffer."*

Where comments concerned the importance of local services, in some cases this was because having a children's centre in their village was a vital source of support that would not otherwise have been reached:

*"In a community with so many small towns and villages spread out, it is important to keep the currently available children's centre sites. I would not have been able to access as much early support post birth if it were not for the [local] centre being walking distance."*

Additional comments in relation to the importance of local support concerned the value of a local centre in terms of developing a community feel and allowing local parents to meet and develop a network:

*"I use the children centres stay and playgroups often, as I'm at home looking after my son. This service provides much needed interaction not only for my son but for myself during the week. If these groups were to go it would leave us very isolated in the community."*

In other cases, comments in relation to the value of local support and the need for centres to be accessible by public transport expressed the view that many users of children's centres and the

## [Early Help: Consultation Findings Report](#)

most vulnerable individuals are more likely to lack their own transport and are therefore more reliant on the ability to access services within walking distance:

*"Access for the most vulnerable is intimately linked with local supply. If you close the local centres those who are most vulnerable will be left out because they tend to be less able to travel."*

Examples of comments concerning opening hours included the view that opening hours should be extended, particularly to allow support outside of Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm, and also the need for clarity around opening hours.

### **2.2.4 Other points**

Several individuals and stakeholders (5%, 16 respondents) expressed general agreement with the strategy; however, some of those questioned how the aims and principles of early help would work in practice with more limited funds, such as the following:

*"We are supportive of the aspiration set out by the Council but concerned that it is within a context of reduced financial support."*

A few individuals (3%, 10 respondents) expressed concerns about combining and integrating services, particularly the potential to lose specialised support and staff, having the same services at the same sites for young children as well as teenagers with behavioural or other issues, and the potential for resources to be spread too thinly as a result.

Additionally, other respondents mentioned various issues outside of the scope of this consultation or outside the Council's control (for example wider Council and central government spending); and a small number (2%, 5 respondents) expressed confusion about the information provided, in some cases seeking further information on the specific changes to be made.

### 3 Views on the Council's proposed options

The consultation sought separate feedback on each of the three options identified by the Council. For each option, an overview was given of what this would involve, with links available to further information. Respondents were then asked about the extent to which they agree or disagree with that option, and the impact they believe this would have on their family as well as families in Buckinghamshire in need of support. They were then asked to select their preferred option from the three provided by the Council, followed by two open response questions to capture any alternative ways the Council could provide early help services, and how the Council might deliver £3.1million in savings.

#### 3.1 Option A: Current model (less 30-35% reduction across all services)

Under Option A, the current range of services would remain broadly the same. The current 35 children's centre buildings will be retained but with a 30-35% reduction in opening hours. This would also mean a 30-35% reduction in the following services:

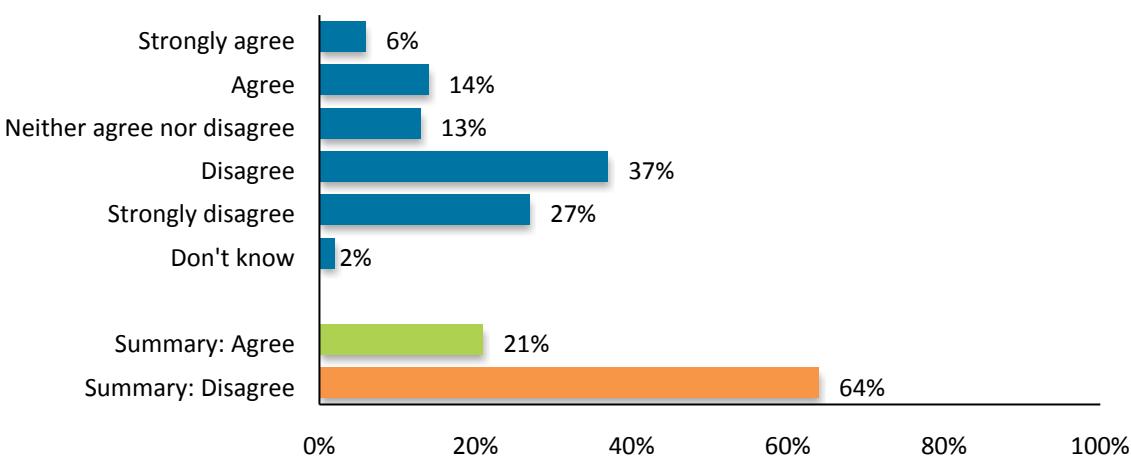
- Support for vulnerable children and families
- Youth services
- Bucks Family Information Service

Families who receive additional support through family resilience, for example, would also experience reductions in services. This is likely to mean that fewer vulnerable children receive support and there will be longer waiting times.

##### 3.1.1 Level of agreement with Option A

The majority (64%) of respondents disagree with Option A for delivering an early help service, including a quarter (27%) who strongly disagree. Around a fifth (21%) agree, including 6% who strongly agree. An additional 13% neither agree nor disagree while 2% do not know.

**Figure 4: To what extent do you agree or disagree with Option A for delivering an Early Help Service?**



Q8. Single answer allowed. Sample base: 748

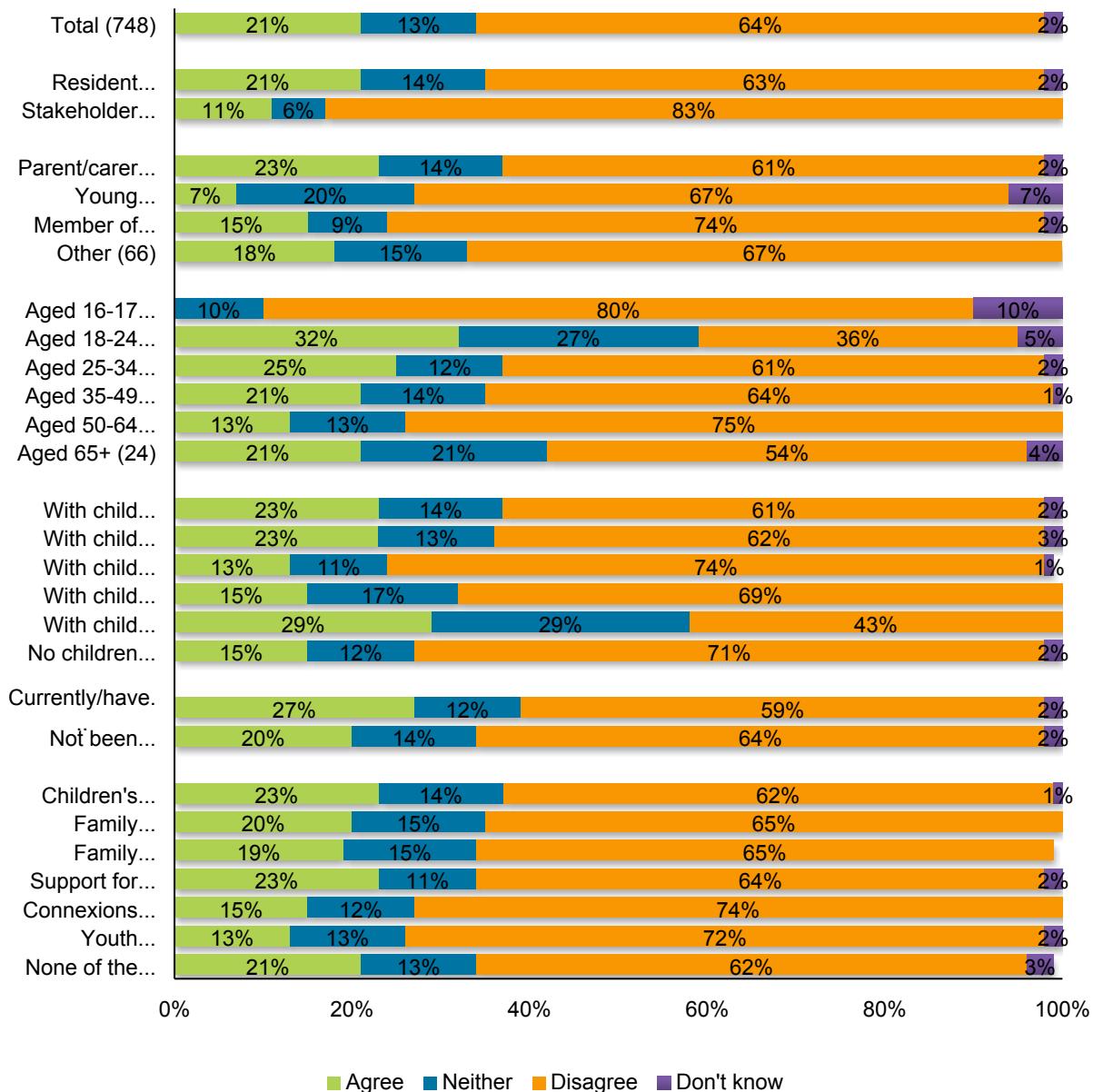
The total of percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

Just over a fifth (21%) agree with Option A for delivering an early help service and agreement levels are significantly higher among parents/carers (23%), children centre users (23%), those

## Early Help: Consultation Findings Report

aged 25-34 (25%), those who are currently pregnant or had been in the last year (27%), and those with a child under 5 (23%). While almost two-thirds (64%) of respondents disagree with Option A, this is significantly higher among stakeholders (83%) and 50-64 year olds (75%).

**Figure 5: To what extent do you agree or disagree with Option A for delivering an Early Help Service? (by demographic and respondent groups of interest)**



Q8. Single answer allowed per respondent. Sample bases in parentheses.

The total of percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

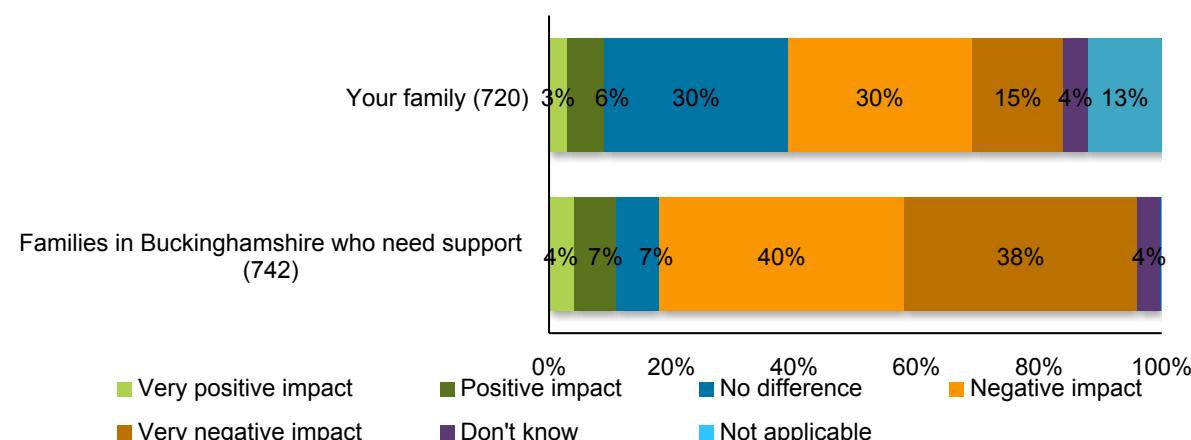
### 3.1.2 Impact of Option A

A very small proportion (3%) feel that Option A would have a very positive impact on their family, while an additional 6% believe it would have a positive impact. Around a third (30%) feel it would make no difference, and the same proportion (30%) think it would have a negative impact. A further 15% feel the impact would be very negative, while 4% do not know and 13% do not think this question is applicable to them.

## Views on the Council's proposed options

Small proportions (4% and 7% respectively) feel that Option A would have a very positive impact on families in Buckinghamshire who need support, and 7% believe it would make no difference, while 40% think the impact would be negative and a similar proportion (38%) feel the impact would be very negative. An additional 4% do not know.

**Figure 6: What level of impact do you think the Council selecting Option A would have on...**



Q9. Single answer allowed per statement. Sample bases in parentheses.

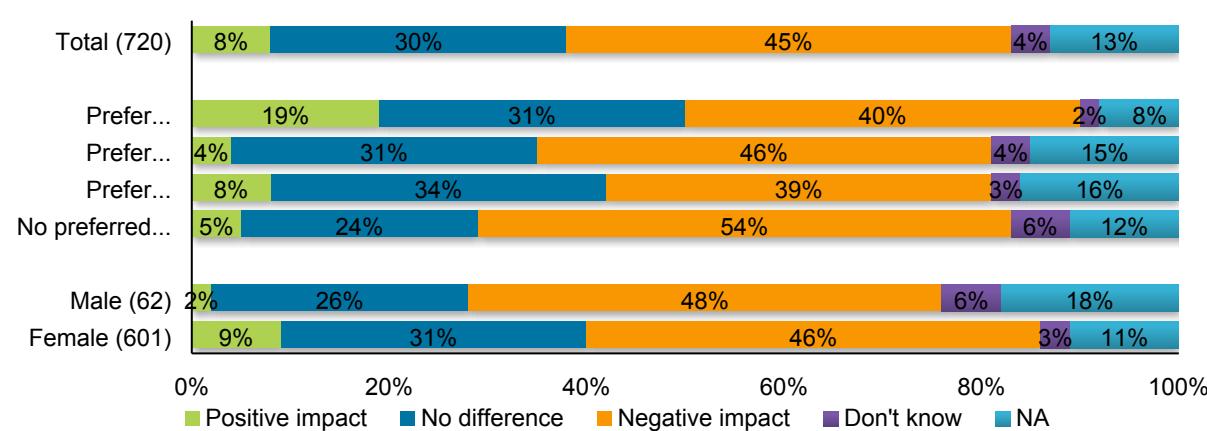
The total of percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

### 3.1.2.1 Impact on own family

Less than one-tenth (8%) of respondents feel that Option A would have a positive impact on their family, while almost half (45%) feel the impact would be negative. Even amongst those who later indicated that Option A is their preference of the options overall, less than one-fifth (19%) feel it would have a positive impact on their family, with 40% expressing the opposite view.

Women are significantly more likely to believe that it would have a positive impact on their family, but less than one-tenth (9%) expressed that view compared to only 2% of men.

**Figure 7: What level of impact do you think the Council selecting Option A would have on your family? (by demographic and respondent groups of interest)**



Q9a. Single answer allowed per respondent. Sample bases in parentheses.

The total of percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

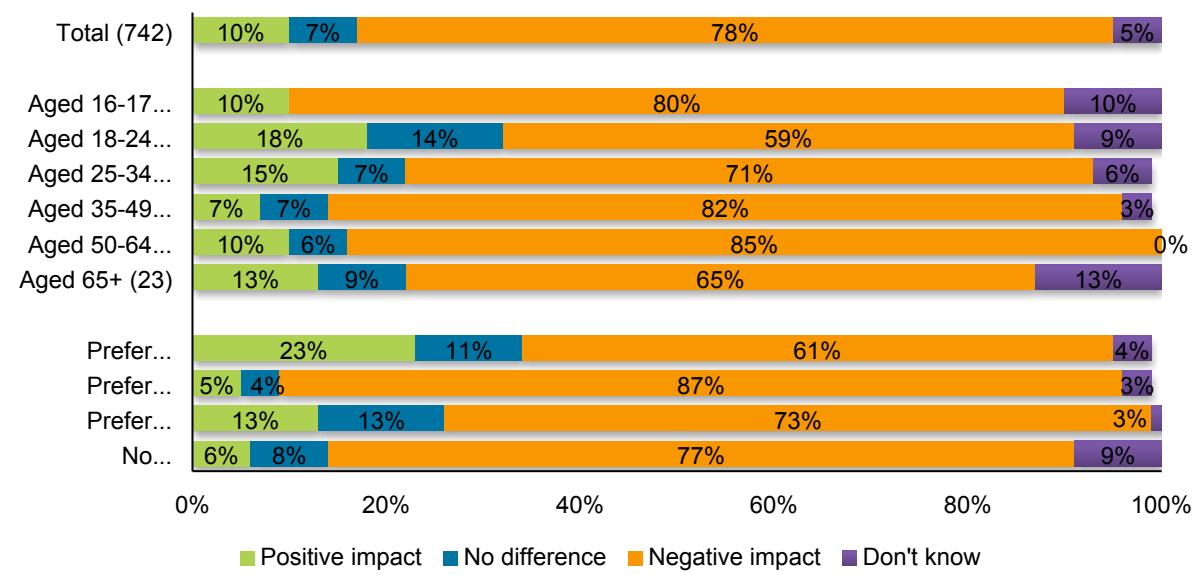
### 3.1.2.2 Impact on families in Buckinghamshire

Around one-tenth (10%) believe that the Council selecting Option A would have a positive impact on families in Buckinghamshire who need support, with over three-quarters (78%)

## Early Help: Consultation Findings Report

expressing the opposite view. Those aged 25-34 are significantly more likely to believe this would have a positive impact than respondents on the whole, but only 15% of this group hold that view. Amongst those indicating that they prefer Option A of the three options presented, less than one-quarter (23%) believe this would be positive while the majority (61%) believe this would have a negative impact.

**Figure 8: What level of impact do you think the Council selecting Option A would have on families in Buckinghamshire who need support? (by demographic and respondent groups of interest)**



Q9b. Single answer allowed per respondent. Sample bases in parentheses.

The total of percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

## 3.2 Option B: Network of family centres – the Council's Preferred Option

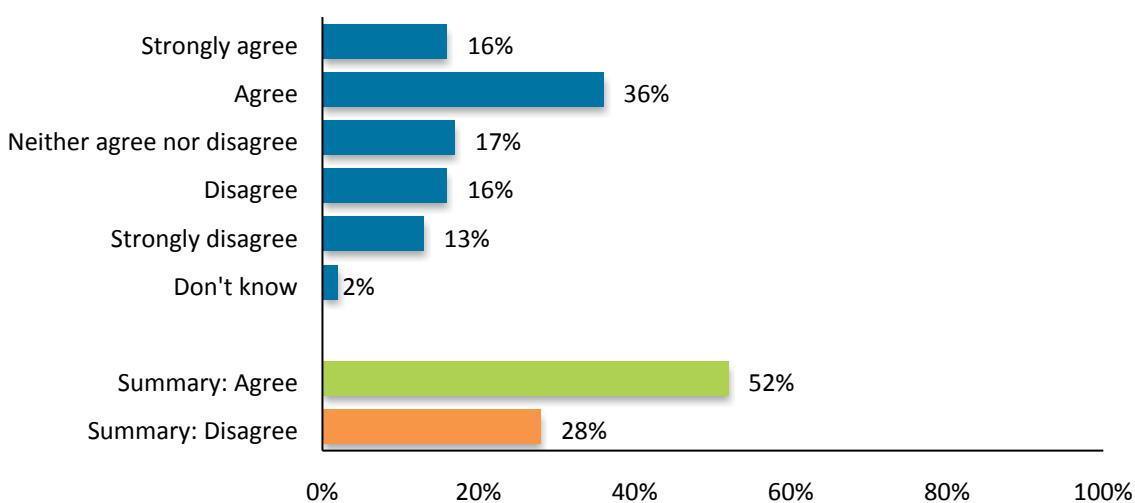
This is the Council's preferred option. Support for families will be delivered from 14 family centres that will provide a programme of activities for families with 0-19 year olds. Three of the centres (known as 'family centre plus') will also provide extra services where families can drop in to access support five days per week.

The family centres will continue to provide partner services e.g. health visiting. The family support teams will have a skills mix to ensure families get the right support at the right time. Families are supported by a lead practitioner who will work with the family, often in the home and coordinate the support families need to create a team around the family to help them tackle the issues they face.

### 3.2.1 Agreement with Option B

The majority (52%) of respondents agree with Option B for delivering an Early Help service, including 16% who strongly agree. Around a quarter (28%) disagree, including 13% who strongly disagree. Almost a fifth (17%) neither agree nor disagree with Option B, while 2% do not know.

**Figure 9: To what extent do you agree or disagree with Option B for delivering an Early Help Service?**



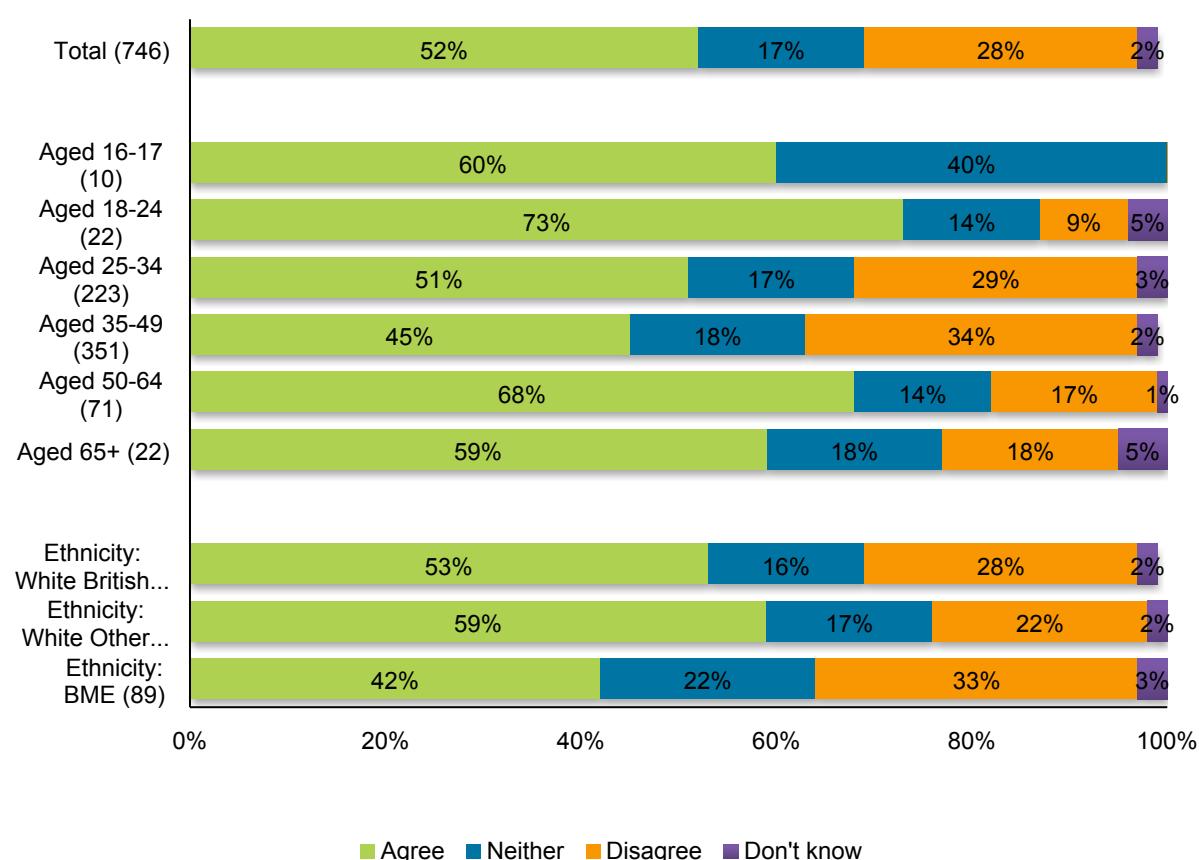
Q10. Single answer allowed. Sample base: 746

The total of percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

## Early Help: Consultation Findings Report

Overall, just over half (52%) agree with Option B for delivering an Early Help service, while just over a quarter (28%) disagree. Levels of agreement with this are significantly higher among those aged 50 to 64 (68%), Youth Services users (67%), and those living in the Aylesbury Vale district (62%). Levels of agreement are significantly lower than average amongst those aged 35 to 49 (45%), children's centre users (45%), members of ethnic minority groups (42%), those with children under 5 (46%), those with children aged 5-9 (45%), and those living in the Wycombe district (44%). In all of these groups, the proportion in agreement with Option B for delivering Early Help remained higher than the proportion expressing the opposite view. Additionally, over three-quarters of stakeholders (77%) agree with Option B compared with around half (51%) of residents.

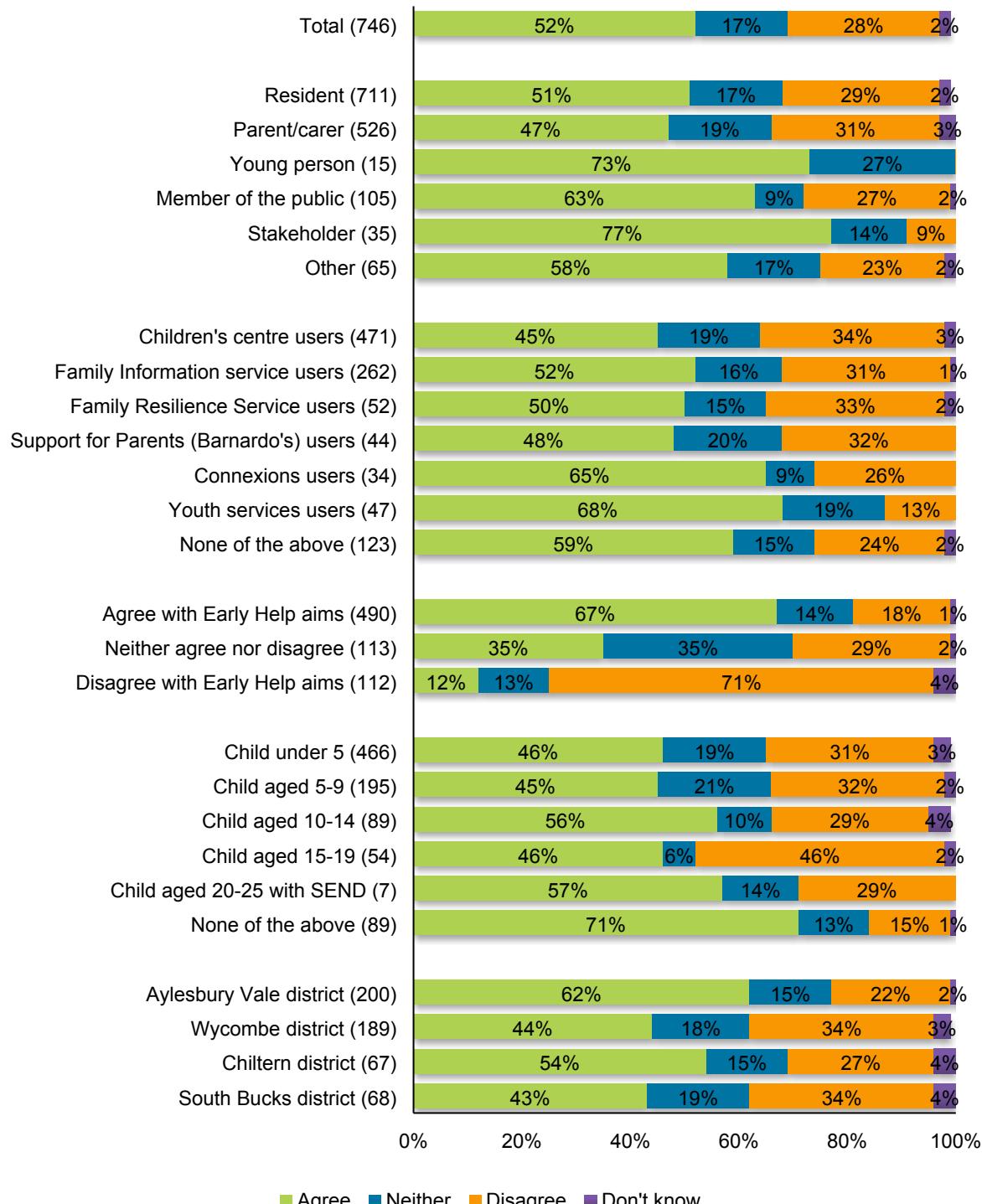
**Figure 10: To what extent do you agree or disagree with Option B for delivering an Early Help service? (by respondent group)**



Q10. Single answer allowed per respondent. Sample bases in parentheses.

The total of percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

**Figure 11: To what extent do you agree or disagree with Option B for delivering an Early Help service? (by other factors)**



Q10. Single answer allowed per respondent. Sample bases in parentheses.

The total of percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

### 3.2.2 Impact of Option B

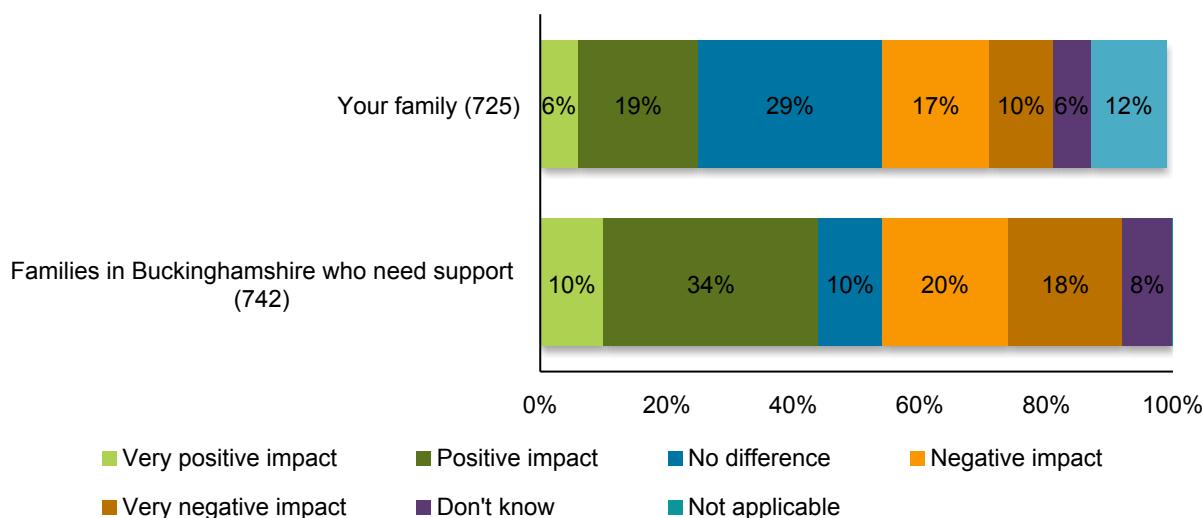
Around a quarter (25%) believe that the Council selecting Option B would have a positive impact on their family, while just over a quarter (28%) stated the opposite.

## Early Help: Consultation Findings Report

Those who believe that the Council selecting Option B would have a positive impact on their family include 6% who think it would have a very positive impact. Almost a third (29%) feel it would make no difference, while 17% think it would have a negative impact, and 10% believe selecting Option B would have a very negative impact. An additional 6% do not know, and 12% stated that the question was not applicable to them.

One-tenth (10%) believe that the Council selecting Option B would have a very positive impact on families in Buckinghamshire who need support, while an additional third (34%) think it will have a positive impact. 10% feel it would make no difference, while a fifth (20%) feel it will have a negative impact, and a similar proportion (18%) stated that the impact would be very negative. A further 8% do not know.

**Figure 12: What level of impact do you think the Council selecting Option B would have on...**



Q11. Single answer allowed per statement. Sample bases in parentheses.

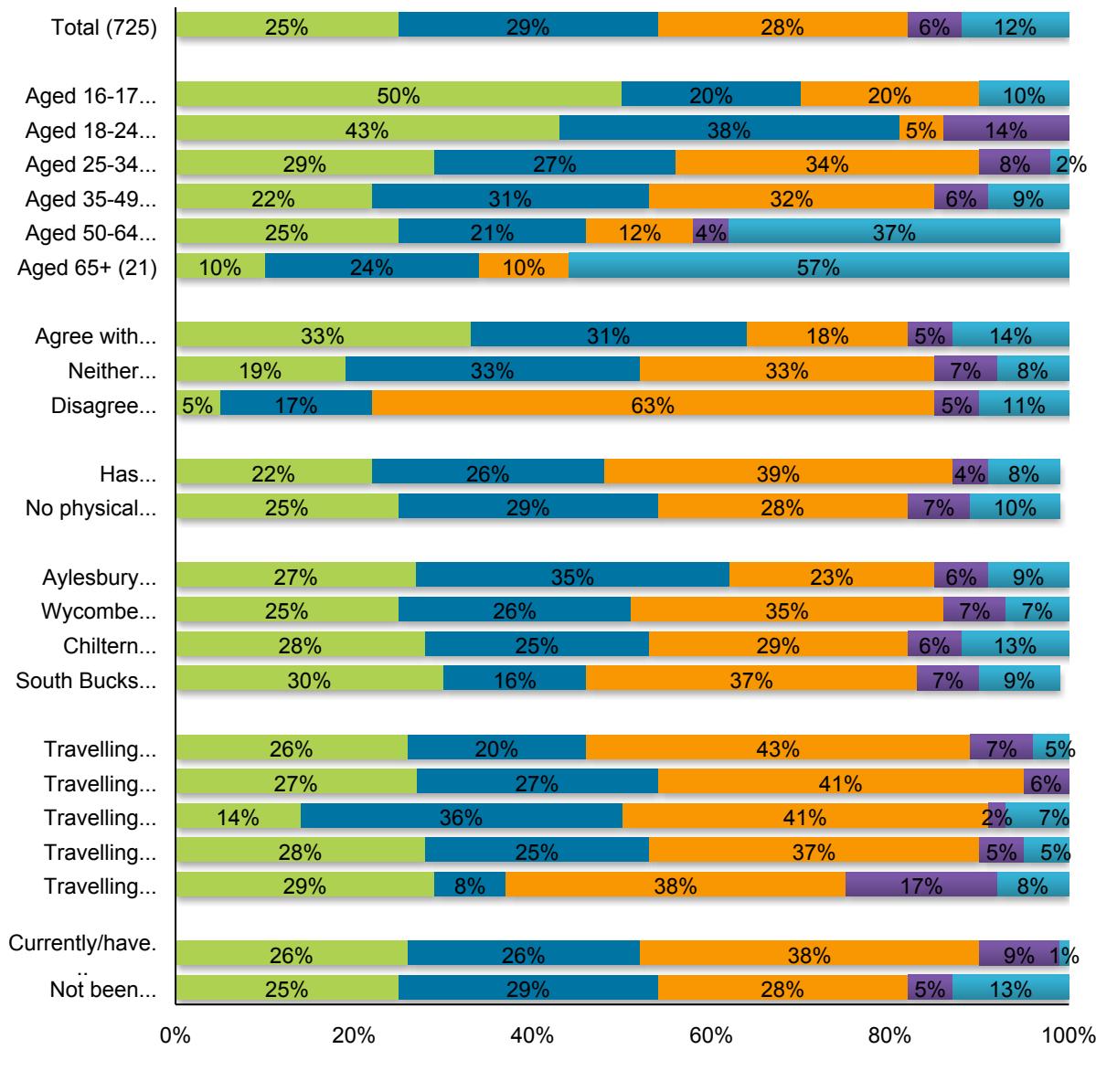
The total of percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

### 3.2.2.1 Impact on own family

The proportion of those expressing the view that Option B would have a negative impact on their family is higher amongst those with physical or mental health issues (39%), Wycombe district residents (35%), those travelling under a mile to their furthest children's centre (43%), those travelling between 1 and 3 miles to their furthest children's centre, and those travelling 3-5 miles to their furthest children's centre (both 41%). Additionally, those aged 25-34 are significantly more likely to state this will have a negative impact, with 34% expressing that view, while 32% of 35-49 year olds also share that opinion, alongside 38% of those who are currently pregnant or have been in the last year. It should be noted that all three groups are more likely to see this question as applicable to them.

Those in agreement with the aims of early help as set out in the consultation are significantly more likely to believe Option B would have a positive impact on their family, with a third (33%) expressing that view. Amongst those who disagree with the aims for early help, a majority (63%) believe Option B would have a negative impact on their family, with only 5% expressing the opposite view.

**Figure 13: What level of impact do you think the Council selecting Option B would have on your family? (by demographic and respondent groups of interest)**



■ Positive impact ■ No difference ■ Negative impact ■ Don't know ■ NA

Q11a. Single answer allowed per respondent. Sample bases in parentheses.

The total of percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

### 3.2.2.2 Impact on families in Buckinghamshire

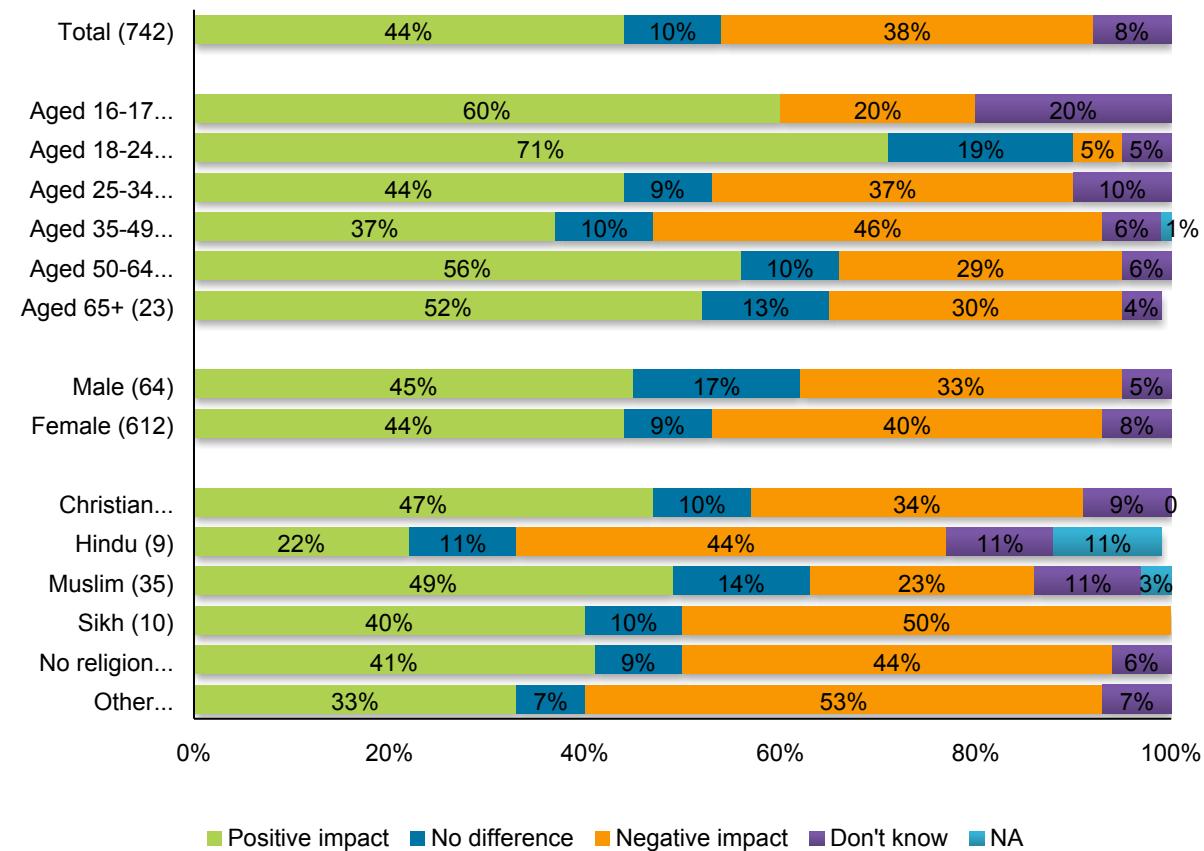
Overall, a higher proportion of respondents believe that the Council selecting Option B would have a positive impact on families in Buckinghamshire who need support than believe the opposite (44% cf. 38%). Stakeholders are significantly more likely to believe this would be positive, with 69% expressing that view compared to 38% of parents and carers; 42% of the latter group expressed the opposite opinion.

The proportion of those who expressed the view that Option B would have a positive impact on families in Buckinghamshire is significantly higher among those aged 50-64 (56%), Youth Services users (59%), and those residing in the Aylesbury Vale district (56%).

## Early Help: Consultation Findings Report

Conversely, whereas 38% of respondents overall believe Option B would have a negative impact on families in Buckinghamshire, this is significantly higher among those aged 35-49 (46%), children's centre users (46%), women (40%), those residing in the Wycombe district (49%), those travelling less than a mile to the furthest children's centre that they use (50%), those travelling between 1 and 3 miles to their furthest children's centre (49%), and those of no religion (44%).

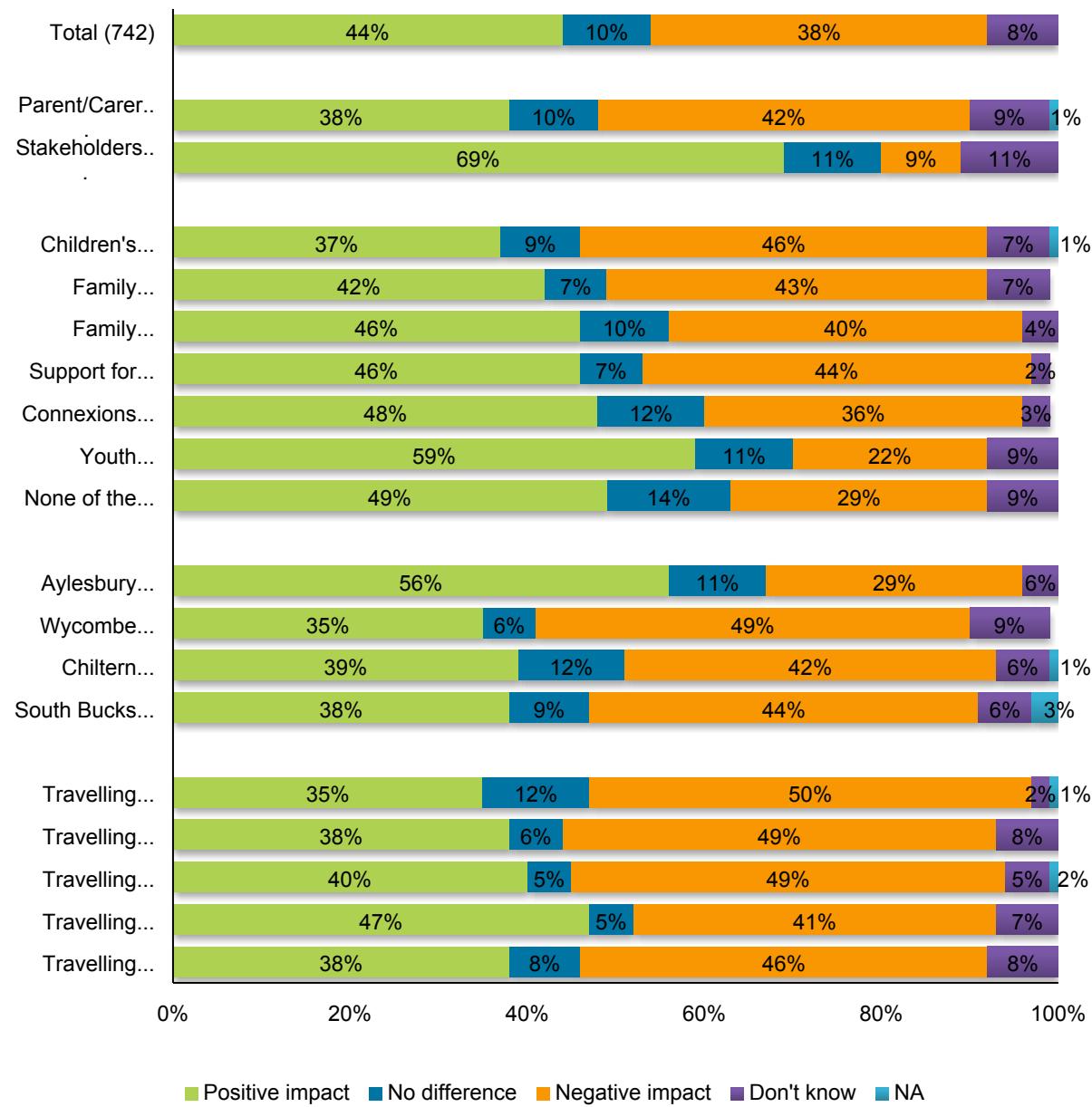
**Figure 14: What level of impact do you think the Council selecting Option B would have on families in Buckinghamshire who need support? (by demographic groups)**



Q11b. Single answer allowed per respondent. Sample bases in parentheses.

The total of percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

**Figure 15: What level of impact do you think the Council selecting Option B would have on families in Buckinghamshire who need support? (by other factors)**



Q11b. Single answer allowed per respondent. Sample bases in parentheses.

The total of percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

### 3.3 Option C: Area-based family outreach model

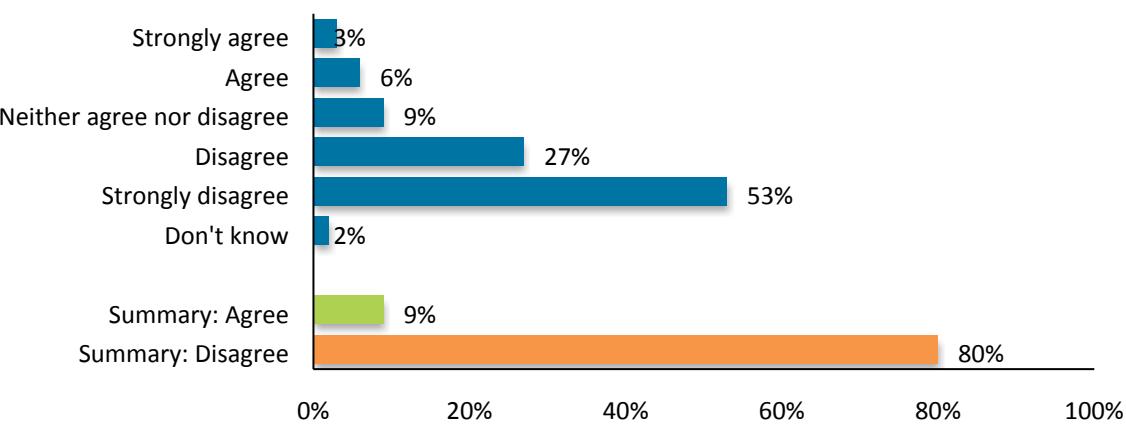
This will provide a new integrated service to support families with children 0-19 years old. The Council services will be focused on targeted work with families only. There would be three area teams working from office bases, but these would not be open to the public. This means family support being provided at the family's home, in school and at local places like libraries and community centres.

There will be no universal provision and no children's centres would be retained by the County Council.

#### 3.3.1 Agreement with Option C

Around four-fifths (80%) of respondents disagree with Option C as a model for delivering an Early Help service, including over half (53%) that strongly disagree. Less than one-tenth (9%) agree with Option C, with 3% strongly agreeing. Around one-tenth (9%) neither agree nor disagree, while 2% do not know.

**Figure 16: To what extent do you agree or disagree with Option C for delivering an Early Help Service?**



Q12. Single answer allowed. Sample base: 743

The total of percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

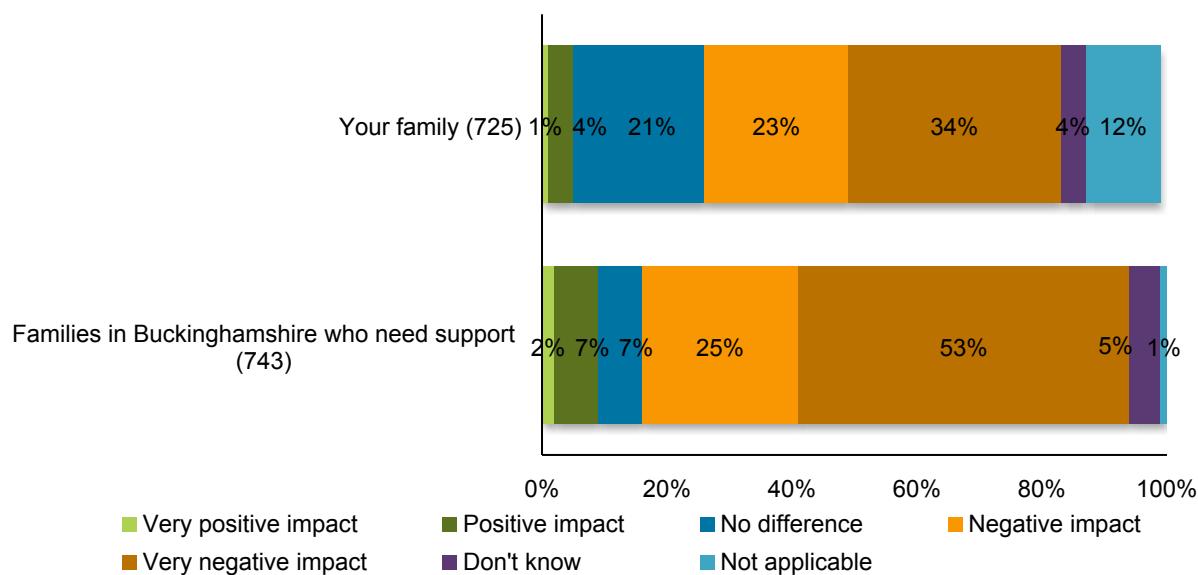
Given the high proportion of respondents who disagree with Option C, levels of disagreement across respondent groups and demographics are mostly consistent, with very few significant areas of difference.

#### 3.3.2 Impact of Option C

A small proportion (5%) of respondents believe that Option C would have a positive impact on their family, with 1% feeling this would have a very positive impact. A majority (57%) feel this would have a negative impact, including a third (34%) thinking this impact would be very negative. A fifth (21%) feel it would make no difference to their family, while 4% do not know and 12% feel the question is not applicable to them.

Over three-quarters (78%) of respondents feel that Option C would have a negative impact on families in Buckinghamshire who need support, including a majority (53%) believing this impact would be very negative. Around one-tenth (9%) feel the impact would be positive, including 2% thinking it would be very positive. 7% believe it would make no difference, 5% do not know, and 1% feel this is not applicable.

**Figure 17: What level of impact do you think the Council selecting Option C would have on...**



Q13. Single answer allowed per statement. Sample bases in parentheses.

The total of percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

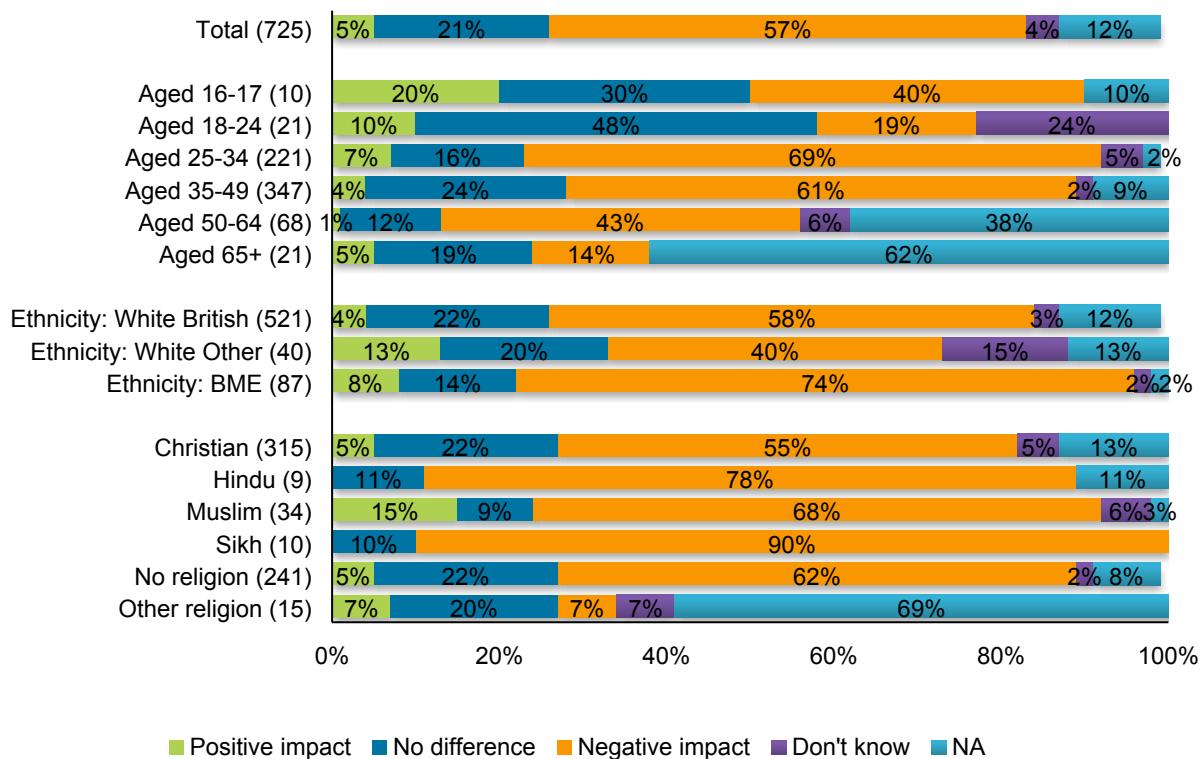
### 3.3.2.1 Impact on own family

The tendency of individuals to believe Option C would have a negative impact on their family is consistent across all demographic groups. Particularly, large majorities of those aged 25-34 (69%), children's centre users (72%), those with children under 5 (70%), and those who are currently or have been pregnant within the last year (77%) are of this view, likely because these groups are more likely to be personally affected than most other groups; the proportion of those feeling that the question is not applicable to them would support this interpretation.

The proportion of those who believe Option C would have a negative impact on their families is also significantly higher than the average amongst those aged 35-49 (61%), members of an ethnic minority (74%), South Buckinghamshire district residents (71%), Wycombe district residents (64%), and those of no religion (62%).

## Early Help: Consultation Findings Report

**Figure 18: What level of impact do you think the Council selecting Option C would have on your family? (by demographics)**

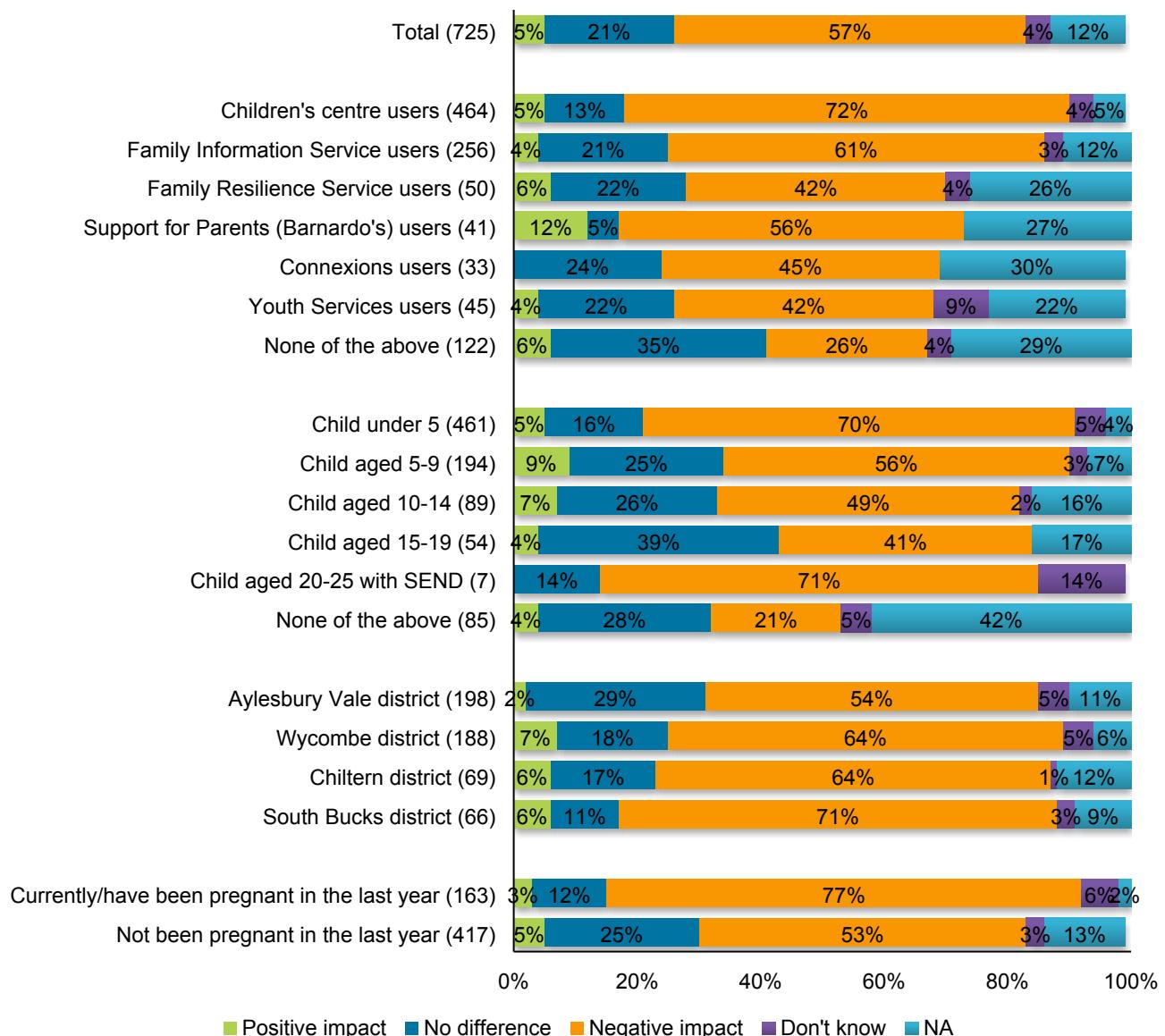


■ Positive impact ■ No difference ■ Negative impact ■ Don't know ■ NA

Q13a. Single answer allowed per respondent. Sample bases in parentheses.

The total of percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

**Figure 19: What level of impact do you think the Council selecting Option C would have on your family? (by other factors)**



Q13a. Single answer allowed per respondent. Sample bases in parentheses.

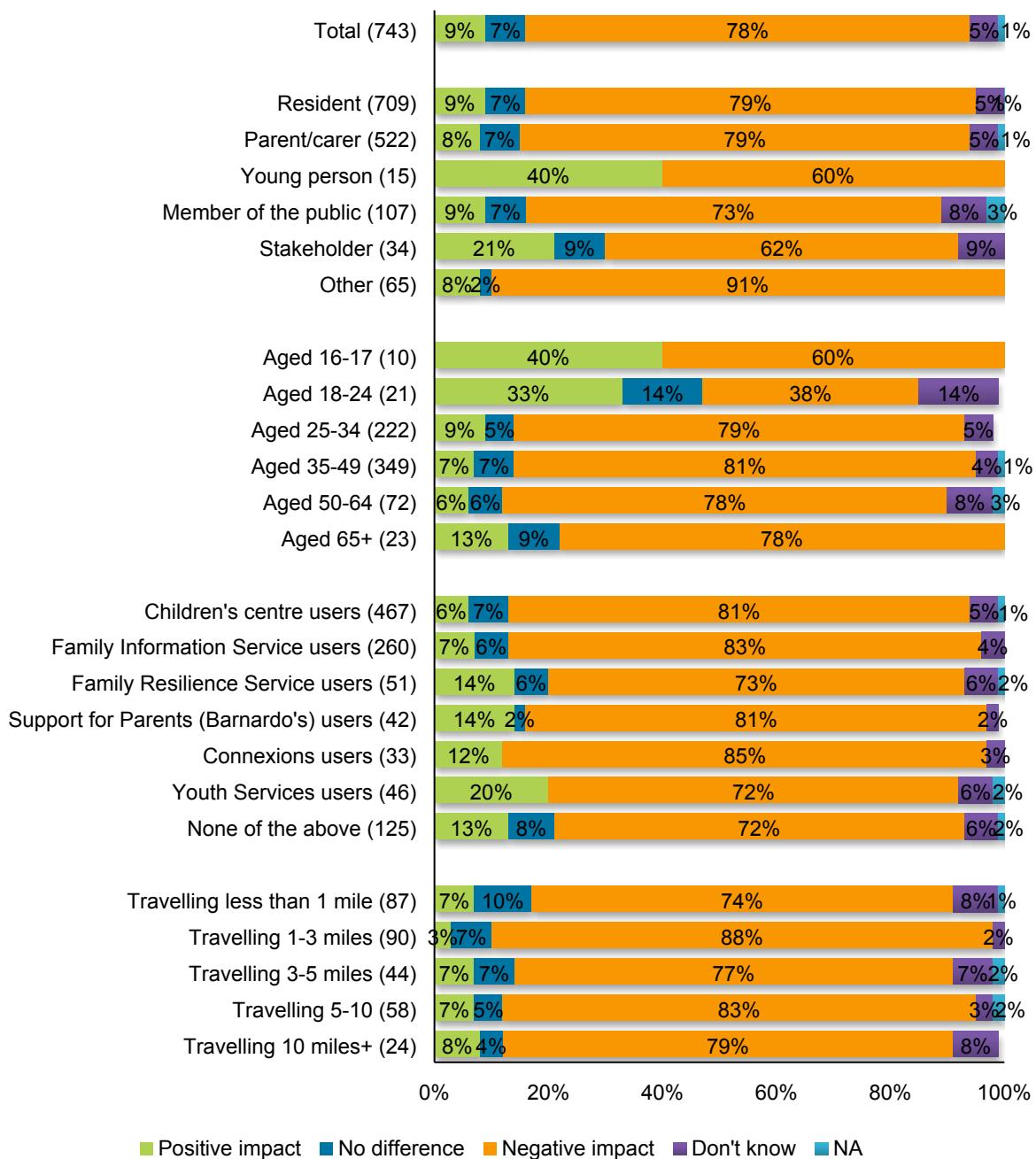
The total of percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

### 3.3.2.2 Impact on families in Buckinghamshire

While a large majority of all demographic groups believe Option C would have a negative impact on families in Buckinghamshire who need support, this is particularly strong among those aged 35-49 (81%), children's centre users (81%), and those who travel 1-3 miles to visit their furthest children's centre (88%). While around four-fifths of parents (79%) believe Option C to be negative in this regard, only 62% of stakeholders hold the same view.

## Early Help: Consultation Findings Report

**Figure 20: What level of impact do you think the Council selecting Option C would have on families in Buckinghamshire who need support? (by demographic and respondent groups of interest)**



■ Positive impact ■ No difference ■ Negative impact ■ Don't know ■ NA

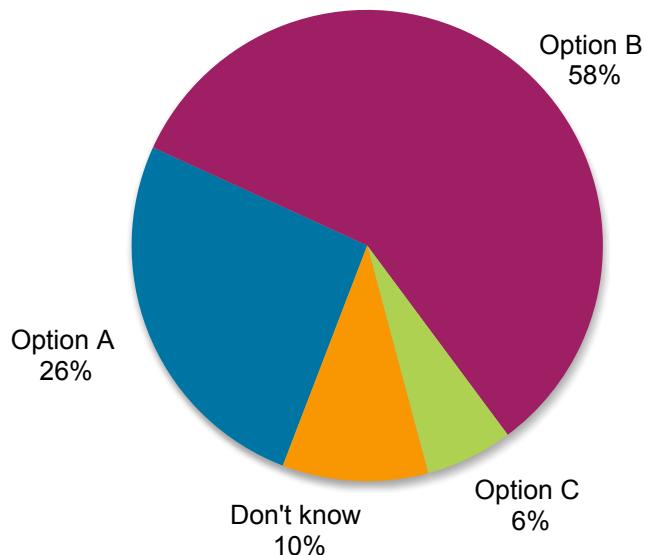
Q13b. Single answer allowed per respondent. Sample bases in parentheses

The total of percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

### 3.4 Preferred options

When asked, a majority (58%) of respondents prefer Option B out of the three options presented within the consultation, while around a quarter (26%) prefer Option A and 6% selected Option C. A further 10% said they do not know. It should be noted that there was no option to select 'none of the above' or an alternative option within this specific question, as the Council was keen to understand respondent's preferences out of the viable options for change; instead respondents were able to skip the question (17 chose to do this), and an open response question was included to capture views on alternative ways the Council could provide early help services.

**Figure 21: Of the options presented, which is your preferred option?**



Q14. Single answer allowed. Sample base: 740

The total of percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

The following sections further explore these preferences based on respondent groups and demographics. Due to the very low proportion of respondents who selected Option C as their preference, most of these comparisons focus on where Options A or B is the preferred option.

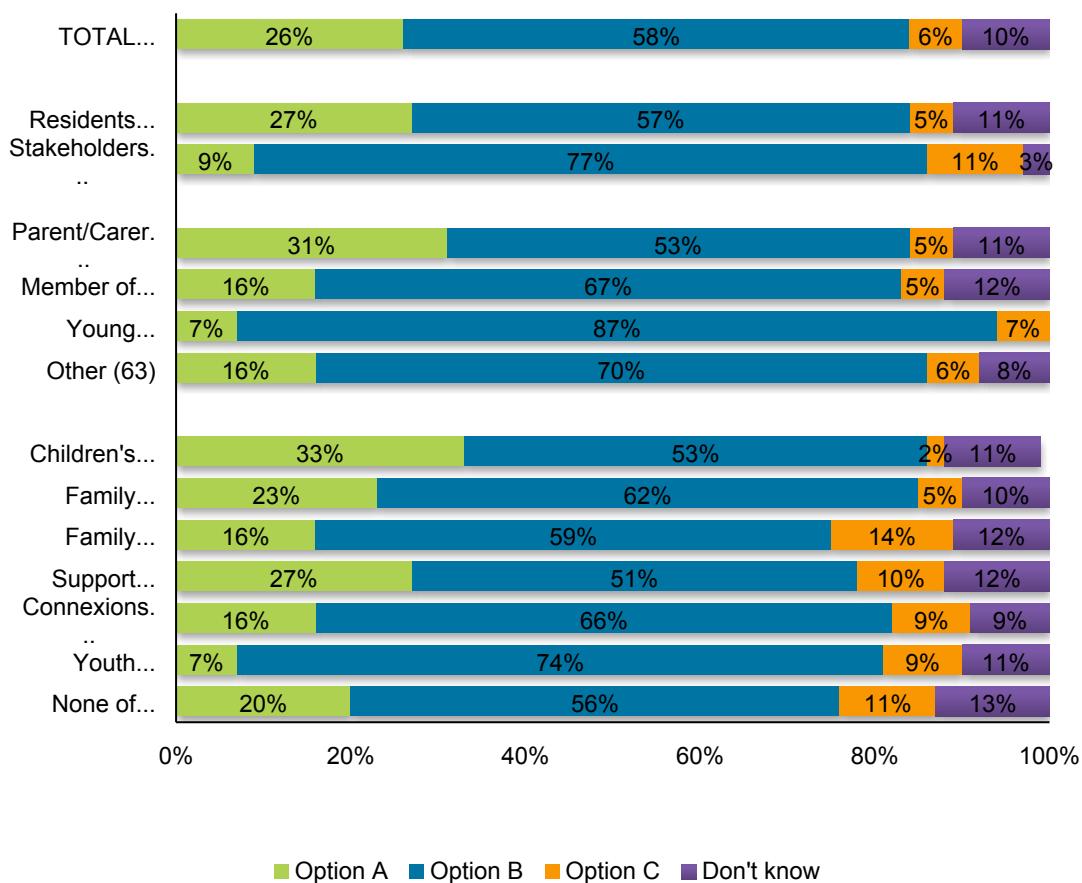
### 3.4.1 Option preference by respondent group

Whilst Option B is the preferred option amongst all respondent groups, residents and particularly parent/carers are significantly more likely than others to prefer Option A (27% and 31% respectively). Respondents are also significantly more likely to prefer Option A if they were children's centre users (33%), as such this group are less likely to be supportive of Option B overall (53%).

Stakeholders and wider members of the public are more likely to prefer Option B (77% and 67% respectively).

Whilst Option C is unpopular across all demographic groups, Family Resilience Service users and non-users of early help services are more likely to prefer this (14% and 11% respectively).

**Figure 22: Option preferred by respondent group**

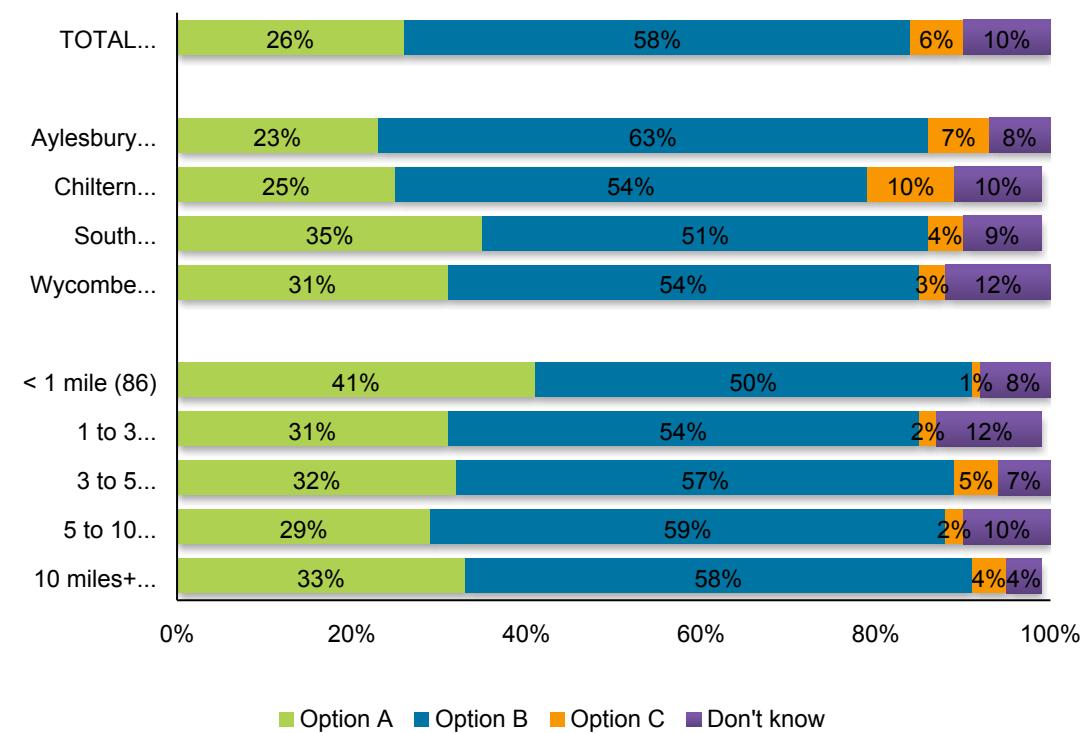


Q14. Figures shown are the proportion of each category preferring Option A. Sample bases in parentheses. The total of percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

### 3.4.2 Option preference by district lived in and distance travelled to furthest children's centre

There are no significant differences identified between the district lived in and likelihood to support the different options. However, those who travelled less than one mile to their furthest children's centre are significantly more likely to support Option A (41%).

**Figure 23: Option preferred by district lived in and distance travelled to furthest children's centre**

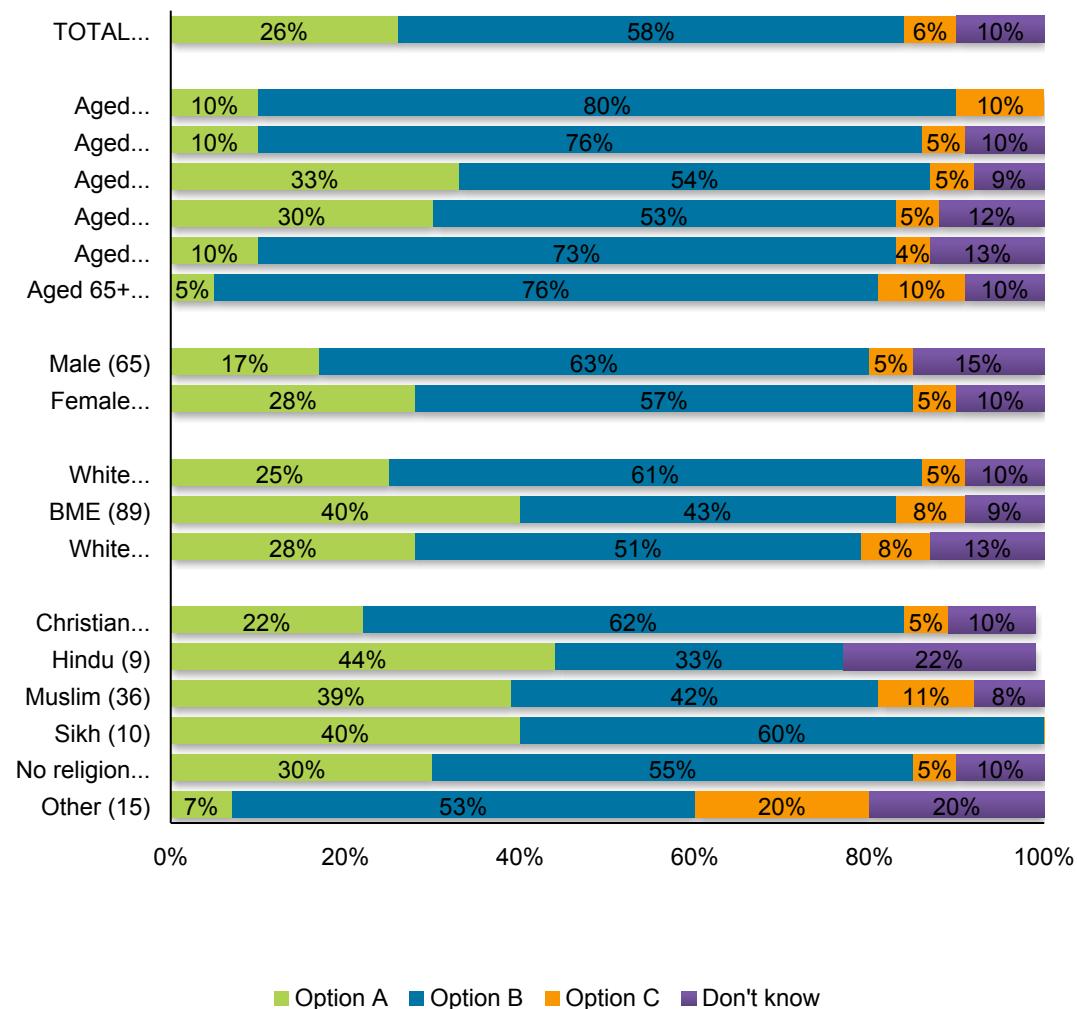


Q14. Figures shown are the proportion of each category preferring Option A. Sample bases in parentheses. The total of percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

### 3.4.3 Option preference by demographics

Again, whilst Option B is the preferred option amongst all respondent groups (except Hindus where a very small base size applies), some significant differences are identifiable by demographics. Respondents are significantly more likely to prefer Option A if they are: aged 25 to 34 or 35 to 49 (33% and 30% respectively); female (28%); or from a BME background (40%). Those identifying as Christian are significantly more likely to prefer Option B, with 62% doing so, while Muslims are significantly less likely to prefer Option B (42%).

**Figure 24: Option preferred by respondent group**

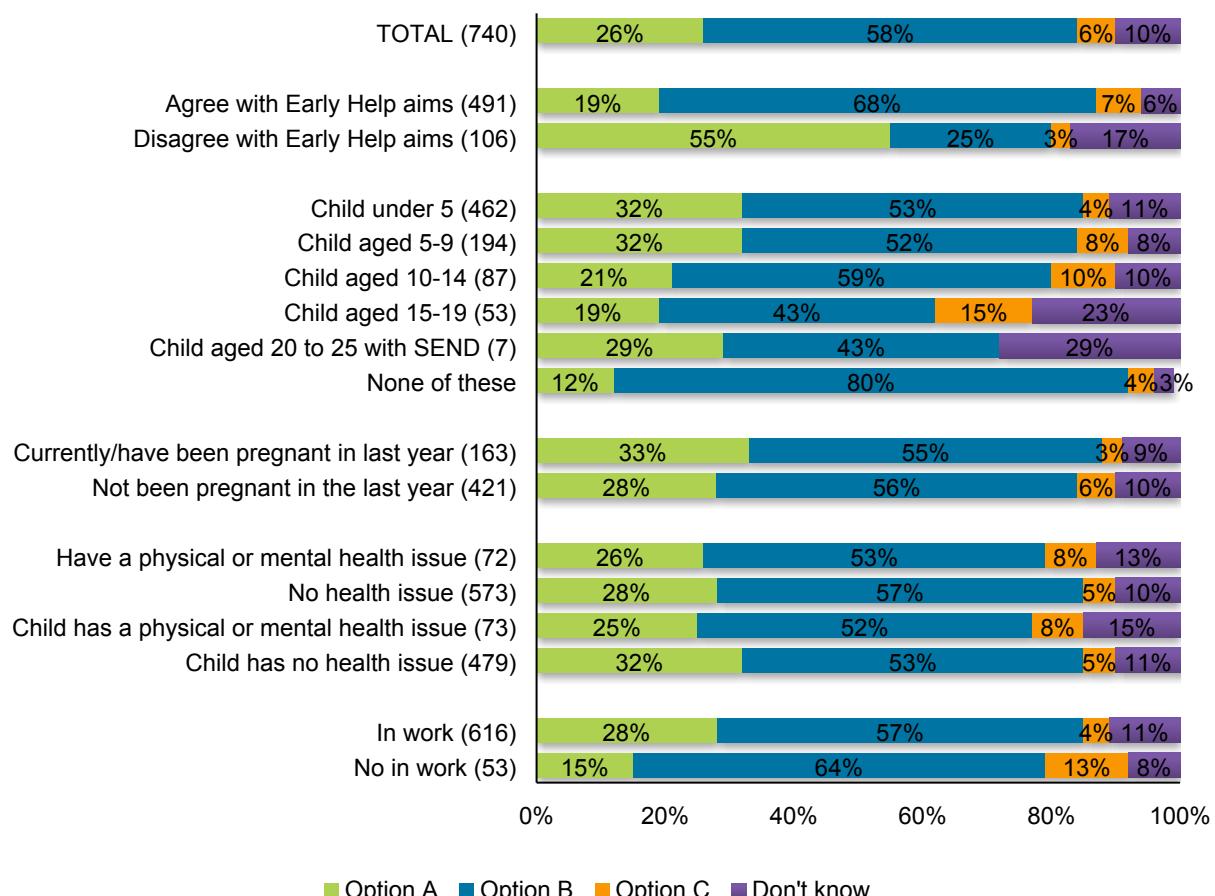


Q14. Figures shown are the proportion of each category preferring Option A. Sample bases in parentheses. The total of percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

### 3.4.4 Option preference by other factors

When other wider factors are taken into consideration, whilst Option B is the overall preference, Option A is more likely to be the preference when: the respondent does not agree with the Council's aims for Early Help (55%); if they have a child under 5 or aged 5 to 9 (32% for each); if the respondent is currently or has been pregnant in the last year (33%); or if the respondent is currently in work (28%).

**Figure 25: Option preferred by other factors**



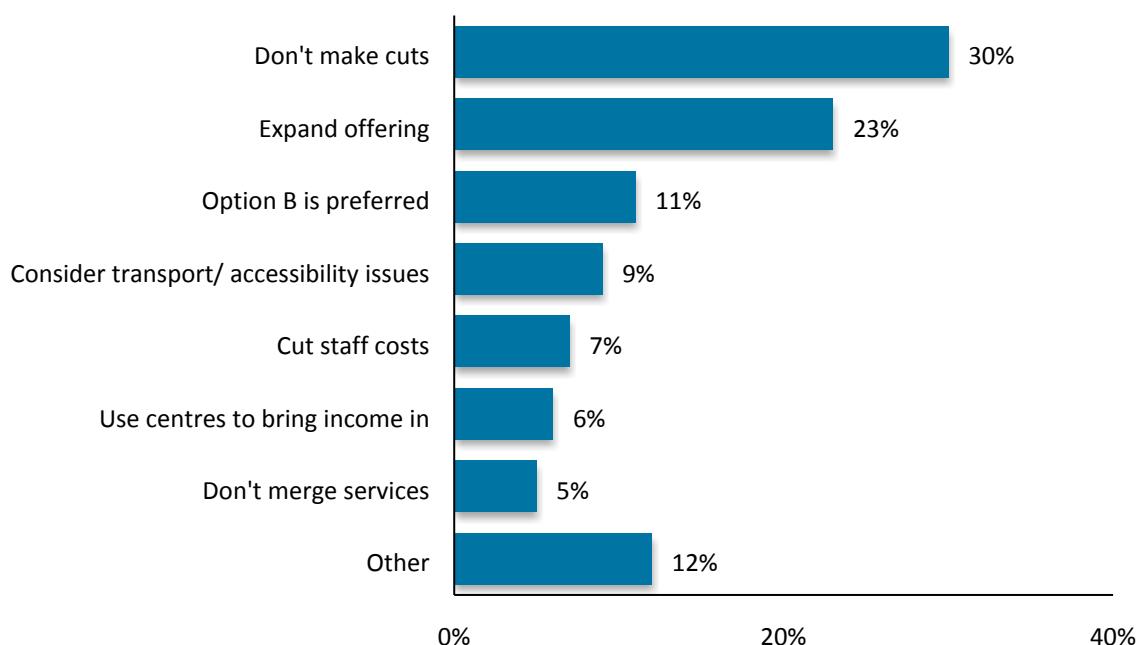
Q14. Figures shown are the proportion of each category preferring Option A. Sample bases in parentheses. The total of percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

## 3.5 Alternative suggestions

### 3.5.1 Alternative ways to deliver early help

After being asked for their views on the three options put forward by the Council, respondents were asked about any suggestions for alternative ways that the Council could provide early help services not described within the three options. 265 respondents provided comments – the key themes are summarised below.

**Figure 26: Do you have any suggestions for alternative ways that the Council could provide early help services not described in options A, B, or C?**



Q19a. Open text response, subsequently coded into categories. Comments may fall into several categories. Sample base: 265

Many (30%, 80 respondents) expressed the view that the Council should not be making cuts to early help services, typically feeling that the Council should simply retain the existing services and make no changes, in some cases making a clear plea to 'keep the children's centres open'. Where individuals elaborated on their reasoning, some talked about the support offered by the current early help system, the importance of having somewhere to go locally to receive support and somebody to talk to, and that any cuts or changes to service offering will affect vulnerable or less affluent people and families. Other examples of comments raised include references to new housing developments in the county, believing that maintaining services will be important due to the demand generated, with a couple noting that the Council will generate funds through council tax on these additional properties. A few (2%, 6 respondents) argued that making changes would simply create additional workload for other areas, or that problems would escalate and require more costly intervention at a later stage.

One respondent evidenced the volume of support for maintaining the current level of centres and services by sharing a petition conducted between October 2017 and January 2018 which obtained over 3,000 signatures in opposition to the Council's previous proposal to replace the 35 children's centres with 9 hubs.<sup>2</sup>

Other respondents (23%, 60 respondents) believe that the Council should not just maintain the current offering, but expand upon it. Where individuals went into more detail on this, several (4%, 10 respondents) expressed the view that more support should be continued later on in life as support may appear to 'expire' at a certain age and needs may therefore not be dealt with. Other examples of comments around expanding service offering queried whether the charitable and voluntary sector could do more to provide services and particularly 'fill in the gaps' if Council provision at a particular centre were to be decreased or cease altogether.

<sup>2</sup> The petition can be found here <https://you.38degrees.org.uk/petitions/save-buckinghamshire-s-children-s-centres>

Where respondents used this question to state their preferred option and their reasoning, this was most commonly in support of Option B (11%, 28 respondents did so). In some cases this was with a caveat, with examples including further training being required, or suggesting locally-specific tweaks to the proposed geographic spread of the sites – expressing concern about ‘gaps’ in service offering in certain areas (particularly the north of the county) leaving residents there without local services. Where individuals explained their support for Option A, this was often because of a desire to retain some local presence so that people would have somewhere to access services, and that keeping the centres open was important in case further funding became available in the future so services can be ‘scaled-up’:

*“Every effort should be made to keep ALL the children’s centre’s open even if this means \*temporarily\* reducing the service... once the centres are closed they’ll be gone forever, keep them open with a view to increasing services again when more money is available.”*

Some (9%, 24 respondents) specifically noted the importance of transport issues, especially the concern that those living in rural areas would struggle to access services if their local centre were to close. Examples of this include: the concern that service users often lack access to their own transport – some respondents noted their own lack of transport - and public transport connecting them with a different centre may be limited and inconvenient; the importance of local services in reaching people in their vicinity and making sure people use the services and help available to them; and the possibility of utilising council-run minibuses to connect residents with local centres.

Several comments (7%, 19 respondents) concerned cutting staffing costs. Often this was not expanded upon, but where respondents were more specific, in many cases their view was that pay for senior staff and directors should be cut, while others advised pay cuts for all staff or pay cuts based on performance, and a few suggested that the Council should employ fewer staff.

Several respondents (6%, 16 respondents) feel that the children’s centres could be used to provide income. Examples of this include: renting out the space to private organisations and individuals; charging a small fee for services, with some suggesting such a charge would be means-tested; and a further comment recommending the Council looks at sponsorship opportunities from businesses related to children, education, food and exercise. Similarly, others (5%, 12 respondents) expressed the view that money could be raised to expand or maintain provision through obtaining funds from central government, raising council tax, or using the Council’s reserves.

A handful of respondents (5%, 12 respondents) expressed the view that merging services would be a mistake, with examples of this including the concerns that specialisation would be lost, and that merging children’s centre services with targeted services aimed at older children would be a mistake due to the issues around safety and the need for the centres to provide a comfortable environment.

A small number of others (3%, 9 respondents) feel that any decisions on changes to early help should be delayed until the new Unitary Council takes effect, often noting that this is expected to save around £18million per annum and suggesting that part of this money be used for early help services:

*“I am not selecting any options because I don’t think such a big decision should be made until the new unitary is formed when we will have a clearer idea of resources available.”*

It should be noted, however, that the announcement regarding the Unitary Council came during the middle of the consultation period, after many individuals had already submitted their response.

## Early Help: Consultation Findings Report

Examples of other comments given include whether the voluntary sector could be used to increase provision, or the desire for a solution involving various elements of more than one option, such as a blend between Option A and Option B to maintain some presence and support across all areas, or incorporating elements of Option C in using teams to perform outreach work inside communities lacking local centres. Other respondents feel that none of the options were appropriate:

*"The three options are wholly inadequate. All the options are bad for families and the communities you pretend to serve."*

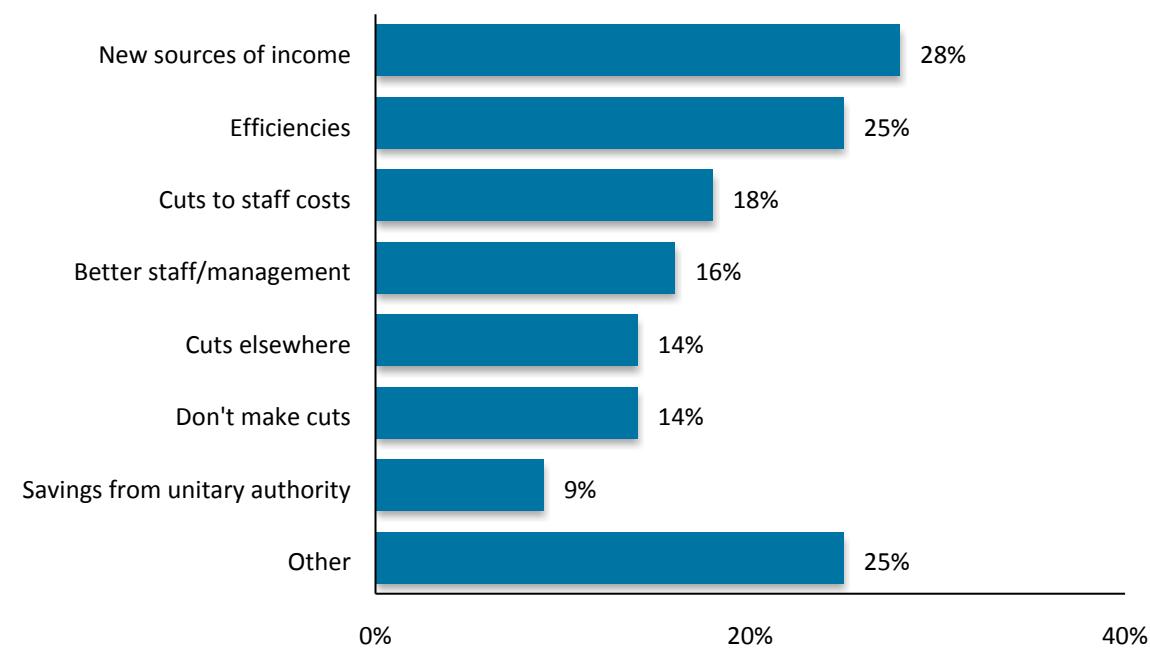
### 3.5.2 Alternative ways to make savings

Respondents were also asked for their suggestions on alternative ways that the Council can deliver £3.1 million in savings per annum. 304 provided comments, although several questioned why this was asked of the public, or felt that they wouldn't be able to answer:

*"This is not an area that I feel I can comment on, as I have no idea how much things cost to run and how many provisions the County fund."*

The key themes are summarised below.

**Figure 27: Do you have any suggestions for alternative ways that the Council can deliver £3.1million in savings per annum?**



Q19b. Open text response, subsequently coded into categories. Comments may fall into several categories. Sample base = 304

Many (28%, 85 respondents) raised the possibility of the Council obtaining additional funds as an alternative to cutting the early help budget. Among the suggestions raised were: renting out children's centre buildings (or spaces within them); charging a small fee for certain sessions or asking for donations; obtaining further funds from central government; raising council tax; raising income through various taxes or charges; and bringing new business into the county. Where respondents expressed support for renting out children's centre buildings, they often feel that children's centres would be a particularly appropriate venue for certain events such as children's birthday parties due to the toys available. In relation to comments about a small charge for certain sessions or services, some respondents suggested this be on a voluntary

basis, while others were not specific, and a few suggesting this charge be applied to specific sessions, or means-testing this in some way. Where raising council tax was mentioned, these comments often specifically referred to wealthier people and more expensive houses. A few feel that the Council should either simply 'refuse' to accept cuts or apply pressure on the government to increase funding, perhaps in conjunction with other councils:

*"How about joining with other councils and telling central government that there is not enough money to support families properly, rather than continually attempting to manage increasing cuts."*

Others (25%, 75 respondents) feel that such savings could be made through greater efficiency across the Council's spending as a whole; few of these comments specifically mentioned early help services. Many of these comments spoke in general terms about overhead or administration costs without specific suggestions for how such savings could be achieved. Where respondents elaborated on this, this was most commonly regarding a desire to see more shared use of facilities across the Council's estate, and running certain services out of alternative locations such as libraries and community centres. Other examples of suggestions noted include: further use of digital technology; assessing the quality of services and the demand for these and making cutbacks accordingly; reducing energy consumption, perhaps through the use of more energy efficient equipment, reducing duplication across public sector services; better communication and marketing to the general public; more communication and information sharing across Council departments; and cutting the costs of restructuring and consulting.

Some (18%, 54 respondents) expressed the view that savings can be achieved through cutting staffing costs. In many cases, individuals specifically highlighted the pay of senior staff as an area where savings could be made, while others endorsed more general pay cuts for staff across the Council. A few comments stated that these savings would be achieved through cutting the number of staff without mentioning cuts to pay. Other examples of suggestions raised included performance-related pay cuts, and reducing the number of agency staff.

A smaller number (16%, 48 respondents) feel that savings could be made through improved staff and management. Specifically, respondents highlighted: better management of sub-contractors, particularly re-negotiating these contracts or bringing work in-house; better management of staff including re-organising staff structures; the use of more volunteers, particularly in running sessions and other activities at children's centres; and for more flexibility in staff working practises, such as more meetings being conducted via teleconferencing facilities rather than face-to-face, and more staff working from home in order to make savings on office costs.

Others (14%, 43 respondents) suggested that cuts should be made to other areas of the public sector budget, so as to protect the current budget for early help services. Where these comments highlighted specific areas of spending, this most commonly concerned what many believe to be 'non-essential' roadworks, particularly changes to the road layout in High Wycombe, such as the following:

*"There has been unnecessary roadworks going on in Wycombe town centre, redesigning road layouts. This in my view is a complete waste of council money. Stop any of this future work and invest it into our children."*

Similarly, a few feel that repairs to roads could be conducted in a more efficient way, and that this could save money:

## [Early Help: Consultation Findings Report](#)

*"Change the way the roads are repaired. Patching pot holes in the current model means repeated repairs of one hole as the repairs do not last. I think the council should consider bringing road repairs back in house."*

Other aspects of the Council budget identified by a few respondents as potential areas for funding cuts included the marketing department, street lighting, adult education, and libraries. Additionally, various comments (5%, 14 respondents) concerned areas of spending which would be matters for central government rather than the Council, such as HS2 and welfare, while other comments expressed their desire to see a change in government – all out of the scope of this consultation.

Some individuals (14%, 42 respondents) passionately feel that the Council should not be making cuts in this area, in some cases believing the Council should instead be increasing the budget, typically feeling that early help is a vital area of the Council's budget. Some talked about the support that early help and children's centres in particular can provide, and that this is crucial support for vulnerable or underprivileged people. Several comments questioned the ideological or practical basis for cutting funding, often stating that the UK is a rich country and should not need to make such cuts. However, it was typically unclear whether their comments were aimed at Buckinghamshire County Council or central government. A few reasoned that saving money in this area and reducing support would create additional problems, by allowing issues to go unresolved and therefore escalate to the point where more serious (and costly) intervention is required:

*"Ensure Early Help really is effective early in a child's life. Families who are currently in need but not reaching thresholds appear to miss support early on and then need more significant support later."*

It was felt by some respondents that other buildings owned by the public sector, such as schools, libraries and community centres, could be further utilised as spaces from which to deliver certain services, and that this would save costs on facilities.

On 1<sup>st</sup> November 2018, during the middle of the consultation period, it was announced that Buckinghamshire would be moving to a single Unitary Council from 2020. Some individuals who provided their response prior to that announcement had already suggested saving money by closing or merging councils, though most were not specific about supporting a move to a single Unitary Council. As noted previously, following the announcement, several noted that the money this will save should be used to maintain the existing early help budget or that any changes should be delayed until the new council takes effect, often specifically noting the estimated £18million of estimated savings per annum:

*"Buckinghamshire is becoming a unitary in 2020 that is forecast to make an £18 million saving. It seems common sense to wait until after this change in structure to make any cuts that will be detrimental to the families you purportedly serve... I can see no strong reason to rush through this decision now."*

This view was also expressed and support for this evidenced through the submission of a petition to delay the decision to make any changes to children's centres until after the formation of the Unitary Council. This petition obtained 356 signatures between the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> December 2018.<sup>3</sup>

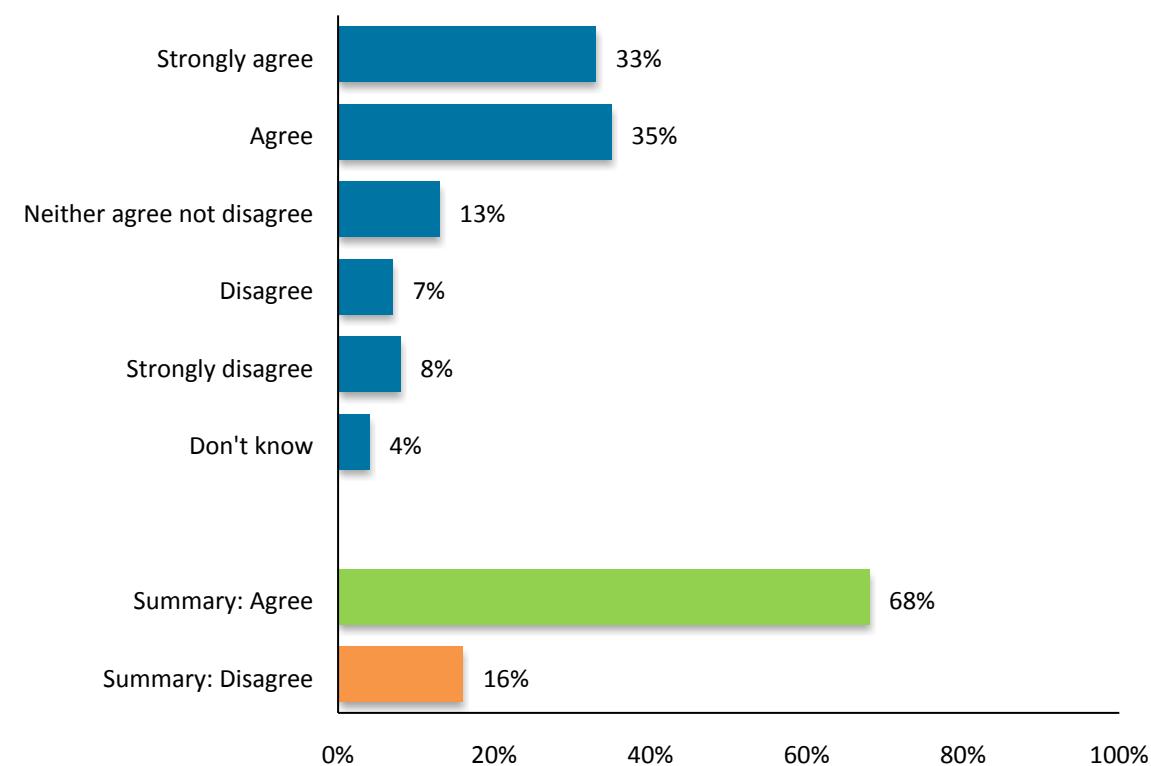
---

<sup>3</sup> The petition can be found here: <https://you.38degrees.org.uk/petitions/save-buckinghamshire-s-children-s-centres-delay-decision-as-it-should-be-made-by-the-new-council>

### 3.6 Future use of buildings

More than two-thirds (68%) of respondents agree with the Council's aim that children's centre buildings proposed for closure should continue to be used for community benefit, particularly early years' provision. This included 33% who strongly agree with this aim. Around one in six respondents disagree with this aim, whilst 13% neither agree nor disagree, and 4% do not know.

**Figure 28: Agreement that children's centre buildings proposed for closure should continue to be used for community benefit, particularly early year's provision**



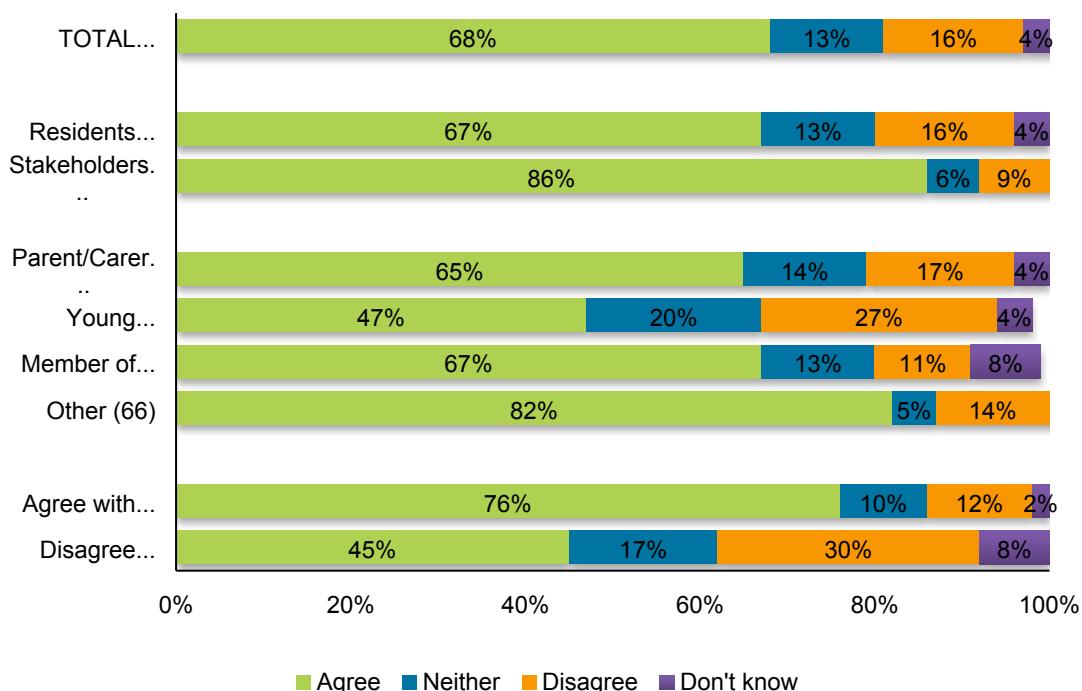
Q16. Single answer allowed. All respondents. Sample base: 744

The total of percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

## Early Help: Consultation Findings Report

Respondents who agree with this aim were significantly more likely to be stakeholders (86%); significantly less likely to be parents or carers (65%); and those in agreement with the Council's aims for early help are also significantly more likely to agree with this aim regarding the future use of buildings(76%).

**Figure 29: Agreement that children's centre buildings proposed for closure should continue to be used for community benefit, particularly early year's provision (by demographic and respondent groups of interest)**



Q16. Single answer allowed per respondent. Sample bases in parentheses.

The total of percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

## 4 Preferences for location

The following tables show the children's centres respondents indicated a preference to keep open. Respondents were asked to select the children's centre which was their top priority to remain open and up to four additional centres they would consider a priority. It should be noted that due to the number of children's centres under consideration, detailed analysis cannot be undertaken based on respondent types (although it is provided where possible); however, two things should be considered when reading these tables:

1. Respondents may be more likely to comment upon children's centres in areas local to them due to greater familiarity.
2. Residents may have been more likely to respond in areas where the Council identified children's centres for closure.

### 4.1 Aylesbury Vale district

In the Aylesbury Vale district the children's centres which were most frequently selected as a priority for keeping open, and that are also seen as the top priorities for remaining open are:

- Aylesbury (Southcourt) Children's Centre (24% think it is a priority overall, and 10% think it is top priority).
- Aylesbury (Berryfields: Quarrendon) Children's Centre (19% think it is a priority overall, and 4% think it is top priority).
- Early Years Excellence Hub (Elmhurst) Children's Centre (12% think it is a priority overall, and 4% think it is top priority).
- Buckingham Children's Centre (13% think it is a priority overall, and 3% think it is top priority).

**Figure 30: Respondents' priorities for keeping open (Aylesbury Vale district)**

Children's Centre	Top priority for keeping open n (%)	A priority for keeping open n (%)	Total selecting n (%)
<b>Aylesbury (Southcourt)</b>	68 (10%)	104 (15%)	172 (24%)
<b>Aylesbury (Berryfields: Quarrendon)</b>	30 (4%)	105 (16%)	135 (19%)
<b>Early Years Excellence Hub (Elmhurst)</b>	30 (4%)	82 (12%)	112 (16%)
<b>Buckingham</b>	19 (3%)	72 (11%)	91 (13%)
Wendover	10 (1%)	57 (8%)	67 (9%)
Aylesbury (Oakfield and Bedgrove) (Broughton)	10 (1%)	56 (8%)	66 (9%)
Early Years Excellence Hub (Bearbrook)	7 (1%)	54 (8%)	61 (9%)
Aylesbury (South West)	4 (1%)	47 (7%)	51 (7%)
<b>Wing Children's Centre</b>	14 (2%)	33 (5%)	47 (7%)
Waddesdon & Whitchurch	1 (*%)	40 (6%)	41 (6%)
Livinghoe & Pitstone	14 (2%)	23 (3%)	37 (5%)
Haddenham	11 (2%)	22 (3%)	33 (5%)
Steeple Claydon	8 (1%)	18 (3%)	26 (4%)

Q17. Respondents could select one top priority and up to four additional priorities. Sample base = 712 for top priority, and 677 for other priorities. The centres the Council proposes to retain under Option B are shown in bold.

## 4.2 Wycombe district

In the Wycombe district the children's centres which were most frequently selected as a priority for keeping open (either as a priority or a top priority) are:

- High Wycombe (Castlefield) Children's Centre – 25%
- Wycombe (Disraeli) Children's Centre – 17%
- Wycombe (Millbrook) Children's Centre – 16%
- Mapledean Children's Centre (Wycombe Abbey) – 14%

Whilst the same four sites are also seen as top priorities for remaining open, these are in the following order:

- Mapledean Children's Centre (Wycombe Abbey) – 6%
- Wycombe (Disraeli) Children's Centre – 5%
- Wycombe (Millbrook) Children's Centre – 4%
- High Wycombe (Castlefield) Children's Centre – 4%

**Figure 31: Respondents' priorities for keeping open (Wycombe district)**

Children's Centre	Top priority for keeping open n (%)	A priority for keeping open n (%)	Total selecting n (%)
<b>High Wycombe (Castlefield)</b>	29 (4%)	150 (22%)	179 (25%)
Wycombe (Disraeli)	39 (5%)	82 (12%)	121 (17%)
Wycombe (Millbrook)	30 (4%)	86 (13%)	116 (16%)
<b>Mapledean (Wycombe Abbey)</b>	43 (6%)	53 (8%)	96 (14%)
<b>Hamilton Road (High Wycombe Terriers &amp; Amersham Hill)</b>	16 (2%)	68 (10%)	84 (12%)
Wycombe (Hampden Way)	17 (2%)	63 (9%)	80 (11%)
Wycombe (East) (Micklefield: Ash Hill)	8 (1%)	67 (10%)	75 (11%)
<b>Marlow (Foxes Piece)</b>	18 (3%)	52 (8%)	70 (10%)
Hazlemere & Loudwater	16 (2%)	54 (8%)	70 (10%)
<b>Risborough</b>	16 (2%)	50 (7%)	66 (9%)
Wooburn Green & Bourne End	7 (1%)	35 (5%)	42 (6%)
Stokenchurch & Hambleden Valley	8 (1%)	21 (3%)	29 (4%)

Q17. Respondents could select one top priority and up to four additional priorities. Sample base = 712 for top priority, and 677 for other priorities. The centres the Council proposes to retain under Option B are shown in bold.

## 4.3 Chiltern & South Bucks district

In the Chiltern and South Bucks district the children's centres which were most frequently selected as a priority for keeping open (either as a priority or a top priority) are:

- Beaconsfield Children's Centre – 13%
- Chesham (Waterside) Children's Centre – 11%
- Amersham Children's Centre – 10%
- The Ivers Children's Centre – 10%
- The Chalfonts Children's Centre – 10%

However, when we look at the centres which are most likely to be seen as the top priorities for staying open this list changes as follows:

- The Ivers Children's Centre – 5%
- Newtown Children's Centre – 5%

**Figure 32: Respondents' priorities for keeping open (Chiltern and South Bucks)**

Children's Centre	Top priority for keeping open n (%)	A priority for keeping open n (%)	Total selecting n (%)
<b>Beaconsfield</b>	15 (2%)	79 (12%)	94 (13%)
Chesham (Waterside)	11 (2%)	66 (10%)	77 (11%)
<b>Amersham</b>	13 (2%)	56 (8%)	69 (10%)
The Ivers	36 (5%)	32 (5%)	68 (10%)
The Chalfonts	6 (1%)	62 (9%)	68 (10%)
Denham & Gerrards Cross	13 (2%)	51 (8%)	64 (9%)
<b>Burnham</b>	14 (2%)	46 (7%)	60 (8%)
<b>Newtown</b>	34 (5%)	25 (4%)	59 (8%)
Farnham	6 (1%)	29 (4%)	35 (5%)
Prestwood & Missenden	4 (1%)	18 (3%)	22 (3%)

Q17. Respondents could select one top priority and up to four additional priorities. Sample base = 712 for top priority, and 677 for other priorities. The centres the Council proposes to retain under Option B are shown in bold.

## 4.4 Priorities by respondent group and characteristics

As noted previously, due to the number of children's centres under consideration, detailed analysis cannot be undertaken based on respondent types; however, we have provided a summary of where centres are more likely to be a top priority by different respondent groups:

- 14% of stakeholders chose High Wycombe (Castlefield) and 6% chose Early Years Excellence Hub (Bearbrook) as their top priority.
- 15% of respondents from BME backgrounds chose Mapledean (Wycombe Abbey), 10% chose the The Ivers, and 7% chose Denham & Gerrards Cross, and 5% chose Burnham as their top priority.
- 26% of Muslim respondents chose Mapledean (Wycombe Abbey) and 6% chose Chesham (Waterside) as their top priority. 13% of Christian respondents chose Aylesbury (Southcourt) as their top priority.
- 19% of respondents who were not in work chose Aylesbury (Southcourt) as their top priority.

## 5 Public meetings and drop-ins

The following chapter provides a summary of the key themes emerging from the public meetings and drop-in sessions. It should be noted that discussions at these events mostly focused on the impact changes to early help would have on children's centres.

The following table provides a summary of the events and the number of attendees at each.

Type of event	Location	Number of attendees
Public meeting	Aylesbury	4
Public meeting	High Wycombe	17
Public meeting	Amersham	10
Drop-in session	Steeple Claydon Children's Centre	13
Drop-in session	Disraeli Children's Centre	25
Drop-in session	The Ivers Children's Centre	15

### 5.1 Key themes from discussions

#### 5.1.1 Impact of children's centres

Attendees at the public meetings and drop-in sessions often strongly stressed the benefits of children's centres and the impact they have had on their lives, praising the staff and their ability to identify individuals with emerging needs through open-access sessions. The centres could therefore intervene and offer support to prevent these escalating further, signposting to other support services where appropriate. Some shared personal stories to illustrate the impact of support from children's centres in dealing with issues such as post-natal depression, anxiety, helping reduce the social isolation faced by many new mothers, and valuing the 'non-judgemental' nature of this support in contrast to the 'stigma' attached to targeted services.

It was felt that reducing the number of centres in general would put the availability of such support at risk, and residents and stakeholders across the different events were keen to stress their concerns related both to their local centre, but also to centres across Buckinghamshire. This point was particularly raised at The Ivers, where they felt that they did not believe it should be a case of 'either/or' between this and other centres. Similarly at the Disraeli centre, some raised a perception that they were being 'penalised' for being from an area that was less deprived, even though they still might need support.

#### 5.1.2 Transport issues

Many residents feel that a lack of adequate, reliable public transport, particularly in rural areas, would mean people without a vehicle would face severe difficulties accessing services without a local centre. They particularly feel that mothers carrying children and pushchairs would not access services if this involved an inconvenient journey of several miles to their nearest centre, perhaps involving multiple buses and lengthy waits for infrequent services. Therefore, some people may 'slip through the net' and not receive the support they require to prevent their needs from escalating.

Transport and travel time and convenience was a particular concern raised by residents and stakeholders at drop-in sessions at Steeple Claydon and The Ivers centres.

### 5.1.3 The need for savings and creation of a Unitary Council

A few individuals sought clarity on budgetary figures, particularly how the new budget would compare to the existing budget, when this would take effect, and the level of cuts made to the relevant budgets previously. There was a sense of frustration that the Council needed to make these savings, particularly from services which were viewed as having a strong impact on people's lives.

Following the announcement that Buckinghamshire will be moving to a single Unitary Council from 2020, subject to parliamentary approval, some questioned why it was necessary to change early help and whether these changes could be delayed until the new council comes into being. It had been publicised that this change is expected to lead to savings of £18m per annum, leading to queries about whether some of this money can be used to maintain or improve the existing early help services. Others questioned whether it was appropriate to make any decisions on the future of early help at this stage, given that the new council may take a different view and have additional funds available.

## 5.2 Specific queries and gaps in the information provided

Many questions were raised concerning the Council's decision process, how it developed the proposals under Option B as outlined in the materials, the substance of the proposals themselves, and the execution of this, particularly:

- Why two open access sessions at each centre was deemed the right level.
- The factors the Council explored when deciding which centres it proposes to remain open under Option B.
- The thought process involved in determining that 14 sites was the most appropriate level, and whether this could be increased at all e.g. to 20 centres.
- Whether changes were necessary given the savings of £18m per annum achieved by the creation of a Unitary Council, and the reserves of the district councils.
- The services that will be offered in Haddenham Children's Centre, and the locations involved.
- Whether Southcourt Children's Centre will be extended in order to become a family centre plus site.
- The extent to which support would be made available for the voluntary sector to be able to develop and run alternative sessions.
- Concerns about the Council's ability to support more people with fewer centres and fewer staff, and the mechanisms through which needs could be identified.
- Details on the numbers of families to be reached by each centre.
- The impact of these changes on the level of staffing.

Further questions were asked about the number of responses received to date; why the efforts to link more closely with Health, early years providers, schools and others was not done already; and whether the Council have made efforts to obtain further funding through engagement with central government.

## 5.3 Comments regarding alternatives

As noted previously, many residents expressed their belief that their local centre should remain open under the Council's Option B. Others enquired about how the new family centres proposed under Option B will accommodate additional visitors, raising concerns such as parking and the space within the buildings (and at particular sessions), and any plans to expand capacity. Further alternatives and considerations were also put forward.

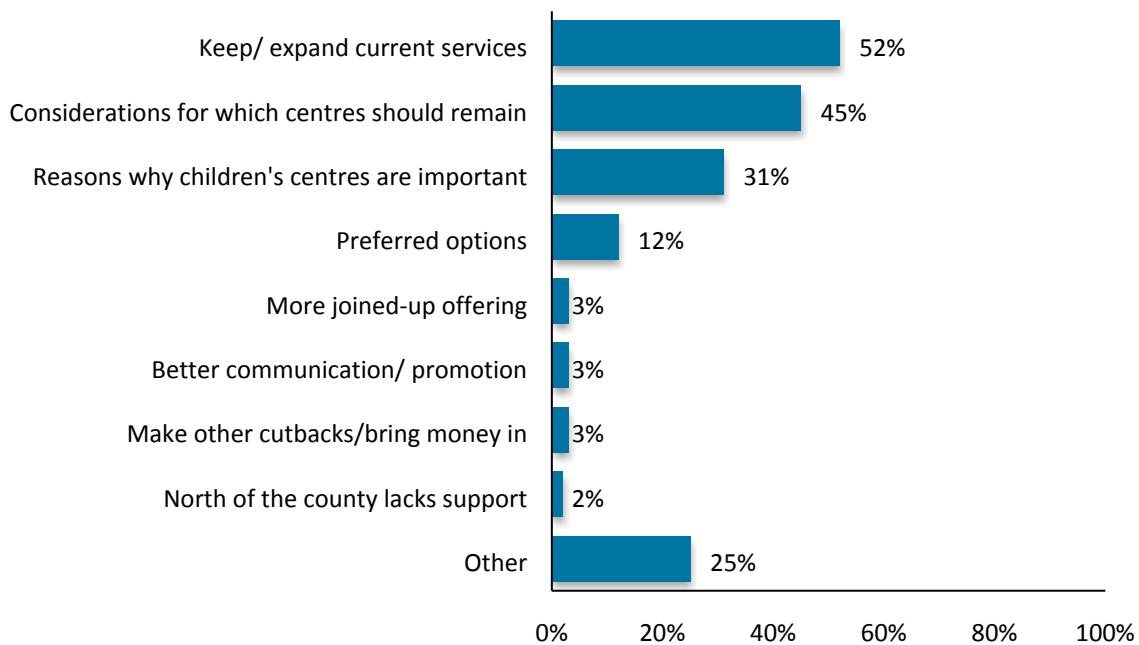
## Early Help: Consultation Findings Report

- One resident felt that Haddenham village hall should be utilised because of its size, its use by residents from surrounding villages who may face difficulties travelling further, and also the local housing developments which will drive further demand.
- Another noted that some the Hampden Way children's centre was the most convenient for them as other local centres are difficult to access due to limited parking and bus services.
- A further individual noted the relatively high levels of deprivation in Iver and felt that this should therefore be prioritised for retention, especially as limited public transport would make it difficult to access any other centre; this concern was also expressed by many residents at the Ivers Children's Centre drop-in, particularly that a visit to a different children's centre would involve changing bus three times and a high fare.
- At the Steeple Claydon drop-in, many comments were made concerning the unsuitability of Buckingham Children's Centre, which was off-putting even to those who were able to travel there.
- At the Disraeli Children's Centre session, the drop-in nature of the centre and its use as a community hub were seen as distinct, and some residents felt more could be done to establish community-ran groups here.
- Some residents felt further information was needed regarding how local communities and groups could work with the Council to ensure the delivery of alternative sessions in their local areas.

## 6 Additional views and comments

Respondents were given an opportunity at the end of the consultation questionnaire to provide any other relevant information they believe the Council should consider. 299 respondents offered additional thoughts. Due to the nature of this question, respondents used this to express a wide range of views on various topics, as summarised in the table below and explored further in this chapter.

**Figure 33: Please provide any other relevant information you believe the Council should consider.**



Q22. Open text response, subsequently coded into categories. Comments may fall into several categories. Sample base: 299

### 6.1 Support for children's centres

Over half (52%, 155 respondents) used the open response question to express their support for children's centres and their belief that they should all remain open, often stating that they oppose the idea of reducing funding, closing any children's centres, or reducing the services they offer. Generally, this was accompanied by praise for the children's centres, their staff, the quality of services provided, and the support they offered in dealing with issues, often sharing personal stories of the sessions they have attended, the issues they faced and the importance of the support from the children's centres in dealing with those issues. In some cases, respondents named a particular children's centre that has provided support (typically the one they used most often or that was local to them), often expressing their hope that the centre will remain open. Some also expressed the view that the children's centre offer should be expanded, sometimes explicitly stating that this should involve more funding or additional sessions.

Similarly, many (31%, 94 respondents) spoke in further detail about their support for children's centres and the reasons their services are important. In particular, individuals noted that the support they provide can go towards vulnerable people and children, and how vital this support

can be to them. Others talked about the value that children's centres can have in allowing people to meet other local parents and provide valuable social contact, particularly as parenting can be a lonely, isolating experience. Similarly, a few talked about the impact of children's centres as something of a hub for the community, playing a role in building a community feel, and bringing people of different backgrounds together. Other examples of reasons given in support of children's centres include: helping the life chances of children by giving them some support earlier in life, in some cases allowing children to become more sociable; the belief that an investment in children's centre services and dealing with issues before they escalate and become more serious would prevent the need for a more serious and costly intervention at a later stage; and the importance of the support they have received from children's centres in dealing with mental health issues. Several expressed concerns that some people may 'slip through the net' and not receive the support they require if a local children's centre was not available, as children's centres currently are a good way to identify those with issues and signpost them to extra support if required.

### 6.2 Considerations for which centres to retain

A large proportion (45%, 134 respondents) also offered their thoughts on the factors they believe should be taken into account to inform the Council's decision on which option to take and which centres would remain open and which would close if Option B is selected. Often, these comments concerned accessibility issues and the requirement for local support to be available, particularly in rural areas, as some people might be unable to reach support due to the distance involved, lack of personal transport and the limited public transport available, as well as the potential expense of travel rendering it an unattractive or impossible option for low-income families. One stakeholder organisation specifically thought that the logistics of travelling to the centres from different areas should be considered. A few expressed their view that, as a result of these factors, some people would no longer visit children's centres, and that issues may escalate as a result. More specifically, several respondents noted that residents in Iver and the surrounding area in particular may be left some distance away from their nearest centre with limited public transport available locally to connect them to another centre.

Several (8%, 24 respondents) respondents feel that deprivation should be an issue for the Council to consider, particularly in ensuring centres in more deprived areas of the county are prioritised for retention. Similarly, a letter from a parish councillor in Iver expressed the view that the relative deprivation in Iver as demonstrated by official sources means that retaining a site there should be prioritised, particularly compared to Beaconsfield.

Respondents also noted various other factors that they believe the Council should consider. Examples of this include: the current usage of the centres; the parking available, whether at the site itself or in the surrounding area; the size and suitability of the buildings themselves; ensuring that the spread reflects population centres and new housing developments; maintaining a geographical spread across the county; and the quality of the staffing and support available at the different centres. In relation to these issues, some expressed their concern that the remaining centres would not be able to accommodate the additional demand due to a lack of space or parking available, with others expressing concerns that more people needing to drive in order to access support would be damaging for the environment and/or increase congestion. A few expressed concerns about converting the children's centres to family centres, feeling that including teenagers with behavioural or other issues alongside support for young mothers and their children would create a less comfortable environment and raise issues around safety.

In relation to the geographic spread, some particularly feel that the north of the county, far south of the county, or the east side of High Wycombe would not be covered adequately by the 14

family centre sites the Council proposes under Option B. The leader of the East Wycombe Independent Party, as well as two of its district councillors representing Micklefield expressed their concerns that the closure of the centres at Hampden Way and Micklefield (Wycombe East) children's centres would leave the east of Wycombe without a centre, and local residents would need to take two buses run by different operators to access their nearest centre. Similarly, Castlefield Community Centre urged the Council to reconsider the geographical spread if it does go with Option B given its concerns about access to centres for residents in East Wycombe in particular, and one stakeholder organisation noted that all of the proposed family centres in High Wycombe under Option B are on the same side of the town.

Castlefield Community Centre, a project of the Karima Foundation, submitted an additional written response to BMG Research regarding their proposal that the Castlefield site "be looked at holistically, with a view to transform current services and to enable the formation of a true community hub, providing better quality outcomes for the community". The Karima Foundation expressed their hope to work with the Council to provide long-term services for children at Castlefield Community Centre.

A few individuals feel that factors concerning the quality of the buildings themselves and the facilities available should be taken into consideration, particularly in relation to parking and access, with some expressing concerns that the remaining centres would not have the space to accommodate additional demand.

### **6.3 Preferences for options**

Some (12%, 37 respondents) commented directly on the three options the Council put forward in its consultation, and elaborated on their reasons for preferring one or another. In some cases, respondents criticised all of the options on offer, believing none of them to be an appropriate model for delivering early help services, and stating that their preference would be for things to remain as they are with no cuts to funding. Several expressed support for Option B, believing it to be the best option in the consultation, with a few stressing the need to maintain some degree of universal open access. A few preferred Option A, typically because it would mean all centres remain open and people would still have access to local services. Option C was generally criticised where it was mentioned, typically because this might stigmatise services or their users and fail to pick up individuals with needs without the universal offer.

### **6.4 Other comments**

Due to the nature of this question, respondents expressed views on a wide range of topics relating to early help. Examples of these comments include: the desire for a more 'joined-up' service offering with better communication across services and departments (3%, 10 respondents); the possibility of making cutbacks in other (often unspecified) areas or to bring additional funds into the service (3%, 8 respondents); the need for clearer and more effective communication regarding the services and sessions available at particular locations (3%, 8 respondents); and a lack of support currently for the north of the county outside of Aylesbury (2%, 6 respondents).

## Appendix 1: Profile of respondents

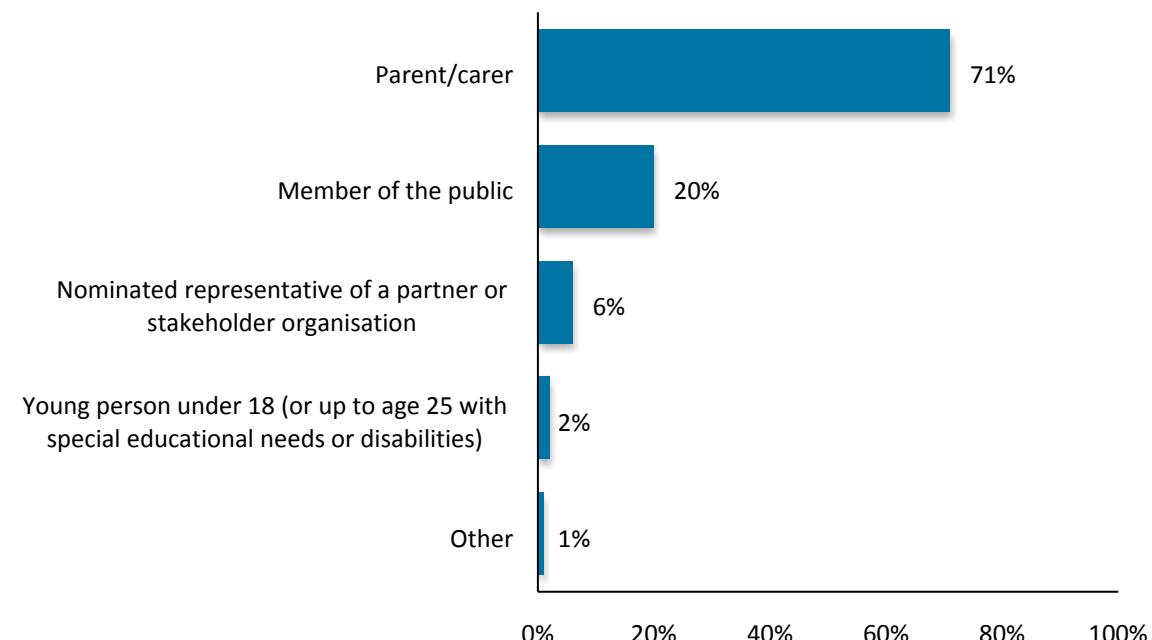
Appendix 1 provides amalgamated information about the respondents to this consultation. Where possible, due to availability of data, it provides comparisons with the wider Buckinghamshire population.

Analysis for this report explored the extent to which there were significant differences based on these groups, and where key differences emerged these are highlighted in the report.

### Respondent types

Over two-thirds (71%) of respondents indicated that they are responding as a parent or carer, and one-fifth (20%) described themselves as a 'member of the public'. 6% of responses were received from nominated representatives of a partner or stakeholder organisation, while 2% of responses were from young people under 18. 1% identified as something else.

**Figure 34: Are you responding to this consultation mainly as a ...**



Q1. Single answer allowed, Sample base=752

The total of percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

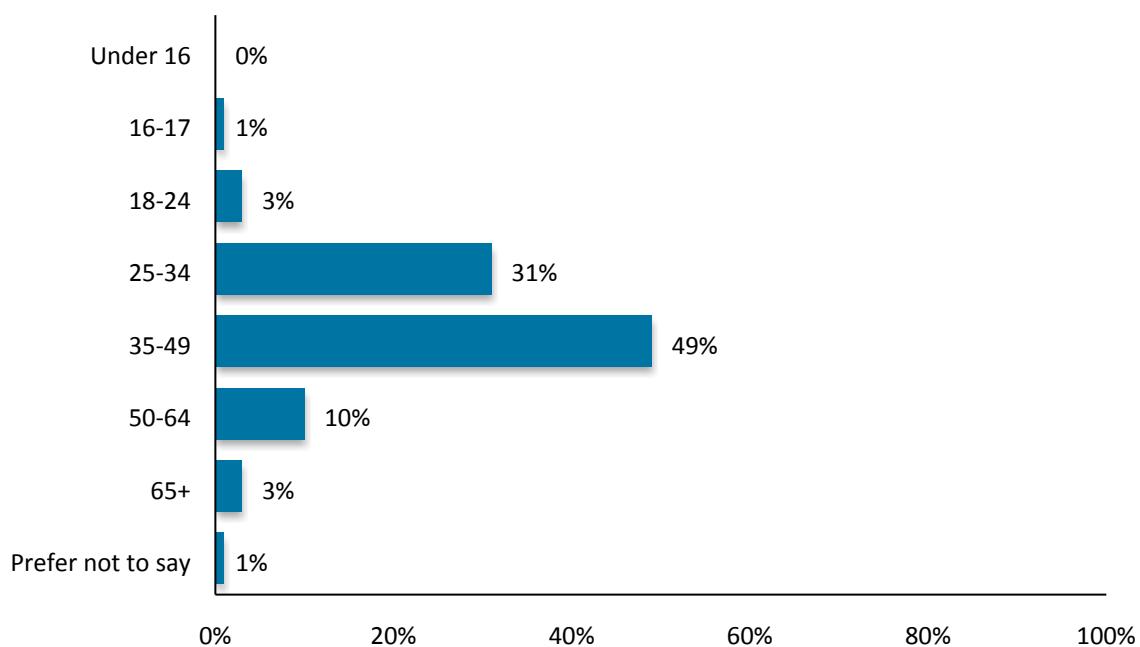
## Resident demographics

### Age of respondents

Approximately half (49%) of respondents to the consultation are aged 35-49, and just under a third (31%) of respondents are aged 25-34. 10% of respondents are aged 50-64, 3% are aged 18-24, 3% came from the over 65s, and 1% of individuals responding to the consultation are aged 16-17. A further 1% preferred not to say. Where respondents were aged under 16, they were instructed to obtain parental consent and instruct a parent or guardian to contact BMG. They would then be sent a link to allow them to complete the questionnaire. However, nobody from this age group completed the questionnaire.

It should be noted that this does not reflect the demographics of Buckinghamshire as a whole. It is estimated that 21% of the county's population are aged under 16; 2% are 16-17; 7% are 18-24; 11% are 25-34; 20% are 35-49; 20% are 50-64; and 19% are aged 65 or older.<sup>4</sup>

**Figure 35: Which of the following age brackets are you in?**



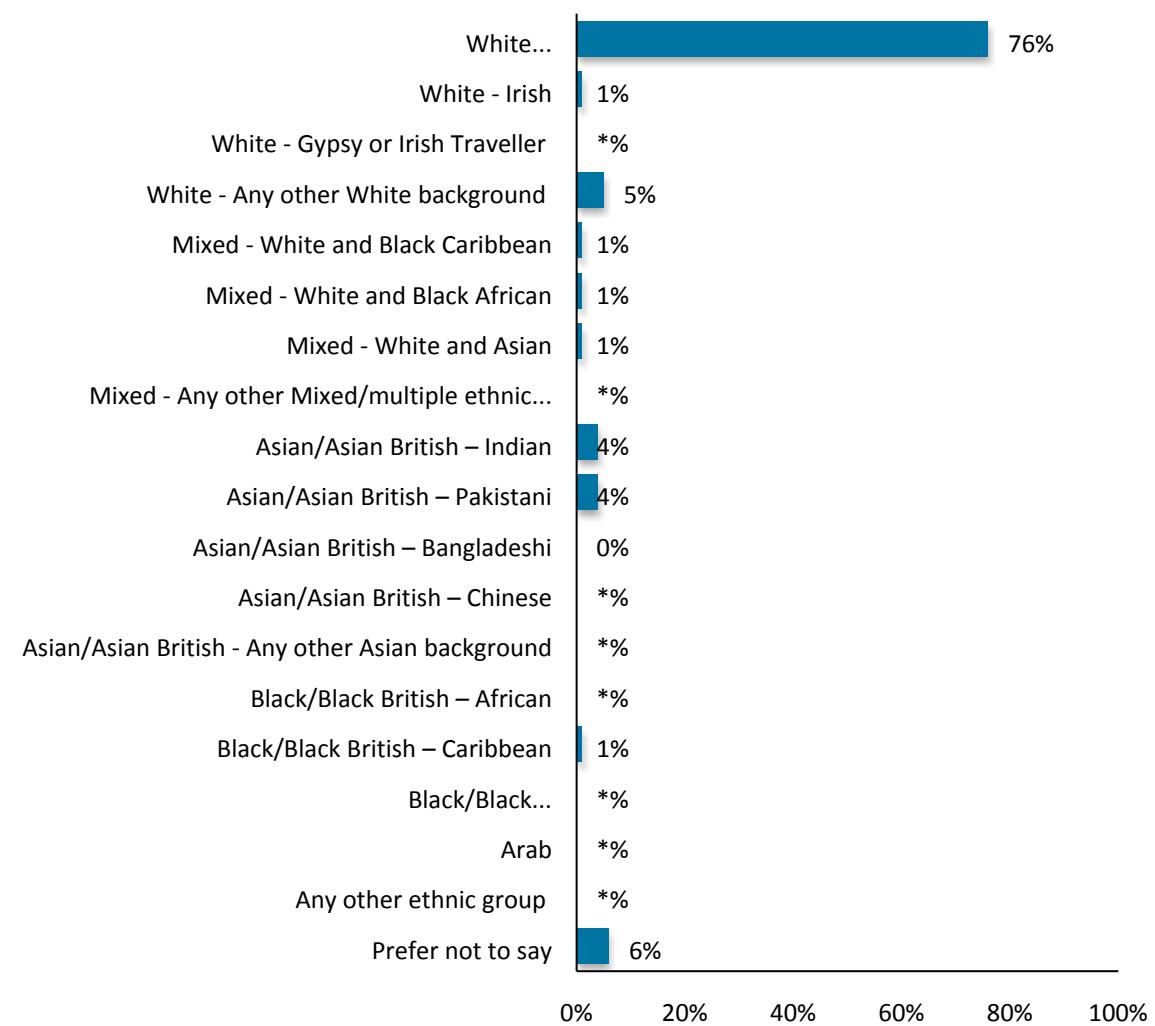
Q2. Single answer allowed. Residents only (not stakeholders). Sample base=712  
The total of percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

<sup>4</sup> Population data obtained from 'Projections Data – Single Years of Age (Dec2014) available here: <https://www.buckscc.gov.uk/services/community/research/population/>

## Ethnicity of respondents

Three-quarters (76%) of consultation respondents identified as White – English/ Welsh/ Scottish/ Northern Irish; this group accounted for 81.1% of Buckinghamshire's population in 2011.<sup>5</sup> 6% of survey respondents preferred not to disclose their ethnic background. 5% identified themselves as from a White background other than British, Irish or Gypsy/Irish Traveller, 4% as Indian, 4% as Pakistani, 1% as White Irish, 1% as Mixed – White and Black Caribbean, 1% Mixed – White and Black African, 1% Mixed – White and Asian, 1% as Black Caribbean. Other respondents identified as White (Gypsy or Irish Traveller), another mixed ethnic group, Chinese, Other Asian, Black African, Other Black, Arab, or another ethnic group not mentioned (less than 0.5% in all cases). These figures are all broadly comparable to the population of Buckinghamshire as a whole, according to the 2011 census.

**Figure 36: Which of the following best describes your ethnic group?**



Q20. Single answer allowed. Residents only. Sample base = 701

The total of percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

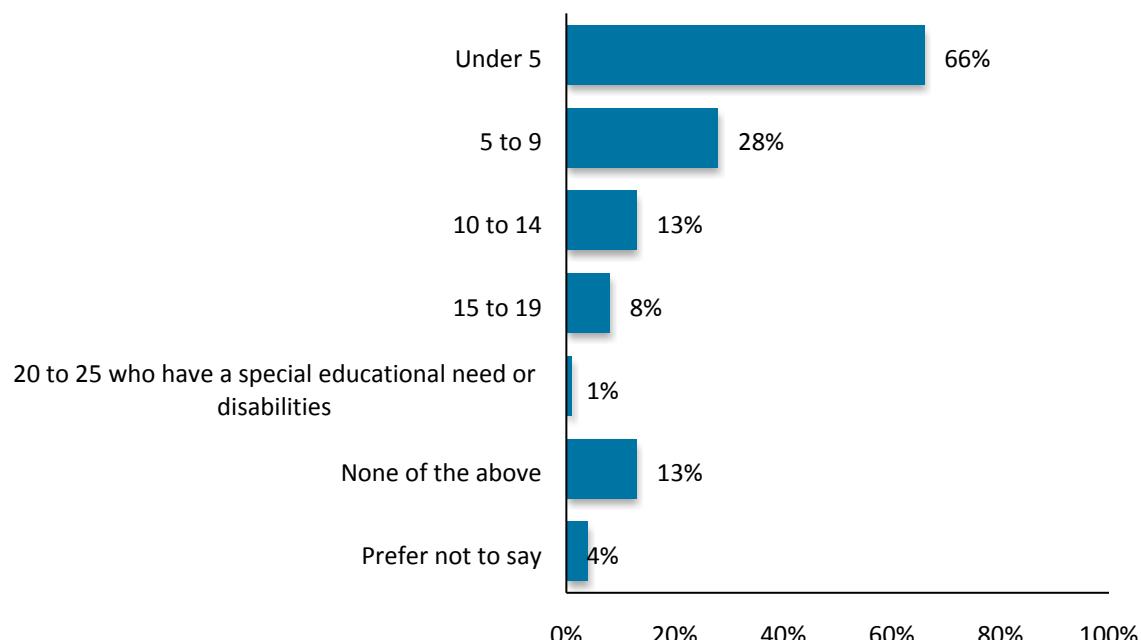
<sup>5</sup> 2011 Census data available here:

[https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140712011717tf\\_](https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140712011717tf_/) /<http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/community/research/2011-census/>

## Parental/caring responsibilities

Two-thirds (66%) of respondents have parental or caring responsibilities for Under 5s, around a quarter (28%) have such responsibilities for children aged 5 to 9, 13% for 10-14 year olds, 8% for 15 to 19 year olds, and 1% for those aged 20-25 with special educational needs or disabilities. 13% had no such responsibilities and an additional 4% preferred not to disclose this information.

**Figure 37: Are you the parent of or a carer for children in any of the following age groups?**



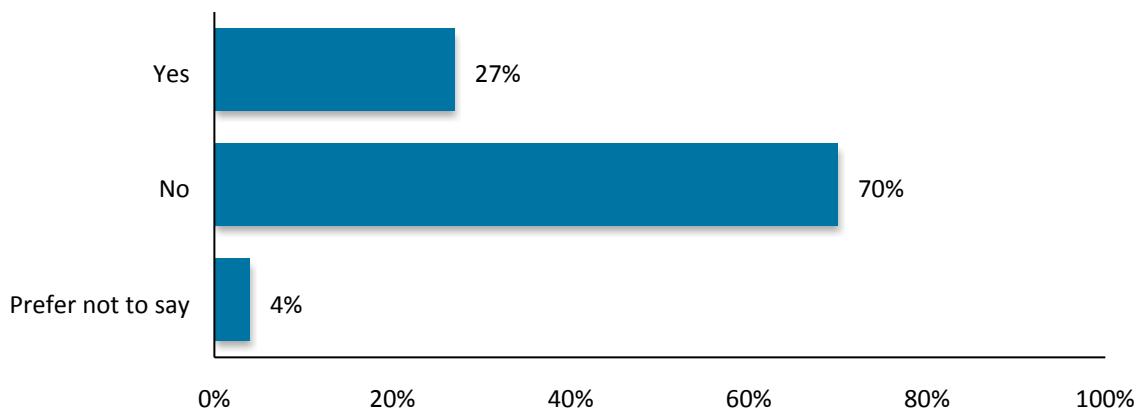
Q21. Multiple answers allowed. Residents only. Sample base = 712

The total of percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

## Pregnancy

Just over a quarter (27%) of female respondents who did not skip the question were either currently pregnant or had been in the last year, while 70% had not been and 4% preferred not to say.

**Figure 38: Are you currently pregnant or have you been pregnant in the last year?**

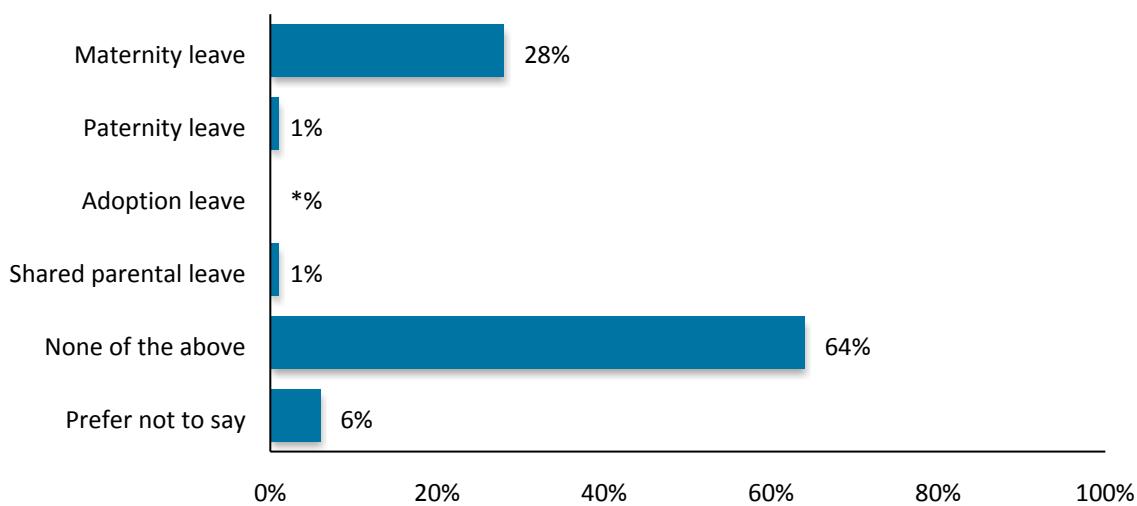


Q22. Single answer allowed. Female residents only. Sample base = 614  
The total of percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

## Types of leave

Almost two-thirds (64%) had not taken any of these forms of leave in the past year, while around a quarter (28%) had taken maternity leave in that time period, with 1% taking paternity leave, 1% shared parental leave, and less than 0.5% adoption leave. A further 6% declined to answer this question.

**Figure 39: Have you taken any of the following types of leave within the past year?**



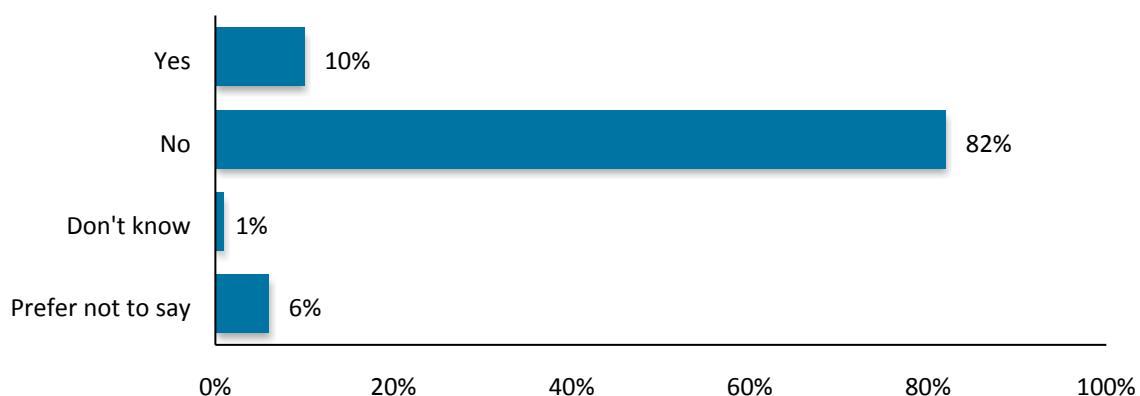
Q23. Single answer allowed. Residents only. Sample base = 682  
The total of percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

## Health issues

Around one-tenth (10%) of respondents identified themselves as having a longer term physical or mental health condition or illness which reduces their ability to carry out day-to-day activities, while four-fifths (82%) said this was not the case, 1% did not know and 6% preferred not to say.

According to the ‘Healthy places, healthy futures: growing great communities’ report: “It is estimated that one in eight men (12.5%), and nearly one in every five women (19.7%) in Buckinghamshire have a common mental health disorder such as anxiety or depression.”<sup>6</sup> Although this gives some indication of the extent of mental health conditions, this does not provide comparable data as this does not include physical health conditions.

**Figure 40: Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last 12 months or more which reduces your ability to carry-out day-to-day activities?**



Q24. Single answer allowed. Residents only. Sample base = 705

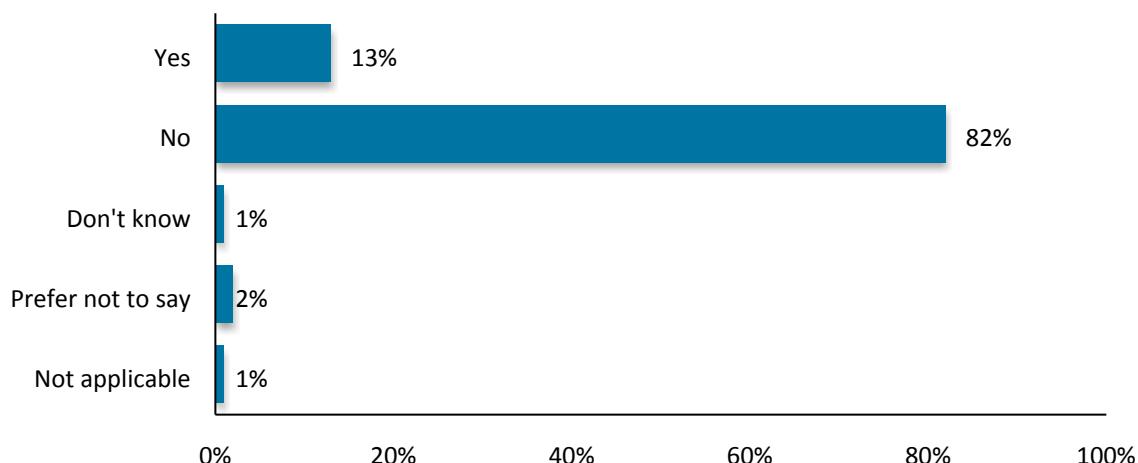
The total of percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

Four-fifths (82%) of respondents do not have any children with long-term mental or physical health problem, while 13% said this is the case. 1% do not know, 2% preferred not to say, and 1% stated this is not applicable to them.

<sup>6</sup> The report can be found here:

<https://democracy.buckscc.gov.uk/documents/s120937/Healthy%20Places%20Healthy%20Futures%20D%20Annual%20Report%20FINAL.pdf>

**Figure 41: Does your child or one of your children have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last 12 months or more which reduces their ability to carry-out day-to-day activities?**



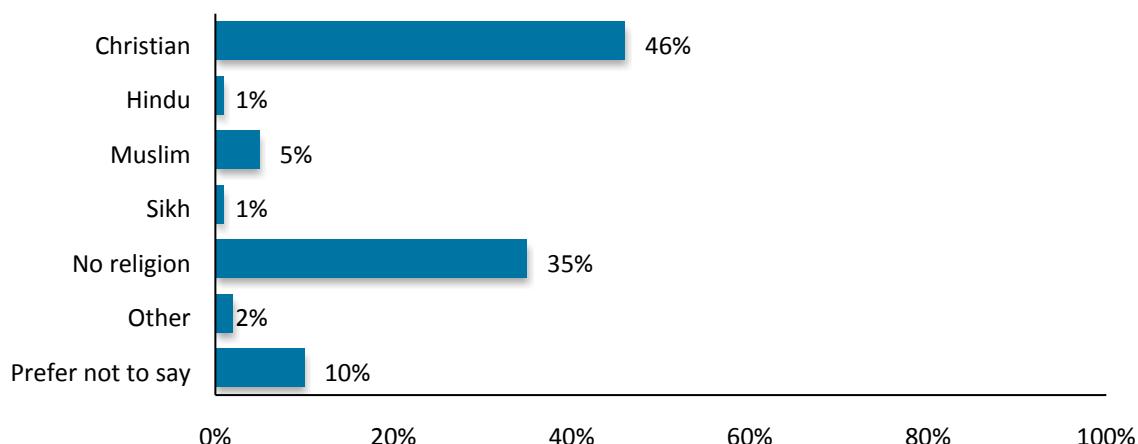
Q25. Single answer allowed. Residents only. Sample base = 586

The total of percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

## Religion

Just under half (46%) of consultation respondents identified as Christian; at the 2011 census, 60.5% of Buckinghamshire's residents did so. The 'no religion' group accounts for over a third (35%) of questionnaire respondents, compared with 24% of Buckinghamshire's residents as a whole. A further 5% of survey respondents identified as Muslim, while 1% were Hindu, 1% Sikh, and an additional 2% belonged to a different religion; these figures are all broadly similar to the proportions given by Buckinghamshire residents overall at the 2011 census.<sup>7</sup>

**Figure 42: Which of the following best describes your religion?**



Q26. Single answer allowed. Residents only. Sample base = 703

The total of percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

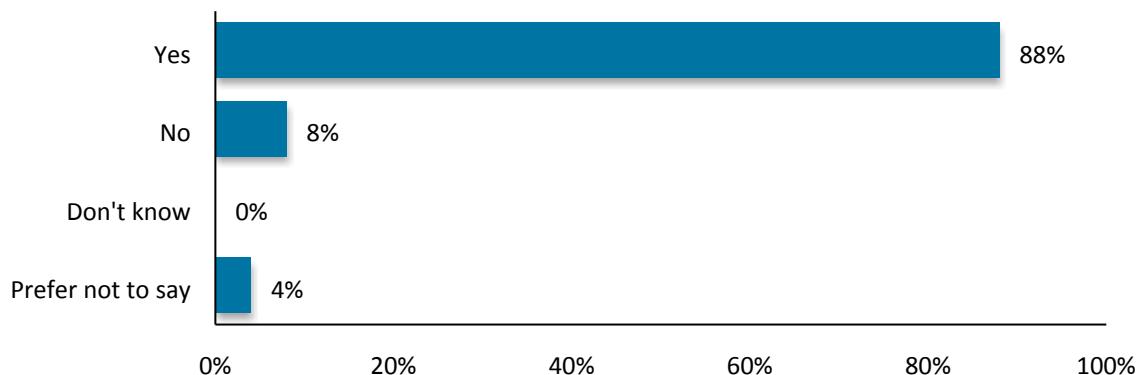
<sup>7</sup> 2011 Census data available at:

[https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140712011717tf\\_](https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140712011717tf_/) /http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/community/research/2011-census/

## Working status

A large majority (88%) of individuals stated that somebody in their household is in work at the moment, while for 8% this is not the case, and an additional 4% preferred not to say.

**Figure 43: Is anyone in your household in work at the moment?**



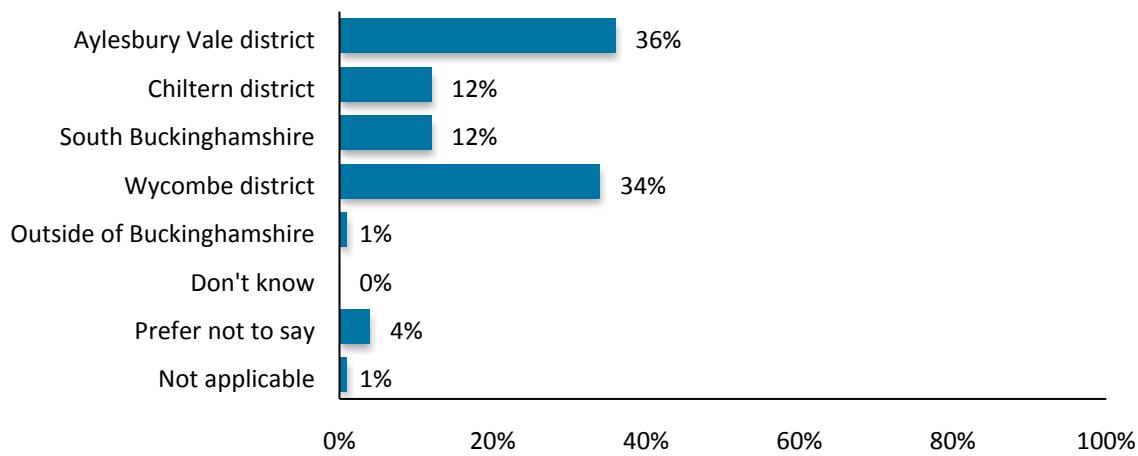
Q27. Single answer allowed. Residents only. Sample base = 704

The total of percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

## District

Over one-third (36%) of the respondents are from the Aylesbury Vale district, a further third (34%) are from Wycombe district, and nearly one-quarter (24%) are from Chiltern and South Bucks.

**Figure 44: Which of the following districts in Buckinghamshire do you live in?**



Results derived from Q28 and Q29. Residents only. Sample base = 560

The total of percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

## Stakeholder profiles

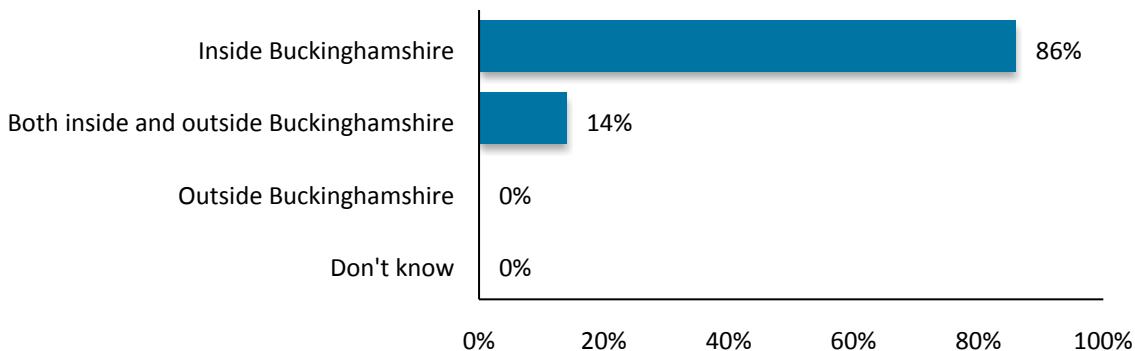
### Organisations involved

35 questionnaire responses were received from people who identified as nominated representatives from a range of organisations including: schools, children's centres, partner organisations, and voluntary and community sector organisations.

## Organisation location

The large majority (86%) of stakeholder representatives stated that their organisation operates solely within Buckinghamshire, while the remainder (14%) operate both inside and outside the county.

**Figure 45: Where does your organisation operate?**



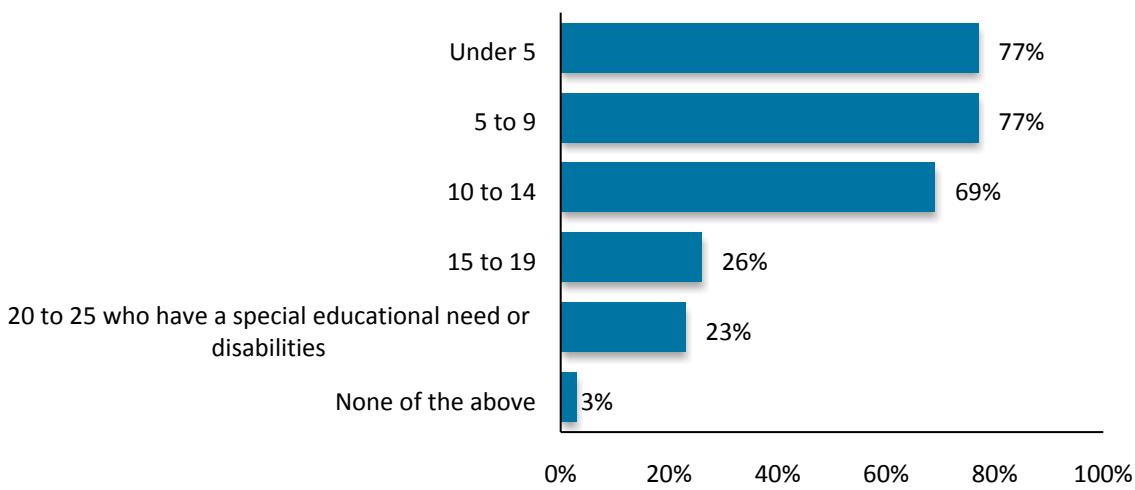
Single answer allowed. Stakeholders only. Sample base = 35

The total of percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

## Age of families supported

Over three-quarters (77%) of the stakeholder organisations provide support for families with children aged under 5, and the same proportion (77%) said this was the case for 5-9 year olds. Over two-thirds (69%) offer support to 10-14 year olds, while around a quarter (26%) work with people aged 15-19, and a similar proportion (23%) work with those aged 20 to 25 with a special educational need or disability.

**Figure 46: Does your organisation provide support for families with children in any of the following age groups?**



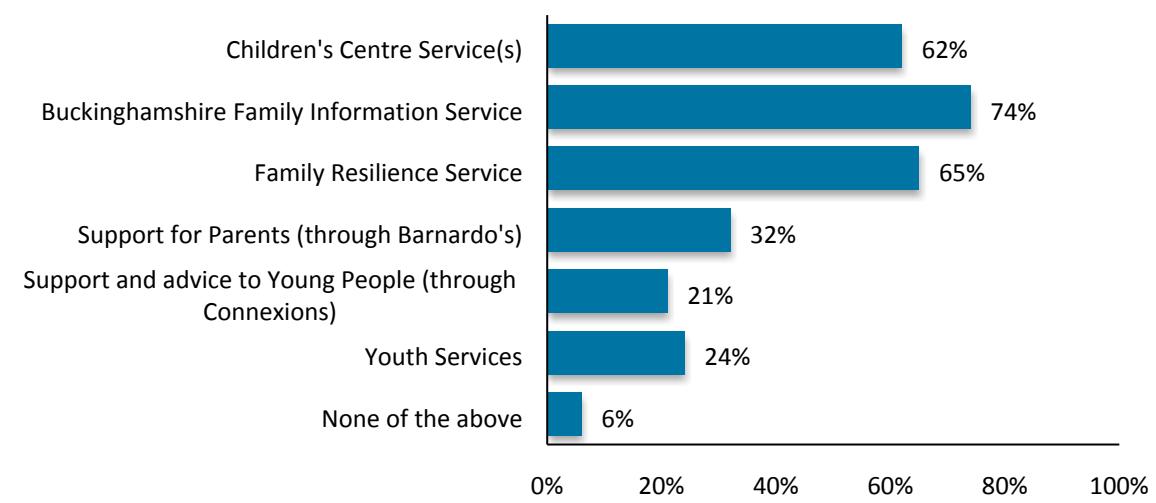
Multiple answers allowed. Stakeholders only. Sample base = 35

## Services worked with

Almost three-quarters (74%) of the stakeholders work closely with the Buckinghamshire Family Information Service, almost two-thirds (65%) work closely with the Family Resilience Service, and a similar proportion (62%) work closely with children's centre service. Smaller proportions

work closely with Support for Parents through Barnardo's (32%), Youth Services (24%), and Support and advice to Young People through Connexions (21%).

**Figure 47: Which, if any, of the following services has your organisation worked closely with in the past year?**



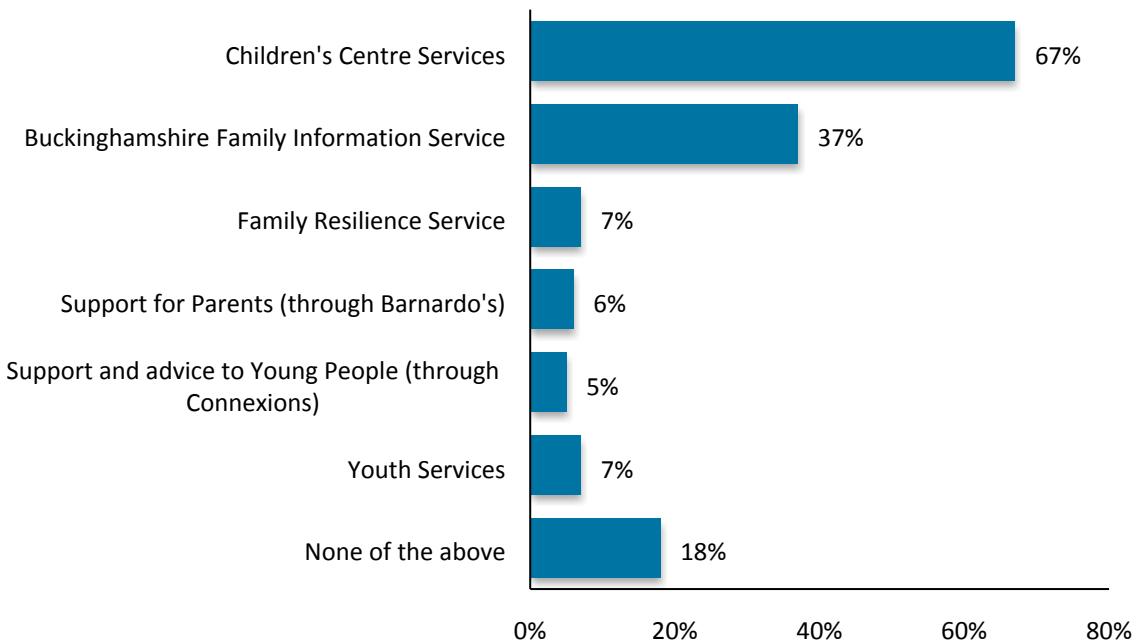
Multiple answers allowed. Stakeholders only. Sample base = 34

## Appendix 2: Current use of services

The following figures show respondents' current use of early help services.

### The services used

**Figure 48: Which, if any, of the following County Council services have you used in the past year?**

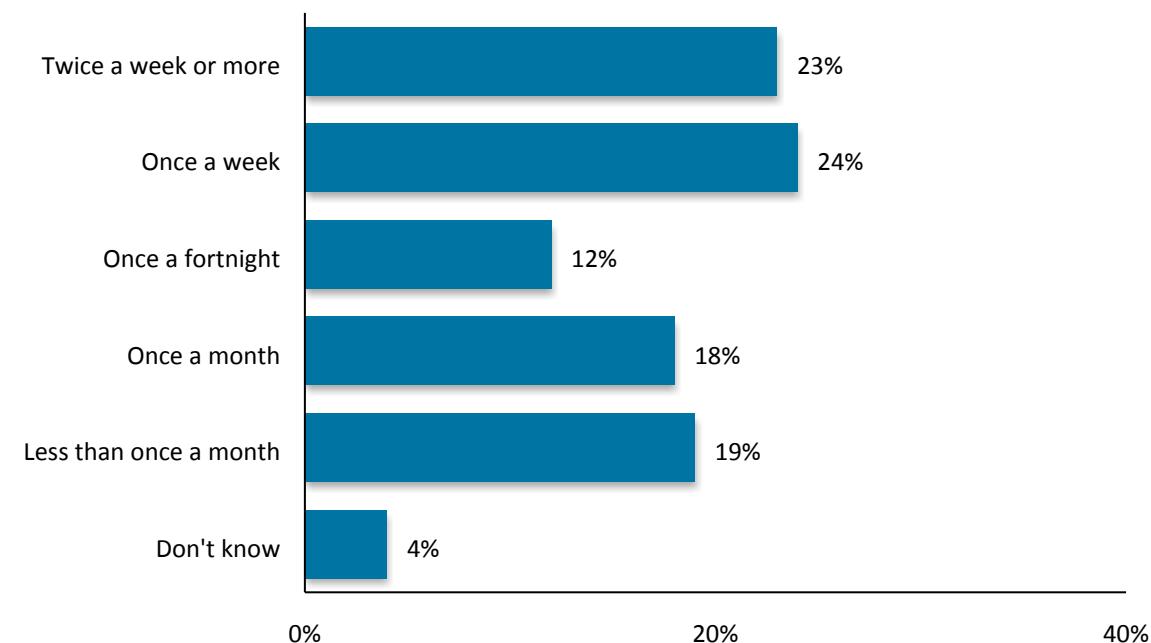


Q3. Multiple answers allowed. Residents only. Sample base = 707

## Frequency of use

### Children's Centre services

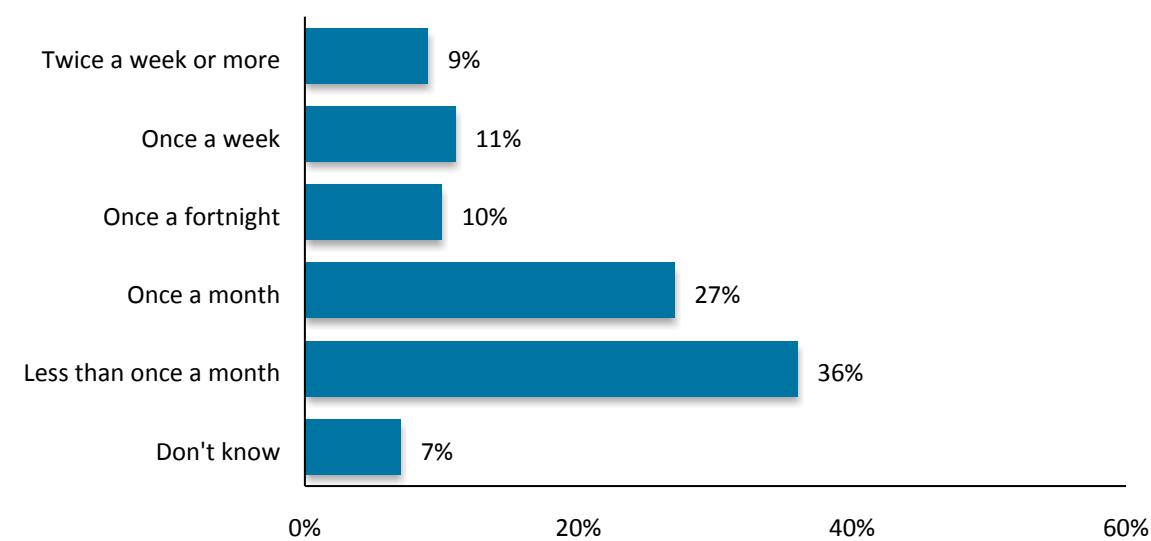
**Figure 49: Typically, how often have you used Children's Centre services in the past year?**



Q4a. Single answers allowed. Residents using children's centres only. Sample base = 468  
The total of percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

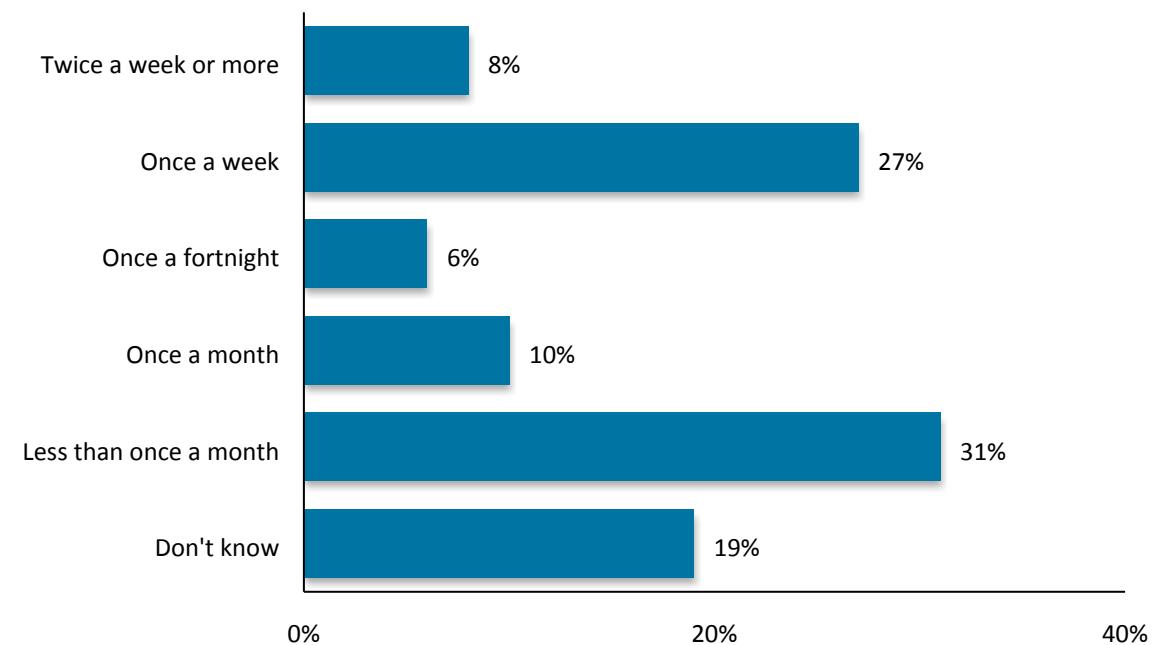
### Buckinghamshire Family Information Service

**Figure 50: Typically, how often have you used the Buckinghamshire Family Information Service in the past year?**



Q4b. Single answers allowed. Residents using the service only. Sample base = 259  
The total of percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

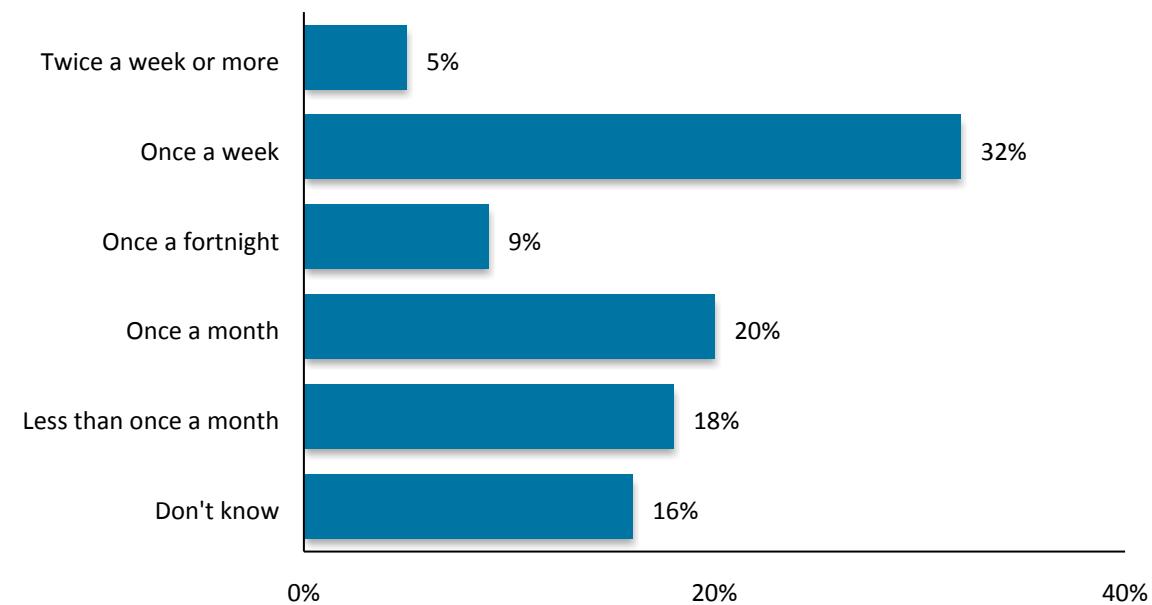
**Figure 51: Typically, how often have you used the Family Resilience Service in the past year?**



Q4c. Single answers allowed. Residents using the service only. Sample base = 52  
The total of percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

#### **Support for Parents (through Barnardo's)**

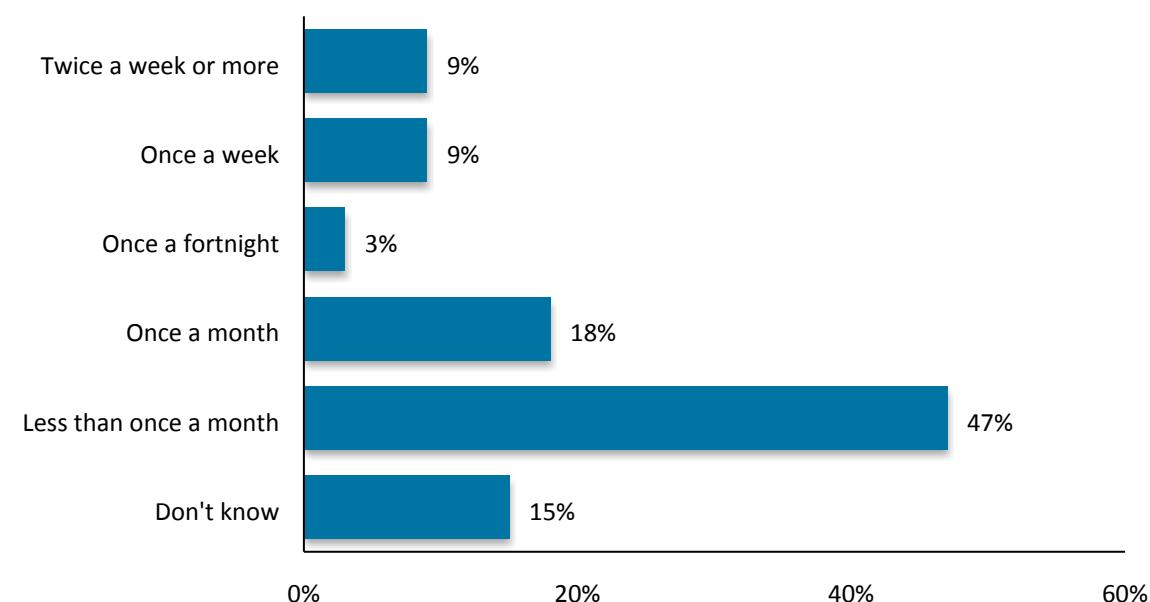
**Figure 52: Typically, how often have you used Support for Parents (through Barnardo's) in the past year?**



Q4d. Single answers allowed. Residents using the service only. Sample base = 44  
The total of percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

### Support and advice to Young People (through Connexions)

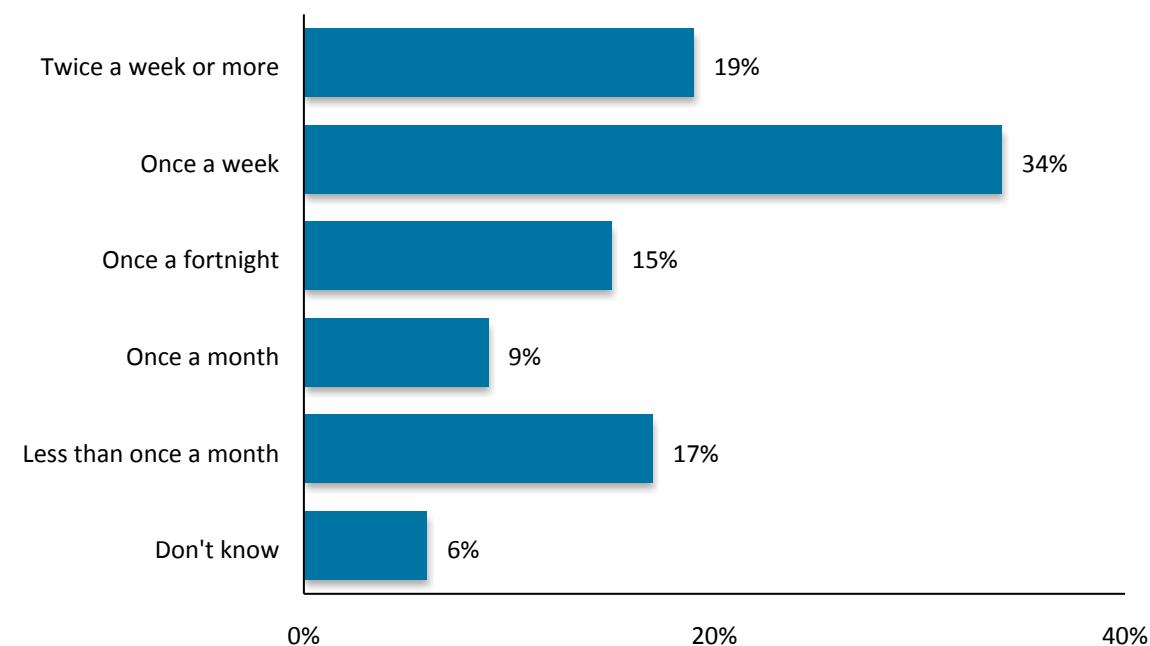
**Figure 53: Typically, how often have you used Support and advice to Young People (through Connexions) in the past year?**



Q4e. Single answers allowed. Residents using the service only. Sample base = 34  
The total of percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

### Youth Services

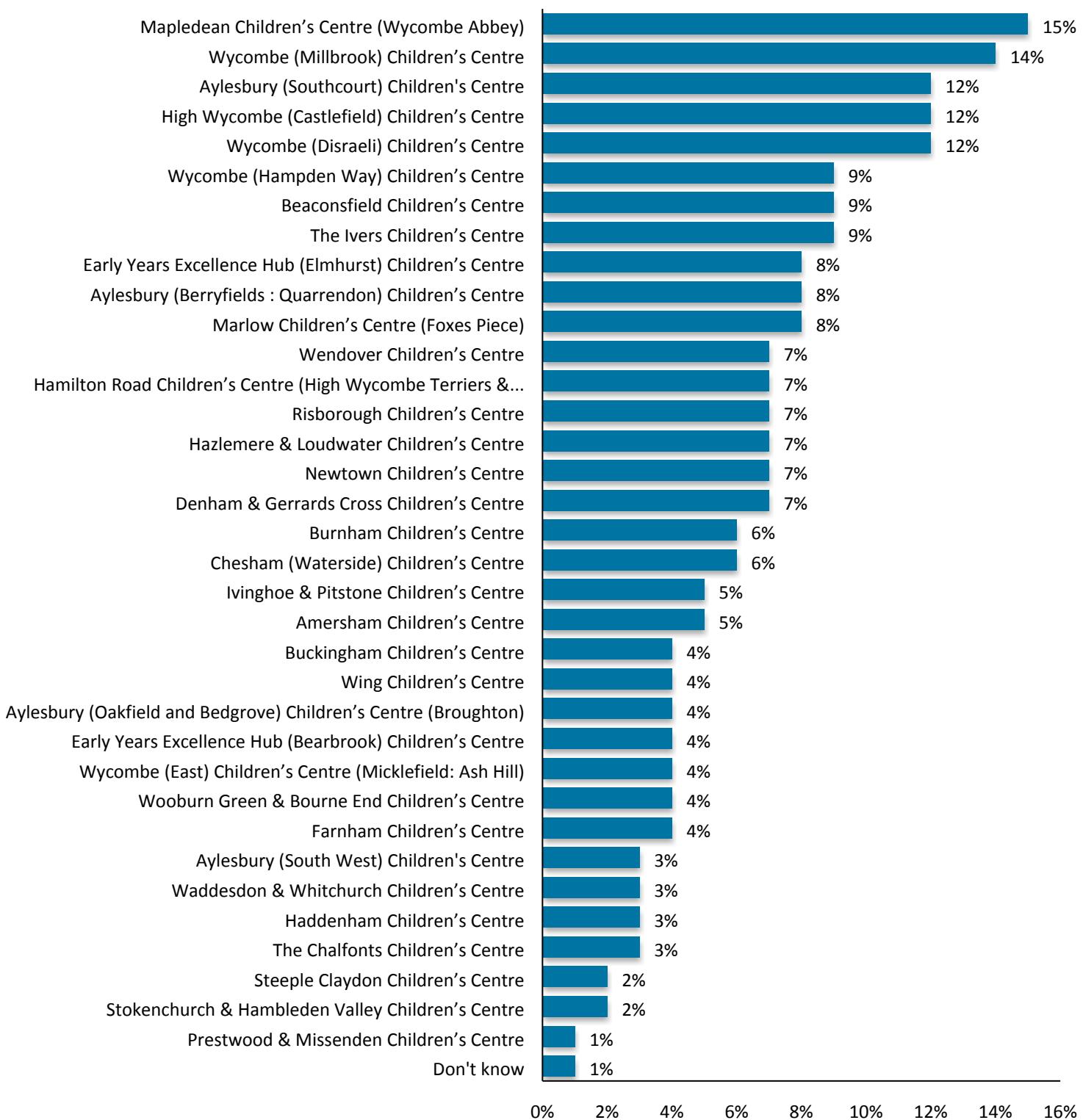
**Figure 54: Typically, how often have you used Youth Services in the past year?**



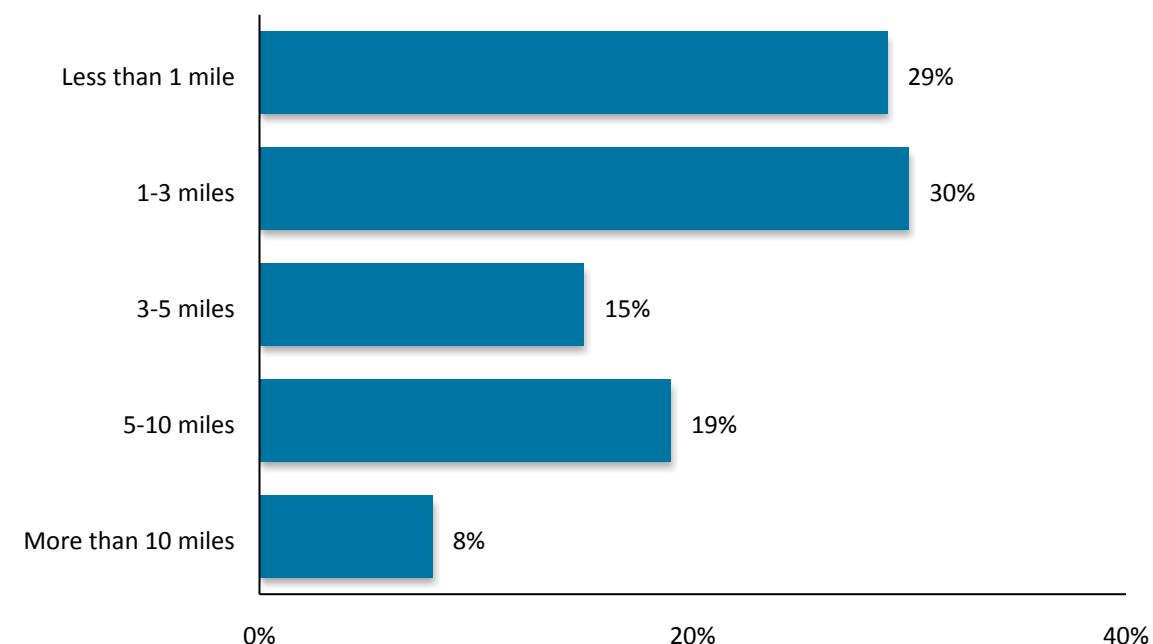
Q4f. Single answers allowed. Residents using the service only. Sample base = 47  
The total of percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

## Use of Children's Centres

**Figure 55: Which children's centres have you used in the past year?**



Q5. Multiple answers allowed. Sample base=469

**Figure 56: How far individuals have travelled to their furthest children's centre**

Results derived from Q5 and Q28. Sample base=304

The total of percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

## Appendix 3: List of participating stakeholder organisations

The following table provides an overview of stakeholder organisations who responded to the consultation. Please note, organisations were not required to provide their name in their response.

Name
Action for Children
Adviza
Animal Antiks
Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust
Bucks Primary PRU
Castlefield Community Centre (Karima Foundation)
Citizens Advice Aylesbury Vale
Citizens Advice in Buckinghamshire, comprising: Citizens Advice High Wycombe, Citizens Advice Chiltern, and Citizens Advice Aylesbury Vale
Cllrs Matt Knight and Andrea Baughan, Wycombe District Council councillors for Micklefield
Empower to Cook CIC
Families and Carers Together in Buckinghamshire (FACT Bucks)
Leap (County Sport Partnership)
East Wycombe Independent Party
Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust
Spurgeons
The Disraeli School and Children's Centre
The Growing Together Federation

Additionally, anonymised responses were received from the following types of organisations:

- x10 primary schools
- x5 infant schools
- x2 pre-schools
- x1 junior school
- x1 secondary school
- x2 other respondents from health-related organisations
- x1 current provider of children's centres

## Appendix 4: Additional responses from stakeholder organisations

The following are additional responses from stakeholder organisations where they have provided consent for these to be published.

Proposal from Castlefield Community Centre (Karima Foundation)

### Representation for the Buckinghamshire County Council Early Years Consultation

12<sup>th</sup> December 2018



---

A Project of the



Rutland Avenue • High Wycombe • Buckinghamshire • HP12 3LL

1. Castlefield Community Centre (CCC) welcomes the opportunity to inform the Buckinghamshire County Council (BCC) Early Years (EY) consultation, in particular for the High Wycombe district.
2. CCC recognise the current EY provision requires change in response to funding constraints and to provide more effective outcomes.
3. This response proposes that the Castlefield site be looked at holistically, with a view to transform current services and to enable the formation of a true community hub, providing better quality outcomes for the community and potential financial benefit for the Council to help contribute towards the required £3.1 million savings.
4. CCC has a well-established track record of working with the local authorities over the years on a variety of projects, most noticeably its partnership with Wycombe District Council (WDC) and realising a financial saving of £1.165m across the life of the lease for CCC.
5. CCC particularly draw your attention to the support this proposal has from Steve Baker MP, BCC Library Service, BCC Councillor Hussain, WDC Community Services, WDC Councillors Asif, Graham & Hanif, Wycombe, Thames Valley Police (TVP), Wycombe Tamil Community Association and a wider group of organisations CCC work with on a regular basis. Annex A has individual letters of support for your attention.
6. These stakeholders unreservedly support our aspirations and have complete confidence in our ability as an organisation to deliver this through existing collaborative working arrangements.
7. CCC hope this submission will be the catalyst for further dialogue between us and the Council before any decision is approved to ensure the best interests of the community of Castlefield are served.

---

#### **Response to Consultation**

---

8. CCC believe efficient, effective and sustainable improvements can only be achieved through a collective and collaborative response from statutory and community services. We welcome the approach the Council has set out in its strategy. CCC are pleased to see the Council's recognition of the role the community plays in helping improve services and delivering sustainable long-term solutions. Working in partnership, community and statutory resources can achieve a more meaningful and impactful change.
9. CCC agree with the visions and priorities set out by the Council for EY services.
10. It is reassuring that the Council has recognised the need to build on the resilience of communities, which allows them to invest scarce resources to build capability rather than creating dependencies.

#### Appendix 4: Additional responses from stakeholder organisations

11. As a community organisation CCC do not advocate the closure of any Centres and therefore our preferred option is A. Taking forward option A will also present an opportunity, where appropriate, for community led provision to increase across the district and this should be fully explored.
12. However, if the Council progress with their preferred Option B, CCC would urge them to review the geographical spread of the proposed Centres before approval. Option B as it stands does not provide equitable access for all residents, most notably on the Eastern side of High Wycombe. Under Option B some provision is in close proximity to one another and in other areas there will be no accessible provision. The distribution of the proposed provisions needs to be revisited and the noticeable gaps addressed.
13. The Council stated in the consultation documents that further planning work will be undertaken in relation to their preferred option. This will include *surveying sites in preparation for possible refurbishment of buildings. The Council will also engage with site owners and other organisations on possible alternative uses of children's centre buildings to maximise their use for the benefit of children and families.*
14. As leaseholder of the Castlefield site since October 2014 and taking into consideration points 10 and 13 (above), CCC are disappointed at having not been involved nor invited to take part in discussions during the Council's two visits to Castlefield.
15. CCC requested a site meeting via Officers on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2018 and were informed that at this stage in the process a meeting with all organisations was not possible. CCC therefore feel that a real opportunity to help understand our aspirations has been missed and hope the Council is able to make time before the decision-making process to meet with us to discuss how we can work in collaboration to develop future plans for the Castlefield site.
16. There needs to open and honest dialogue between all agencies operating in the area. CCC will work with the Council to bring about strategic change and improve outcomes for the community, whilst offering value for money.
17. Despite not being a part of the site discussions, CCC believe it would be useful to provide additional information via this consultation specially relating to our work at Castlefield. CCC are presenting an opportunity for the Council to work with us to ensure there is effective utilisation of the site to allow service provision to further grow and develop.

18. In October 2014, The Karima Foundation took over from WDC management of CCC on a 25-year lease. Our team provides a wealth of experience including individuals with expertise in project management, educational, health, social care, youth work and finance. Many of our committee members hold positions of senior leadership in both the public and private sectors.
19. The site consists of CCC and Castlefield Children's Centre which is currently occupied by Action for Children (AFC). We are responsible for all aspects of maintenance for the CCC building and all communal areas across the Castlefield site. Under the current arrangement AFC & BCC are invoiced on a quarterly basis for their proportion of the communal costs and report quarterly CCC performance data to WDC. The management, maintenance and cost relating to the Castlefield Children's Centre does not fall under our remit and is overseen by AFC.
20. The Community Asset Transfer realised a number of benefits for WDC:
  - No impact on delivery of services
  - Public access secured
  - Achievable within public sector legal and procurement parameters
  - Local management of the asset resulting in increased community use of an underutilised asset
  - Helping an active local community organisation to develop and grow its services further
  - **A financial saving of £1.165m across the life of the lease**
21. In the last four years, under our management the accessibility and usage of CCC has increased significantly and there is now a wide range of activities and provision for all age groups. CCC have formed strong links with statutory organisations, schools, community groups and the community as a whole and have established a flourishing centre that is a vibrant part of the community.
22. The current summary of activities delivered from CCC (unique weekly participants) is as follows:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Castlefield Community Library (100)</li><li>• Supplementary School (100)</li><li>• Autism Spectrum Club (10)</li><li>• Taekwondo Club (60)</li><li>• Brazilian Jujitsu Club (105)</li><li>• Basketball Club (15)</li><li>• Special Mums' Club (16)</li><li>• Tuition Groups (40)</li><li>• Youth Club (30)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Aflah Nursery (30)</li><li>• Adult learning courses (70)</li><li>• Beaver &amp; Scouts (28)</li><li>• Archery (30)</li><li>• Aerobics (12)</li><li>• Boxercise (30)</li><li>• Tamil Community Prayers (30)</li><li>• Yoga (15)</li><li>• Future Leaders Programme (30)</li></ul>
--	--
23. In addition to these activities CCC provide a venue for Social Services, WDC, BCC and private hirers as required. CCC have long term agreements with providers such as Aflah Nursery, AFC Bucks Activity Project and Wycombe Wanderers (Fit & Fed) by providing them with a venue to deliver their services from.

#### Appendix 4: Additional responses from stakeholder organisations

24. Aflah Nursery has been operating from CCC since January 2017. The Nursery runs 38 weeks of the year, Monday to Friday in accordance with the Bucks term dates. Their current provision provides 15 hours of universal funded entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds with parents having the option to take up the 30 hours of universal free entitlement.
25. CCC secured the future of the Castlefield Community Library after we took over management and running of the library from BCC in 2015. This project is an example of partnership working with BCC to reduce the impact of tough financial decisions by providing a community led solution. The library relocated from Castlefield School to CCC and is open three days a week and staffed by our team of community volunteers facilitating for 100+ visitors a week.
26. AFC Bucks Activity Project provide a range of activities for disabled children aged 5 to 19 years. CCC are privileged to have worked with them for the last two years providing them with a venue from which they can run their services.
27. The Fit & Fed (a Wycombe Wanderers) project helps families that "*feel the pinch*" during school holiday, by providing children and their families with cooking tutorials, fun physical activities and a free meal, ensuring children go back to school fit and healthy. A significant number of local families engage with the project, with the support of local schools and CCC being paramount to its success.
28. The Supplementary School runs a once a week provision offering basic skills, numeracy, literacy and personal, social and emotional development through activities for children from the age of 5 to 9. This is currently operating at capacity.
29. CCC work closely with Thames Valley Police on community related matters and have representation on the Independent Advisory Group (IAG) to help develop a community-based approach to policing.
30. Over the last four years CCC has gained considerable experience managing the facility, running services and activities and working in collaboration with statutory and community groups. All activities and service provisions are now well established, with CCC providing a safe and convenient venue for all our users.
31. The CCC is operating at capacity and the opportunity to offer more diverse services and to grow existing services is restricted.
32. As a result of our success, CCC are in the final stages of agreeing a freehold lease with WDC which will be legally signed off by the end of December 2018.

## Our Aspirations

---

33. Whichever option is chosen; this review offers a timely opportunity to look at (where possible) how the community can work in collaboration with the Council to deliver services.
34. CCC is requesting a dialogue with the Council for the Castlefield site to be looked at holistically to allow for services to grow for the local and wider community. Opportunities are available to reconfigure services across the whole site allowing for its transformation into a true community hub.
35. Our aspirations are to:
  - a. **Work closely with providers on site to ensure service provisions is delivered in a safe and secure environment with qualified staff**
  - b. **Better utilise the capacity currently available on site, especially during evenings and weekends**
  - c. **Broaden community based services that are provided at the site**
  - d. **Provide a holistic management solution for the site to include the Castlefield Children's Centre**
36. Through collaboration we will realise synergies that will deliver high quality effective outcomes for the community that will be sustainable, cost effective and provide value for money in line with the appropriate safeguards and legal obligations.
37. CCC welcomes the opportunity to discuss this further to ensure all options are thoroughly explored and the best interests of High Wycombe residents, in particular the community of Castlefield are served.

Khaiam Shabbir  
Trustee  
Castlefield Community Centre (Project of the Karima Foundation)  
Rutland Avenue  
High Wycombe  
Bucks  
HP12 3LL

Letter from the chair of the East Wycombe Independent Party



**East Wycombe Independent Party**  
Nabeela Rana (Chair)  
16 Hunters Hill  
High Wycombe  
Bucks  
HP13 7EW

11<sup>th</sup> December 2018

**Early Help Consultation**

As the Chair of the East Wycombe Independents I write on behalf of our 50 members and over 1000 supporters in the eastern wards of High Wycombe.

We are opposed to the closure of the Children's Centres at both Hampden Way and Micklefield (Wycombe East) as this leaves a whole area of Wycombe without a Family or Children's Centre.

The Centre in Micklefield has already been run down and offers almost no services so this will skew responses to the consultation, as there will be very few families who have regularly used that centre for several years now.

The Totteridge and Bowerdean Centre at Hampden Way is in a Housing Association property so is under threat.

Our members want to see improved Children's Centres or a Family Centre in East Wycombe. The thought that there would be no Family Centre between High Wycombe town centre and Beaconsfield is unacceptable and contrary to the principles of accessible Early Help set out in the proposals.

Yours Sincerely,

Nabeela Rana

Chair, East Wycombe Independents

## Appendix 5: Residents' questionnaire

Pro\_1614

### About you

**Q1 Are you responding to this consultation mainly as a...? Please put a cross (x) in one box only**

- |  |                          |   |                          |
|--|--------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| Parent/carer   | <input type="checkbox"/> | Nominated representative of a partner or stakeholder organisation | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Young person under 18 (or up to age 25 with special educational needs or disabilities) | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other. Please specify.....  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Member of the public   | <input type="checkbox"/> |   |                          |

**Q2 Which of the following age brackets are you in? Please put a cross (x) in one box only**

If you are **under 16** and would like to share your views in the consultation you will need the permission of a parent or carer to do so. Please ask your parent or carer to contact Elizabeth Davies Research Director – BMG Research, by phone on 0121 333 6006 or by email on [Elizabeth.Davies@bmGRESEARCH.co.uk](mailto:Elizabeth.Davies@bmGRESEARCH.co.uk) and we will arrange for a copy of the consultation questions to be sent to you.

Under 16	16-17	18-24	25-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Prefer not to say
<input type="checkbox"/>							

**Q3 Which, if any, of the following County Council services have you used in the past year?  
Please put a cross (x) in as many boxes as apply**

**Children's Centre Service(s)**

Families with 0-5 year olds are provided with support through a mixture of open access provision such as stay and play sessions and targeted support, through one-to-one advice and guidance to running parenting groups. Centres also provide an element of outreach for families in need of additional support.

**Support for Parents (through Barnardos)**

A service that co-ordinates volunteers to work with families with children 0-8. It provides practical support in the home with parenting, accessing benefits and services.

**Buckinghamshire Family Information Service**

This service is a free and impartial information service dedicated to helping families with children and young people aged 0-19 (or up to 25 for children with a disability) access a wide range of support such as childcare information and services available to children with special educational needs and disabilities.

**Support and advice to Young People (through Connexions)**

This contract includes managing the Council's statutory data collection duties in regard to young people (post 16) as well as mentoring support. It also provides support for young people in secondary special schools as part of their progression towards adulthood.

**Family Resilience Service**

This service provides support to families who are in need of additional support due to the complexity of or multiple issues they face

**Youth Services**

This is a targeted referral-based service, working with young people aged 11 to 25 identified as in need of support. The service provides 1:1 support for young people and small group work to support social and emotional development and to develop personal skills.

None of the above

- Q4** Typically, how often have you used the following services in the past year?  
**Please put a cross (x) in one box for each of the following (if you have not used these services please select 'not applicable')**

	Twice a week or more	Once a week	Once a fortnight	Once a month	Less than once a month	Don't know	Not applicable
Children's Centre Service(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>						
Buckinghamshire Family Information Service	<input type="checkbox"/>						
Family Resilience Service	<input type="checkbox"/>						
Support for Parents (through Barnardos)	<input type="checkbox"/>						
Support and advice to Young People (through Connexions)	<input type="checkbox"/>						
Youth Services	<input type="checkbox"/>						

- Q5** If you have used children's centre services, which children's centres have you used in the past year? **Please put a cross (x) in as many boxes as apply**

Aylesbury (Southcourt) Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wendover Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	Stokenchurch & Hambleden Valley Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>
Early Years Excellence Hub (Elmhurst) Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ivinghoe & Pitstone Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hazlemere & Loudwater Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>
Aylesbury (Berryfields : Quarrendon) Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mapledean Children's Centre (Wycombe Abbey)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wooburn Green & Bourne End Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>
Buckingham Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	High Wycombe (Castlefield) Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	Newtown Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wing Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hamilton Road Children's Centre (High Wycombe Terriers & Amersham Hill)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Amersham Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>
Aylesbury (South West) Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	Marlow Children's Centre (Foxes Piece)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Burnham Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>
Aylesbury (Oakfield and Bedgrove) Children's Centre (Broughton)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Risborough Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	Beaconsfield Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>
Early Years Excellence Hub (Bearbrook) Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wycombe (Hampden Way) Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	The Chalfonts Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>
Waddesdon & Whitchurch Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wycombe (East) Children's Centre (Micklefield: Ash Hill)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Prestwood & Missenden Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>
Steeple Claydon Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wycombe (Disraeli) Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	Farnham Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>
Haddenham Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wycombe (Millbrook) Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	Denham & Gerrards Cross Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>
				Chesham (Waterside) Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>
				The Ivers Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>
				Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>

## About the Council's strategy and priorities

The Council's Early Help Service is designed to have clear responsibilities and to deliver support to families in partnership which enable improved outcomes for children and families, as set out in the draft partnership Early Help Strategy which can be found at [www.buckscc.gov.uk/earlyhelp](http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/earlyhelp)

The Council is proposing to refocus its support for families in a new Early Help Service with the following aims:

- Supporting vulnerable children and families to enable them to thrive and achieve real, positive outcomes.
- Integrating services wherever possible to create stronger partnerships which make effective use of all resources and improve family and community resilience.
- Improving access and reducing duplication to enable children and families needing our support to tell their story only once.
- Evidencing the impact of early help to reduce cost pressures on statutory services.

For more information please see the Council's consultation summary document at [www.buckscc.gov.uk/earlyhelp](http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/earlyhelp) or paper copies of the consultation summary document are provided at the children's centre or library where you picked up this questionnaire.

**Q6 To what extent do you agree with the Council's proposed aims for its Early Help Service as set out above?  
Please put a cross (x) in one box only**

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Q7 Do you have any other comments on what the aims of the Council's Early Help service should be?  
Please write in the box below**

### Options for consideration

We want to understand your views on the different options for early help services being considered by the Council. Before responding, we recommend you read the consultation summary document which you can find at [www.buckscc.gov.uk/earlyhelp](http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/earlyhelp) or paper copies of the consultation summary document are provided at the children's centre or library where you picked up this questionnaire.

**Please note, we will first ask some specific questions about your views on each of the options, and then you will be given the opportunity to share your views and reasons for these in more detail in an open response question.**

#### Option A: Current model (less 30-35% reduction across all services)

The current range of services would remain broadly the same. The current 35 children's centre buildings will be retained but with a 30-35% reduction in opening hours. This would also mean a 30-35% reduction in the following services:

- Support for vulnerable children and families
- Youth services
- Bucks Family Information Service

Families who receive additional support through family resilience, for example, would also experience reductions in services. This is likely to mean that fewer vulnerable children receive support and there will be longer waiting times.

Further information about this option is available in the consultation summary document which you can find at [www.buckscc.gov.uk/earlyhelp](http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/earlyhelp) or paper copies of the consultation summary document are provided at the children's centre or library where you picked up this questionnaire.

**Q8 To what extent do you agree or disagree with Option A for delivering an Early Help Service?**  
Please put a cross (x) in one box only

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Q9 What level of impact (either positive or negative) do you think the Council selecting Option A would have on:**  
Please put a cross (x) in one box for each of the following

	Very positive impact	Positive impact	No difference	Negative impact	Very negative impact	Don't know	Not applicable
Your family	<input type="checkbox"/>						
Families in Buckinghamshire who need support	<input type="checkbox"/>						

## Option B: Network of family centres – Council's Preferred Option

This is the Council's preferred option. Support for families will be delivered from 14 family centres that will provide a programme of activities for families with 0-19 year olds. Three of the centres (known as 'family centre plus') will also provide extra services where families can drop in to access support five days per week.

The family centres will continue to provide partner services e.g. health visiting. The family support teams will have a skills mix to ensure families get the right support at the right time. Families are supported by a lead practitioner who will work with the family, often in the home and coordinate the support families need to create a team around the family to help them tackle the issues they face.

Further information about this option, including a map of proposed family centre locations, is available in the consultation summary document which you can find at [www.buckscc.gov.uk/earlyhelp](http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/earlyhelp) or paper copies of the consultation summary document are provided at the children's centre or library where you picked up this questionnaire.

**Q10** To what extent do you agree or disagree with **Option B** for delivering an Early Help Service?

Please put a cross (x) in one box only

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Q11** What level of impact (either positive or negative) do you think the Council selecting **Option B** would have on:

Please put a cross (x) in one box for each of the following

	Very positive impact	Positive impact	No difference	Negative impact	Very negative impact	Don't know	Not applicable
Your family	<input type="checkbox"/>						
Families in Buckinghamshire who need support	<input type="checkbox"/>						

## Option C: Area-based family outreach model

This will provide a new integrated service to support families with children 0-19 years old. The Council services will be focused on targeted work with families only. There would be three area teams working from office bases, but these would not be open to the public. This means family support being provided at the family's home, in school and at local places like libraries and community centres.

There will be no universal provision and **no children's centres** would be retained by the County Council.

Further information about this option is available in the consultation summary document which you can find at [www.buckscc.gov.uk/earlyhelp](http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/earlyhelp) or paper copies of the consultation summary document are provided at the children's centre or library where you picked up this questionnaire.

**Q12** To what extent do you agree or disagree with **Option C** for delivering an Early Help Service?

Please put a cross (x) in one box only

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Q13** What level of impact (either positive or negative) do you think the Council selecting **Option C** would have on:

Please put a cross (x) in one box for each of the following

	Very positive impact	Positive impact	No difference	Negative impact	Very negative impact	Don't know	Not applicable
Your family	<input type="checkbox"/>						
Families in Buckinghamshire who need support	<input type="checkbox"/>						

**Q14** Of the options presented, which is your preferred option? **Please put a cross (x) in one box only**

Option A: Current model  
(less 30-35% reduction  
across all services)

Option B: Network of  
family centres

Option C: Area-based  
family outreach model

Don't know

**Q15a** Do you have any suggestions for alternative ways that the Council could provide early help services not described in options A, B, or C? **Please write in the box below**

**Q15b** Do you have any suggestions for alternative ways that the Council can deliver £3.1million in savings per annum? **Please write in the box below**

**Q16** Under options B & C, some or all, children's centre buildings would be closed as children's centres and proposed to be used for other activities. Further details on possible alternative uses of the buildings are set out in the consultation summary (see page 11) which you can find at [www.buckscc.gov.uk/earlyhelp](http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/earlyhelp) or paper copies of the consultation summary document are provided at the children's centre or library where you picked up this questionnaire.

To what extent do you agree with the Council's proposed approach of seeking to ensure that if children's centres are proposed for closure that the buildings continue to be used for community benefit, and specifically for early years provision (for example extra nursery places) where there is local need?

**Please put a cross (x) in one box only**

Neither agree nor

Strongly agree

Agree

disagree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Don't know

- Q17** The following list includes all of the children's centres currently open in Buckinghamshire. Under Option B (the Council's preferred option) 14 children's centres would be kept open with an extended widened role to provide support to all families with children aged 0-19 (children's centres currently support families with children aged 0-5).

Those in bold are the ones the Council would propose to keep open under Option B, and all would be closed under Option C.

Using the list that follows, please tell us which centre is your top priority for keeping open (select one from column A) and which others you would prioritise (select up to 4 from column B). Please note, you cannot select the same centre in both column A and B. **Please note this list continues overleaf.**

**Please put a cross (x) in the boxes you want to select**

	(A) Top priority for staying open?	(B) Select up to 4 other children's centres
<b>Aylesbury (Southcourt) Children's Centre</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Early Years Excellence Hub (Elmhurst) Children's Centre</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Aylesbury (Berryfields : Quarrendon) Children's Centre</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Buckingham Children's Centre</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Wing Children's Centre</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Aylesbury (South West) Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Aylesbury (Oakfield and Bedgrove) Children's Centre (Broughton)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Early Years Excellence Hub (Bearbrook) Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Waddesdon & Whitchurch Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Steeple Claydon Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Haddenham Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wendover Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ivinghoe & Pitstone Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Mapledean Children's Centre (Wycombe Abbey)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>High Wycombe (Castlefield) Children's Centre</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Hamilton Road Children's Centre (High Wycombe Terriers &amp; Amersham Hill)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Marlow Children's Centre (Foxes Piece)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Risborough Children's Centre</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wycombe (Hampden Way) Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wycombe (East) Children's Centre (Micklefield: Ash Hill)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wycombe (Disraeli) Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wycombe (Millbrook) Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stokenchurch & Hambleden Valley Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hazlemere & Loudwater Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wooburn Green & Bourne End Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Newtown Children's Centre</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Amersham Children's Centre</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Burnham Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Beaconsfield Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The Chalfonts Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Prestwood & Missenden Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Farnham Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Denham & Gerrards Cross Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Chesham (Waterside) Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The Ivers Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Would prefer to use another location, please specify where this would be	<input type="text"/>	

**Q18** Please provide any other relevant information you believe the Council should consider. This might include:

- information on your preferred or least preferred options and your reasons for this;
  - your thoughts on how the different options might affect your family or others;
  - any suggestions for alternative options you think the Council should consider;
  - any reasons the Council should keep a particular children's centre open, or why it should consider closing one;  
or
  - anything else you would like to add.
-

**Population questions**

The following questions tell us more about you and help us to make sure we have captured views from a cross section of people. We recognise that you might consider some of these questions to be personal or sensitive, in which case you are free not to answer them. The information you provide will be used for the sole purpose of ensuring that we can understand the views and experiences of different groups of people to inform the Council's decisions about Early Help services.

**Q19 I identify my gender as... Please put a cross (x) in one box only**

Male  
Female

Something else (Please cross (x) and write in the box below)   
 Prefer not to say

--

**Q20 Which of the following best describes your ethnic group? Please put a cross (x) in one box only**

White - English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British  
White – Irish  
White - Gypsy or Irish Traveller  
White - Any other White background (Please cross (x) and write in the box below)  
Mixed - White and Black Caribbean  
Mixed - White and Black African  
Mixed - White and Asian  
Mixed - Any other Mixed/multiple ethnic background (Please cross (x) and write in the box below)  
Asian/Asian British – Indian  
Asian/Asian British – Pakistani

Asian/Asian British – Bangladeshi   
 Asian/Asian British – Chinese   
 Asian/Asian British - Any other Asian background (Please cross (x) and write in the box below)   
 Black/Black British – African   
 Black/Black British – Caribbean   
 Black/Black British - Any other Black/African/Caribbean background (Please cross (x) and write in the box below)   
 Arab   
 Any other ethnic group (Please cross (x) and write in the box below)   
 Prefer not to say

--

**Q21 Are you the parent of or a carer for children in any of the following age groups?  
Please put a cross (x) in as many boxes as apply**

Under 5	5 to 9	10 to 14	15 to 19	20 to 25 who have a special educational need or disabilities	None of the above	Prefer not to say
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				

**Q22 Are you currently pregnant or have you been pregnant in the last year? Please put a cross (x) in one box only**

Yes  No  Prefer not to say

**Q23 Have you taken any of the following types of leave within the past year? Please put a cross (x) in one box only**

Maternity leave	Paternity leave	Adoption leave	Shared parental leave	None of the above	Prefer not to say
<input type="checkbox"/>					

**Q24** Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last 12 months or more which reduces your ability to carry-out day-to-day activities? **Please put a cross (x) in one box only**

Yes	No	Don't know	Prefer not to say
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Q25** Does your child or one of your children have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last 12 months or more which reduces their ability to carry-out day-to-day activities?

**Please put a cross (x) in one box only**

Yes	No	Don't know	Prefer not to say	Not applicable
<input type="checkbox"/>				

**Q26** Which of the following best describes your religion? **Please put a cross (x) in one box only**

Christian	Sikh	Other (Please cross (x) and write in the box below)	Prefer not to say
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hindu	No religion		
Muslim	<input type="checkbox"/>		

**Q27** Is anyone in your household in work at the moment? **Please put a cross (x) in one box only**

Yes	No	Don't know	Prefer not to say
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Q28** What is your home postcode? This information will be used to ensure people from across Buckinghamshire have taken part, it will also be used to understand people's preferences for service locations. If you do not want your information to be used in this way, please select 'prefer not to say' or you can choose to provide only the first part of your postcode **Please write in the box below**

<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	Prefer not to say <input type="checkbox"/>
--	---

**Q29** Which of the following districts in Buckinghamshire do you live in? This information will be used to ensure people from across Buckinghamshire have taken part, it will also be used to understand people's preferences for service locations. If you do not want your information to be used in this way, please select 'prefer not to say'. **Please put a cross (x) in one box only**

Aylesbury Vale district	Don't know <input type="checkbox"/>	Prefer not to say <input type="checkbox"/>
Chiltern district	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
South Buckinghamshire district	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wycombe district	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Many thanks for taking the time to share your views in this consultation.

By completing and returning this questionnaire to us, we will take this as your consent for us to process and analyse the data you have provided.

Your responses will be treated in the strictest confidence. BMG Research abides by the Market Research Society Code of Conduct and data protection laws at all times, including General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018. You have the right to access your data at any time as well as withdraw your consent to participate.

You can find out more information about our surveys and what we do with the information we collect in our Privacy Notice which is here [www.bmgresearch.co.uk/privacy](http://www.bmgresearch.co.uk/privacy)

We will not include any information about you that may be identifiable in our reporting for Buckinghamshire County Council unless you provide permission for us to do so.

The results of this consultation will be published and help inform a decision by the Council's Cabinet in March 2019. A report will then be published which will detail the decisions made and the reasons for doing so.

**Continuation page**

If you would like to expand on your responses to any of the free text boxes in this questionnaire please do so on the following page.



## Appendix 6: Statement of Terms

### Compliance with International Standards

BMG complies with the International Standard for Quality Management Systems requirements (ISO 9001:2015) and the International Standard for Market, opinion and social research service requirements (ISO 20252:2012) and The International Standard for Information Security Management (ISO 27001:2013).

### Interpretation and publication of results

The interpretation of the results as reported in this document pertain to the research problem and are supported by the empirical findings of this research project and, where applicable, by other data. These interpretations and recommendations are based on empirical findings and are distinguishable from personal views and opinions.

BMG will not publish any part of these results without the written and informed consent of the client.

### Ethical practice

BMG promotes ethical practice in research: We conduct our work responsibly and in light of the legal and moral codes of society.

We have a responsibility to maintain high scientific standards in the methods employed in the collection and dissemination of data, in the impartial assessment and dissemination of findings and in the maintenance of standards commensurate with professional integrity.

We recognise we have a duty of care to all those undertaking and participating in research and strive to protect subjects from undue harm arising as a consequence of their participation in research. This requires that subjects' participation should be as fully informed as possible and no group should be disadvantaged by routinely being excluded from consideration. All adequate steps shall be taken by both agency and client to ensure that the identity of each respondent participating in the research is protected.

With more than 25 years' experience, BMG Research has established a strong reputation for delivering high quality research and consultancy.

BMG serves both the public and the private sector, providing market and customer insight which is vital in the development of plans, the support of campaigns and the evaluation of performance.

Innovation and development is very much at the heart of our business, and considerable attention is paid to the utilisation of the most up to date technologies and information systems to ensure that market and customer intelligence is widely shared.



*Together...Keeping Children Safe*

# Early Help Strategy

April 2019 - 2022



In partnership  
with



# Contents

1. Foreword	3
2. What is Early Help?	5
3. Context	7
4. Partnership working context	11
5. Vision, principles and approach	13
6. Outcomes & measuring success	17
Appendix	19



# 1. Foreword

**This Early Help Strategy is central to delivering our partnership ambition for children, young people and their families to thrive and contribute to our community.**

This partnership strategy is central to delivering our shared ambition for children and young people. It has been co-produced with partners and reflects the views of children and their families as we recognise that early help is a collaborative approach, not just an isolated service provision. It secures a collective commitment and accountability for the delivery of broad, accessible and responsive early help provision. This approach will empower families to take control over their lives. It also strengthens local networks and builds community capacity to support families and help them develop the skills and independence needed to be less reliant on public and statutory services.

This strategy will steer our joint endeavour to effectively support vulnerable children and families. It sets out how all partners will work together to learn from local and national evidence of what works to ensure that our early intervention is focused on the children and families who need it most. We will use selective targeting through analysis of demographic risks and where identified problems require more intensive support, provide this at the earliest opportunity for those most in need. In this way we are confident we will use our shared resources effectively and deliver sustainable outcomes for vulnerable families. As partners, we are committed to working together to align resources, share learning and develop practice.

This strategy is for staff across Buckinghamshire at all levels. It is supported by multi-agency guidance and procedures which will help front-line practitioners in their everyday working environment.

Together with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Children's Partnership Board, we would like to commend this Early Help Strategy to you.



**Warren Whyte**  
*Cabinet Member for  
Children's Services*



**Tolis Vouyioukas**  
*Children's Partnership Board  
Chair and Executive Director  
for Children's Services*



**Debbie Richards**  
*Children's Partnership Board  
Vice-Chair and Director of  
Commissioning and Delivery  
for Buckinghamshire CCG*

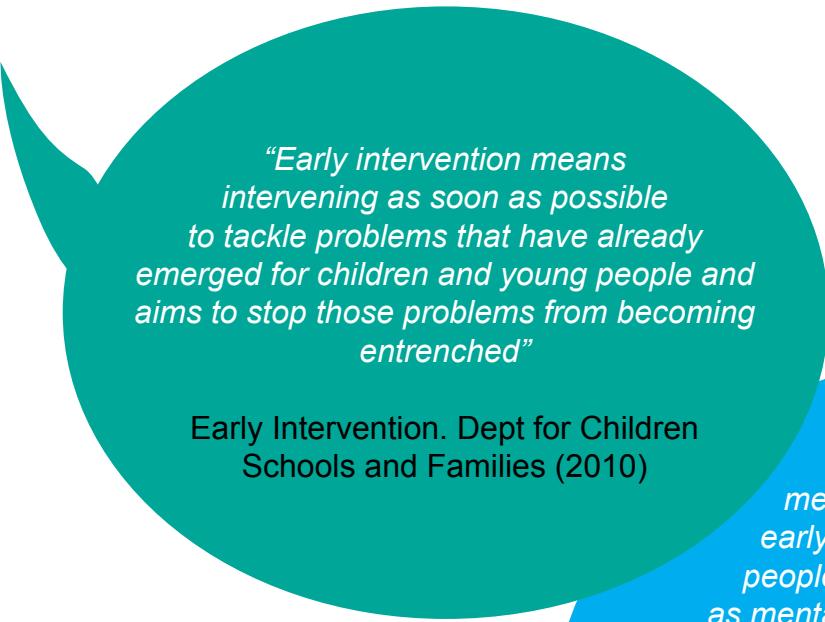


## This strategy will:

- Explain what we mean by early help in Buckinghamshire
- Share the values that underpin the development and delivery of services
- Set out Buckinghamshire's ambition for the impact of early help
- Outline how we will know we are making a difference: our success criteria evidenced by an effective performance monitoring
- Hold partners to account for effective early help delivery

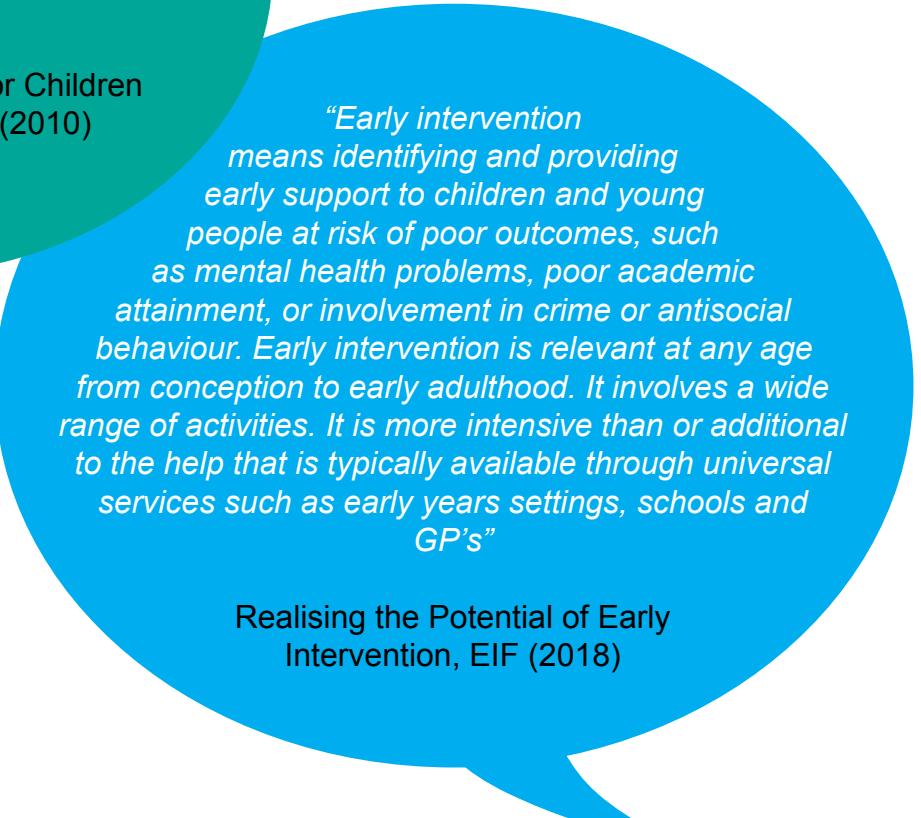
## 2. What is early help?

Early help is the identification of and response to emerging problems children, young people and their families face. It is a way of working that supports families to overcome these challenges and avoids things becoming worse and harder to resolve. Timely and flexible support is evidentially better for children and families, prevents escalation and is as a result, more cost effective. Early help is provided through a range of different services: universal which are open to all, targeted provision, and specialist services. It is also embedded in communities where provision is available to families through informal support, local networks and voluntary activity which add real capacity and value to our collective early help offer.



*“Early intervention means intervening as soon as possible to tackle problems that have already emerged for children and young people and aims to stop those problems from becoming entrenched”*

Early Intervention. Dept for Children Schools and Families (2010)



*“Early intervention means identifying and providing early support to children and young people at risk of poor outcomes, such as mental health problems, poor academic attainment, or involvement in crime or antisocial behaviour. Early intervention is relevant at any age from conception to early adulthood. It involves a wide range of activities. It is more intensive than or additional to the help that is typically available through universal services such as early years settings, schools and GP’s”*

Realising the Potential of Early Intervention, EIF (2018)

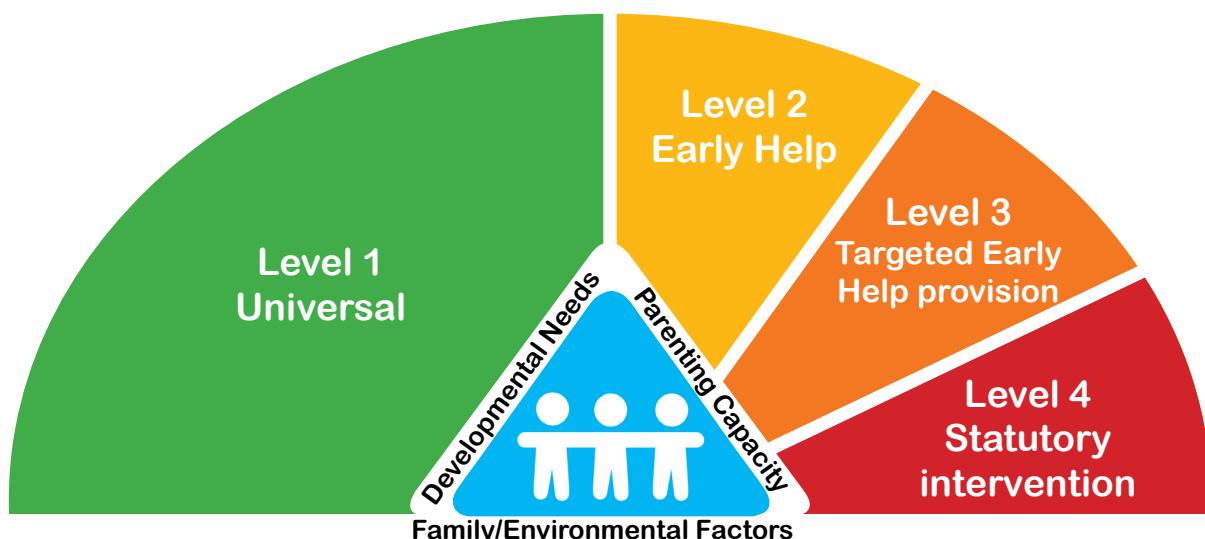
Effective early help relies upon local organisations and agencies working together to:

- Identify children and families who would benefit from early help.
- Undertake an assessment of the family or child's needs for early help.
- Provide appropriate targeted early help services to address the assessed needs of a child and their family which focuses on activity to significantly improve the outcomes for the child.

Early help in Buckinghamshire consists of all the support available to children and families at levels 1, 2 and 3 of the Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Board's Thresholds document. It also enables children and young people moving away from statutory support (level 4), to sustain the progress they have achieved and promote their increasing independence.

A full copy of the Thresholds document can be viewed on the following webpage:

[http://www.bucks-lscb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/BSCB-Procedures/Thresholds\\_Document\\_Sept\\_2015\\_final.pdf](http://www.bucks-lscb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/BSCB-Procedures/Thresholds_Document_Sept_2015_final.pdf)



**Level 1** – children whose needs are met within universal services. May need limited intervention to prevent needs arising (universal – available to all)

**Level 2** – children with additional needs identified that can be met through a single agency response and partnership working (early help)

**Level 3** – children with multiple needs requiring a multi-agency coordinated response with a lead professional (targeted early help provision)

**Level 4** – children with a high level of unmet and complex needs or a child in need of protection (statutory intervention).

# 3. Context

## The Buckinghamshire context

In Buckinghamshire, there is strong political and organisational support to ensure that the early help offer is visible, accessible and contributes to both the Children's Services improvement journey, in response to the 2018 Ofsted inspection judgement and the delivery of the SEND reforms to improve outcomes for children and their families in Buckinghamshire.



Buckinghamshire has a total population of approximately 534,700. 30% of the population is aged 0-24 years, slightly higher than the South East (24%). The population overall has increased by 29,400 (4.6%) from 2011 to 2016 and is projected to increase by 107,200 (20%) from 2015 to 2039. Although a largely rural or semi-rural county, a quarter of residents live within the towns of Aylesbury and High Wycombe. A third of residents live in rural areas, compared to 20% across the South East (ONS Mid-Year Estimates 2015).



Approximately 122,200 children and young people under the age of 18 years live in Buckinghamshire. This is 22.9% of the total population in the area (534,700 people), which is slightly above the English average of 21.3%. Currently, the population aged 0-19 tends to be clustered to the south of Buckinghamshire in Wycombe, Chiltern and South Buckinghamshire. There are fewer young people in the more rural areas. By 2031, Aylesbury and Wycombe will be home for 70% of 0-19 year olds.



Buckinghamshire is home to an increasingly diverse population - 21% of the 0-19 year old population is of an ethnic minority (Black and Minority Ethnic or Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME), compared to the South East average of 14% (based on Census 2011). It is estimated that the BAME population aged 0-19 year will reach 47,000 by 2031 compared to 26,000 in 2011, making Asian and Asian British the largest groups in the younger and adult populations. To accommodate the rising population in the county, significant building is anticipated in Buckinghamshire including the need for affordable housing. From 2013 – 2033 it is estimated that there is a need for 9,600 affordable homes and 15,000 high specification dwellings across Buckinghamshire. The majority of new house builds will be around Aylesbury and High Wycombe and around the northern county border with Milton Keynes.

Around two thirds of demand for Children's Services is situated in:

- **Aylesbury and High Wycombe**, which together account for approximately half of all service users
- **Chesham** is the next biggest town in terms of service users - between 5 and 8%
- **Buckingham, Amersham, Burnham & Lent Rise, Beaconsfield, Marlow and Princes Risborough** all have high proportions of service users across children's services
- **Rural areas** account for between 5% and 11% of service users depending on the service

Overall increases in demand for statutory services over the last five years are included in the table below. In line with national trends, escalating demand into statutory social services are further grounds for increasing our focus on targeted and timely early intervention and the positive impact this can have on improving the lives of children and families. This requires a partnership approach to maximise early identification opportunities and responding quickly to provide proportionate and effective early help support. We know this will prevent matters from becoming worse and will enable children and families to be self-reliant and able to face new challenges without the need for statutory intervention or further early help.

Service	% increase 2013 - 2018
Children in Need <sup>1</sup>	53%
Children subject to Child Protection	160%
Children Looked After	14%
Youth Offending service clients	42%



<sup>1</sup> Children in need as defined by the Department for Education. This includes every child who had an open referral at some point during the year whose referral decision was not "No Further Action". This will include all the CP and CLA but it will also include children on CIN Plans and those who were assessed but did not then progress to a plan.

## Drivers for change - National context

National evidence is informing policy development towards a more co-ordinated, problem solving service delivery model to ensure better use of resources. Many local authorities have already taken decisions to streamline and co-ordinate early help services. This provides a more integrated service offer and enables them to target resources at those most in need of support to achieve sustainable outcomes for children and families reducing demand on statutory services.

Work undertaken by the Early Intervention Foundation, the Local Government Association, Washington State Institute for Public Policy, the Dartington Social Research Unit, MP Frank Field's review on the Foundation Years, MP Graham Allen's review of early intervention, among many others provide a growing body of evidence that early help can reduce demand on more reactive and expensive services.

Enabling children, young people and their families to reach their full potential has been a common theme in recent reviews commissioned by successive governments (Munro, Marnet, Tickell). They all independently reached the same conclusion that it is important to provide help early in order to improve outcomes. Nationally, interest is growing in an evidence base for early intervention, in particular a need to demonstrate effectiveness to produce cost savings in more specialist and acute services. It is important to recognise that early intervention is not a one-off fix but a highly targeted process and approach – a way of working with specific outcomes.

Multiple or complex challenges impact negatively on a family and children living within that family. It is the combination of problems which has most impact on children. Problems for children commonly appear in the early years and in adolescence – key times for brain development as well as physical development.

*"While early intervention cannot solve all problems, it can substantially improve children's lives if it is delivered to a high standard and is directed to the children and families who need it the most."*

Realising the Potential of Early Intervention", EIF (2018)

*"The wider, long term benefits that accrue to the whole of society have the potential to provide the biggest pay-offs. They are critical to understanding the value of early intervention and why it should be prioritised."*

Realising the Potential of Early Intervention, EIF (2018)

Many early help services are focused on a particular age group, a single issue or one approach. Feedback from children and families captured nationally has consistently shown that this is not the best approach to improve outcomes and build resilience.

Problems within a family invariably link together and impact across the family. For example, parental mental health issues are likely to impact on their employability but also on the attendance, behaviour and attainment of their children in school. Similarly, one child's serious or long term disability or learning difficulty brings both mental and financial pressures onto the whole family, while domestic abuse or relationship problems are proven to have serious consequences for the long term outcomes of children. These families with multiple needs: mental ill-health, domestic abuse and substance abuse are all indicators of increased risk of harm.

*"A single disorder can negatively affect parents' capacity to meet their children's needs, but the co-existence of these types of problems has a much greater impact on parenting capacity."<sup>2</sup>*

Tackling one problem or one individual is less likely to be effective than dealing with everything that is going on for the family as a whole. In Buckinghamshire, the early help lead practitioner model enables coordination of effective multi-agency support for families and children, to provide the best opportunity of positive outcomes.

<sup>2</sup> Children's Needs - parenting Capacity.  
Child abuse: Parental mental illness, learning disability, substance misuse and domestic violence. 2nd Edition (2011) Heady Cleaver, Ira Unell, Jane Aldgate. London TSO. (page 202)



# 4. Partnership working context

This document will steer and enable partners to help deliver the four priorities in the current Children's and Young People's Plan.

- 1. Keep children and young people safe and in their families wherever possible**
- 2. Enable and support children, young people, parents and carers to overcome the challenges they may face**
- 3. Improve children and young people's health and well-being**
- 4. Provide opportunities for children and young people to realise their full potential**

## The Children's Partnership Board

The Children's Partnership Board is responsible for providing strategic direction and oversight of the implementation and delivery of early help in Buckinghamshire. The group develops and owns the Early Help Strategy, and monitors and evaluates the impact of early help described in the joint performance framework.

## Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Board

Local Safeguarding Children Boards are multi-agency partnerships that are responsible for coordinating local arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and ensuring that these arrangements are effective. The Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Board will monitor the effectiveness of early help across the partnership and supports multi-agency training and a consistent understanding of Buckinghamshire's early help approach amongst all stakeholders.

The impact of our early help offer will deliver the outcomes described in this strategy and will be jointly scrutinised by the Children's Partnership Board and the Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Board to ensure high quality early help services are delivered. This strategy also aligns with the work that is being led by the Integrated Care System Partnership Board.



## The partners critical to the success of the Early Help Strategy include:

- Children, young people and families
- Buckinghamshire District Councils
- Buckinghamshire Clinical Commissioning Group
- Buckinghamshire College Group
- Buckinghamshire County Council
- Bucks Healthcare NHS Trust
- Schools and Early Years settings
- National Probation Service
- Parent Carers Forum
- NHS England
- Oxford Health Foundation NHS Trust
- Public Health
- Thames Valley Police
- Thames Valley Probation (Community Rehabilitation Company)
- Youth Offending Service
- Voluntary and Community Sector

# 5. Vision, principles and approach



## Our Vision

We want all children and young people in Buckinghamshire to live in resilient families, to be happy, safe and healthy, and to grow up with skills, knowledge and attributes to be confident and independent, ready for adult life.

As partners we will work together and alongside volunteers and communities to provide a seamless service for children and their families. This will prevent the escalation of need and ensuring targeted, timely interventions that achieve positive outcomes for children and families which are supported by effective multi agency practices.

## Our ambitions



Thriving children, young people and families with real, positive outcomes.



Building and improving family and community resilience.



Stronger partnerships making effective use of all resources.



Children and families only have to tell their story once.



Moving resources from statutory services to Early Help provision over time.



## Our Principles

The early help partnership has adopted the following shared principles:

**Work to families' strengths** – recognising and developing existing strengths of children, parents and carers and take the time to understand their needs fully.

**Focus on preventing problems** before they occur and offer timely, flexible and responsive support when and where it is required.

**Build the resilience** of children, young people, parents and communities to support each other.

**Work together across the whole system** aligning resources to best support families to do what needs to be done when it needs to be done.

**Base all that we do on evidence of what works**, what is needed and what will be effective for families. We must be brave enough to innovate and honest enough to stop things that are not working as well as we want.

**Be clear and consistent about the outcomes** we expect and measure our performance against them.



## Our Approach

To be effective, early help requires full commitment to consistent, solution-focused, multi-agency working. We recognise that all professionals within the partnership have vital contributions to make to improve the quality of life of children, young people and their families. As a child or family can experience a range of problems all at once, early help requires a multilevel, holistic family approach. Early help is about working with children and families together - a truly collaborative approach to providing effective support.

### Our work is underpinned by a commitment to:

- Be pro-active.
- Early intervention is 'everybody's business'
- Protect the most vulnerable
- Promote resilience, independence, health and wellbeing
- Make better use of collective resources
- Develop a confident partnership workforce

## Early help - delivered in partnership

In Buckinghamshire, early help is a collaboration between Council services and the wide range of organisations who work with children and families. Early help services cannot be viewed in isolation, but instead as a complimentary continuum of support from universal services through to statutory or acute provision, all of which are focussed on improving the lives of children.

The delivery of our early help strategy is predicated on a joint commitment to shared outcomes, which will evidence the impact we make for families by intervening early and providing the right support at the right time, enabling sustainable outcomes and building family resilience. A critical ingredient to successful working is the commitment of individuals and families to make changes in their lives.

Early help provides support for those children, young people and families at risk of poor outcomes. All our work is child and family-centred, consent-based and focussed on working collaboratively with families to overcome the issues they face, build their resilience and leave them better able to manage future challenges.

Families who may require early help are identified by a wide range of practitioners, in many different ways, for example:

- A health visitor sees a family finding it difficult adapting to a new baby at home
- A member of school staff observes that a child may have behavioural or emotional issues
- A school nurse notices a young person's persistent absence from school
- An antisocial behaviour officer is worried that a young person may be putting themselves at greater risk of offending or entering the criminal justice system
- An adviser is concerned that a parent may be subject to a benefit sanction
- A housing officer notices a family struggling with debt and at risk of eviction
- A drug or alcohol worker feels that children in the family home may be vulnerable through the risk taking behaviour of adults
- A social worker feels there is a need for additional support for a child even though there are no child protection concerns
- A youth worker is concerned that a young person is at risk of sexual exploitation
- A General Practitioner recognises that a child is struggling to cope with his/her parent's separation
- A probation officer identifies that an individual, with children, may be having problems settling back into their family home

## Buckinghamshire early help model

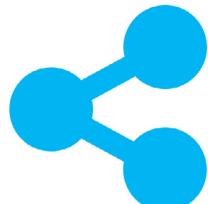
Our early help partnership offer is delivered through our integrated network and core Family Support Service operating across three locality networks which are:



**Proactive**  
in terms of the early identification of need.



**Targeted**  
provision of support to those children and families most in need.



**Connected**  
to partners, providers and critically, families and communities.

We are committed to using our network of family centres to support the identification of emerging needs and provide informal and peer support at a universal level. Our early help offer will be timely, responsive and flexible, available to those in most need and, by establishing and maintaining strong links to schools, early years settings and health providers we will increase our ability to work together for the benefit of the children and families who need our support.

A strong, vibrant and valued community and voluntary sector will add depth and variety to the early help offer and create greater community and individual resilience to promote independence and reduce reliance on formal service provision.

Our locality teams are based in accessible community settings and provide direct, practical support for children, young people and families. Lead practitioners coordinate agreed support plans that are developed through a clear understanding of the family context, needs and support priorities. By working together with the family and key partners, we will all contribute towards achieving the outcomes we have agreed with the families we are supporting.

Our integrated teams have a range of skills and specialist staff in key areas such as SEND, youth work, parenting and early years. This will ensure that the support offered is appropriate both in terms of age and the issues faced. Working alongside other professionals as a team around the family, this model will provide effective targeted and outcome focused support. We will strengthen our links to schools and settings to ensure that, together with education colleagues, we are enabling all children to achieve their potential. This will be achieved through provision of appropriate support for them and their families, which recognises all service users as individuals with specific needs, ambitions and strengths.

# 6. Outcomes

We will know we have been successful if the following outcomes are delivered:

## Children and young people are:

- Safe, happy and confident
- Resilient, engaged and able to learn well
- Supported by their families and communities and, when necessary, by professionals to thrive and be successful

## Communities:

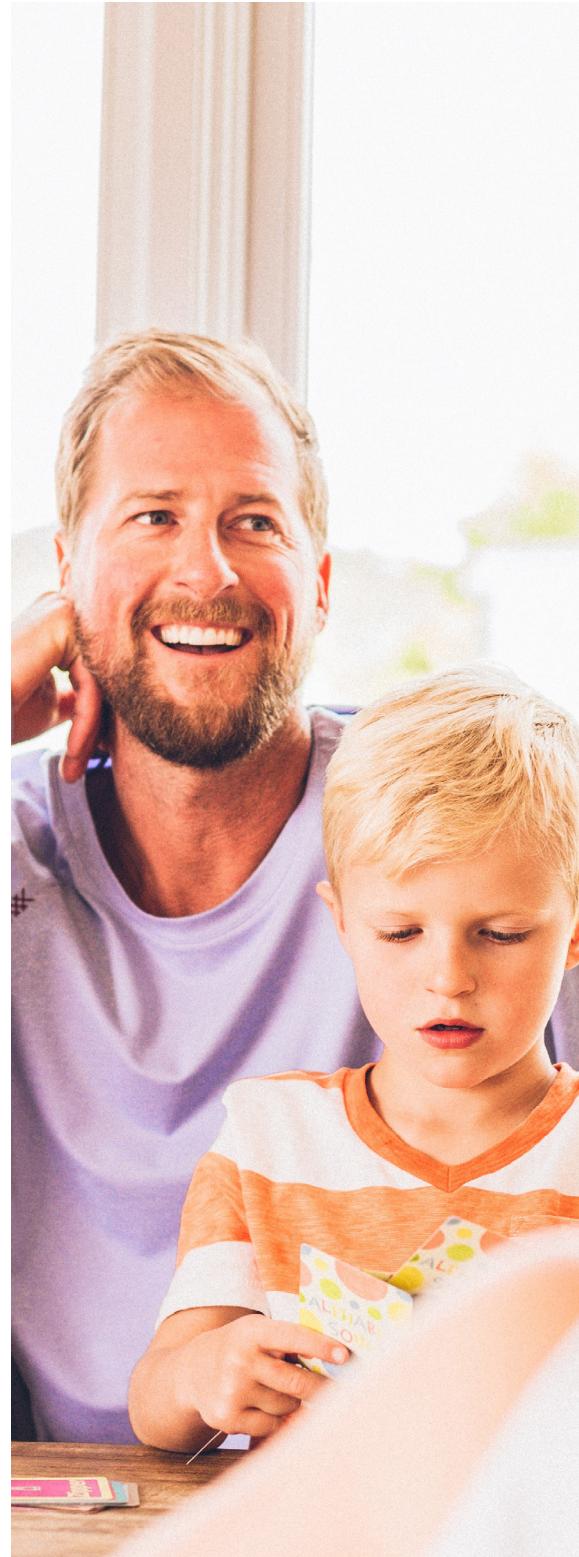
- Accept collective responsibility to support children and parents
- Utilise local assets and skills to build community capacity that supports social support networks
- Are providing sustainable support through individuals, community groups, business and voluntary organisations
- Are understood and valued by practitioners as being part of the early help solution

## Parents:

- Are supporting one another in their communities
- Know where to get help if they need it
- Have trusted relationships with practitioners, neighbours and other parents
- Are well informed about how best to help their children develop and are motivated to make great choices

## Practitioners:

- Focus first on families and their strengths
- Work closely with families to understand what they need, and build trusting relationships
- Have a shared vision and understanding of outcomes and success
- Are skilled, knowledgeable and are co-creating and co-delivering approaches that work



## Measuring success

As an Early Help Partnership, we have an agreed framework which provides core performance indicators which evidence the impact of our early help support in key areas which impact on children's outcomes. This is reported quarterly to the Children's Partnership Board and Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Board.

Individual agencies within the partnership retain responsibility for the provision of data to support reporting against this framework. We will include feedback directly from children, young people and families to understand the impact that we have on their lives, as part of our measures of success.

In all areas, success will be measured by the outcomes experienced by children, young people and their families. We will also use national and peer group benchmarking to ensure that together, our partnership is delivering appropriate outcomes.

## Buckinghamshire Early Help Partnership Performance indicators

### Hearing the child's voice and its influences on the family journey

- Children, young people and families will tell us we have made a difference through feedback from service users

### Right Service, Right Time

#### Reductions in:

- Number of contacts into First Response (Children's Social Care)
- Number of referrals into Children's Social Care
- Number of re-referrals to Children's Social Care (within 12 months of previous plan completion)
- Number of children and young people requiring statutory intervention

#### Increase in:

- Share of contacts (%) received in First Response, allocated to early help services
- Number of early help assessments
- Number of young carers identified and young carer assessments completed
- Number of contacts signposted effectively via appropriate information, advice and guidance or to Bucks Family Information Service (BFIS)

#### Reductions in:

- Number of Post 16 young people who are Not in Education, Employment or Training NEET/ unknown
- Number of fixed term exclusions from school for children and young people
- Number of permanent exclusions from school for children and young people
- Number of Education Health Care Plans (EHCP) assessment requests
- Incidents of Anti-Social Behaviour relating to families with children under 16
- Number of first time entrants to youth justice system

### Improving educational outcomes and opportunities for all

- Increased attendance for school age children engaged with early help services
- More adults in paid work and less reliant on benefits

# Appendix

## Useful links

Children's Services strategies including the Children's Strategy 2016-18

<https://www.buckscc.gov.uk/services/council-and-democracy/our-plans/our-strategic-plan/childrens-services-strategies/>

Buckinghamshire County Council Strategic Plan

<https://www.buckscc.gov.uk/services/council-and-democracy/our-plans/our-strategic-plan/>

Thresholds document

<http://www.bucks-lscb.org.uk/professionals/thresholds-document/>

Further Guidance on the Thresholds document

<http://www.bucks-lscb.org.uk/professionals/thresholds-document/>

Good Practice Guide/Early Help Toolkit

<http://www.bucks-lscb.org.uk/professionals/early-help-toolkit/>

Safer Bucks Plan 2016-2017

<http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/media/1287/safer-bucks-plan-2016-17.pdf>

Special Educational Needs & Disabilities Strategy

<https://www.bucksfamilyinfo.org/kb5/buckinghamshire/fsd/advice.page?id=ginScCY9QW0>

Early Intervention Foundation

<http://www.eif.org.uk/>

Understanding the development of an effective local early help offer. LGA

[http://ncasc.info/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/TW3\\_ISOS\\_LGA.pdf](http://ncasc.info/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/TW3_ISOS_LGA.pdf)

How early intervention can improve outcomes for children, Early Intervention Foundation

[http://ncasc.info/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/TW3\\_EIF.pdf](http://ncasc.info/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/TW3_EIF.pdf)

Realising the Potential of Early Intervention.

<https://www.eif.org.uk/report/realising-the-potential-of-early-intervention>

Early Intervention: securing good outcomes for all children and young people. Department for Children Schools and families 2010

[www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters)

Working together to Safeguard Children . Department for Education 2018

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>



## *Together...Keeping Children Safe*

# Proposed design for new Family Support Service



# **Proposed design for new Family Support Service**

This paper sets out an overview of the proposed design for the new Family Support Service in Buckinghamshire.

## **Service design proposal**

The proposed early help model will provide the opportunity to ensure children and families receive the right support, at the right time, in order to improve their outcomes. Together with our partners, we will support the most vulnerable children and their families and prevent problems from becoming too complex to resolve. Working together to achieve sustainable outcomes, we can avoid the need for statutory intervention.

Family support is not just about services for families with young children. The Council also has a responsibility to provide support to families with children of school age and older. One of the challenges for many families with more than one child is easily finding the help needed to address the issues they face which can affect the whole family. Buckinghamshire's new Family Support Service will be available and relevant to families with children and young people aged 0-19 (or up to 25 for those children with special educational needs or disabilities).

## **Service aims**

The vision for the new Family Support Service is:

*“That all children and young people in Buckinghamshire are enabled to live in resilient families, to be happy, safe and healthy, and to grow up with skills, knowledge and attributes to be confident and independent, ready for adult life.*

*As partners we will work together, and alongside volunteers and communities, to provide a seamless service for children and their families. This will prevent the escalation of need and ensuring targeted, timely interventions that achieve positive outcomes for children and families which are supported by effective multi-agency practices.”*

We will work to achieve this vision through:

- Supporting vulnerable children and families to enable them to thrive and achieve positive outcomes.
- Integrating services, creating stronger partnerships, and making effective use of all available resources to improve family and community resilience.
- Improving access and reducing duplication to enable children and families who need our support to reach appropriate services and tell their story only once.
- Evidencing the impact of our early help offer so that over time, where possible, resources can be moved from statutory services to early intervention provision.

## Key benefits

There are three key benefits of an integrated Family Support Service:



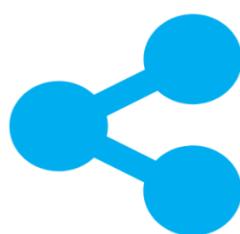
### 1. Targeted support for those in need

- Specialist practitioners in key areas: including special educational needs, domestic abuse, and parenting.
- A pro-active focus on identifying those who can benefit most from early help.
- A named key worker for each family with a support plan to co-ordinate activity to address the family needs, achieve agreed outcomes and sustain improvements.



### 2. Improved access to support

- Residents will be able to access services through a variety of ways: including self-referral and via professionals such as GPs, health visitors and schools.
- Open access stay and play sessions for babies & toddlers, held at family centres across the county.
- An enhanced Buckinghamshire Family Information Service website, including new self-help online tools.



### 3. Better connected

- Three area family support teams working jointly with key partners, particularly schools and health colleagues to identify and support vulnerable families.
- Each school will have a named link family support worker to improve early identification and multi-agency early intervention, supporting families with emerging needs.
- Each area family support team will have a dedicated officer to develop community capacity and grow local networks, encouraging independence and building resilience.

The new service model is an integrated, locality-based offer which is a significant departure from the current range of directly delivered and commissioned provision.

This will enable children, young people and families to access a network of 16 family centres offering:

- Open access (universal) sessions for families with children aged 0-5 (on average 2 sessions per week, per centre).
- Access to health clinics and drop-in sessions run by health professionals.
- Programme of targeted activities to support families 0-19 (up to 25 for those with special educational needs or disabilities) with specific challenges.
- Parenting group sessions, youth mentoring, support for young carers, Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) support, healthy eating, budgeting and benefits and other community-led activities.
- Drop-in support, advice and guidance at Family Centre Plus sites, five days a week.

Family Centre Plus sites will be open for families to drop-in to get advice and to discuss any issues. Health services will also be delivered from these centres, providing additional expertise and opportunities to identify emerging concerns that might require additional support.

There will be three area teams and each will comprise staff with different specialist skills to provide support to families. Staff with a range of specialist skills will provide responsive and flexible services.

### **Family Support Service responsibilities**

The Family Support Service will:

- Promote the early identification of emerging needs and responding appropriately to prevent problems from becoming too complex to resolve.
- Deliver a range of family support services that meet the current and future needs of children and families, which do not meet the statutory threshold for children's social care.
- Provide early years open access sessions across the network of family centres to promote informal support, peer networks and the early identification of need.
- Co-ordinate and develop bespoke, localised programmes of activity for children, young people and families across the family centre network.
- Build effective partnerships that increase capacity and strengthen the way in which health, schools and support services work together to help children and families.
- Promote universal support and family activities through the Buckinghamshire Family Information Service.
- Enhance support for children with SEND and their families by promoting the Local Offer and ensuring that specialists within the Family Support Service help build parental knowledge and confidence, enabling their children to thrive.
- Simplify pathways to support for families by improving communication and cooperation across partner organisations.
- Demonstrate impact through evidence-based performance reporting.

### **Accessing services**

A key aspect of the development of the new Family Support Service is to improve access to support for people whose needs can be met by a universal service, as well as those with greater or more complex needs.

This will require better interface with other services and partner agencies and in particular with mainstream and special schools, health practitioners and community groups. This will ensure that we focus on the identification of emerging needs so that we can provide appropriate and timely support.

We plan to invest in, and enhance, the current Buckinghamshire Family Information Service. We want to make it easier to find information quickly by reducing the number of ‘clicks’ through the introduction of simpler site navigation. We are also looking to add new, self-help modules, which will enable visitors to the site to self-assess, deal with and develop their own action plan to help them with the issues they face. Visitors will be able to self-refer to the Family Support Service at any time.

In addition, the new Family Support Service will have early help staff in First Response, working alongside colleagues, assessing and allocating contacts received by Children’s Services. This approach will help connect key elements of children’s support services with referring agencies, providing information, advice and guidance. This will promote the approach that wherever possible and safe, children and families are supported at universal or emerging needs levels, rather than escalating to statutory intervention. This will also contribute to our goal of reducing demand into children’s social care.

Family centres will offer open-access sessions, where parents and young families (children 0-5) can attend and speak informally to early years staff. We are working closely with health providers to ensure that where possible, services will be delivered concurrently from family centres, to make sure families are able to access partnership early help services.

#### **Critical success indicators for the new service are:**

- Reduction in number of contacts into First Response (Children’s Social Care) from schools.
- Reduction in the number of cases previously closed to social care that are re-referred within 12 months from closure.
- Increased percentage share of contacts received in First Response, allocated to early help services.
- Number of early help assessments completed.
- Number of contacts signposted effectively via appropriate information, advice and guidance or to Buckinghamshire Family Information System (BFIS).
- Increased attendance for school age children engaged with family support services.
- Reduction in number of Post 16 young people who are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET / unknown).
- Reduction in number of fixed term exclusions from school.
- Reduction in number of exclusions from school for students with SEND.
- Reduction in the number of students permanently excluded from schools.
- Reduction in the number of Education Health and Care Plan assessment

requests.

### Family centre activities

Each family centre will have a programme of activities and services on offer which reflects local need. This will include community and voluntary sector activities. Examples of the range of sessions offered might include:

Age range / target group	Activity
<b>Children 0-5 and parent / carer</b>	Drop-in Play and Stay Health provision including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• developmental checks</li><li>• baby weighing</li><li>• pre and post-natal clinics</li></ul> Speech & Language sessions ( e.g. Little Talkers) Messy play Breast feeding support Post-natal well-being
<b>School-age children</b>	Mentoring for young people Young carers support Pre-NEET support and guidance Employment advice for post 16 young people
<b>Parents and families</b>	Family mediation Parenting advice and parenting courses Benefits and money advice
<b>Local residents</b>	Community and Voluntary group meetings

## APPENDIX A

### Examples of how the Family Support Service would work

#### Example 1: Peter, single dad



*Peter is feeling overwhelmed by trying to cope with the behaviour of his teenage son who has obsessive-compulsive disorder, an anxiety disorder. Peter's son is lashing out and can be violent, causing damage to the house.*

#### Accessing Support

Peter goes online and finds some information on the Buckinghamshire Family Information Service website. He decides to complete the online Family Support Service self-referral form.

Within a few days Peter is phoned by an officer in the Family Support Service to understand the situation and to arrange a home visit.

#### Support Provided

Sharon, a Family Support Worker with expertise in working with children with special educational needs meets with Peter and together they develop a support plan. Actions include:

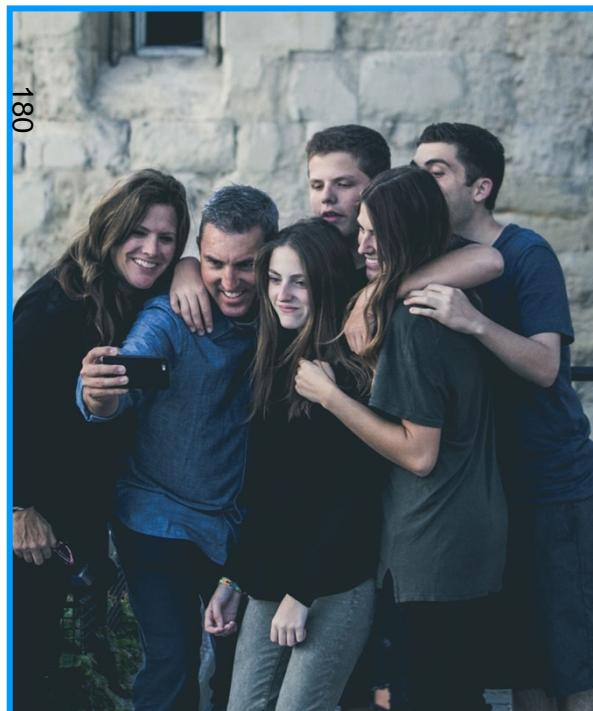
- Developing Peter's parenting skills to enable him to identify what triggers his son's challenging behaviour and help him better understand and respond to his son's condition and influence his behaviour.
- Sessions held with his son to understand his perspective and allow this to inform actions to improve the relationship.
- Working with the school to ensure appropriate support is in place and establish consistent school-home routines to reduce negative behavioural triggers.
- Providing Peter with contacts for community-based organisations that provide support, peer networks and respite sessions.
- Engage with the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) to ensure the Family Support Plan complements their work.

## Positive Outcomes

The outcomes include:

- Son feels able to talk to his dad about his feelings on an ongoing basis, which helps improve their relationship.
- Peter puts in alternative routines and adapts home-life to minimise the triggers for challenging behaviour, so reducing aggressive incidents.
- Peter feels less isolated and more confident in his parenting to able to manage his son's behaviour. His mental health and wellbeing is significantly improved from the interventions.

### Example 2: Sandra and Malcolm with four children



*Sandra and Malcolm have been married for 10 years and have four children; the oldest is nine years old. Concerns have been raised over Malcolm physically chastising one of the children. Sandra also has low self-esteem and potentially has mental health issues. The family are distrustful of social care and have threatened to leave the country if they get involved.*

#### Accessing Support

The children's school are worried about the family and contact the named link officer in the local Family Support Service to seek support.

With the consent of Sandra and Malcolm, the school arrange an initial meeting between the family and the link family support worker.

#### Support Provided

Sarah, the family support worker who has a specialist background of working with families meets with the family to talk to them about how they view any problems and their potential support needs.

The views and wishes of the children are captured and used to inform the plan. A family support plan is agreed which includes:

- Sarah working on a 1:1 basis with Malcolm to help him understand the impact of physical chastisement, which helps to safeguard the children.
- Coaching Sandra and Malcolm on different aspects of their parenting, including routines and boundaries, rewards and sanctions, family time and co-parenting.
- Parenting course scheduled at their local family centre.
- Sandra supported to access appropriate support via her GP to explore her emotional and mental wellbeing.

## Positive Outcomes

The outcomes include:

- Malcolm no longer resorts to physical chastisement as he is better able to deal with negative behaviours and feels confident in managing the children's behaviour.  
↳
- All the children feel their relationship with their dad has improved and enjoy spending time with him.
- School reports an improvement in the engagement of the children in their lessons and learning outcomes.
- Sandra's self-esteem is improving and she has a better understanding of her feelings and the confidence to seek appropriate medical supervision and care when needed.
- Sandra has started volunteering three hours a week at her children's primary school, which is building her confidence.

### **Example 3: Adel, single new mother**



182

*Adel is a single mother with a baby boy aged 3 months. She has recently moved to Buckinghamshire and is feeling isolated and finding it hard to cope.*

*Adel attends a health clinic, run by the health visiting team, at her local village hall to get her baby weighed. Adel gets chatting to Dave, a member of the Family Support Team, who is running a stay and play session alongside the health clinic. During the conversation the staff member encourages Adel to talk about how she is feeling.*

#### **Accessing Support**

Dave gives Adel information about a voluntary mums group that is run in the local area and encourages her to give it a try.

He also tells her about the local Facebook groups and Buckinghamshire's Family Information Service website to find out about other activities that she can attend.

#### **Positive Outcomes**

Adel starts to attend the weekly stay and play group on a regular basis.

Adel also starts to make new friends via one of the Facebook groups and they are planning to meet up for coffee.  
She starts to like the people she meets in the area and feels part of the local community.

## Family Centre Site Locations Report

### **Summary**

There are currently 35 children's centres and 2 satellite sites across Buckinghamshire. This report sets out the proposed site locations for 16 family centres (at retained children's centre sites) and proposals for closing 19 children's centres (and 2 satellite sites) and their future use.

The annexes at the end of this report include:

- A – Site choice rationale
- B – Maps of proposed family centre locations
- C – Alternative use for buildings proposed to be closed as children's centres

### **The Family Centre Network**

1. As part of the Council's proposed service delivery model, services would be delivered from 16 buildings across the county, as well as through online and telephone services, and individual support delivered at family homes or at other community venues. The overall number of fixed delivery sites is proposed to ensure localised delivery and reach across the county.
2. All family centre sites are proposed to be retained children's centre buildings in order to ensure a continuing focus on the delivery of early years provision, as well as widening the use of the building for the benefit of families with older children. The family centres would continue to operate as the locations for the Council's children's centres with continuing registration of use with the Department for Education (DfE), and in accordance with all statutory requirements.
3. Currently, the existing children's centre buildings are in many cases under-utilised and are not cost-effective to maintain. Efficiencies from a reduction in the running costs of buildings means that more funding is available for service delivery.

## New site location considerations

4. The Council has considered how best to meet its statutory obligations in relation to the selection of sites for retained children's centres and service delivery.
5. In particular, attention has been made to follow the relevant requirements under the following sets of guidance:
  - Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018, DfE<sup>1</sup>
  - Statutory guidance on children's centres 2013, DfE<sup>2</sup>
  - Statutory guidance on the roles and responsibilities of the Director of Children's Services 2013, DfE.<sup>3</sup>
6. In line with the Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 Statutory Guidance, the factors used as the basis for site consideration included evidence on the needs of different localities (as published in a research report), which were informed by the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA). The service design model and types of services to be delivered at family centres is also informed by consideration of evidence on the effectiveness of current services (as set out in an options appraisal).
7. To meet the Council's statutory duty to ensure sufficient children's centres within the area, as set out in the statutory guidance on children's centres 2013, consideration has been given in particular to:
  - The accessibility of children's centres and their services, taking into account the distance and the availability of transport.
  - The evidence in regard to each children's centre with a presumption against closure, unless the Council has the supporting evidence to demonstrate that the most disadvantaged would not be adversely affected.
8. The Council has also given consideration to the need to meet its statutory obligation to ensure sufficient high quality early years provision across Buckinghamshire.
9. A range of factors have informed the proposals regarding which children's centre buildings to be retained and used as family centres. These include:

---

<sup>1</sup>

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/729914/Working\\_Together\\_to\\_Safeguard\\_Children-2018.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/729914/Working_Together_to_Safeguard_Children-2018.pdf)

<sup>2</sup>

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/678913/childrens\\_centre\\_stat\\_guidance\\_april-2013.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/678913/childrens_centre_stat_guidance_april-2013.pdf)

<sup>3</sup>

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/271429/directors\\_of\\_child\\_services - stat\\_guidance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/271429/directors_of_child_services - stat_guidance.pdf)

- a) **The views of the public and partners**—See consultation report provided by BMG Research, Appendix 1 of the Cabinet papers.
- b) **Overall need levels by area**—The identified need of children and families for additional support was considered based upon the analysis set out in the research report for this review (see background papers). This research report identified composite needs based on a range of five risk factors:
- Domestic Violence
  - Assault
  - Mental Health
  - Neglect
  - Substance Misuse
- c) **Population density**—At least one family centre is proposed in each of the three largest towns in the county: Aylesbury, Wycombe and Amersham. One of these centres per town will be called family centre plus sites and deliver services five days a week with drop-in access.
- d) **Coverage and reach across Buckinghamshire**—Buckinghamshire is a rural county which means that not all towns are within easy travel distance for rural communities. Enabling broad coverage of children's centres across the county was a key consideration.
- e) **Practical building considerations**—Consideration was given to the suitability of the building for a wide-range of family activities, the size of the venue and access. In addition, the potential for the building to be used by partners, particularly health, has been considered to improve joint working.
- f) **The effectiveness of current children's centres**—Evidence on the impact of potential closures has been considered from a range of sources including considering data on the current use and reach of the buildings (as published in the Council's research report), as well as consultation responses.
- g) **The potential for sites to be used for wider early years provision**—The Council has had preliminary discussions with site owners and other interested parties to test the viability of children's centre buildings being used to help meet the Council's statutory responsibility to ensure sufficiency of early years provision where they might be closed formally as children's centres.

## **Family Centre Plus Sites**

10. Out of the 16 family centre locations identified, the Council is committed to ensuring that three of these sites deliver extra services to meet needs. At these family centre plus sites families will be able to access drop-in support five days a week, as well as a wide variety of family support, including joint health delivery. From September 2019 the initial intended location of the family centre plus sites will be:

- Mapledean, High Wycombe
- Newtown, Chesham
- Southcourt, Aylesbury

11. The exact range and configuration of services delivered at the family centres will be developed as part of the implementation planning with local community engagement.

12. As part of the service design model it is intended that the advertised programmes will change to meet local needs over time, including which of the family centres will host the drop-in access. A key consideration for the drop-in access will be to ensure that this is provided in the most accessible centres in areas of high population density.

## **Staff office locations**

13. The Family Support Service staffing will be structured to operate three area-based teams: Aylesbury Vale; Wycombe and Chiltern/South Bucks. Staff will operate flexibility to work across these areas to respond to need. Three area office bases are intended to operate from the following sites: Elmhurst Family Centre (Aylesbury Vale Area); Castlefield/Hamilton Road (Wycombe area); and from Chiltern District Council offices (Chiltern/South Bucks).

## **Alternative uses of children's centre sites**

14. 19 children's centres are proposed for closure as designated children's centres registered with the DfE. Whilst these buildings would no longer be used as formally designated children's centres, the Council is proposing that they continue to be used for the benefit of families with children 0-5 and wider community benefit.

15. As part of the consultation process, the Council asked for views on possible alternative uses of buildings. More than two-thirds (68%) of respondents agreed with the Council's aim that children's centre buildings proposed for closure should continue to be used for community benefit, particularly early years provision.

16. During the consultation process preliminary discussions took place between the Council and relevant site owners/leaseholders to identify alternative uses for those sites where the Council either owns the building or is a leaseholder.

17. A key consideration in these discussions has been to ensure that where a DfE SureStart grant was provided that the building continues to be utilised for early years majority usage to meet the grant conditions.

18. Following these discussions the types of use proposed for the 19 children's centre sites are:

- a. School sites—additional nursery/pre-school places (8)
- b. School sites—continuing early years provision e.g. baby & toddler groups, health clinics, and wider school and or community use (4)
- c. Library sites—continuing early years provision as above. (3)
- d. Community sites—continuing early years provision as above (2)
- e. Centres to be closed where there was no fixed address so no building (2)

#### **Proposed future use of children's centres**

<b>Area</b>	<b>Retention</b>	<b>Closure &amp; alternative use</b>
<b>Aylesbury Vale</b>	Aylesbury (Southcourt) Children's Centre Early Years Excellence Hub (Elmhurst) Aylesbury (Berryfields: Quarrendon) Children's Centre Wing Children's Centre Buckingham Children's Centre	Aylesbury (South West) Children's Centre Aylesbury (Oakfield and Bedgrove) Children's Centre (Broughton) Early Years Excellence Hub (Bearbrook) Children's Centre Waddesdon & Whitchurch Children's Centre Haddenham Children's Centre Wendover Children's Centre Ivinghoe & Pitstone Children's Centre Steeple Claydon Children's Centre
<b>Wycombe</b>	Mapledean Children's Centre (Wycombe Abbey) High Wycombe (Castefield) Wycombe (Hampden Way) Children's Centre Wycombe (Disraeli) Children's Centre Marlow Children's Centre Risborough Children's Centre	Wycombe (East) Children's Centre (Micklefield: Ash Hill) Wycombe (Millbrook) Children's Centre Hamilton Rd Children's Centre (High Wycombe Terriers & Amersham Hill) Stokenchurch & Hambleden Valley Children's Centre Hazlemere & Loudwater Children's Centre Wooburn Green & Bourne End Children's Centre
<b>Chilterns &amp; South Bucks</b>	Newtown Children's Centre Amersham Children's Centre Burnham Children's Centre Beaconsfield Children's Centre	The Chalfonts Children's Centre Prestwood & Missenden Children's Centre Farnham Children's Centre Denham & Gerrards Cross Children's

	The Ivers Children's Centre	Centre Chesham (Waterside) Children's Centre
--	-----------------------------	---

## Annex A: Rationale for Site Proposals

*Note: Shaded cells indicate children's centres proposed for retention. Non-shaded centres are those existing children's centres which are proposed for closure. This means that the County Council would de-designate these buildings as children's centres with the DfE. However, this does not mean that the buildings would be empty (see Annex C for alternative uses).*

### Aylesbury Vale Delivery Sites

There are five family centre sites proposed in the Aylesbury Vale district area overall: three in the Aylesbury town centre area, and two in surrounding villages to maximise accessibility in rural communities.

The Aylesbury town centre area has a high population density and significant composite early help need levels in comparison to other areas in Buckinghamshire. It will also see the largest housing growth in the surrounding areas. Consideration has been given to ensure a good geographical coverage of centres across the town centre, as well as across the whole of the Aylesbury Vale district area to meet local needs.

	<b>Centre Name</b>	<b>Rationale for decision</b>
1	Aylesbury (Southcourt) Children's Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Surrounding areas have high rates of composite needs for early help services.</li><li>The building is large enough to enable a wide-range of service provision and staff use, and it is in a good location for public transport and car access.</li></ul>
2	Early Years Excellence Hub (Elmhurst) Children's Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Surrounding areas have high rates of composite needs for early help services.</li></ul>
3	Aylesbury (Berryfields: Quarrenden) Children's Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Surrounding areas have high rates of composite needs for early help services.</li><li>Situated in an area of housing growth with the population of 0-19 forecast to rise.</li></ul>
4	Wing Children's Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Situated in the centre of an isolated area of relative high composite need for early help services.</li><li>This location provides greater accessibility to a family centre for residents in the rural surrounding areas.</li></ul>
5	Buckingham Children's Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Buckingham town centre is an area of high relative need for early help services.</li><li>It is also the largest town within the north Buckinghamshire area with the best transportation access for service users.</li></ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The current Buckingham Children's Centre is proposed for retention based upon the needs within the area. However, through the consultation process service users and stakeholder organisations highlighted the limitations of the current building which is a room within the Grenville school site. The current location and size means that whilst it can continue to be used as a children's centre for early years provision other venues in the town may need to be used for wider family service delivery.</li> <li>In the longer-term the Council will be looking to explore other possible alternative venues for a fixed family centre (and children's centre) within the Buckingham town centre to improve accessibility for families.</li> </ul>
<b>6</b>	Aylesbury (South West) Children's Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Whilst this is a registered children's centre with the DfE there is no fixed delivery site.</li> <li>Services are currently delivered by Spurgeons, on behalf of the Council, through offering a programme of activities across a cluster of children's centres.</li> <li>Health provision will continue unaffected in the area as they do not use a current children's centre building.</li> <li>Residents living in this area have good access to alternative children's centres in Aylesbury town.</li> </ul>
<b>7</b>	Aylesbury (Oakfield and Bedgrove) Children's Centre (Broughton)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Within the Aylesbury town centre area the Council has identified three children's centres to retain to meet the needs of town residents.</li> <li>The sites identified for retention have higher levels of need compared to this site.</li> </ul>
<b>8</b>	Early Years Excellence Hub (Bearbrook) Children's Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This site is close to the proposed retained Southcourt Children's Centre so this was discounted in order to ensure good geographical spread across Aylesbury town.</li> </ul>
<b>9</b>	Steeple Claydon Children's Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lower level of composite early help need in comparison to sites proposed for retention.</li> </ul>
<b>10</b>	Waddesdon & Whitchurch Children's Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The children's centre is located in a property owned by Waddesdon Parish Council which is leased to the County Council. The parish council are keen to continue with a range of early years delivery from their site including widening access so that childminders can use the space.</li> <li>Given the community-led desire to use the space to meet early years needs in the community the Council is proposing this site for formal closure as a children's centre.</li> </ul>
<b>11</b>	Haddenham Children's Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lower level of composite early help need in surrounding area in comparison to sites proposed for retention.</li> </ul>
<b>12</b>	Wendover Children's Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lower level of composite early help need in comparison to sites proposed for retention.</li> <li>Identified need in the area for additional nursery provision. The Council has a statutory duty to ensure sufficiency of early years provision and this site has been identified as being suitable to help meet this need and duty.</li> </ul>
<b>13</b>	Ivinghoe & Pitstone Children's Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lower level of composite early help need in comparison to sites proposed for retention.</li> <li>Identified need in the area for additional nursery provision.</li> <li>The Council has a statutory duty to ensure sufficiency of early years provision and this site has been identified as being suitable to help meet this need and duty.</li> </ul>

## Wycombe Delivery Sites

There are six family centres proposed in the Wycombe district area overall: four in the town area and two in the surrounding areas to maximise travel accessibility.

The Wycombe town area has a high population density and significant composite early help need levels in comparison to other areas in Buckinghamshire.

Given the need levels of the town population four family centres are proposed overall in High Wycombe. Consideration has been given to their best location to ensure geographical coverage across the town as well as respond best to local needs.

	<b>Centre Name</b>	<b>Rationale for decision</b>
14	Mapledean Children's Centre (Wycombe Abbey)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Relatively high composite need for early help services in surrounding areas.</li><li>The building provides a large and high quality space for the delivery of a wide range of services/activities.</li></ul>
15	High Wycombe (Castlefield) Children's Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Relatively high composite need for early help services in surrounding areas.</li><li>The building provides a large and high quality space for the delivery of a wide range of services/activities.</li></ul>
16	Wycombe (Hampden Way) Children's Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>This site was originally proposed in the Council's consultation for closure and is now proposed for retention.</li><li>Consultation feedback highlighted the desirability of a wider geographical spread of children's centres across the Wycombe town area.</li><li>It is located in an area of high composite early help need in the surrounding area.</li></ul>
17	Wycombe (Disraeli) Children's Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>This site was originally proposed in the Council's consultation for closure and is now proposed for retention.</li><li>Consultation feedback highlighted the relative high levels of usage, reach and need levels in the surrounding area.</li></ul>
18	Marlow Children's Centre (Foxes Piece)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Retaining a children's centre in Marlow helps to ensure a good geographical coverage of centres across Buckinghamshire to maximise their accessibility to residents.</li></ul>
19	Risborough Children's Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Retaining a children's centre in Risborough helps to ensure a good geographical coverage of centres across Buckinghamshire to maximise their accessibility to residents.</li></ul>
20	Wycombe (East) Children's Centre (Micklefield: Ash Hill)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Wycombe East is an area of high composite need for early help services.</li><li>This site is proposed for closure as the building space is small – one room. The size limits the usage of the space currently and health partners deliver from alternative sites in the area.</li><li>Residents will be able to access services from Hampden Way Family Centre, as well as continuing</li></ul>

		health provision in the area which is unaffected.
<b>21</b>	Wycombe (Millbrook) Children's Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relatively lower levels of composite early help need in immediate surrounding areas, as well as user numbers in comparison to those sites proposed for retention in Wycombe town area.</li> <li>In addition, the school has responded that their intention is to continue to ensure that the building space is available for continuing use for early years provision and health use.</li> </ul>
<b>22</b>	Hamilton Rd Children's Centre (High Wycombe Terriers & Amersham Hill)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lower levels of composite early help need in immediate surrounding areas, as well as user numbers in comparison to those sites proposed for retention in Wycombe town area.</li> </ul>
<b>23</b>	Stokenchurch & Hambleden Valley Children's Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lower level of composite early help need in surrounding area in comparison to sites proposed for retention.</li> </ul>
<b>24</b>	Hazlemere & Loudwater Children's Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lower level of composite early help need in surrounding area in comparison to sites proposed for retention.</li> </ul>
<b>25</b>	Wooburn Green & Bourne End Children's Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lower level of composite early help need in surrounding area in comparison to sites proposed for retention.</li> </ul>

Note: There are two satellite sites to children's centres which are also proposed for alternative use. The first site is a satellite to Marlow Children's Centre at Sandygate Road, Marlow Infant School and proposed for nursery or school use.

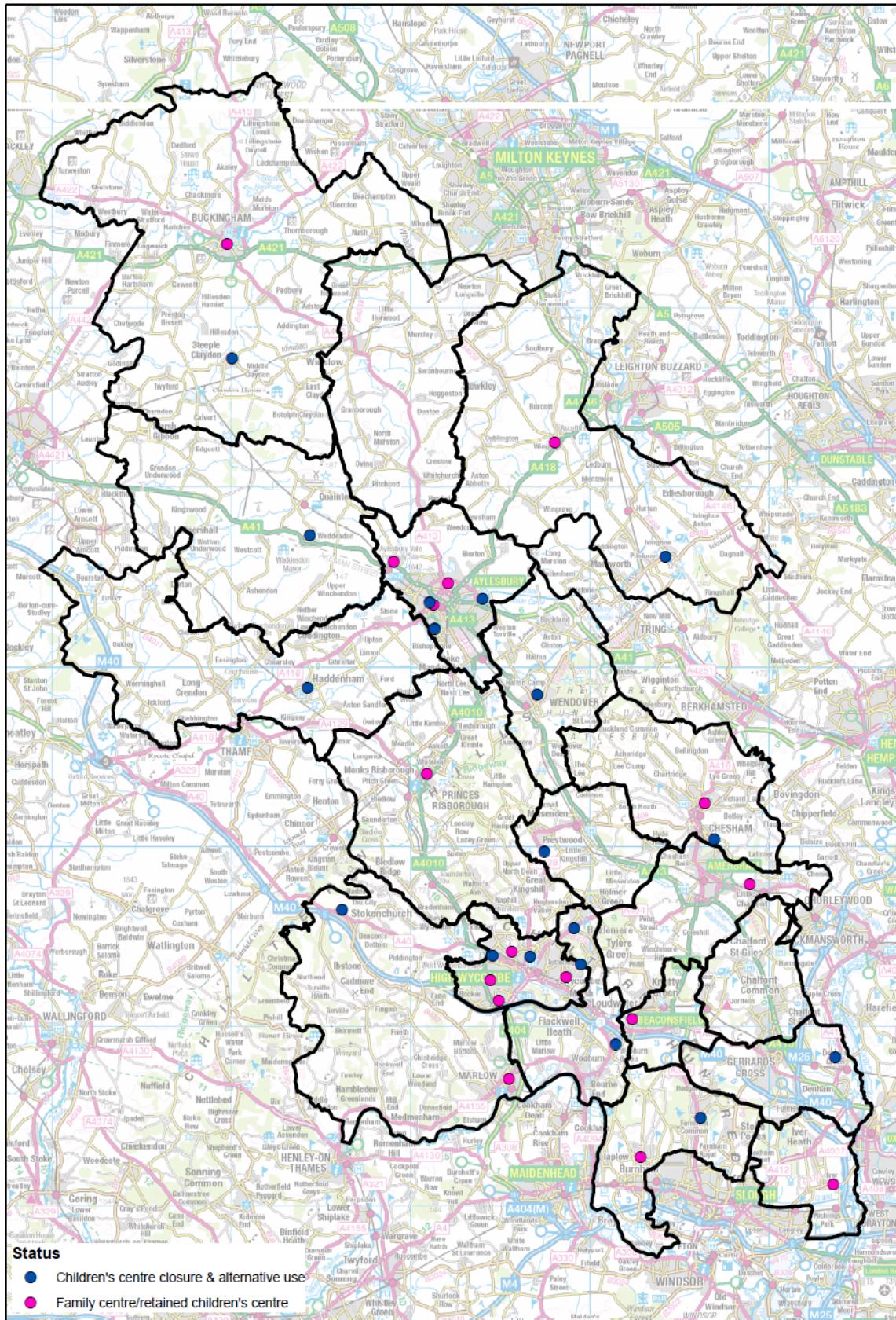
The second is a satellite site to Stokenchurch & Hambleden Valley Children's Centre at Lane End Primary School and the school is committed to continuing to use the space for early year provision including health delivery.

## Chiltern & South Buckinghamshire Sites

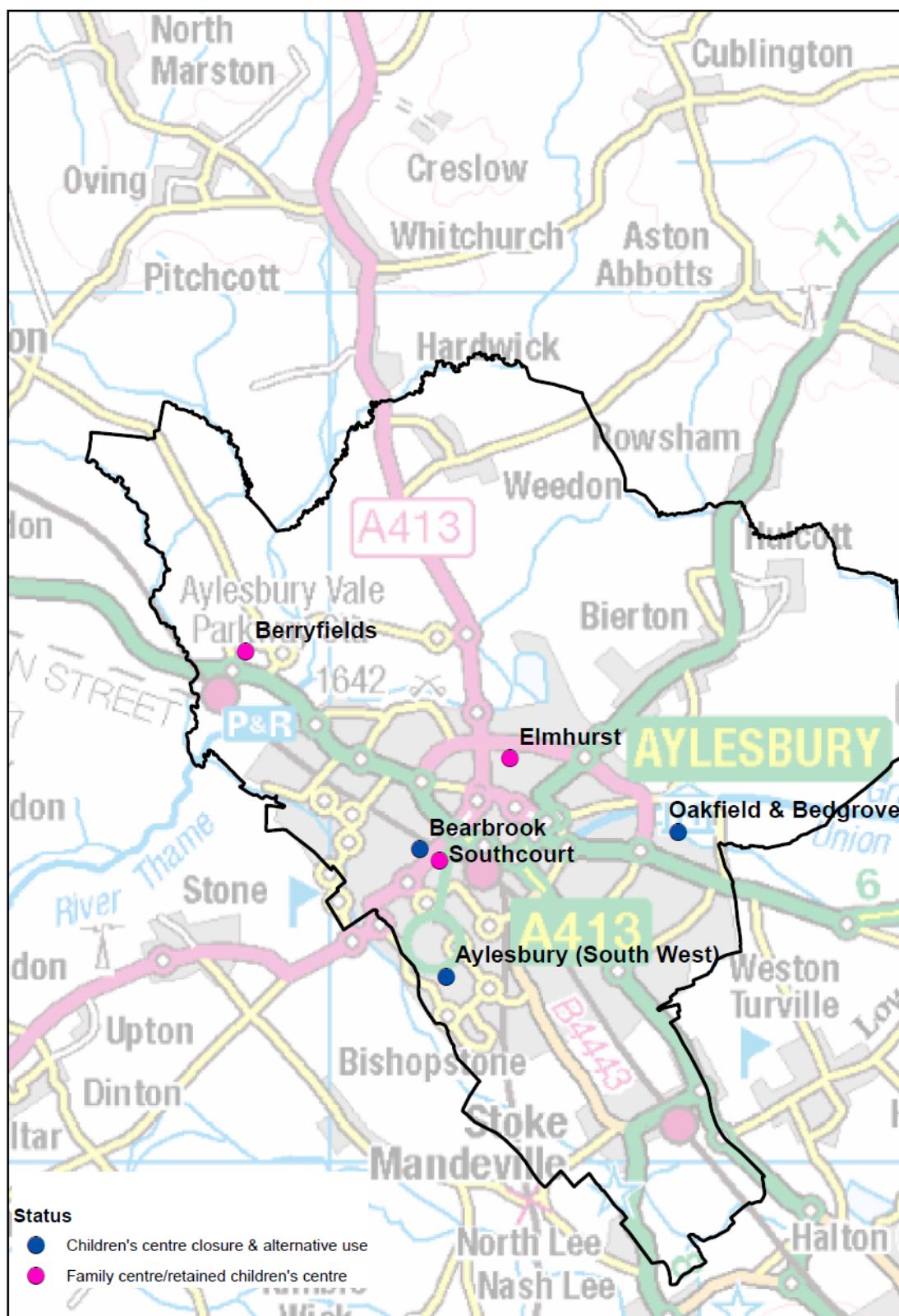
Five family centres are proposed across the Chiltern and South Bucks district areas overall. The area is relatively rural with a low population density overall. Particular regard was therefore given to ensuring a sufficient geographical coverage of centres to ensure accessibility, recognising the limited public transport between areas.

	<b>Centre Name</b>	<b>Rationale for decision</b>
<b>26</b>	Newtown Children's Centre (Chesham)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Located in Chesham town area which is an area of relatively high composite early help need.</li> <li>Out of the two centres in Chesham it has a significantly higher number of users and reach.</li> </ul>
<b>27</b>	Amersham Children's Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Located in an area with a large 0-19 population in the surrounding areas.</li> <li>Amersham in population terms is the fourth largest town after Aylesbury, Wycombe and Chesham.</li> </ul>
<b>28</b>	Burnham Children's Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Located in and close to isolated areas of high composite need for early help services.</li> <li>This location ensures a geographical coverage in the far south of the county, to maximise the accessibility of family centres to residents in rural isolated areas.</li> </ul>
<b>29</b>	Beaconsfield Children's Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Situated near to isolated areas of high composite need for early help services.</li> </ul>
<b>30</b>	The Ivers Children's Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Located in an area of high composite early help need in the surrounding area.</li> <li>This location ensures a geographical coverage in the far south of the county, to maximise the accessibility of family centres to residents in an area with limited public transportation to alternative centres.</li> </ul>
<b>31</b>	The Chalfonts Children's Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lower level of composite early help need in surrounding area in comparison to sites proposed for retention.</li> <li>Whilst this is a registered children's centre with the DfE there is no fixed delivery site.</li> <li>Services are currently delivered by Action for Children, on behalf of the Council, through offering a programme of activities across a cluster of children's centres with the centre hub at Beaconsfield children's centre (proposed for retention).</li> <li>Health provision will continue unaffected in the area as they do not use a specific children's centre building.</li> <li>Residents living in this area have good access to a family centre at Beaconsfield.</li> </ul>
<b>32</b>	Prestwood & Missenden Children's Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lower level of composite early help need in surrounding area in comparison to sites proposed for retention.</li> </ul>
<b>33</b>	Farnham Children's Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lower level of composite early help need in surrounding area in comparison to sites proposed for retention.</li> </ul>
<b>34</b>	Denham & Gerrards Cross Children's Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lower level of composite early help need in surrounding area in comparison to sites proposed for retention.</li> </ul>
<b>35</b>	Chesham (Waterside) Children's Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Located in Chesham town area which is an area of relatively high composite early help need. In comparison to Newtown children's centre, this site is in a relatively lower area of need with lower numbers of users and reach.</li> </ul>

## Annex B – Proposed Family Centres across Buckinghamshire



## Aylesbury Town: Detailed View



## **High Wycombe: Detailed View**



## Annex C: Alternative uses proposed for children's centre's proposed for closure

<b>Children's Centre</b>	<b>Type of location</b>	<b>Tenure</b>	<b>Future use—Outcome of preliminary engagement</b>
<b>Aylesbury Vale District Sites</b>			
Aylesbury (South West) Children's Centre	n/a	n/a	n/a – no fixed address.
Aylesbury (Oakfield and Bedgrove) Children's Centre (Broughton)	School	Freehold	Additional pre-school places. The pre-school on the site is oversubscribed and there is an identified need for more early years places in the area.
Early Years Excellence Hub (Bearbrook) Children's Centre	School	Freehold	Additional pre-school places. The pre-school on the site is oversubscribed and there is an identified need for more early years places in the area.
Steeple Claydon Children's Centre	School	Freehold	The school has confirmed its intention to use the space to support continuing early years provision, including use of the building for health clinic delivery.
Waddesdon & Whitchurch Children's Centre	Parish Council	Leasehold	Waddesdon Parish Council would like to take back the management of this space for continuing early years provision, including use by childminding groups and wrap around early years care.
Haddenham Children's Centre	Library	Leasehold	The children's centre operates from the community library there is no separate building. The library would like to utilise the space for continuing community benefit and children's library.
Wendover Children's Centre	School campus	Freehold	Nursery provision. There is an identified need in the area and suitable standalone site for full-time day care provision.
Ivinghoe & Pitstone Children's Centre	School	Leasehold	Additional pre-school places. The pre-school on the site is oversubscribed and there is an identified need for more early years places in the area.

<b>Wycombe District Area Sites</b>			
Wycombe (East) Children's Centre (Micklefield: Ash Hill)	School	Freehold	The school is interested in exploring expanded nursery provision and the Council's officers are working with the school to help create a business plan.
Wycombe (Millbrook) Children's Centre	School	Freehold	The school would continue to use the space to provide early years provision through a programme of activities.
Hamilton Rd Children's Centre (High Wycombe Terriers & Amersham Hill)	Council stand-alone site	Freehold	The Council's Early Help Service intends to retain the first floor for staff office space and the ground floor for nursery provision.
Stokenchurch & Hambleden Valley Children's Centre	Private – Owned by Scouts	Leasehold	The Council would look to sub-lease to a nursery provider to meet the need for additional places in the area.
Hazlemere & Loudwater Children's Centre	Library	Freehold	The library would take on responsibility for the building and will continue to offer early years use and health provision.
Wooburn Green & Bourne End Children's Centre	School	Freehold	The school would take over the running of the building for continuing early years use and health provision.
Sandygate site at Marlow Infant School (satellite site to Marlow children's centre)	School	Freehold	The nursery on school site would use for extended space or school use for early years.
Lane End site at Lane End Primary School (satellite site to Stokenchurch & Hambleden Valley Children's Centre)	School	Freehold	The school would use the space for continuing early years services and continued health provision.
<b>Chiltern and South Bucks Sites</b>			
The Chalfonts Children's Centre	n/a	n/a	n/a – no fixed address.
Prestwood & Missenden Children's Centre	Holy Trinity Church	Leasehold	The Holy Trinity Church would take on the running on the building and continue to use the space for early years provision, including through continuing health provision delivery on site.
Farnham Children's Centre	Community Library	Freehold	The library would take on responsibility for the building and will continue to offer early years use and health provision.
Denham & Gerrards Cross Children's Centre	School	Freehold	The school would take on the running of the building and continue to use the space for continuing early years provision, including health

			service delivery and the potential for family support delivery and sensory space.
Chesham (Waterside) Children's Centre	School	Leasehold	The Academy Trust intends to use this space as office space for its headquarters.



**When completing this Equality Impact Assessment, please refer to the accompanying guidance document available on the intranet [here](#).**

### **Part 1: Basic details**

<b>Project title</b>	Early Help Review
<b>Is this a new or existing document/service?</b>	Existing
<b>Responsible officer</b>	Sara Turnbull
<b>Job title</b>	Transformation Programme Manager
<b>Contact no.</b>	
<b>Team</b>	Early Help
<b>Service</b>	Education
<b>Business Unit</b>	Children's Services
<b>Date started</b>	June 2018
<b>Date completed</b>	31 Jan 19 (and kept under review following the outcome of a Cabinet decision)

### **Part 2: Purpose and Objectives**

<b>2.1</b>	<b>What is the purpose of the project or change?</b>	The Early Help Review seeks to redesign an effective, efficient, and financially sustainable, Early Help service for Buckinghamshire to improve services for children and families. Currently, the County Council's early help services are not reaching children and families in need effectively. Analysis has shown only 15% of the children and families who currently access the Council's early help services in the scope of the review have been assessed as needing to access additional support. <sup>1</sup>
<b>2.2</b>	<b>What are the key objectives of the project or change?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To improve outcomes for children and families by transforming the way in which services are delivered.</li> <li>• To ensure services are delivered within the financial resources available.</li> <li>• To ensure contacts, referrals and repeat referrals to social care reduce, and, children and their families receive the right support at the right time.</li> <li>• To ensure early help support is co-ordinated and aligned to social care provision.</li> <li>• To enable the tracking of outcomes across all early help services to provide evidence of impact and</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Early Help Review Options Appraisal Appendix 2 - research report on prevalence and need.

<https://democracy.buckscc.gov.uk/documents/s121169/Appendix%20Research%20report%20on%20Prevalance%20and%20Needs.pdf>



## Equality Impact Assessment Template

	<p>demonstrate sustainability.</p> <p>To achieve these project objectives a new integrated Family Support Service is proposed to be set-up which aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support vulnerable children and families to enable them to thrive and achieve positive outcomes.</li> <li>• Integrate services wherever possible to create stronger partnerships which make effective use of all resources and improve family and community resilience.</li> <li>• Improve access to services and reduce duplication to enable children and families needing our support to tell their story only once.</li> <li>• Evidence the impact of early help to reduce cost pressures on statutory services.</li> </ul>
<b>2.3</b>	<p><b>Which other functions, services or policies may be impacted?</b></p> <p>The functions and service areas within the scope of this review are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Buckinghamshire Family Information Service.</li> <li>• Children's Centres.</li> <li>• Advice and support for young people provided by Connexions/ Adviza.</li> <li>• Family Resilience Service.</li> <li>• Barnardo's Support for Parents.</li> <li>• Youth Service.</li> <li>• Support services: Families First &amp; Early Help Panel teams.</li> </ul> <p>The Council's early help services work is part of a wider system of support to families provided by a variety of organisations. Stakeholders have been consulted and engaged as part of the consultation process (see BMG consultation report Appendix 1 to the Cabinet decision report).</p>
<b>2.4</b>	<p><b>Who are the main stakeholders impacted by this project or change?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• District Councils.</li> <li>• Buckinghamshire Clinical Commissioning Group.</li> <li>• Buckinghamshire College Group.</li> <li>• Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust.</li> <li>• Schools and Early Years Providers.</li> <li>• National Probation Service.</li> <li>• Parent Carers Forum.</li> <li>• NHS England.</li> <li>• Oxford Health Foundation NHS Trust.</li> <li>• Public Health.</li> <li>• Thames Valley Police.</li> <li>• Thames Valley Probation (Community Rehabilitation Company).</li> </ul>

## Equality Impact Assessment Template

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth Offending Service.</li> <li>• Voluntary and Community Sector.</li> <li>• Service users of early help services, as well as more widely children and families 0-19 (and up to age 25 for those with special educational needs).</li> <li>• BCC employees in scope of the Early Help Review.</li> <li>• Providers and employees in scope of the Early Help Review.</li> </ul>
<b>2.5</b>	<p><b>Which other stakeholders may be affected by this project or change?</b></p> <p>Many organisations provide support to children and families, not just the County Council. Effective early help relies upon local organisations working together to identify children and families who would benefit from early help; undertaking an assessment of need; and providing targeted early help services to address those assessed needs.</p>

### **Part 3: Data and Research**

<b>3.1</b>	<p><b>What data and research has been used to inform this assessment?</b></p> <p><b>Pre-consultation Research</b>  The County Council undertook a range of pre-consultation research prior to going out to formal consultation on proposals. The Council published an options appraisal which includes an overview of the different evidence considered, as well as a research report delivered in-house and a pre-consultation qualitative research report carried out by BMG Research. Copies of the pre-consultation documents are available to view online at: <a href="http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/earlyhelp">www.buckscc.gov.uk/earlyhelp</a></p> <p>The qualitative research included in-depth interviews with residents and partners, as well as a workshop with both groups to ensure their views were included in the design of proposals.</p> <p>Quantitative research looked at needs, population density and changing demand to identify where support should be targeted. A research report was compiled to present an in-depth analysis of the profile of need for early help services in Buckinghamshire and the profile of existing service use. This report collated and analysed a variety of data, intelligence, web-resources, policy and guidance from local, regional and national sources in order to build a comprehensive picture of early help in Buckinghamshire and establish a clear needs assessment.</p> <p><b>Demographic data and needs analysis</b></p>
------------	--

## Equality Impact Assessment Template

	<p>Buckinghamshire has a total population of approximately 534,700. 30% of the population is aged 0-24 years, slightly higher than the South East (24%). The population overall has increased by 29,400 (4.6%) from 2011 to 2016 and is projected to increase by 107,200 (20%) from 2015 to 2039. Although a largely rural or semi-rural county, a quarter of residents live within the towns of Aylesbury and High Wycombe. A third of residents live in rural areas, compared to 20% across the South East (ONS Mid-Year Estimates 2015).</p> <p>Approximately 122,200 children and young people under the age of 18 years live in Buckinghamshire. This is 22.9% of the total population in the area (534,700 people), which is slightly above the English average of 21.3%. Currently, the population aged 0-19 tends to be clustered to the South of Buckinghamshire in Wycombe, Chiltern and South Buckinghamshire. There are fewer young people in the more rural areas. By 2031, Aylesbury and Wycombe will be home for 70% of 0-19 year olds.</p> <p>Buckinghamshire is home to an increasingly diverse population - 21% of the 0-19 year old population is of an ethnic minority (Black and Minority Ethnic or Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME), compared to the South East average of 14% (based on Census 2011). It is estimated that the BAME population aged 0-19 year will reach 47,000 by 2031 compared to 26,000 in 2011, making Asian and Asian British the largest groups in the younger and adult populations. To accommodate the rising population in the County, significant development is anticipated in Buckinghamshire including the need for affordable housing. From 2013–2033 it is estimated that there is a need for 9,600 affordable homes and 15,000 top of the range dwellings across Buckinghamshire. The majority of new house builds will be around Aylesbury and High Wycombe and around the northern county border with Milton Keynes.</p> <p>Around two thirds of demand for Children's Services is situated in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Aylesbury and High Wycombe, which together account for approximately half of all service users.</li><li>• Chesham is the next biggest town in terms of service users - between 5 and 8%.</li><li>• Buckingham, Amersham, Burnham &amp; Lent Rise, Beaconsfield, Marlow and Princes Risborough all have high proportions of service users across all of the six in-scope services.</li><li>• Rural areas account for between 5% and 11% of service users depending on the service.</li></ul>
--	---

## Equality Impact Assessment Template

	<p>Factors affecting families who may benefit from early help include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Population growth.</li><li>• Housing growth.</li><li>• Deprivation.</li><li>• Protected characteristics.</li></ul> <p>The drivers of population growth among children and young people in Buckinghamshire are mainly due to:</p> <p><b>Births</b>—Between 6,000 to 6,300 births annually (birth rates are higher in the most deprived 20% of Buckinghamshire 72 compared to 62 average births per 1,000 women in Buckinghamshire).</p> <p><b>Migration</b>—Families with young children and adults often move to Buckinghamshire, and a large proportion of young people aged 15 -19 years leave the county.</p> <p><b>Housing growth</b>—Latest estimates suggest that the population of Buckinghamshire is 534,700. 30% of the population are aged 0-24 years, which is slightly higher than for the south east region (24%).</p> <p><b>Deprivation</b>—Deprivation is often linked to higher levels of need within communities around the county. It is used as an indicator of need, and although it is not the only predictor for actual need in the community, it is regarded as a substantial contributing factor.</p> <p>Buckinghamshire is the second least deprived county council in England according to the 2015 Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD). At a district level, Chiltern district is the third least deprived local authority (out of 326 local authorities) in England, and the least deprived in Buckinghamshire, ahead of South Bucks (25th least deprived), Wycombe (34th) and Aylesbury Vale (44th).</p> <p>Nevertheless, there are pockets of more significant deprivation in local areas of the county.</p> <p>The most deprived Buckinghamshire residents are situated in Aylesbury and High Wycombe. Aylesbury Vale is the only district with areas in Rank 2 (the worst rank for Buckinghamshire for overall deprivation), located in Quarrendon and Southcourt.</p> <p><b>Family centre Locations</b> The locations of family centres proposed are set out in</p>
--	---

## Equality Impact Assessment Template

	<p>Appendix 4 of the Cabinet decision papers. The data as set out in the Council's needs assessment was a critical factor in determining locations, alongside other factors such as geographical spread of sites.</p> <p><b>Population data and protected characteristics</b></p> <p>As part of the Council's needs assessment research was carried out to identify information on the service user profile and wider potential population who may benefit from early help services. Key information known is summarised below:</p> <p><b>Age differences</b>—A comparison of projected changes from 2016 to 2031 identifies substantial differences between districts. The largest growth across all age groups is expected in Aylesbury Vale, which is also where the highest population of young people in Buckinghamshire is expected (38% of estimated 0-19 year old population by 2031).</p> <p>Highest growth is expected in the 10-14 year old and 15-19 year old categories, supporting the need for effective services to meet the needs of families with teenagers as well as those with young children.</p> <p><b>Age &amp; service user profile</b></p> <p>Early help services are open to all parents/carers regardless of their age. Currently there are different age ranges of children that individual services support. The predominant service users are those accessing universal services at children's centres which focus on supporting families with children 0-5.</p> <p><b>Disability</b>—Disability is an indicator for potential need for early help services. The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) chapter on Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) has identified an increase in the number of children aged 0-16 years taking up the Disability Living Allowance, with particular increases in Aylesbury Vale. From 2012 to 2015, there was a 9% increase in claimants. As well as the number of children who will be eligible for SEND services, complexity of need has increased.</p> <p>Children and young people with SEND are 15% more likely to be eligible and claiming free schools meals.</p> <p>13.4% of the population said in the 2011 Census that they had a long-term health problem or disability limiting their day-to-day activities to some extent, 7.8% reported that their activities were limited a little and 5.6% said that they were limited a lot. Buckinghamshire has similar proportions across districts.</p>
--	--

## Equality Impact Assessment Template

### **Disability and service user profile**

The disability of early help service users overall is not data currently held. However, children's centre service user data shows that children are more likely to have a disability (15% compared with a 1% average across the county).

This data may reflect that some targeted sessional activities are delivered at children's centres by health such as CAMHS provision, as well as reflecting disability as one indicator of need.

**Gender**—The gender breakdown in Buckinghamshire is 51% female and 49% male, which is similar to national average.

### **Gender & service user profile**

Early help services are open to be accessed by all regardless of gender. The gender profile is different for each individual service within scope of this review. For example, the Family Resilience Service gender profile is broadly similar to the general population. In contrast, the profile of children's centre service users is predominately female (75% of registered users in 2017/18) which is also reflective of the profile of survey respondents.

**Pregnancy and Maternity**—There were 7,244 conceptions in Buckinghamshire in 2013. In 2014, there were 5,989 live births of which over a third were born to mothers from Aylesbury Vale or Wycombe district. Mothers in Buckinghamshire have a slightly older age profile than England but the majority of mothers are aged between 30-34 years at the time of delivery. Mothers in the most deprived quintile of the population have a higher birth rate than in the least deprived quintile.

### **Pregnancy/Maternity & service user profile**

No overview data is held by the Council on the pregnancy/maternity and service users. However, many of the existing range of services that are delivered at children's centres are specifically targeted at new mothers such as anti- and post-natal health services. Whilst these services are out of scope of this review they are often delivered from children's centre buildings.

**Marriage and civil partnerships**—In the 2011 Census, 54% of the Buckinghamshire population described themselves as married, 28.8% as single, 8.1% divorced, 6.5% widowed, 2.3% separated and 0.2% registered in a same-sex civil partnership. The proportion of the population married was higher, whilst the proportion of those who were single,

## Equality Impact Assessment Template

	<p>divorced, widowed or separated or in same sex civil partnerships was lower than the regional and national averages.</p> <p>The 2011 census estimated that there are about 33,556 coupled families and 12,338 lone parents living across Buckinghamshire.</p> <p>No data is held on the service user profile in regard to this protected characteristic.</p> <p><b>Race</b>—In Buckinghamshire, 21% of the 0-19 year old population are from Black and Minority Ethnic or Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds, compared to the South East average of 14% (based on Census 2011). There has been an increase in BAME groups compared to white groups – with an increase of 82% from 2001 – 2011 and a forecast increase of 62% in BAME groups from 2011 – 2031 across the Buckinghamshire population.</p> <p>It is estimated that the BAME groups aged 0-19 year will increase to 47,000 by 2031 from 26,000 in 2011. Asian and Asian British are expected to be the largest groups. In 2011, the BAME population is much younger than the white population in Buckinghamshire.</p> <p>It is estimated that there will also be distinct differences by town across the community with High Wycombe and Greater Aylesbury likely to see the greatest increases in BAME population growth by 2033.</p> <p>There are a disproportionate number of people from BAME backgrounds who have repeat contact with social care. The JSNA also identified that almost a third of people living in the most deprived areas of Buckinghamshire are of non-white ethnicity compared to 6% in the least deprived areas.</p> <p><b>Race &amp; service user profile</b></p> <p>The ethnicity profile of early help service users overall is not data currently held. However, in regard to children's centre service user data shows that children are more likely to come from BAME ethnic groups (30% compared with 21% Bucks average).</p> <p><b>Religion or belief</b>—The 2011 Census is the most up to date data source for religion or belief in Buckinghamshire. This showed that 69% of people in Buckinghamshire stated that they followed a religion (compared to 68% in England). The 0-19 year old population differ slightly to the Buckinghamshire average. A lower proportion reported to be Christian (53.7%)</p>
--	--

## **Equality Impact Assessment Template**

	<p>compared to the Buckinghamshire average (60.5%) and a higher proportion reported to be Muslim (8.4%) compared to Buckinghamshire (5.1%).</p> <p>A high proportion of 0-19 year olds stated they were Muslim in Wycombe (14%) but this figure is lower for Chiltern (4%) and South Bucks (4%). There were slightly higher numbers of Sikh and Hindu groups in the South Bucks district of the county compared to the rest of the county.</p> <p>No overview data is held by the Council on the religious profile of service users. Council services are open to all.</p> <p><b>Sexual Orientation and Transgender</b> —The Buckinghamshire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment estimated that there are likely to be approximately 7,500 people aged 16 and over who consider themselves gay/lesbian/bisexual.</p> <p>No data is held on the service user profile in regard to either sexual orientation or transgender. Services are open to all.</p> <p><b>Public Consultation</b></p> <p>BMG Research was commissioned by the Council to deliver a consultation survey. A copy of the consultation report is set out in Appendix 1 of the Cabinet decision papers. The key issues arising from the consultation in relation to protected characteristics were:</p> <p><b>Age</b>—Respondents to the consultation survey were predominantly a younger profile than the Bucks average. This is reflective of the service user profile of early help services.</p> <p>Approximately half (49%) of consultation respondents were aged 35-49, and just under a third (31%) of respondents were aged 25-34. 10% of respondents were aged 50-64, 3% were aged 18-24, 3% came from the over 65s, and 1% of individuals responding to the consultation were aged 16-17. A further 1% preferred not to say.</p> <p>Overall those from all age groups who responded to the survey were more likely to support the Council's preferred option B, which is what is proposed to Cabinet, setting up an integrated Family Support Service to operate via a network of family centres.</p> <p>However, respondents were significantly more likely to prefer Option A if they were aged 25 to 34 or 35 to 49 (33% and 30% respectively in comparison to the average of 26% support for option A).</p>
--	--

## Equality Impact Assessment Template

	<p><b>Disability</b>—Around one-tenth (10%) of respondents identified themselves as having a longer term physical or mental health condition or illness which reduces their ability to carry out day-to-day activities, while four-fifths (82%) said this was not the case, 1% did not know and 6% preferred not to say. Four-fifths (82%) of respondents do not have any children with long-term mental or physical health problem, while 13% said this was the case. 1% did not know, 2% preferred not to say, and 1% stated this was not applicable. The proportion of respondents who expressed the view that option B would have a negative impact on their family is higher amongst those with a physical or mental health issue (39%), in comparison to 27% overall.</p> <p><b>Gender and Pregnancy/Maternity</b>—The majority of survey respondents were female (610) which is reflective of the service user profile of children's centre users.</p> <p>Whilst option B was the preferred option for all demographic groups, option A is more likely to be the preference when the respondent has a child under 5 or aged 5 to 9 (32% for each); and if the respondent is currently or has been pregnant in the last year (33%), in comparison to the average of 26% across all respondents.</p> <p>In the open-text consultation responses a key theme was concerns about the accessibility of services if children's centres closed. In particular, a practical concern was raised in regard to how parents (and particularly women as the primary carers) might be able to access a proposed family centre if there was not a direct and accessible bus journey.</p> <p>In response to this concern, the Council has made changes to the locations of the proposed family centres. Overall, 2 additional family centres are proposed to maximise accessibility in Ivers and east Wycombe. Accessibility was a key factor considered in all site locations (see Appendix 3 of the Cabinet papers on site locations).</p> <p><b>Race</b>—Overall those from all age groups who responded were more likely to support the Council's preferred option B. However, respondents were significantly more likely to prefer option A if they were from a BAME background (40% in comparison to the average of 26% for option A).</p> <p>Whilst the Council has no evidence of a negative impact of the proposals in relation to ethnicity, and has evidence of positive impact arising from the service design model, the</p>
--	--

## Equality Impact Assessment Template

		<p>consultation feedback indicates that there will need to be an effective communications plan to alleviate any concerns in implementing service changes.</p> <p><b>Religion</b>—Just under half (46%) of consultation respondents identified as Christian; at the 2011 census, 60.5% of Buckinghamshire's residents did so. The 'no religion' group accounts for over a third (35%) of questionnaire respondents, compared with 24% of Buckinghamshire's residents as a whole. A further 5% of survey respondents identified as Muslim, while 1% were Hindu, 1% Sikh, and an additional 2% belonged to a different religion; these figures are all broadly similar to the proportions given by Buckinghamshire residents overall at the 2011 census.<sup>2</sup></p> <p>Those identifying as Christian were significantly more likely to prefer option B, with 62% doing so, while Muslims were significantly less likely to prefer option B (42%).</p>
3.2	<b>Have any complaints on the grounds of discrimination been made in relation to this project?</b>	No
3.3	<b>Please provide evidence of these.</b>	N/A
3.4	<b>What <u>positive</u> impacts have been established through research findings, consultation and data analysis?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The proposed model targets resources at supporting the most vulnerable children and families. We know that our current early help services are not reaching those families who need help most—only 15% of the families accessing the Council's early help services in 2017/18 had an identified need for support.</li> <li>• Better support for families through ensuring stronger co-ordination and join-up of support across partner organisations, particularly with health and schools.</li> <li>• The retention of delivery sites across Buckinghamshire will maintain the accessibility of the service locally as well as via access through outreach by family support workers and online/telephone support.</li> <li>• Greater potential for flexible responses to changing demography and need, due to the number of localised delivery sites which can be varied to reflect increase/decreasing need or population.</li> <li>• Enhanced Buckinghamshire Family Information Service and on-line resource to enable increased opportunities for self-help.</li> </ul>

<sup>2</sup> 2011 Census data available at:

[https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140712011717tf\\_](https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140712011717tf_/) /http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/community/research/2011-census/

## Equality Impact Assessment Template

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each school will have a named link family support worker within an area team to ensure the timely identification of families in need and develop support plans. This will help schools to address the rising level of ECHP and increase SEN support.</li> <li>• Increased outreach capacity through integration of services ensuring support plans for children and families are collaborative, clear and effective.</li> <li>• <b>Age</b>—The proposals for change include setting up an integrated family support service which supports families with children 0-19 (up to 25 for those with special educational needs). The family centres would enable increased access to support for families with older children with a wider remit than the current children's centres which are for families with children 0-5.</li> <li>• <b>Disability</b>—The increased targeting of the service at the more vulnerable should have a positive overall impact for disabled children and families.</li> <li>• <b>Gender</b>—Targeted support for those in need including specialist practitioners in key areas including SEND, domestic abuse and parenting. This specialist support may be particularly beneficial to women so have a positive gender impact reflecting the societal demography of women as primary carers. Currently, there are low numbers of male parents who access children's centre services. Introducing a more targeted approach provides the opportunity to consider how best to engage with this group to enhance service provision.</li> <li>• <b>Pregnancy/Maternity</b>—Targeted support for those in need is a key aspect of the service design including greater integration of service working with health, which should have a positive impact on this group.</li> <li>• <b>Race</b>—Increased targeting work is aimed at avoiding problems getting worse and the need for social care interventions. There are a disproportionate number of people from BAME backgrounds who have repeat contact with social care. Therefore, the design of the new model, if effective, will have a positive impact in relation to this protected characteristic.</li> </ul>
3.5	<p><b>What <u>negative</u> impacts have been established through research findings, consultation and data analysis?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There will be fewer opportunities for the identification of families through children's centres. However, this would be offset by improved liaison with schools, early years settings, and health to support increased early identification. A core function of the integrated area teams will be to identify families in need.</li> <li>• There will be a reduced number of fixed delivery sites</li> </ul>

## Equality Impact Assessment Template

	<p>across the county. However this is replaced by more integrated services, outreach work and increased accessibility to family support services through a variety of ways including easier self-referral. Targeted services will remain accessible and the Council will support access to universal services through direct delivery at family centres and through the wider work of the service in promoting community provision.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Age</b>—The service design model is assessed as having an overall positive impact for families 0-19 (and for children up to the age of 25). However, it is recognised that some parents/carers with children 0-5 have expressed concern about the closures of children's centres, as can be seen in the survey responses.</li><li>• <b>Disability</b>—The service model is assessed as having an overall positive impact for children and families with disabilities, as a result of targeted provision to those with additional needs. However, in areas where children's centres are to close parents who wish to access universal/open access stay and play baby/toddler activities may need to look to other community/private provider alternatives. As the profile of children accessing children's centres is disproportionately children with disabilities this is identified as a potential negative impact and a need for mitigation through ensuring that parents are aware of the range of local community activities available.</li><li>• <b>Gender</b>—The service model is assessed as having an overall positive impact for women and men. However, in those areas where children's centres are to close, users who wish to access universal/open access stay and play baby/toddler activities may need to look to other community/private provider alternatives. As the profile of children's centre users is disproportionately female (75%) this is identified as a potential negative impact and a need for mitigation through ensuring that parents are aware of the range of local community activities available.</li><li>• <b>Pregnancy/Maternity</b>—The service model is assessed as having an overall positive impact for pregnancy/maternity. However, in those areas where children's centres are to close there may be a disproportionate impact on mothers as a result of the need for possible changes in some locations of where health services are delivered in future. This is mitigated by both the alternate use of buildings proposal where ongoing health delivery will be maintained in some designated sites and further by the commitment of both Public Health and Buckinghamshire Health Trust to localised delivery for their client group, even if this</li></ul>
--	---

## Equality Impact Assessment Template

		<p>means identifying alternate local delivery sites where continued use of children's centre buildings cannot be maintained.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Race</b>—The service model is assessed as having an overall positive impact on race. However, respondents were significantly more likely to prefer Option A if they were from a BAME background (40% in comparison to the average of 26% for option A). This evidence supports the need for mitigation through an effective communications plan which is targeted at different groups, including BAME groups, on the service changes.</li> </ul>
<b>3.6</b>	<b>What additional information is needed to fill any gaps in knowledge about the potential impact of the project?</b>	As part of the implementation planning, the new Family Support Service will ensure that data on protected characteristics is collected on the profile of service users. This will help the service to monitor and target services to different groups to increase the accessibility of services, meet needs, and improve the outcomes of different groups.

### Part 4: Testing the impact

Within this table, please indicate (✓) whether the project will have a positive, negative or neutral impact across the following nine protected factors and provide relevant comments.

*Note 1: Listing a negative outcome does not mean the project cannot continue.*

*Note 2: This is an opportunity to identify and address issues for improvement*

		Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Neutral Impact	What evidence do you have for this?	Improvement Actions Required
4.1	<b>Age</b>	✓	✓		<p>Positive—Family centres set-up to provide support to families with children 0-19, wider than the current remit of children's centres 0-5.</p> <p>Negative—in areas where children's centres are closed parents/carers of children 0-5 will be impacted and may wish to access alternative provision e.g. community run baby and toddler groups/activities or travel to their nearest family centre.</p>	Buckinghamshire Family Information Service website to be enhanced to signpost to local community family activities.
4.2	<b>Disability</b>	✓	✓		<p>Positive—increased targeting supports this group.</p> <p>Negative—A disproportionate number of children accessing children's centre services are disabled therefore will be impacted by the closure of children's centres. In addition, the survey responses indicated that those with physical or mental health issues had higher levels of negative views about the potential impact of option B on their</p>	An effective communications implementation plan to be put in place, including continuing engagement with key groups such as FACT, to ensure that services are designed and communicated to parents of children with disabilities.

## Equality Impact Assessment Template

				families.	
4.3	<b>Gender</b>	✓	✓	<p>Positive—increased targeting of provision provides opportunity for specialist support with health and support for fathers.</p> <p>Negative—In those communities where children's centres are closed, parents (particularly mothers) may need to access alternative provision (such as community run baby and toddler activity sessions).</p>	<p>Creation of three new posts in the service dedicated to building community capacity.</p> <p>Improvements to the Buckinghamshire Family Information Service Website.</p> <p>Closer working with health providers to enable earlier identification of need.</p>
4.4	<b>Marriage / Civil Partnership</b>			✓	
4.5	<b>Pregnancy / Maternity/ Paternity</b>	✓	✓	<p>Positive—increased targeting of services to those in need will improve accessibility for this group.</p> <p>Negative—In areas where children's centres are closed, the locations of where anti-natal and post-natal care is delivered from may need to change.</p>	<p>The Council has been working closely with BHT and other health partners to mitigate this risk. In many of these buildings services will continue unaffected by agreement of the new lease holder (predominately schools).</p> <p>Health partners are committed to continuing localised health delivery and will be identifying local alternative venues as needed.</p>
4.6	<b>Race</b>	✓	✓	<p>Positive—A key objective of the new service design is to prevent problems getting worse and the need for social care interventions. The service will be targeted at this group to improve outcomes.</p> <p>Negative—The survey results indicated disproportionate support for alternative service design models.</p>	<p>As part of the communications plan for the launch of the new service, engagement with BAME communities will be critical.</p>
4.7	<b>Religion/ Belief</b>			✓	
4.8	<b>Sexual Orientation</b>			✓	
4.9	<b>Transgender</b>			✓	
4.10	<b>Carers</b>	✓	✓	<p>Positive—The new service is designed to maximise support for carers who need additional support.</p> <p>Negative—Where children's centres are closing carers may want/need to access alternative universal open access activities e.g. stay and play baby/toddler groups.</p>	<p>Buckinghamshire Family Information Service website to be improved to signpost to local community family activities.</p>

## **Equality Impact Assessment Template**

### **Part 5: Director / Head of Service Statement**

<p>I am fully aware of the duties required of Buckinghamshire County Council (BCC) under the Equality Act 2010 and I have read our Equality Strategy.</p> <p>I am satisfied that this Equality Impact Assessment shows that we have made every possible effort to address any actual or potential unlawful discrimination.</p>	<p><b>Name:</b> Gareth Morgan</p> <p></p> <p><b>Signature</b></p> <p><b>Date:</b> 31 January 2019</p>
--	--

# Report to Cabinet

---

<b>Title:</b>	<b>Home to School Transport</b>
<b>Date:</b>	Monday 4 March 2019
<b>Date can be implemented:</b>	Tuesday 12 March 2019
<b>Author:</b>	Cabinet Member for Education and Skills
<b>Contact officer:</b>	Sarah Callaghan, Director for Education
<b>Local members affected:</b>	All
<b>Portfolio areas affected:</b>	Education and Skills, and Transportation

*For press enquiries concerning this report, please contact the media office on 01296 382444*

## Summary

The purpose of this report is to seek approval to agree, following a consultation process, the adoption of the proposed changes to the Council's Home to School Transport provision. The details to support this paper are set out in Appendices 1 – 6, as listed below:

- Appendix 1 - Proposed Home to School Transport Policy
- Appendix 2 - Consultation Findings Report
- Appendix 3 - Proposed Post 16 Annual Statement
- Appendix 4 - Legislation for Home to School Transport
- Appendix 5 - Needs Assessment
- Appendix 6 - Equality Impact Assessment

The service is proposing that the Home to School Transport provision in Buckinghamshire changes as (a) increased demand is creating unsustainable budget pressures, and (b) to ensure that the Council's policy is in line with current Government guidance. In addition, it is important Cabinet notes that the level of demand for Home to School Transport has increased the budget pressure from £1.4m to £1.9m between April 2018 and November 2018.



## **Recommendations**

- 1. To note the results of the consultation and agree the changes to Buckinghamshire's Home to School Transport provision, in line with the recommended options summarised below and detailed in paragraph 12:**
  - a) Transport for Post 16 pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disability**
    - i. Remove free transport for existing and new pupils.
    - ii. From September 2019, charges to be based on the distance from home to school as detailed within section 12.
    - iii. Increase provision of independent travel training for eligible young people aged between 16 and 18 years old.
  - b) Reduction of costs associated with our Home to School Transport offer**
    - i. Review the cost of all paid for transport, including mainstream.
    - ii. Review unnecessary transport through rationalisation of routes and bus sizes.
    - iii. Remove commissioned transport where there is a viable public route.
  - c) Evreham and Ivinghoe arrangements**
    - i. From September 2020, remove discretionary free transport for all new pupils only.
    - ii. Offer routes to commercial sector where appropriate.
- 2. To agree that the revised Home to School Transport Policy (Appendix 1), produced in consultation with parent carer representatives, is adopted.**
- 3. To agree that the revised Post 16 Annual Transport Policy Statement (Appendix 3) setting out the Post 16 transport offer be adopted.**
- 4. To agree to give delegated authority to the Executive Director for Children's Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills and the Cabinet Member for Transportation to:**
  - a) Update and revise both the Home to School Transport Policy (Appendix 1) and the Post 16 Annual Transport Policy Statement (Appendix 3) and undertake consultation as and when required.**
- 5. To agree that there should be a further review of the Post 16 Transport Policy in January 2020 to determine whether future policy changes are required.**

## A. Narrative setting out the reasons for the decision

### Case for Change

1. There are three key drivers that underpin the review of the Council's Home to School Transport offer as follows:
  - a) **Financial Sustainability** - The current financial position is unsustainable. Even with changes to practice and improving access to earlier support in schools, the cost for transport continues to exceed the planned budget due to increasing demand and pressures against current policy provision. It is important that the Council ensures that children and young people in Buckinghamshire are able to access quality and sustainable services. It is also worth noting that forecast pressures have increased since the launch of the consultation process and this has informed the recommendations in relation to the timeframe for implementation. As such, the recommendation in the report is to bring forward charging for Post 16 SEND students to September 2019.
  - b) **Promoting Independence** - The Council is committed to fulfilling its statutory duties in accordance with the Children and Families Act 2014, and disabled and vulnerable adults who have eligible care and support needs, as defined under the Care Act 2014. We need to make sure that young people are adequately prepared for adulthood by encouraging and enabling them to access education, as well as develop their independence.
  - c) **Environment** - As the county grows, we need to mitigate the effects of growth on our environment by introducing and implementing environmental laws and fostering good practice. Tackling air pollution and concentrating on improving air quality and cleaner transport, as well as lowering pollutants, are key elements of the sustainable modes of transport strategy.
2. The proposed changes are part of the Council's transport transformation programme to improve quality and best support residents' travel needs. The programme aims to ensure a consistent approach in the adjustment to the support offered, that mitigates any negative impact on particular cohorts of pupils and is based on the following principles:
  - Support those most in need.
  - Promote independence.
  - Provide the most cost effective travel assistance.
  - Promote and encourage the use of sustainable travel.

### Current policy and cost of Home to School Transport

3. The total annual cost of providing transport for all pupils is currently £15.1m. The categories below provide a breakdown of how the spend is apportioned.
  - a) Compulsory school age – eligible pupils under section 508B of the Education Act 1996

The existing policy covers those who are prescribed to be offered travel assistance free of charge. The annual cost of this is currently £12.7m, of which £8.8m is for children with special educational needs or a disability (SEND).

- b) Compulsory school age – supported under sections 508C and 509A of the Education Act 1996

The existing policy covers other transport categories, including assistance for those residing in Evreham and Ivinghoe under a historic arrangement and paid for travel, which the Council is currently subsidising. The annual cost of these other arrangements is currently £1.0m.

- c) Post 16 Transport – eligible pupils under section 509AA of the Education Act 1996

The existing policy supports students with SEND who have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) if they meet specific criteria. The policy also provides information of other transport options, including the transport arranged by colleges and schools, bursaries and the options for paid for transport. The annual cost for this cohort is currently £1.4m.

## **The proposal**

4. The Council consulted on amending its Home to School Transport policy in the following areas:

- a) Utilise more sustainable modes of transport, including moving routes to the public network and reducing the amount of dedicated school buses.
- b) Remove option of free school transport for those currently supported under sections 508C of the Education Act 1996 (Evreham Promise and Ivinghoe Promise).
- c) Implement discounted travel (subsidised) for Post 16 SEND pupils on public networks or other appropriate provision, replacing the free of charge travel currently offered.
- d) Extend the use of Independent Travel Training to increase the ability of pupils to use alternative transport options.

## **The Consultation Process**

5. The Council has been exploring alternative ways of delivering Home to School Transport. The Council wanted to seek the views of Buckinghamshire residents on the proposals so that the future offer best meets the needs of local communities and families within available resources. The consultation focused on understanding residents' views on these proposals.

6. The consultation took place between 31 October 2018 and 4 January 2019. There were 2308 survey responses completed, of which 245 respondents reported they

received free home to school transport due to their child having SEND. Of the 245 respondents, 80 reported they have a child/children over the age of 16.

7. As part of the consultation process and to target key stakeholders, the Council hosted a number of face to face events. Attendees included parents and carers, young people, parents and service user representative groups such as Families and Children Together (FACT) Bucks, The National Autistic Society (NAS), Greater Resources for Autism Supporting Parents and Siblings (GRASPS), Special Educational Needs and Disability Information, Advice and Support (SENDIAS), Schools and Colleges, and Transport providers. The events included:
  - **11** Council public meetings open to all to attend.
  - **1** forum for parents who have a child/children with SEND facilitated by FACT Bucks.
  - **2** sessions specifically for parents who have a child/children with SEND.
  - **1** session with the Youth Voice Executive Committee.
8. A full summary of the consultation findings can be found in Appendix 2, covering the themes raised by respondents as part of the survey and in the open event sessions.
9. The consultation survey was promoted via social media, schools and governors, bulletins, newspapers articles, radio coverage, television, internal newsletters, parish newsletters, and banners on relevant webpages.

## **Summary of consultation questions**

10. A summary of the profile and responses received during the consultation process are provided below:

### **Profile:**

- 91% of respondents were parents with children attending school or college.
- 33% of respondents are parents with a child that receives free home to school transport.
- 12% of respondents are parents with a child/children with SEN.
- 67% of respondents do not currently receive free Home to School Transport.

### **Responses**

- 66% of respondents had concerns about their children travelling on a public bus service, but only 12% of all respondents were parents with a child/children with SEN.
- 48% of those responding did not think their child would benefit from having a more flexible bus service for after school activities etc.
- There were comparable proportions of respondents who would (23%) and would not (24%) change to a public service that was more cost effective. The remaining respondents either did not currently pay (39%), or were not sure what decision they might make (14%).
- 24% of all respondents disagreed that those in the Ivinghoe and Evreham promise areas should have transport provision in line with the statutory

guidelines that are already applied to the rest of the county. This is much lower compared to the respondents who live in Ivinghoe and Evreham, where 46% and 76% respectively disagreed that the current discretionary transport provision should be removed

- 35% of all respondents agreed that those who are currently receiving free transport in Ivinghoe and Evreham should have to start paying from September 2020. This is higher compared to those respondents who live in Ivinghoe and Evreham, where 20% and 9% respectively agreed.
- 55% of all those responding to the online survey disagreed that parents should have to pay a contribution for their children to attend Post 16 education if they had special educational needs. This is significantly lower compared to those respondents who have a child/children with SEND where 94% disagreed. Of those respondents who have a post 16 SEND child/children 99% disagreed.
- 48% of all respondents preferred a flat fee if a charge for Post 16 SEND transport was to be implemented. 28% thought the fee should be based on distance, and 24% did not mind. In comparison, 70% of respondents who have a child/children with SEND preferred a flat fee. Of those respondents who have a post 16 SEND child/children 72% preferred a flat fee.
- 63% of all respondents said that those Post 16 SEND students already receiving transport should not have to pay from September 2020. This is significantly lower compared to the respondents who have a child/children with SEND where 91% disagreed. Of those respondents who have a post 16 SEND child/children 97% disagreed.

11. The following table set outs the key themes from the consultation findings and the Council's proposed response.

Consultation findings	
<b>Key themes from question about use of public transport (Q6. We are proposing to move some school bus routes to public bus routes. Do you have any concerns about your child travelling to school on a public bus route?)</b>	<b>The Council will:</b>
<p>1) <b>Safety</b> – Residents expressed concerns regarding the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children travelling on buses with members of the public who are not DBS (Disclosure Barring Service) checked</li> <li>• Pupils walking to and from bus stops that are further away</li> <li>• Children getting off the bus before they get to school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aim to set up a partnership agreement with our suppliers in order to ensure safeguarding, reliability and quality of the transport provision</li> <li>• Establish standard checks against which suppliers must comply</li> <li>• Have robust strategies in place to manage Passenger Assistants and Drivers ensuring children's' safety (Transporting children and/or vulnerable adults constitutes a 'regulated activity' under the</li> </ul>

	<p>Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake regular monitoring through compliance officers to assure the quality of service and ensure appropriate safety standards</li> <li>• Publish a clear complaints process.</li> </ul>
2) <b>Routes</b> – Residents raised comments on the following:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not having a public bus route near to their home</li> <li>• Public bus routes not going directly to the school (with pupils having to change buses)</li> <li>• Concerns that public bus routes could be cancelled by the bus companies</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to work with service suppliers to ensure that where practical, routes are available in rural areas</li> <li>• Review performance and contract monitoring so that suppliers are delivering against agreed outcomes</li> <li>• Implement Mandatory Training for Operators/Drivers/Passenger Assistants as well ensure they sign up to our Code of Good Practice; our partnership agreement includes mandatory training for all suppliers.</li> <li>• Over time, develop mixed provision to include community offer which will widen provision of transport in more rural areas.</li> </ul>
3) <b>Times</b> – Residents raised comments regarding the following:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to work with service suppliers to ensure that routes are at appropriate times to coincide with start and end of school day.</li> </ul>
<b><i>Themes from question about increased flexibility (Q7. Most school buses provide a single pick up and drop off service each weekday. Would your child benefit from moving to a more flexible public bus route? For example, if they take part in after-school clubs or activities).</i></b>	<b><i>The Council will:</i></b>
4) <b>Poor bus route/frequency</b> – Residents commented on the following:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Address these issues together through tighter control of contracts as set out in point 2</li> </ul>
• The quality and frequency of public	

<p>buses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The location of bus stops, length and frequency of journeys.</li> <li>There are school routes with no public route from their home to school (This tended to be in rural areas).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some of these issues are outside the scope of the consultation</li> <li>Continue to work with service suppliers to ensure that where practical, routes are available in rural areas</li> <li>Review performance and contract monitoring so that suppliers are delivering against agreed outcomes</li> </ul>
<p>5) <b>Journey times</b> – there was a significant number of residents who expressed views the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Journey times</li> <li>Flexibility and reliability of public transport.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to work with service suppliers to ensure that where practical, routes are available in rural areas and links to school routes.</li> <li>Review performance and contract monitoring so that suppliers are delivering against agreed outcomes</li> <li>Have an even better ‘grip’ and management of the market so as to creating a competitive climate</li> <li>Incentivise a competitive market to encourage a wider range of stakeholders to be involved</li> </ul>
<p>6) <b>Safety</b> - Comments included concerns on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Journeys for children from public bus stops to their home, referencing poor street lighting, speed of roads and location of bus stops.</li> <li>Perception of the safety of public transport compared to school buses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aim to set up a partnership agreement with our suppliers in order to ensure safeguarding, reliability and quality of the transport provision</li> <li>Establish standard checks against which suppliers must comply</li> <li>Undertake regular monitoring through compliance officers to assure the quality of service</li> <li>Publish a clear complaints process.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Themes from question about paid for transport and option of cheaper travel (Q8. If you currently pay for school transport, would you consider moving to a public bus service if it meant that you saved money?)</b></p>	<p><b>The Council will:</b></p>
<p>7) <b>Safety</b> - Residents responding to this question highlighted the following:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aim to set up a partnership agreement with our suppliers in order to ensure safeguarding, reliability and quality of</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>That the safety of their children was a high priority for them.</li> <li>Some respondents commented that they would prefer to spend more on a school bus as they deemed this a safer option for their child.</li> <li>Respondents also commented that the general public on buses were a safety concern, locations of bus stops and danger of high speed roads.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the transport provision</li> <li>Establish standard checks against which suppliers must comply</li> <li>Undertake regular monitoring through compliance officers to assure the quality of service</li> <li>Publish a clear complaints process.</li> </ul>
<p><b>8) Journey times</b> - Comments were received regarding bus services, particularly in regard to the lack of reliability.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to work with service suppliers to ensure that where practical, routes are available in rural areas and links to school routes.</li> <li>Review performance and contract monitoring so that suppliers are delivering against agreed outcomes</li> </ul>
<p><b>9) Potential for savings and availability of routes and times</b> - Residents said their decision to switch to public transport would depend on the options for routes and in particular what potential savings could be achieved and the potential flexibility of routes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with service providers to optimise routes so that all users can benefit from efficiencies in costs</li> <li>Work with service providers to continue to develop flexibility of routes through development of a mixed provision</li> <li>Review of contracts – scrutiny of procurement and cost</li> </ul>
<p><b>Themes from Post 16 charging (Q11 – Introducing transport charges for students with (SEND) aged 16+)</b></p>	<p><b>The Council will:</b></p>
<p><b>10) Too expensive</b> - Residents are concerned about the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cost of transport if charges are implemented for Post 16 SEND pupils.</li> <li>A number commented that both proposals were too expensive and unaffordable.</li> <li>Comments also cited other costs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that it is clearly communicated that charges would be a contribution. The cost of transport will remain heavily subsidised as the average cost per Post 16 SEND pupil is £3,500 per year.</li> <li>Incentivise suppliers to be more competitive which will have an impact on the reducing the cost of transport</li> </ul>

<p>required to support a child with SEND.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some comments mentioned making alternative arrangements to avoid the cost by either making other travel arrangements or looking for alternative school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with colleges and other education establishments to help those who require financial support access bursaries.</li> <li>To rationalise routes and bus sizes to be more cost effective.</li> </ul>
<p><b>11) Fewer special schools –</b> Residents commented on how the levels of provision of special schools within Buckinghamshire could mean that SEND children travel longer distance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review current sufficiency of SEND provision so that the appropriate support is available to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND.</li> </ul>
<p><b>12) Unfair or discriminatory -</b> Respondents commented that they felt the proposal was unfair and penalised parents with children with SEND. Residents who did not receive SEND home to school transport commented that they thought the proposal was either unfair or families with children with SEND should not be penalised financially.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to make transport arrangements for those requiring specialised provision.</li> <li>Undertake a transport assessment for every young person prior to their transition to Post-16 education.</li> <li>Develop the Independent Travel Training which will upskill students who have the potential to travel supported or unsupported on public transport.</li> <li>To implement charges that are consistent for all Post 16 students whether they have SEND or not.</li> </ul>
<p><b>13) Some contribution is reasonable –</b> Residents who did not receive SEND home to school transport thought the proposal was fair with most preferring the flat fee option. However, many commented that this should be means tested.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduce a financial contribution based on distance banding; this is in line with current charging for mainstream Post 16 students</li> <li>Work with colleges and other education establishments to support those who require it to access financial support via bursaries.</li> <li>Continue to have exceptional circumstances taken into account to allow consideration of a reduced contribution in the case of extreme financial hardship.</li> </ul>

## Needs Assessment

Appendix 5 sets out a needs assessment for the Post 16 cohort of students. This provides detail on the existing transport network, location of sixth forms and colleges and travel options for different groups of students. This assessment highlights that students with SEND are more likely to have to travel further to a college or school and this travel is therefore likely to cost more on average. In addition students with SEND may have more difficulties utilising public transport networks or need more support to use these transport options. For this reason, it is appropriate that support continues to be provided to students with SEND who meet specific criteria, however this support does not need to be provided free of charge. The legislation permits support to be offered by way of a financial contribution as opposed to offering to fully fund transport. As the average cost of transport for students with SEND is approximately £3,500 and significantly higher than the average cost of transport for students without SEND, it is appropriate for the Council to subsidise the cost of transport, but require a financial contribution to be made by the parents of students with SEND.

In addition, it is important to support students with SEND to gain independence by increasing the availability of independent travel training, as this will assist students to utilise a wider range of travel options and to gain independence as part of their transition to adulthood.

## **Recommendations**

12. Having fully considered the consultation responses and other relevant information set out in this report, the following changes are recommended:

- a) **Transport for Post 16 pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disability**
  - i. **Removal of free transport for existing and new pupils.**
  - ii. **From September 2019, charges to be based on the distance from home to school as set out below. A 5% increase and an administration fee have been applied to the current academic year's charges, which range from £660 - £1111.**

<b>Band</b>	<b>Distance from home to school</b>	<b>Annual charge</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Under 4 miles</b>	<b>£706.00</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>4 – 4.99 miles</b>	<b>£823.60</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>5 – 6.99 miles</b>	<b>£941.20</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>7 – 9.99 miles</b>	<b>£1,060.90</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>10 miles or more</b>	<b>£1,179.55</b>

**These charges will be subject to annual review.**

- iii. **Increase provision of independent travel training for eligible young people aged between 16 and 18 years old. Further detail is provided below in paragraph 13.**
- iv. **Conduct a further review of the Post 16 Transport Policy in January 2020 to determine whether future policy changes are required.**

- b) **Reduction of costs associated with our Home to School Transport offer**

- i. **Review the cost of all paid for transport, including mainstream.**
- ii. **Review unnecessary transport through rationalisation of routes and bus sizes.**
- iii. **Remove commissioned transport where there is a viable public route.**

**c) Evreham and Ivinghoe arrangements**

- i. **From September 2020, remove free transport for all new pupils only.**
- ii. **Offer routes to commercial sector where appropriate.**

### **Independent Travel Training**

13. Independent Travel Training (ITT) is presently available to pupils aged 16 to 18 in Buckinghamshire within some colleges and schools. In preparation for adulthood, it is expected that the majority of young people beyond the age of 16 who are able to do so will travel independently to their place of education. ITT supports young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to engage in activities which support outcomes associated with growing independence.
14. The Council is working with schools and colleges to promote a programme of ITT, so that students will ultimately be able to travel on their own. For some students with SEND, ITT would not be appropriate due to their complex needs, but where students have the potential to benefit from ITT it is expected that those students will participate in the programme.
15. It is a programme of support that aims to enable a young person to become an independent and safe traveller, as a result it covers topics such as road safety, personal safety, journey planning and coping strategies.
16. The Council recognises that ITT has the following immediate benefits for the student:
- a) Enables students to be more independent and use their own initiative.
  - b) Improves self-confidence and promotes independence.
  - c) Enables students to access positive social, educational and professional development activities.
  - d) Helps to improve social skills and maintain relationships.
  - e) Physical health benefits as the student walks all or part of the way.
17. The Council will be looking to extend the use and availability of this programme through an externally commissioned arrangement. In addition, the Council will also encourage more educational establishments to provide their own ITT programme to support this cohort further.

## B. Other options available

18. Consideration was given to a number of options, as outlined in the previous Cabinet report.

19. The Council could:

- a) Make no change and continue with the current Home to School Transport offer.
- b) Introduce the Post 16 SEND proposed changes for new children only and transport offers for existing children would not be affected.
- c) Continue to offer free transport for those Post 16 SEND pupils who are part way through a two year course.
- d) Charge a flat fee for Post 16 SEND pupils as suggested by 48% of all respondents and 70% of respondents who have a child/children with SEND.

20. A summary of the pros and cons of each of the other options is set out below:

Option	Pros	Cons	Rationale for not choosing this option
a) No change and continue with the current Home to Transport School offer.	New and existing service users will continue to benefit from current home to school transport arrangements.	This option would not mitigate the unsustainable budgetary pressures and is not aligned with the principles set out in the 'Case for Change' section of this report.	The current policy does not utilise limited financial resources to support those most in need, nor does it seek to promote independence in the most effective way. The proposed changes permit the council to work with the commercial operators to rationalise routes and provide a more integrated transport network in the future.
b) Introduce the Post 16 SEND proposed changes for new children only and transport offers for existing children would not be affected.	Existing service users within this cohort will continue to benefit from current home to school transport arrangements.	This option would not mitigate the unsustainable budgetary pressures and is not aligned with the principles set out in the 'Case for Change' section of this report.	Most sixth form age students attend for no more than two years and even if some students with SEND will attend for a longer period, this is likely to be for a considerably shorter period than for attendance at primary or

			secondary phases of education. Therefore it is reasonable to expect a financial contribution from existing students.
c) Continue to offer free transport for those Post 16 SEND pupils who are part way through a two year course.	Existing service users within this cohort will continue to benefit from current home to school transport arrangements and the risk of this disrupting their education is reduced.	This would contribute to increased budgetary pressures	This option would not mitigate the unsustainable budgetary pressures.
d) Charge a flat fee for Post 16 SEND pupils as suggested by 48% of all respondents, 70% of respondents who have child/children with SEND and 72% of respondents who have a post 16 SEND child/children.	This was the preferred option from respondents as part of the consultation.	This option would not mitigate the unsustainable budgetary pressures and is not aligned with the principles set out in the 'Case for Change' section of this report.	It is accepted that the cost of transport for Post 16 pupils with SEND is on average higher than for pupils without SEND, however Post 16 pupils not receiving support with transport will often pay for transport based on distance travelled, as this reflects the additional cost of transport. To promote independence, it is reasonable to introduce charges that reflect the additional cost of transport due to distance travelled.

### C. Resource implications

21. The resource implications of this decision are that the Council's revised Home to School Transport provision is targeted at those who need it most, creating a more sustainable model, aligned with our statutory duties.
22. In April 2018, the Council was forecasting a pressure of £1.4m against the Home to School Transport budget. By November 2018, this had increased to £1.9m as a result of rising demand.
23. If Cabinet agrees to the proposed changes, based on the current cohort, it is estimated that the savings by 2022/23 will be £1.5m. Further details are broken down below:

Area for review	Recommendation	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Evreham Promise	Charge for new pupils only from September 2020.	£0	£33,600	£86,400	£139,200
Livinghoe Promise	Charge for new pupils only from September 2020	£0	£12,600	£32,400	£52,200
Post 16 SEND	Charge based on distance from home to school for both new and existing pupils	£207,077	£363,087	£439,585	£474,357
Transport Efficiency Review	Route rationalisation	£114,000	£250,000	£250,000	£250,000
Transport Efficiency Review	Commercialisation	£181,000	£310,000	£310,000	£310,000
<b>Total</b>		<b>£502,077</b>	<b>£969,287</b>	<b>£1,118,385</b>	<b>£1,225,757</b>

24. A further £250k savings before 2022/23 is estimated to be achieved from the introduction of a Dynamic Purchasing System, which is a fully-electronic procurement process used by public sector bodies to award contracts for works or services. The use of this system will deliver better value for money and engage suppliers to maximise supply.
25. In addition, £120k will be invested over a two year period to increase provision of independent travel training for eligible young people aged between 16 and 18 years old.

#### D. Value for Money (VfM) Self Assessment

26. The Council's strategy for ensuring value for money in Home to School Transport is based on the efficient procurement of transport and application of the eligibility policy. In addition, the Council's recommendations provide the best VfM because (a) resource will be targeted at those that need it most, and (b) efficiencies will be achieved through contract management and rationalisation of bus routes.

#### E. Legal implications

27. The Education Act 1996 contains statutory duties and powers in relation to school transport. This statutory framework is set out in Appendix 4. As the Post 16 duties are based on what provision is necessary, a needs assessment has been completed and is included in Appendix 5. The needs assessment for the Post 16 SEND pupils has been written in line with the latest statutory guidance published from the Department for Education. All appropriate considerations have been given to the criteria set out in the guidance and mitigations to ensure that those most in need are supported to access education.

28. Section 508B and section 509AA of the Education Act 1996 set out duties on the Council to arrange travel or other arrangements as it deems necessary for pupils of compulsory school age and Post 16 to enable them to attend educational establishments. For compulsory school age eligible pupils, the arrangements must be free of charge, whereas for Post 16 students the arrangements can include

financial assistance. When determining what is necessary, the Council must take account of local circumstances. In addition, the Council can make transport available under its discretionary powers under s.508CC for compulsory school age. The proposed policy includes some areas where it is reasonable to exercise this discretionary power, including for certain linked schools and for certain reception aged children. This reflects discretionary provision that exists under the current policy.

29. In addition, statutory guidance has been published on these duties as follows:

- a) Home to School Travel and Transport Guidance.
- b) Transport to education and training for people aged 16 to 18

30. The above guidance confirms that the arrangements can be made by the Council or a third party and could include provision of a bus pass to use public buses, arrangements with a local school or with a parent's consent, payment of a mileage allowance. For arrangements to be suitable, they must be safe and reasonably stress free, to enable a child to arrive at school ready for a day of study.

31. The guidance also confirms the potential benefits of independent travel training, stating there can be significant short and long term benefits for students with SEND, as this can provide a skill for life that could lead to greater social inclusion and employment prospects.

32. The guidance sets out a number of case studies, including one from Hertfordshire, where liaison with schools, community groups and commercial operators led to 130 routes to schools of preference operated independently of the Council.

33. In the Post 16 guidance, the following should be taken into account in determining what arrangements are necessary to set out in the policy statement:

- a) The needs of those who could not access education or training provision if no arrangements were made.
- b) The need to ensure that young people have reasonable opportunities to choose between different establishments at which education and training is provided.
- c) The distance from the learner's home to establishments of education and training.
- d) The journey time to access different establishments.
- e) The cost of transport to the establishments in question.
- f) Alternative means of facilitating attendance at establishments.

34. There is a duty to consult on any changes to the Home to School Transport Policy and the Post 16 Annual Transport Policy Statement. This includes a prescribed list of consultees. The consultation focused on the aims of the strategy, as well as seeking to identify the extent of support for the different options and the impact of any changes. The consultation results are summarised in this report and the full summary report is included in Appendix 2 to ensure that Cabinet takes into account

what respondents said and the strength of feeling towards the proposals as part of the decision making process.

35. In addition to the statutory duties under the Education Act 1996, there are a number of overarching duties that are relevant to this proposed policy change. These include duties under:

- The Education and Skills Act 2008 to encourage enable and assist participation of young people with SEND up to the age of 25.
- The Children and Families Act 2014 in relation to the local offer.
- The Equality Act 2010 in relation to having due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other prohibited conduct, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. The equality impact assessment is referred to below.

## F. **Property implications**

36. There are no property implications associated with any of the proposed changes.

## G. **Other implications/issues**

37. It is recognised that it is essential that the Council mitigates the impact of any future changes on families who made education choices based on the offer available at that point in time.

38. To minimise disruption, it is recommended that there is good communication to those who find they are required to make adjustments in the way they access services and support.

39. Similarly, those delivering services may also be required to make adjustments in how they enable service users to access services. To this end, the transport team continues to engage with providers to reshape the offer of public transport services across Buckinghamshire. A number of workshops have been held to update them on the requirements of our updated procurement processes and contract changes.

40. The recommended changes are our response to building a sustainable offer of travel assistance to the school population in Buckinghamshire. The Council wants to provide appropriate support in a climate of increasing demand, using a delivery model that demonstrates efficiency and value for money. The proposed changes will enable young people to fully participate in education and improve their outcomes for later life.

41. The relevant sections from Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 that apply to this matter are as follows:

- (a) A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- (i) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- (ii) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- (iii) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

(b) Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:

- (i) remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- (ii) take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- (iii) encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

(c) The steps involved in meeting the needs of disabled persons that are different from the needs of persons who are not disabled include, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities.

(d) Having due regard to the need to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:

- (i) tackle prejudice, and
- (ii) promote understanding

42. An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been completed and is set out in Appendix 6. This assessment has considered both the potential positive and negative impacts in relation to all protected characteristics. The main impact is on school age children and Post 16 students with SEND, but also recognises that BAME children are over-represented in our SEND community. The Council recognises that the proposed banded charges, based on distance from home to school, negatively impacts on Post 16 students with SEND, therefore this disproportionately impacts individuals who are disabled. In mitigation, the highest banded charge is still significantly lower than the actual cost of providing the transport. The Council is proposing to increase the offer of independent travel training to enable students with SEND to develop life skills to assist them to utilise a wider range of travel options and gain independence as they transition to adulthood. The Council will continue to be clear and transparent in its communication to all those affected in order to alleviate any concerns relating to the changes. Further mitigating actions are set out in Appendix 6.

## H. Feedback from consultation, Local Area Forums and Local Member views

43. The feedback from the survey responses has been summarised earlier in this report and the full consultation report is included in Appendix 2.

44. All Members have been kept informed throughout the process and, in addition, a cross party Member Working Group was formed at the beginning of September 2018 and met monthly through the consultation phase.

**I. Communication issues**

45. Future communication following implementation will be direct with parents and via schools to ensure that parents and students can take account of the availability of travel assistance when making decisions about which educational establishment to attend.

**J. Progress Monitoring**

46. The progress on the implementation of the policy changes will continue to be monitored monthly and reported to the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills.

**K. Review**

47. The web links and online information will be reviewed annually for accuracy.

48. The policy changes will be kept under review, in order to reduce the budgetary pressure by use of alternative modes of travel assistance and the extended use of independent travel training, where appropriate.

49. It is proposed that there should be a further review of the Post 16 Transport Policy in January 2020 to inform whether future policy changes are required.

---

**Background Papers**

22 October 2018 – Decision taken to go out to consultation on Buckinghamshire's Home to School Transport offer

<https://democracy.buckscc.gov.uk/documents/s123658/Report%20for%20Home%20to%20School%20Transport%20Consultation.pdf>

Statutory Guidance - Transport to education and training for people aged 16 to 18

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/post-16-transport-to-education-and-training>

Statutory Guidance - Home-to-school travel and transport

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/home-to-school-travel-and-transport-guidance>

Full responses to the Home to School Transport consultation.

---

**Your questions and views**

*If you have any questions about the matters contained in this paper please get in touch with the Contact Officer whose telephone number is given at the head of the paper.*

*If you have any views on this paper that you would like the Cabinet Member to consider, or if you wish to object to the proposed decision, please inform the Democratic Services Team by 5.00pm on Friday 1 March 2019. This can be done by telephone (to 01296 382343), or e-mail to [democracy@buckscc.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@buckscc.gov.uk)*

# Buckinghamshire County Council Home to School Transport Policy

Publication date: February 2019



## **Contents**

<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Section 1 - Mainstream and Low Income Transport .....</b>	<b>5</b>
1.1 Types of Travel Assistance .....	5
1.2 Personal Transport Budget.....	6
1.3 Mileage allowance .....	6
1.4 Calculation of distances and available routes .....	6
1.5 Pupils who live beyond the statutory walking distance .....	6
1.6 Extended rights for pupils from low income families.....	7
1.7 Children whose route to school is unsafe .....	7
1.8 Children with SEN, a disability or a mobility difficulty .....	7
1.9 Pupils living outside of Buckinghamshire .....	8
1.10 Grounds of Religion or Belief .....	8
1.11 Home address .....	8
1.12 Change of address and emergency contact details.....	8
1.13 Inaccurate applications .....	8
1.14 Transport to schools that are not the nearest .....	9
1.15 Home to School Transport provision in special circumstances (discretionary assistance) .....	9
1.16 Transport during the school day .....	10
1.17 Timing of transport arrangements .....	10
1.18 Care of vulnerable children .....	10
1.19 Expected level of behaviour for all pupils .....	11
<b>Section 2 - Special Educational Needs Transport.....</b>	<b>12</b>
2.1 General.....	12
2.2 Criteria for SEND Home to School Transport .....	12
2.3 Independent Travel Training .....	13
2.4 Passenger assistants.....	13
2.5 Residential schools .....	14
<b>Section 3 - Post 16 Transport 16-19 years.....</b>	<b>15</b>
3.1 Post 16 Transport.....	15
<b>Section 4 - Sustainable Modes of Travel.....</b>	<b>16</b>
4.1 Sustainable Travel .....	16
<b>Section 5 – Transport for Looked after Children.....</b>	<b>17</b>

5.1 Looked after Children under the care of the Council.....	17
<b>Section 6 - General Information .....</b>	<b>18</b>
6. 1 Application process .....	18
6.2 Review process.....	18
6.3 Complaints .....	18
6.4 Appeals.....	18
6.5 Disclosure and Barring Service checks (DBS) and identity badges .....	19
6.6 Safety of routes .....	19
6.7 Fare paying seats / Concessionary Travel Permits .....	20
6.8 Identification of new routes.....	20
6.9 Journey times .....	20
6.10 Data Protection .....	21
6.11 Transport following the closure of a school .....	21
6.12 Parents/carers not at home .....	21
<b>Appendix A - Glossary of Terms.....</b>	<b>23</b>

## **Introduction**

This document describes the policy and criteria applied to determine eligibility for home to school travel assistance.

This policy has been developed in accordance with the legislative framework set out under the Education Act 1996 and current Government guidance. This policy will be reviewed and updated regularly to ensure that arrangements adopted within Buckinghamshire reflect any new legislation and guidance.

It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to ensure that their child attends school; however, in certain circumstances, Buckinghamshire County Council will provide travel assistance, if the criteria are met.

We are committed to fulfilling our statutory duties towards Buckinghamshire pupils and the Home to School travel assistance aims to:

- Support those most in need.
- Promote principles of independence.
- Provide the most cost effective travel assistance.
- Promote and encourage the use of sustainable travel.

As a Council, we expect the service delivered to be of a high standard. All children who travel under this policy can expect that those standards will be monitored and maintained.

The Education Act 1996 provides the following duties and powers on local authorities:

- Duty to promote sustainable modes of travel to meet school travel needs – s.508A;
- Duty to make necessary travel arrangements free of charge to secure suitable home to school travel arrangements for eligible children. Eligibility includes distance to school, disability and safe walking routes – S.508B;
- Power to make necessary school travel arrangements for other children on payment of a charge as appropriate – s.508C;
- Power to provide travel assistance or travel expenses for child attending early years education – s.509A;
- Duty to prepare Post 16 transport policy statement setting out transport provision and financial assistance to facilitate attendance of sixth form students at educational institutions – s.509AA and s.509AB.

## **Section 1 - Mainstream and Low Income Transport**

There are four categories of pupils of compulsory school age living in Buckinghamshire and attending their **nearest suitable school** who are eligible for free travel assistance:

- a) Children who live beyond the **statutory walking distance**.
- b) Children from **low income families** (extended rights apply).
- c) Children whose route to school is unsafe.
- d) Children with Special Educational Needs (SEN), a disability or a mobility difficulty.

**Compulsory school age** begins with the start of term following a child's fifth birthday and ends on the last Friday in June in the academic year in which s/he turns 16.

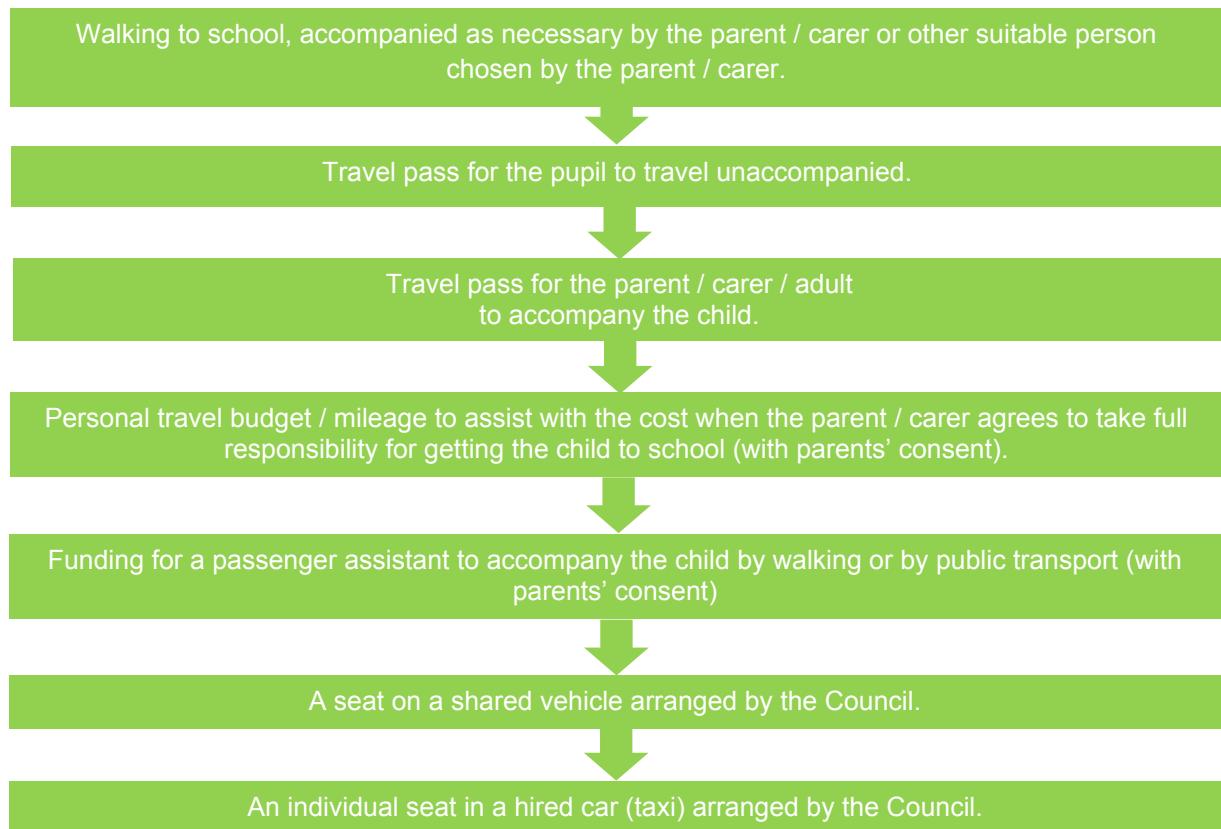
A **qualifying school** is a:

- Maintained school or nursery, or a special school approved under s.342 of the Education Act 1996;
- Pupil referral unit or alternative provision academy; or
- An Academy.

If parents do not apply for a place at their **nearest suitable school** or choose a place at a school which is not the nearest suitable school, the pupil will not be eligible for free travel assistance unless the extended rights apply.

### **1.1 Types of Travel Assistance**

The Council will explore the most cost-effective means of travel assistance and will generally consider travel options in the following order:



## **1.2 Personal Transport Budget**

A **personal transport budget** (PTB) is funding to help you get your child to school or college. It allows you to make flexible travel arrangements rather than travelling on a vehicle contracted by the Council. A PTB is not a short-term alternative while your transport application is being processed.

You may be eligible for a budget if your child has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). You also need to meet the criteria for free school transport, which includes an assessment of the most cost-effective suitable travel assistance to be offered.

If eligible, how much you may receive is based on the distance between your home and school, college or learning provider. We measure this as a straight line distance, not the distance as calculated by a route planner.

## **1.3 Mileage allowance**

In addition, a **mileage allowance** could be offered if this is cheaper than other appropriate travel options, but a parent may choose to take a personal travel budget as a contribution towards their own travel arrangements. In this case, the budget will be based on the most cost effective and appropriate travel assistance.

## **1.4 Calculation of distances and available routes**

For eligibility purposes, the statutory walking distances will be calculated with reference to the shortest walking route a child (accompanied as necessary) can walk safely. A route might include footpaths, bridleways and other tracks which are not passable by motorised transport.

For children who fall within the ‘Extended Rights’ eligibility criteria (see 1.6 for details), the 6 mile and 15 mile upper limits are not walking routes. These routes are those which are passable using a suitable motorised vehicle. In short, the two upper limits will be measured along road routes.

## **1.5 Pupils who live beyond the statutory walking distance**

Travel assistance will be provided free of charge for those pupils of compulsory school age who are travelling over the statutory walking distance to/from the nearest open entrance gate of their nearest suitable school. Pupils may be required to use public transport and in these cases they will be provided with a free bus pass in order for them to use the service.

The statutory walking distances are as follows:

- Beyond 2 miles (if below the age of 8); and
- Beyond 3 miles (if aged between 8 and 16).

### **1.6 Extended rights for pupils from low income families**

A pupil may be eligible under the 'low income' provisions if they are entitled to free school meals, or if their parents or carers receive working tax credit at the maximum rate.

Children aged 8 – 10 from low income families who live more than 2 miles (rather than 3) from their nearest suitable school become eligible for free school transport from the Council. Children under 8 who live more than 2 miles from their nearest suitable school are eligible under the statutory walking distance category above.

Secondary school age children from low income families who attend schools between 2 and 6 miles from their home will be eligible for free school transport even if the school they attend is not their nearest suitable school, providing there are not three or more suitable qualifying schools which are nearer to their home.

Secondary school age children from low income families who attend a school between 2 miles and 15 miles away from home will be entitled to free school transport if their parent has expressed a wish for them to be educated at that particular school based on the parent's religion or belief and, having regard to that wish, there is no nearer suitable school. This applies to parents with a particular religious or philosophical belief, including those with a lack of religion or lack of belief.

### **1.7 Children whose route to school is unsafe**

If the route to school is unsafe, and if the child lives within statutory walking distance of and is registered at the nearest suitable school, the Council will make suitable travel arrangements free of charge.

The Council will assess the route at the times the child would be using it and will take into account:

- The age of the child.
- Whether risks might be less if the child were accompanied by an adult and whether that is practicable.
- The width of the road and the existence of pavements.
- The volume and speed of traffic.
- Different conditions at different times of year.

### **1.8 Children with a special educational need, a disability or a mobility difficulty**

If a child is a registered pupil at their nearest suitable school and has special educational needs (SEN), a disability or mobility problems which means they cannot reasonably be expected to walk to school, then we will provide travel assistance free of charge.

Additional information is set out in Section 2 of this document.

### **1.9 Pupils living outside of Buckinghamshire**

Pupils who live outside of Buckinghamshire attending a school in Buckinghamshire should apply to their own local authority for assistance with transport.

### **1.10 Grounds of Religion or Belief**

There is no eligibility to transport assistance for pupils on the grounds of religion or belief, except as provided above in relation to low income families (see Extended Rights 1.4).

### **1.11 Home address**

Transport assistance is based upon the distance from the home address to school and will be verified using the information supplied by the parent/carer. Home address is defined as being the address at which the parent/carer ordinarily resides and with whom the child normally lives. In situations of joint parental custody, the home address would normally be that at which the parent/carer, in receipt of the child benefit for that pupil, resides. If child benefit is not received then the address at which the child is registered with a GP will be used. If this is not conclusive then we will use the address the child spends the greater proportion of the school week.

### **1.12 Change of address and emergency contact details**

Parents have an obligation to notify the Council when they move house. In the event that they no longer meet the eligibility criteria travel assistance arrangements will cease.

If a pupil moves to an address further away from the school such that their current school is no longer the nearest suitable school, the Council will normally expect the parents to apply for a place at the nearest suitable school and to consider a moving date which takes account of a planned transition to the new school. If parents choose not to apply for a place at the nearest suitable school, the Council will not continue to provide travel assistance unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Parents/carers must provide the Council with emergency contact numbers and email addresses which must be amended and updated as necessary. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure that they provide updated information as and when this changes.

### **1.13 Inaccurate applications**

The Council reserve the right to reclaim the cost of any transport provided, if it is found that any incorrect information has been provided to the Council in order to gain travel assistance.

There is a checker on the website which can be used to work out which is the nearest qualifying school:

<https://services.buckscc.gov.uk/school-admissions/transport>

## **1.14 Transport to schools that are not the nearest**

If a place cannot be offered at the nearest suitable school, when this has been expressed as a preference, then travel assistance to the next nearest suitable school will be offered. There is an expectation that parents will have applied for and been refused a place at the nearest suitable school (which may be an upper school even if a child is qualified to attend a grammar school). Parents will also have been expected to have continued to apply for a place at the nearest suitable school by going onto the waiting list for a place. Should a place at the nearest suitable school become available, then the transport offer will be withdrawn. However if the place becomes available after the 31 July the transport offer will remain.

## **1.15 Home to School Transport provision in special circumstances (discretionary assistance)**

### **a) Those living closest to a non-Buckinghamshire School**

Where the nearest suitable school is outside of Buckinghamshire, pupils will be offered transport to the nearest Buckinghamshire school, unless there is a Virtual Buckinghamshire School (subject to normal eligibility rules). In four areas there is an existing admissions arrangement (the 4 'Virtual Buckinghamshire Schools') and most parents have chosen to apply to the out of county school, so transport is provided there as it is closer than a Buckinghamshire school. A list of these out-of-county schools will be set out on the website each year in time for the annual admissions process. Currently the list of Virtual Buckinghamshire Schools comprises Tring School in Hertfordshire and Icknield School, Lord Williams's School and Wheatley Park School which are in Oxfordshire.

### **b) Reception Intake**

Children under compulsory school age are not automatically entitled to transport to an early years setting or school. Compulsory school age begins on the first day of the term following the child's fifth birthday.

The Council does not wish to encourage the transport of unaccompanied 4 year-olds on school transport. The Council will consider the application of the transport eligibility rules to these pupils in the term the child becomes 5. This will be subject to a safety assessment so parents should not assume automatic entitlement.

### **c) Your child will be attending a linked junior school**

To ensure consistency of education provision, in addition to transport (subject to the normal rules) to the nearest suitable school, transport will be provided to junior school age pupils attending the junior school described as linked to the infant school attended when the application is made, even where this is not the nearest primary school.

**d) Pre-existing primary transport serves your area**

At primary age where there is established, pre-existing school transport to a primary school designated as the catchment school for the child's home, then transport will also be provided subject to the normal eligibility rules.

**e) Other exceptional circumstances**

Parents/carers who do not meet the eligibility criteria above, but feel that their circumstances merit provision of travel assistance should make an application in writing to the Transport Exceptions Panel (TEP). Each application for discretionary assistance will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis and discretionary assistance may be granted for a set period of time. Discretionary award of travel assistance is subject to review more frequently than other circumstances. If discretionary assistance is provided, this may be subject to payment of the whole or a contribution of the cost of the travel assistance.

**1.16 Transport during the school day**

Transport will not be provided for journeys made during the school day. Where pupils attend for example, medical or dental appointments or off-site provision arranged by the school, then the school or parent, as appropriate, must make arrangements and pay for transport.

**1.17 Timing of transport arrangements**

Appropriate transport arrangements will be made based on the age and needs of the child. Pick-up and drop-off times cannot be rescheduled to take into account other family commitments. Parents who are unable to be home at the specified pick-up and drop-off times and location will have to make alternative arrangements.

Parents will be responsible for ensuring their child is at the pick-up/setting down point near their home and for accompanying their child to/from this point where required.

**1.18 Care of vulnerable children**

Parents and carers must ensure a responsible adult is available to hand over/collect their child to/from the driver if this is a requirement of the travel assistance.

If there is not a responsible adult at home to receive a child and the operator or client transport staff are unable to contact the parent/carer, the child will be taken to a safe place, such as the local police station or Adult and Child Social Care Emergency Duty Team. Please note that the transport staff will not hand a child over to anyone outside of the home address, unless previously authorised by the Client Transport Service.

### **1.19 Expected level of behaviour for all pupils**

The consequences of poor behaviour by pupils on buses can be wide ranging. Other passengers may be deterred from using public transport shared with poorly behaved school pupils.

The Council will work in partnership with schools to promote appropriate standards of behaviour by pupils on their journey to and from school through rewarding positive behaviour and using sanctions to address poor behaviour.

Pupils being transported will be expected to follow the same behaviour codes as they do when in school. Unacceptable behaviour will be monitored and appropriate action taken. Parents will be responsible for transporting their own children during any period of exclusion from transport.

## **Section 2 - Special Educational Needs Transport**

### **2.1 General**

This section of the policy provides additional guidance on travel assistance for children of compulsory school age with SEND and takes account of the 'Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 0 to 25 years'.

Children who have SEND may require assistance with getting to school that are over and above the provision made for all pupils. The Council will provide travel assistance as explained below.

Guidance on Post 16 Transport can be found on Buckinghamshire County Council's website at:

<https://www.buckscc.gov.uk/services/education/school-transport/transport-for-16-19-year-olds>

### **2.2 Criteria for SEND Home to School Transport**

The Council considers the individual needs of children, involving professional advice, and will consult with parents and teachers in arriving at a final decision. Having an EHCP does not automatically mean that a child will be eligible for travel assistance.

Every case will be considered individually on its merits. The Council will take into account any information provided by parents, the school, other professionals who know the child and, when appropriate, the child as well. In addition to the factors set out in Section 1, these are the factors that the Council will take into account:

- Mobility
- Medical
- Behaviour
- Vulnerability including age, young parents and NEET
- Practicality
- Training

The list is for guidance only, and satisfaction of one or more of the criteria does not automatically support entitlement to transport assistance. If the conclusion is that the child is not able to manage the required route safely, accompanied by a parent as appropriate, then the most appropriate type of transport assistance will be provided.

When determining the most appropriate mode of travel assistance for pupils with SEND, the following factors will be considered:

- The age of the child;
- The nature and severity of the pupil's SEND;
- The availability of public transport;
- The length and nature of the journey; and
- The most cost effective mode of transport.

## **2.3 Independent Travel Training**

Some students may benefit from completing the Council's Independent Travel Training Scheme, which is designed to develop students' skills to travel independently to and from education and social activities by providing a personalised travel programme. Independent Travel Training will be discussed, if appropriate, at annual transport reviews.

Independent travel training supports the individual to make a journey between two places on their own safely. This journey could be as simple as walking a short distance or as complicated as using two buses combined with walking between the connections. A training programme tailored to the individual needs will be provided covering road safety, personal safety and transport training as required.

If a place is offered and a parent refuses to consent to their child attending independent travel training, their child's eligibility may be reviewed and future travel arrangements may be offered on the condition that their child attends the training in the future. Continued refusal may lead to withdrawal of travel assistance, although consideration will be given to individual circumstances.

## **2.4 Passenger assistants**

Passenger assistants are responsible for the care and supervision of pupils to and from school. They will oversee the pupil's conduct and safety in such a way that the driver is unhindered in his/her duties.

The role of the passenger assistant includes:

- Prevention of self-harm;
- Prevention of harm to / by others; and
- Assisting the driver in the loading of passengers ensuring transportation in safe and appropriate manner.

Passenger assistants will be provided, when specified, by the Council. There is no minimum and maximum age that determines whether a passenger assistant is required.

The needs of each individual child will be assessed to determine whether they will require the care and supervision by a passenger assistant. The Council employs passenger assistants who have received specialist training in order to understand the needs of pupils placed in their care. All Council passenger assistants are subject to an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring check (DBS).

Every effort will be made to ensure that the same passenger assistant and driver continue to transport a child. We understand disruption can be unsettling and will do our best to minimise changes. However this may not always be possible and changes will often need to be made, for example as a result of staff unavailability / staff turnover / contract renewals. The Council reserves the right to make changes to routes and modes of travel as necessary.

The passenger assistant is not responsible for administration of medical aid, over and above basic first aid. If a pupil has a medical condition which could require the administration of medical aid during the transport journey, the Council may expect the parent to accompany the child or arrange for another suitable adult to accompany the child for this purpose. Alternatively, the parent could choose to accept a mileage allowance or direct payment toward the cost of arranging their own transport.

## **2.5 Residential schools**

Pupils in residential schools for the standard 40 weeks academic year (and who are eligible for transport assistance) will be provided with transport assistance between home and school for the start and end of term period (generally half-terms). This totals 12 single journeys, 4 per term. Transport for pupils in 52-week schools will be determined individually.

Where a student attends a school named in their EHCP which provides a residential setting and is beyond the daily travelling distance, students will be entitled to one journey at the beginning of the academic period, and one return journey at the end. Where a student is unable to make their journey to school due to sickness or family matters and the Council has been informed at least 24 hours before, the journey will be provided at a date agreed between the Transport Officer and the carer. A parent will be expected to make their own further transport arrangements if the Council is notified less than 24 hours before. The total number of journeys provided will be as follows:

- Termly Boarders: 2 journeys each term, 6 journeys per academic year
- Half Termly Boarders: 2 journeys each half term, 12 journeys per academic year
- Fortnightly Boarders: 2 journeys each fortnight, 38\* journeys per academic year
- Weekly Boarders: 2 journeys each week, 76\* journeys per academic year

*\* The total number of journeys for fortnightly and weekly boarders will vary depending on the number of weeks in the school calendar, numbers for guidance only*

## **Section 3 - Post 16 Transport 16-19 years**

### **3.1 Post 16 Transport**

Travel assistance for Post 16 students is contained in the Council's Post 16 Transport Policy Statement at:

<https://www.buckscc.gov.uk/services/education/school-transport/transport-for-16-19-year-olds/>.

This provides information about the availability of travel assistance by the Council and other providers.

## **Section 4 - Sustainable Modes of Travel**

### **4.1 Sustainable Travel**

The Council's Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy can be downloaded from the Council's web site using the following link:

<https://www.buckscc.gov.uk/services/transport-and-roads/transport-plans-and-policies/getting-to-school-strategy-smots/>

School Travel Plans identify and address congestion, safety, health and environmental issues associated with car use on the school journey. Schools may organise campaigns and projects, run initiatives and events and promote activities to reduce single occupancy car use for the journey.

## **Section 5 – Transport for Looked after Children**

### **5.1 Looked after Children under the care of the Council**

The Council is committed to ensuring that all children receive travel assistance who need it to support those most in need, to promote independence and encourage sustainable travel.

It is recognised that looked after children face specific challenges and barriers to achieving their full potential, and as corporate parents we are committed to reducing those barriers through providing travel assistance for looked after children whom are under the care of Buckinghamshire County Council.

For looked after children under the care of Buckinghamshire County Council transport will be provided as follows:

- If a looked after child under the care of the Council is to be educated at a school that is not the nearest suitable school for less than one term, transport will be provided by the Council for this period.
- If a looked after child under the care of the Council is to be educated at school that is not the nearest suitable school for more than one term, transport will be provided by the Council for one term, during which it is expected that an application will be made to the nearest suitable school, unless there are exceptional circumstances as to why the pupil should not move to this school. The view of the virtual school head will be taken into account when considering exceptional circumstances.

## **Section 6 - General Information**

### **6.1 Application process**

Application forms for Home to School Transport are available from the Admissions and Transport Team via the Contact Us form: [www.buckscc.gov.uk/contactadmissions](http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/contactadmissions)

Further information in relation to the application process can be found here:  
<https://www.buckscc.gov.uk/services/education/school-transport/free-school-transport/>

### **6.2 Review process**

Provision of travel assistance at any one time does not guarantee that this will be an ongoing arrangement and the requirement will be reviewed by the Council on a regular basis.

If during the course of any school year the Council determines that the provision of free home to school transport need no longer be provided, it will cease at the end of the term in which the Panel's decision was made.

All young people who receive free home to school transport will be subject to review:

- At the end of Year 3 in which the pupil attains the age of 8 years.
- At the end of Year 6.
- Following the successful completion of Independent Travel Training.
- If the pupil has an EHCP, at the annual review meeting.
- Following a change in circumstances.

### **6.3 Complaints**

Any pupil, parent or carer wishing to make a formal complaint relating to Home to School Transport should complete the [school transport 'Contact Us Form'](#).

Formal complaints should be made through Buckinghamshire County Council's Feedback & Complaints Procedure:

[www.buckscc.gov.uk/services/contact-and-complaints/feedback-and-complaints/](https://www.buckscc.gov.uk/services/contact-and-complaints/feedback-and-complaints/)

### **6.4 Appeals**

The Council has a 2 stage review process for parents/carers who wish to challenge a decision about:

- The transport arrangements offered.
- Their child/young person's eligibility.
- The distance measurement in relation to statutory walking distances.
- The suitability of the route.

The appeal process is to challenge the above matters. If you have a concern about how the arrangements are being delivered, you should use the complaints process.

### Stage 1

Parents/carers have 20 working days to request a review of our decision about home to school transport. Parents should write to us, detailing why the decision should be reviewed, giving details of any personal/family circumstances and including any supporting evidence to be considered. The decision will be reviewed by a senior officer or via the Transport Exceptions Panel (TEP). Within 20 working days of receipt of this letter parents will be advised in writing of the appeal decision.

### Stage 2 – Review by an Independent Appeal Panel

Parents/carers have 20 working days from the receipt of our Stage 1 written decision notification to make a written request to escalate the matter to Stage 2. Within 40 working days of receipt of the parents/carers' request, an independent appeal panel will consider written and verbal representations from both the parent/carer and officers involved in the case and will give a detailed written notification of the outcome within 5 working days of the panel meeting. The independent appeal panel is made up of trained volunteers who have experience of transport issues. These volunteers are independent of the Council.

### Stage 3 – Complaint to Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman

Parents/carers can complain to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman only if they consider that:

- there was a failure to comply with the procedural rules or
- if there are any other irregularities in the way the appeal has been handled.

For further information please contact the Admissions Team:

[www.buckscc.gov.uk/contactadmissions](http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/contactadmissions)

### **6.5 Disclosure and Barring Service checks (DBS) and identity badges**

Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service checks are carried out on all drivers and passenger assistants prior to them being employed on Home to School Transport. Following a satisfactory check and appropriate safeguarding training, an identity badge will be issued to drivers and passenger assistants by the Council which will be worn at all times as proof of approval to undertake the work.

If you have any concerns regarding the behaviour of drivers or passenger assistants, please report this by completing the [school transport 'Contact Us Form'](#).

### **6.6 Safety of routes**

The Council will monitor the routes and vehicles used on the routes to ensure that they are fit for purpose and do not pose a risk to anyone travelling on the vehicle or using the route to travel to school. Any vehicle or route found to be unsafe will be withdrawn and alternative arrangements made until normal service can be resumed. If you are concerned regarding the safety of a route, you can report this by completing the [school transport 'Contact Us Form'](#).

## **6.7 Fare paying seats / Concessionary Travel Permits**

In some cases, spare places may be available on coaches, buses or taxis contracted to convey pupils to school. These places may be made available to pupils who do not qualify for free travel following the purchase of a concessionary fare permit.

Where spare capacity exists on current vehicles that have been contracted to provide home to school transport for entitled pupils, the Client Transport Service will make these seats available for non-entitled pupils. **A Seat Will Only Be Allocated if Public Transport Provision Is Not Available.** All purchased seats will be subject to the seat being withdrawn with **FIVE** working days' notice should the seat be required for an entitled pupil.

Further details can be obtained by completing the [school transport 'Contact Us Form'](#).

The bus pass is the responsibility of the child and, if lost or damaged, replacements will be provided but this will carry an administration charge of £13.00.

## **6.8 Identification of new routes**

The Council reserves the right to review all routes in light of any changes to the Admission Policy or areas of new housing. If such changes mean that a pupil will no longer be entitled to free transport then the notice of withdrawal will be two months from the date of notification to the parent/carer.

Examples of change could include building of new roads, opening of new footpaths, or changes to the safety of a route as determined by the Road Safety Team.

## **6.9 Journey times**

The Council will make every effort to ensure that travelling times to and from school will be as follows:

- A maximum 45 minutes each way at primary school age; and
- 75 minutes at secondary school age.

In some cases, the distances involved mean that some children will have longer journeys. Please note that return journeys are not constrained by specific times at intermediate stops with the result that homeward journeys may be quicker than advertised. Every effort is made to ensure that the waiting time on school premises, before and after school, and at pick up and set down points, does not exceed 20 minutes.

You will receive a schedule, and will be notified if there are any changes.

## **6.10 Data Protection**

The Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) regulates the way we use your personal information. You provide this information when you seek services from, or come in to contact with us. The Act provides a legal framework to the way we handle this data. Data Protection compliance is not an activity that is done once and requires ongoing compliance measures and reviews. To ensure this compliance is managed in a structured way the Council employs a Data Protection Officer and covers the following activities:

<https://www.buckscc.gov.uk/services/council-and-democracy/open-data/data-protection/>

## **6.11 Transport following the closure of a school**

If a school decides it is prudent to close early or not open because of severe weather, every attempt will be made to inform the parents. However, this may not always be possible especially in the case of larger schools. The school will advise parents of their procedures in the event of an emergency closure.

In bad weather conditions, the transport operator is the sole judge of whether to commence or complete a bus journey, giving priority to the safety of the pupils on the vehicle.

Parents must ensure that the pupil is warmly dressed in case the journey to or from school is very slow or even halted in bad weather.

Should the school transport on any route not operate in the morning because of adverse weather conditions, but a parent nevertheless decides to take their child to school, then they will be expected to make their own arrangements to collect the child either at the end of the day or at the time of early closure.

Drivers are required to seek the safest route and may therefore avoid normal routes in order to stay on major roads or to avoid specific hazards. They are instructed that they must only set-down pupils at specific set-down points. Where transport is not able to access the pre-determined set-down point due to poor weather, passengers may be asked to leave the vehicle at an alternative safe location. Where these arrangements are made, they will be announced on

<https://closures.buckscc.gov.uk/TransportTrouble.aspx>

Where a road is too hazardous for school transport in the morning, the transport operator is under no obligation to attempt the afternoon run.

## **6.12 Parents/carers not at home**

There are occasions when it would not be possible to return a child home having been transported from school. The following guidance is intended for drivers and passenger assistants in order to manage such situations.

- If the parent or carer is not at home the driver or passenger assistant must notify Client Transport Services to seek advice.
- Where possible, make a return visit to the family home to check if the parent or carer has returned.
- If the parent or carer has not returned by the end of the route, the driver or passenger assistant must contact Client Transport Services to inform them of the situation. The Client Transport Service will then inform the Head Teacher and / or the relevant social care team. Drivers and passenger assistants will receive further instructions following the advice given by the Head Teacher and may be required to travel back to school to hand over the child to staff at the school or an appropriate adult. In all cases, a note must be left for the parent containing details of who they should contact and the whereabouts of the child. If an incident happens after 5pm Monday–Thursday and after 4.30pm Friday, contact will be made with the Emergency Duty Team. All incidents will be recorded and considered by the Transport Review Panel.

## Appendix A - Glossary of Terms

The table below provides a glossary of the terms used in this policy:

Travel Assistance	Cost effective home to school transport arrangements or assistance provided by the Council using variety of methods, as deemed appropriate in each pupil's case.
Transport/Home to School Transport	Transport provided to enable the child to attend school. It is provided at the start and the end of the school day and operates between the location of the home and school only.
Free Home to School Transport	Travel assistance provided at no cost to the family.
The Council	Buckinghamshire County Council.
EHCP	Education, Health and Care Plan.
Nearest Suitable School	The nearest qualifying school with places available that provides education appropriate to the child's age, ability, aptitude, gender and any special educational needs they may have.
Extended Rights	Extra free transport options for those pupils entitled to free school lunches, or if their parents or carers receive working tax credit at the maximum rate.
Client Transport Staff	A Team of Council Officers who commission transport provision in relation to the Home to School Transport Policy and appropriate contract compliance.
Compulsory school age	This begins with the start of term following a child's fifth birthday and ends on the last Friday in June in the academic year in which s/he turns 16.
Looked After Children	Children and young people who maybe in residential care, in foster care, looked after by a family member other than a parent, or those who are looked after at home.
Virtual Buckinghamshire School	A team of education specialists who are there to ensure that Looked After Children and children who have left care are supported and achieve their full potential at school.



# Consultation Findings Report Home to School Transport Review

February 2019



# Table of Contents

<b>1. Context.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>2. Pre-consultation preparation .....</b>	<b>5</b>
2.1    Understanding the needs of Buckinghamshire's population and profile of the current children receiving home to school transport (see background papers).....	5
2.2    Best practice research and benchmarking of policies and arrangements in 13 local authorities.....	5
2.3    Qualitative research through holding focus groups with service users and stakeholders .....	6
<b>3. The consultation process and methodology.....</b>	<b>7</b>
3.1    Consultation via an online questionnaire .....	7
3.2    Consultation through meetings:.....	7
3.3    Working collaboratively with FACT (Families and Carers Together) Bucks and Buckinghamshire SENDIAS (SEND Independent Advisory Service) on the detailed development of the Home to School Transport Policy to ensure the document is as clear as possible to parents. ....	8
<b>4. Overall findings from the Consultation process.....</b>	<b>9</b>
4.1    Profile .....	9
4.2    Responses.....	9
4.3    Feedback from key groups.....	10
4.3.1    Post-16 SEND .....	10
4.3.2    Ivinghoe residents .....	10
4.3.3    Evreham residents .....	11.
Questionnaire Responses and Key Themes.....	12
5.1    Profile of Respondents .....	12
<b>6. Proposed changes to the Home to School transport arrangements .....</b>	<b>18</b>
6.1    Proposal 1: Changing how we provide school transport .....	18
6.2    Proposal 2: Providing statutory free home to school transport to the nearest eligible school (Ivinghoe and Evreham [Iver]).....	30
6.3    Proposal 3: Introducing transport charges for students with (SEND) aged 16+ .....	34
<b>7. Feedback from Consultation Events.....</b>	<b>43</b>
7.1    Public Meetings .....	43
7.2    SEN Parent Forum and dedicated sessions for parents with children with SEN.....	43
7.3    Young People's Views.....	44
7.4    Transport Operator sessions .....	45
<b>8. Summary.....</b>	<b>46</b>

<b>Appendix A – Copy of Consultation Questionnaire .....</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>Appendix B – Copy of Young People’s Questionnaire .....</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>Appendix C – Organisational Response from FACT Bucks .....</b>	<b>59</b>

## **1. Context**

A public consultation regarding proposed changes to the current arrangements for home to school transport was launched on 31 October 2018 and closed on 4 January 2019.

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the consultation process to aid the County Council in its decision-making process regarding the proposed changes to the Home to School Transport Policy and working practices.

The current Home to School Transport Service requires review in the light of rising demand which will place increased pressure on limited resources. The current annual cost of providing home to school transport is £15.1million, out of which £12.7million is spent to meet the local authority's statutory duty to provide free transport to eligible students. Transport is also provided for 4,810 children at a cost of £2.4m in accordance with other statutory transport duties and powers.

Revising the way the service is provided presents an opportunity to support more young people to travel independently, as well as making better use of public transport routes. Full details of the proposals for a modern Home to School Transport Service are set out in the draft policy.

## **2. Pre-consultation preparation**

Prior to going out to consultation, the Council undertook a range of pre-consultation research to inform the development of proposals for change. This research included:

### **2.1 Understanding the needs of Buckinghamshire's population and profile of the current children receiving home to school transport (see background papers).**

An analysis of the profile of key demographic groups currently receiving home to school transport shows the following:

- The overall pupil population in Buckinghamshire is growing
- The percentage of pupils with EHCPs (Education Health Care Plans) is growing, and the rate of growth in relation to this group is accelerating faster than growth in the general pupil population
- The range of needs that this cohort of pupils have are increasingly complex and varied, which means that the local authority needs to review its current provision and adjust where appropriate
- There has been a change in the age range of pupils (19-25 years) who could hold an EHC plan which has resulted in a significant increase in the number of students with EHCPs. Developing independence for students whilst still in full time education is critical to allow an effective transition to adulthood and therefore there should be an increasing emphasis on encouraging use of independent travel options.

### **2.2 Best practice research and benchmarking of policies and arrangements in 13 local authorities (statistical neighbours of the Council).**

This process revealed that:

- Only 5 out of the 13 other local authorities examined offered some free transport for post-16 pupils.
- All 13 local authorities offered travel assistance; however none have a policy of full cost recovery.
- Out of the 13 local authorities, 12 have a contribution-based policy within which parents and carers are asked for a contribution to subsidise the cost of transport.
- Out of those areas that offered subsidised transport, the contributions ranged from £321 to £1,411.50 per annum.
- The majority of local authorities (9 out of 13) charged for post-16 home to school

- transport.
- Only 3 of the 13 local authorities offered personal transport budgets to clients to self-manage.

The overall findings from the benchmarking exercise suggests that the proposed changes within the consultation process are in line with current practice deployed by other local authorities.

## **2.3 Qualitative research - holding focus groups with service users and stakeholders.**

During July 2018 two focus groups with service users and organisations were held to explore the opportunities and options for changes to the Council's Home to School Transport policy and arrangements. In addition to these groups there was also engagement with key stakeholders including FACT Bucks and transport providers prior to the launch of the consultation. This was to enable stakeholders to have input into the design of the consultation process. Discretionary elements of the current Home to School Transport were reviewed with an explanation as to why these were/have been implemented and how these could be potentially changed. The focus groups identified a number of areas where it would be sensible to consider a change in approach, which included: Paid for transport for compulsory school age pupils, SEN Post-16 transport, and the current arrangement for Ivinghoe and Evreham. The group identified a number of options around these areas and considered these through undertaking a risk analysis and made the following recommendations:

- Discounted travel (subsidised) on public networks or other appropriate provision
- Extend the use of Independent Travel Training to support students with SEND
- Remove contracted transport so that public transport becomes the available travel option (recommended for viable routes)
- Remove the option of free school transport for Ivinghoe and Evreham, instead implementing charging for transport and offering routes to the commercial sector

The feedback obtained helped to develop the consultation questions and inform the policy development process.

### **3. The consultation process and methodology**

The Council carried out a consultation process in a robust and collaborative manner, with the principal aim to seek the views of local residents within the county (and particularly from parents of children and young people) on the following proposed changes:

- Changing how we provide school transport – greater integration of school bus services with public bus services.
- Only providing free home to school transport to the nearest eligible school, withdrawing historic, discretionary transport arrangements in Ivinghoe and Evreham (Iver).
- Introducing transport charges for students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) aged over 16.

The communications were particularly targeted at parents/carers to encourage them to participate in the consultation process. The Council was particularly keen to understand the views of parents who were likely to be making secondary school choices for their children during the next two years, parents of children with special educational needs and key stakeholder organisations.

In order to reach a wide range of residents and key stakeholders, a number of different consultation methods were employed. These included:

#### **3.1 Consultation via an online questionnaire**

Residents were able to access an online questionnaire to complete via the Buckinghamshire County Council website. A total of **2,308** people responded via the online questionnaire.

The consultation survey was promoted via social media, schools and governors, bulletins, newspapers articles, radio coverage, television, internal newsletters, parish newsletters, and banners on relevant webpages.

#### **3.2 Consultation through meetings**

A number of dedicated public meetings were held in order to provide an opportunity for residents to raise questions and better understand the proposed changes. These meetings included:

- **11** Council public meetings for all to attend held in venues across Buckinghamshire (with a total of 59 attendees).

- **1** SEN Parent Forum facilitated by FACT Bucks (Charity, Families and Carers Together in Buckinghamshire).
- **2** sessions specifically for parents with SEN children.
- **1** session with the Youth Voice Executive Committee.
- **4** sessions with transport operators (held between September and December 2018).

### 3.3 Consultation through collaboration

This involved working collaboratively with FACT Bucks and Buckinghamshire SENDIAS (SEND Independent Advisory Service) on the detailed development of the Home to School Transport Policy to ensure the document is as clear as possible to parents.

The overall communication plan and the associated outcomes from the consultation can be summarised in the following diagram:

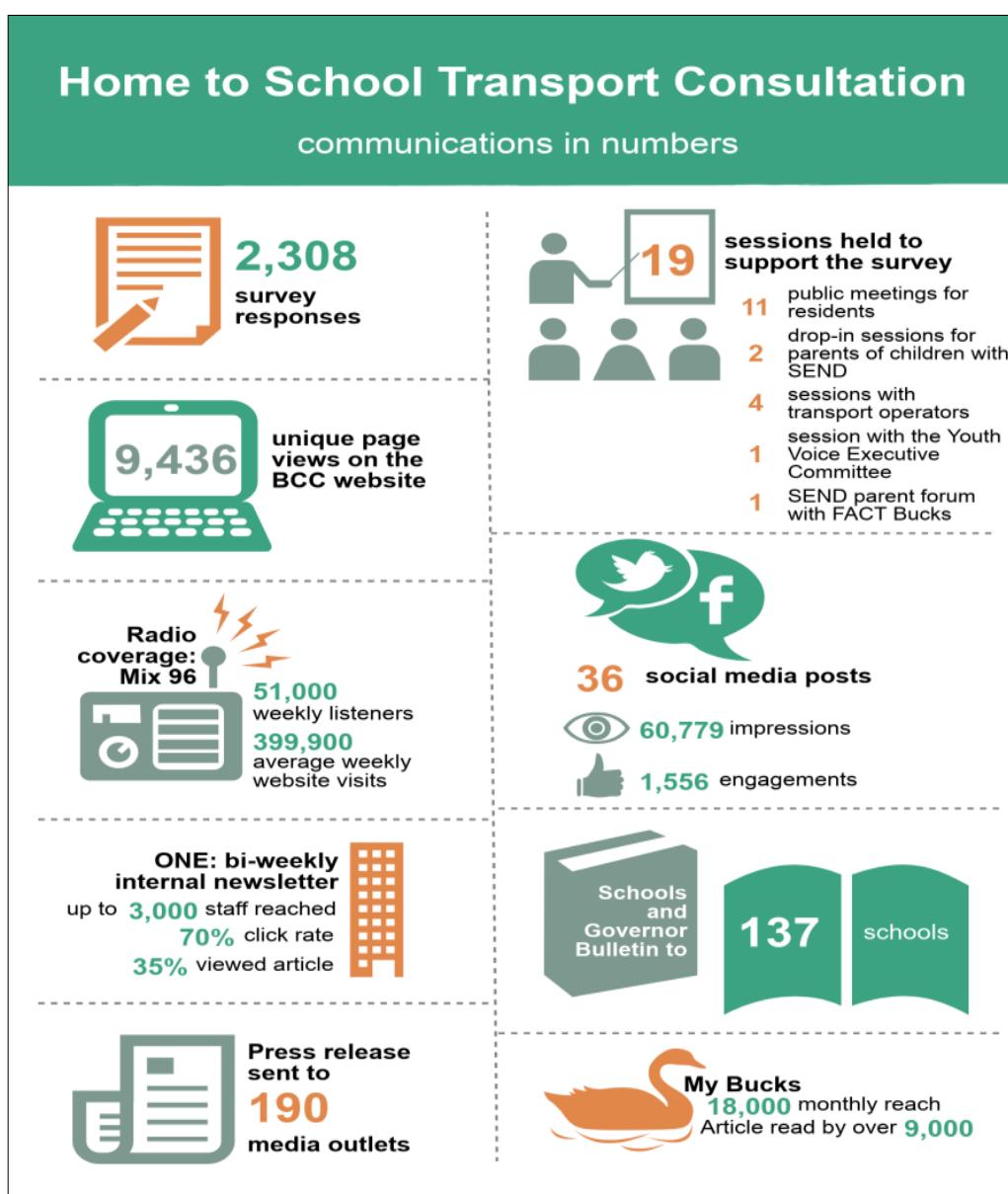


Figure 1

## 4. Overall findings from the Consultation process

### 4.1 Profile

- **2308** responses were received in total
- **91%** of respondents were parents with children attending school or college.
- **33%** of respondents are parents with a child that receives free home to school transport.
- **12%** of respondents are parents with a child with SEN
- **67%** of respondents do not currently receive free Home to School Transport.

Respondent	Responses	Percentage
Parents with a child that travel to school or college	1,879	91%
Parents with a child that receives free home to school transport	689	33%
Parents with a child with SEN	245	12%

### 4.2 Responses

Below is a breakdown of overall survey responses. It is important to note that 67% of all respondents do not currently receive free home to school transport.

- **66%** of respondents had concerns about their children travelling on a public bus service, but only 12% of all respondents were parents with a child with SEN (a group impacted by the proposals).
- **48%** of those responding did not think their child would benefit from having a more flexible bus service for after school activities etc.
- There were comparable proportions of respondents who would (23%) and would not (24%) change to a public service that was more cost effective. The remaining respondents either did not currently pay (39%), or were not sure what decision they might make (14%).
- **24%** of all respondents disagreed that those in the Ivinghoe and Evreham areas should have the current discretionary transport offer removed.. This is much lower compared to the respondents who live in Ivinghoe (213 respondents) and Evreham (245 respondents), where 46% and 76% respectively disagreed that the transport provision should be in line with the statutory guidelines.
- **35%** of all respondents agreed that those who are currently receiving free transport in Ivinghoe and Evreham should have to start paying from September 2020. This is higher compared to those respondents who live in Ivinghoe and Evreham, where 20% and 9% respectively agreed.
- **55%** of all those responding to the online survey disagreed that parents should have to pay a contribution for their children to attend post-16 education.
- **48%** of all respondents preferred a flat fee if a charge for post-16 SEND transport was to be implemented. 28% thought the fee should be based on

distance, and 24% did not mind. In comparison, 70% of respondents who have a child/children with SEND preferred a flat fee.

- **63%** of all respondents said that those post-16 students already receiving transport should not have to pay from September 2020. This is significantly lower compared to the respondents who have a child/children with SEND where 91% disagreed.

### 4.3 Feedback from key groups

The three key groups who will be most impacted by the proposals set out through the process are:

#### 4.3.1 Post-16 SEND

There were 245 responses from parents/carers who received free home to school transport due to their child having SEND, out of which 80 responses that stated that they had a child/young person over the age of 16 who had SEND. All of these responses stated that they currently received free home to school transport, therefore this group would be directly affected by the proposed changes to the Home to School Transport arrangements if their child remains in Post 16 education from the date of the implementation of the proposal.

Of these responses:

- 71 answered Q11, with 99% (70) saying that they did not agree with the banded charge proposal. 1 responded that they were not sure – meaning no-one in this group agreed with the proposal.
- 53 answered Q12, with 72% (38) having a preference for a flat fee per year. 6 responses (11%) preferred a fee per year based on distance between home and school, and 9 (17%) said they did not mind.
- 71 answered Q13, with 97% (69) saying that SEND students aged 16+ who already receive free school transport should not start paying from September 2020.

#### 4.3.2 Ivinghoe residents

The current arrangement allows Buckinghamshire children who are closer to Tring School in Hertfordshire to receive free home to school transport to Cottesloe School without meeting all of the eligibility criteria, as it is not their nearest school.

There were 213 responses with postcodes in the Ivinghoe area. 184 answered Q3 about whether they currently received free home to school transport – 56% of these received free home to school transport. However, under the new proposals, these respondents may not necessarily still qualify as they may not be attending their nearest school. It is evident from this group of respondents that there are strong reservations about the proposed changes.

Out of the 193 that answered Q6 about moving to public bus routes, 85% said they had concerns.

- 192 answered Q7 about being able to benefit from more flexible transport routes/timings, with only 15% agreeing that their child would benefit.
- 192 answered Q8 about moving to public services if it was cheaper. 54% (104) said they currently didn't pay. 9% (17) said they would consider moving to public services.
- Q9 was about withdrawing historic, non-statutory arrangements in Ivinghoe and Evreham, and 191 answered this question. 23% (43) agreed with the proposal. 46% (88) disagreed, and 31% (60) said they were not sure.
- 190 answered Q10. 66% (125) said that students in Ivinghoe and Evreham (Iver) who already receive free school transport to a school that is not their nearest suitable school should not have to start paying from September 2020. 14% (27) said they did not mind, and 20% agreed.

#### **4.3.3 Evreham residents**

There is an historic arrangement that children living in the catchment area of the former Evreham Secondary School would receive free home to school transport to Chalfont Community College. However, under the new proposals, these respondents may not necessarily still qualify as they may not be attending their nearest school. It is evident from this group of respondents that there are strong reservations about the proposed changes.

There were 245 responses with postcodes in the current Evreham promise area. 224 answered Q3 about whether they currently received free home to school transport – 62% of these received free transport.

- Out of the 235 that answered Q6 about moving to public bus routes, 80% said they had concerns.
- 232 answered Q7 about being able to benefit from more flexible transport routes/timings, with only 17% agreeing that their child would benefit.
- 231 answered Q8 about moving to public services if it was cheaper. 65% (115) said they currently did not pay. 8% (19) said they would consider moving to public services.
- Q9 was about withdrawing historic, non-statutory arrangements in Ivinghoe and Evreham, and 231 answered this question. 11% (25) agreed with the proposal. 76% (175) disagreed, and 13% (31) said they were not sure.
- 230 answered Q10. 84% (193) said that students in Ivinghoe and Evreham (Iver) who already receive free school transport to a school that is not their nearest suitable school should not have to start paying from September 2020. 7% (17) said they did not mind, and 9% agreed.

## 5. Questionnaire Responses and Key Themes

The survey data has been analysed in-house by the Council's Business Intelligence & Insight Team.

Responses to closed-ended questions have been analysed overall and for different groups of people. Where possible, results have been compared within demographic categories to show where results are statistically different from each other (to a 95% level of confidence)<sup>1</sup>.

Free text responses have also been analysed to identify key themes and categorised under the most common themes. Each comment can be attributed to more than one theme.

### 5.1 Profile of Respondents

Questions 1-5 of the consultation survey were about respondents. From the responses submitted to these questions we know that:

- 91% of respondents had children, of which 53% used the bus as their main mode of transport to school, with a further 29% using the car.
- 70% of the responses to Q2 regarding the age groups of children had children aged 11-16 years, 41% had children aged 5-10 years and 20% being aged 16 years or older (note that respondents often had more than one child which is reflected in the responses).
- 67% of the respondents did not receive free transport. Of those that did, 15% received free transport because of being over the statutory walking distance from the school, with a further 12% receiving free transport due to their child having SEN D (246 respondents).
- 63% of respondents who stated that they receive free home to school transport because their child had SEND indicated that ASD best described their child's needs, with a significant number (57%) citing Speech, Language and Communication needs.

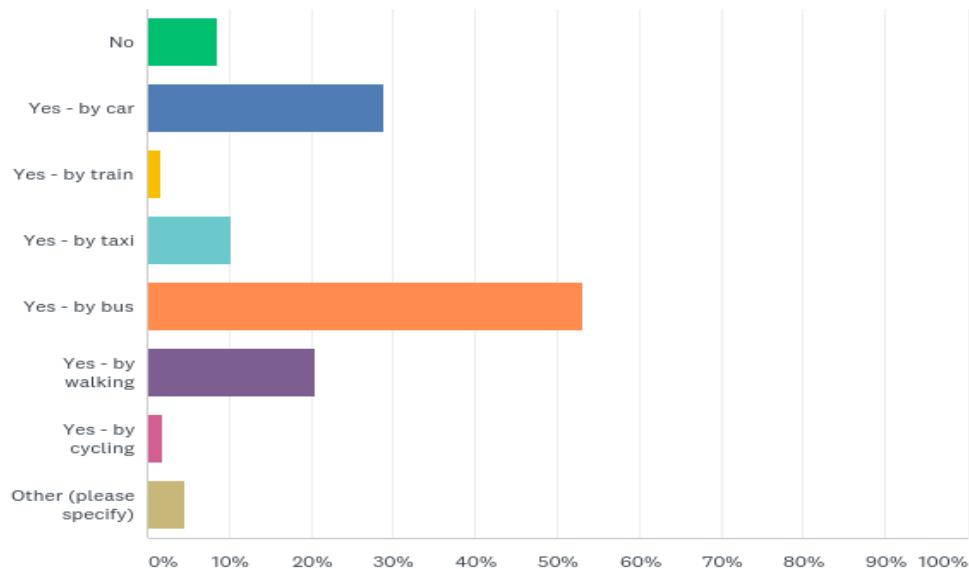
A full breakdown is provided in this section in response to these questions.

---

<sup>1</sup> Note that this is a self-selecting survey and although it is standard practice to statistically test results, the theoretical application of significance testing is based on random sampling approaches (rather than self-selecting surveys). Statistical differences are also noted when there are at least 28 respondents in a demographic group.

**Q1: Do you have children in your household that travel to school or college?  
Please select all that apply**

Answered: 2,308 Skipped: 0



**Figure 2**

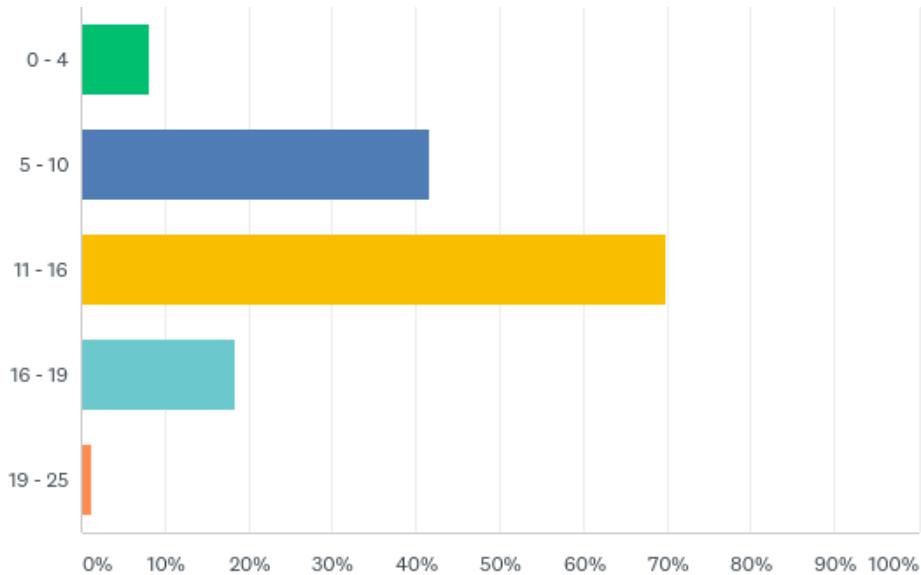
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
No	8.62%	199
Yes - by car	28.77%	664
Yes - by train	1.60%	37
Yes - by taxi	10.27%	237
Yes - by bus	53.16%	1,227
Yes - by walking	20.49%	473
Yes - by cycling	1.82%	42
Other (please specify)	4.51%	104
Total Respondents: 2,308		

**Figure 3**

All 2,308 respondents answered this question. Overall, slightly over half of the respondents reported that children in their household travel to school or college by bus (53.2%), with a further 28.8% travelling by car and 20.5% walking. Alternative modes of transport including train, taxi, cycling or other totalled approx. 18% overall. It is worth noting that 9% of the respondents do not have children who travel to school or college.

**Q2: Which age group(s) are your children in? Please select all that apply**

Answered: 2,097 Skipped: 211



**Figure 4**

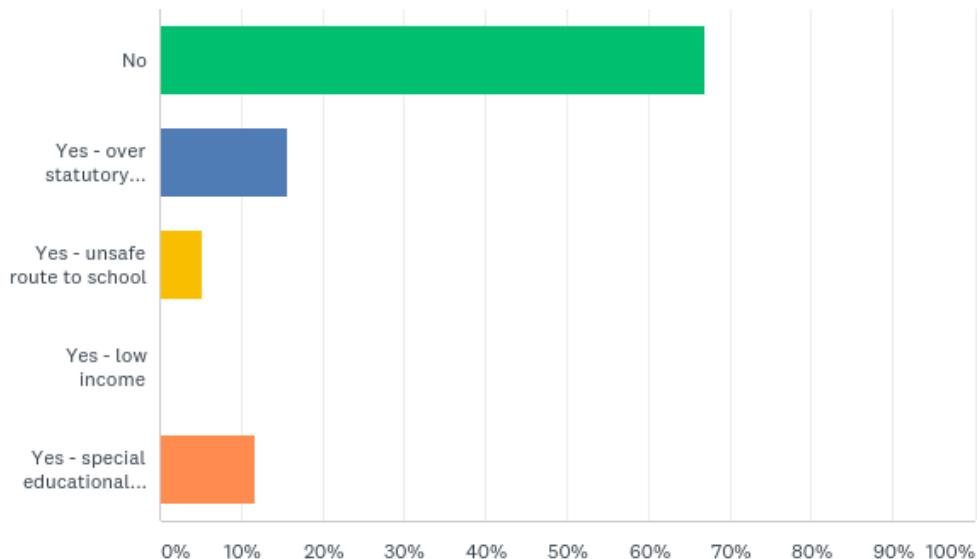
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
0 - 4	8.20% 172
5 - 10	41.63% 873
11 - 16	69.91% 1,466
16 - 19	18.31% 384
19 - 25	1.34% 28
Total Respondents: 2,097	

**Figure 5**

2,097 respondents answered this question (91%). Respondents were asked to select all of the age groups applicable for their children. 69.9% of respondents who answered this question have children aged between 11-16 and 41.6% have children aged 5-10.

### **Q3: Do your children receive free home to school transport?**

Answered: 2,085 Skipped: 223



**Figure 6**

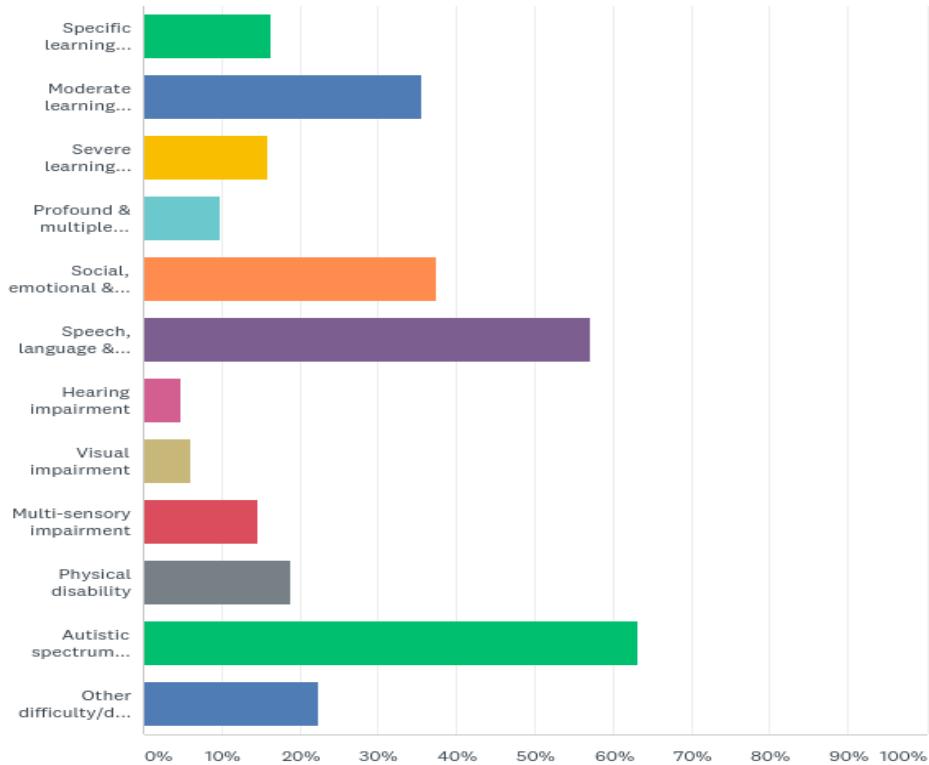
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
No	66.95%	1,396
Yes - over statutory walking distance	15.73%	328
Yes - unsafe route to school	5.32%	111
Yes - low income	0.19%	4
Yes - special educational needs or disability or mobility problems	11.80%	246
Total Respondents: 2,085		

**Figure 7**

2,085 respondents answered this question (90%). 66.9% of these respondents do not receive free home to school transport. Respondents in receipt of free home to school transport were most likely to receive this because they live further than the statutory walking distance (15.7% of people who answered this question) or because their child has special educational needs, disability or other mobility problems (11.8% of people who answered this question). 5.3% of respondents who answered this question receive free transport due to the route to school being unsafe, and less than 1% receives this provision due to low income.

**Q4: Which of the following descriptions apply to your child? Please select all that apply.**

Answered: 245 Skipped: 2,063



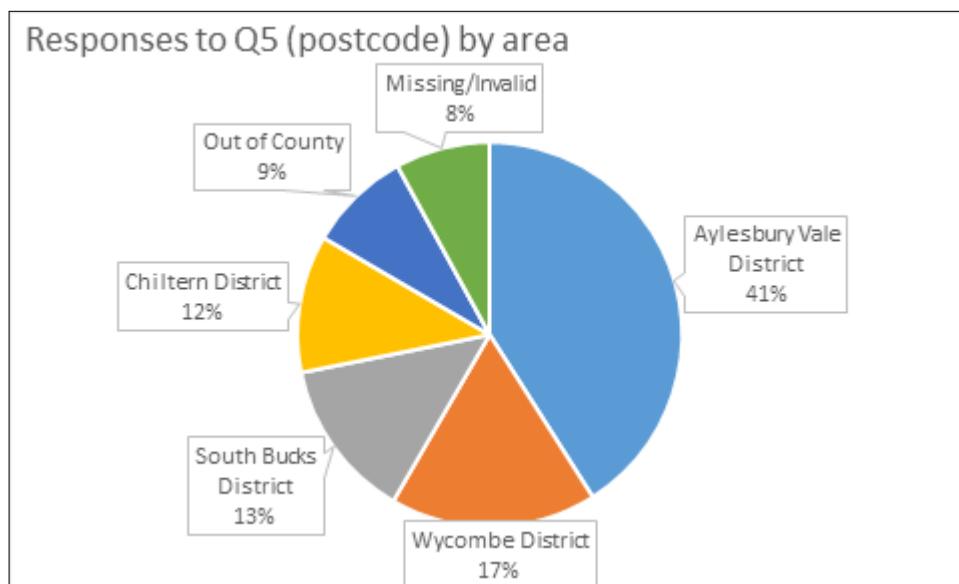
**Figure 8**

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Specific learning difficulty	16.33%	40
Moderate learning difficulty	35.51%	87
Severe learning difficulty	15.92%	39
Profound & multiple learning difficulty	9.80%	24
Social, emotional & mental health	37.55%	92
Speech, language & communication needs	57.14%	140
Hearing impairment	4.90%	12
Visual impairment	6.12%	15
Multi-sensory impairment	14.69%	36
Physical disability	18.78%	46
Autistic spectrum disorder	63.27%	155
Other difficulty/disability	22.45%	55
Total Respondents: 245		

**Figure 9**

245 respondents answered this question (11%). Several respondents identified multiple difficulties/disabilities applicable to their child. Autistic Spectrum Disorder (63.3% of people who answered this question) and Speech, Language and Communication needs were the most commonly identified in the survey (57.1% of people who answered this question). This is in line with information published in the SEND JSNA chapter, which identified that these are the two most prevalent need types for young people with Education, Health and Care plans.

**Q5: Respondents were asked to submit their full postcode.**



**Figure 10**

The majority of respondents (41%) resided in the Aylesbury vale area, with 17% of responses coming from residents in the Wycombe District and 13% in the South Bucks District.

## 6. Proposed changes to the Home to School transport arrangements

### 6.1 Proposal 1: Changing how we provide school transport

Questions 6 to 8 of the questionnaire related to proposed changes on how school transport is provided.

**Q6. We are proposing to move some school bus routes to public bus routes. Do you have any concerns about your child travelling to school on a public bus route?**

Answered: 2,030    Skipped: 278

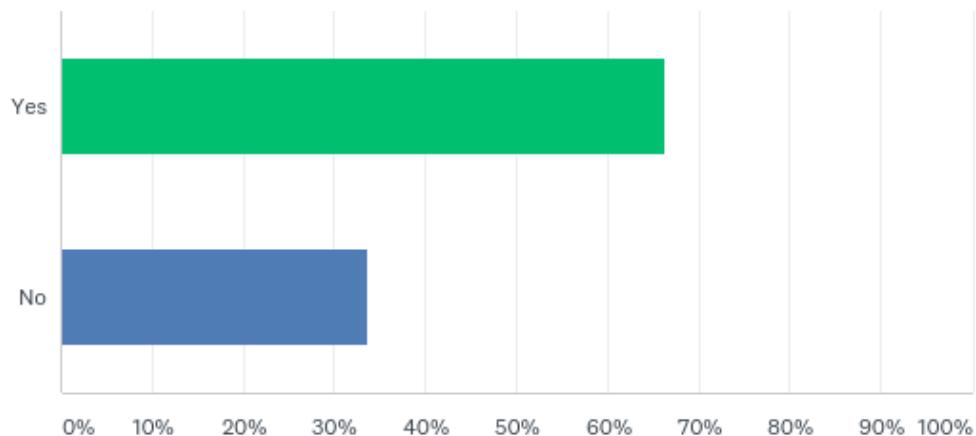


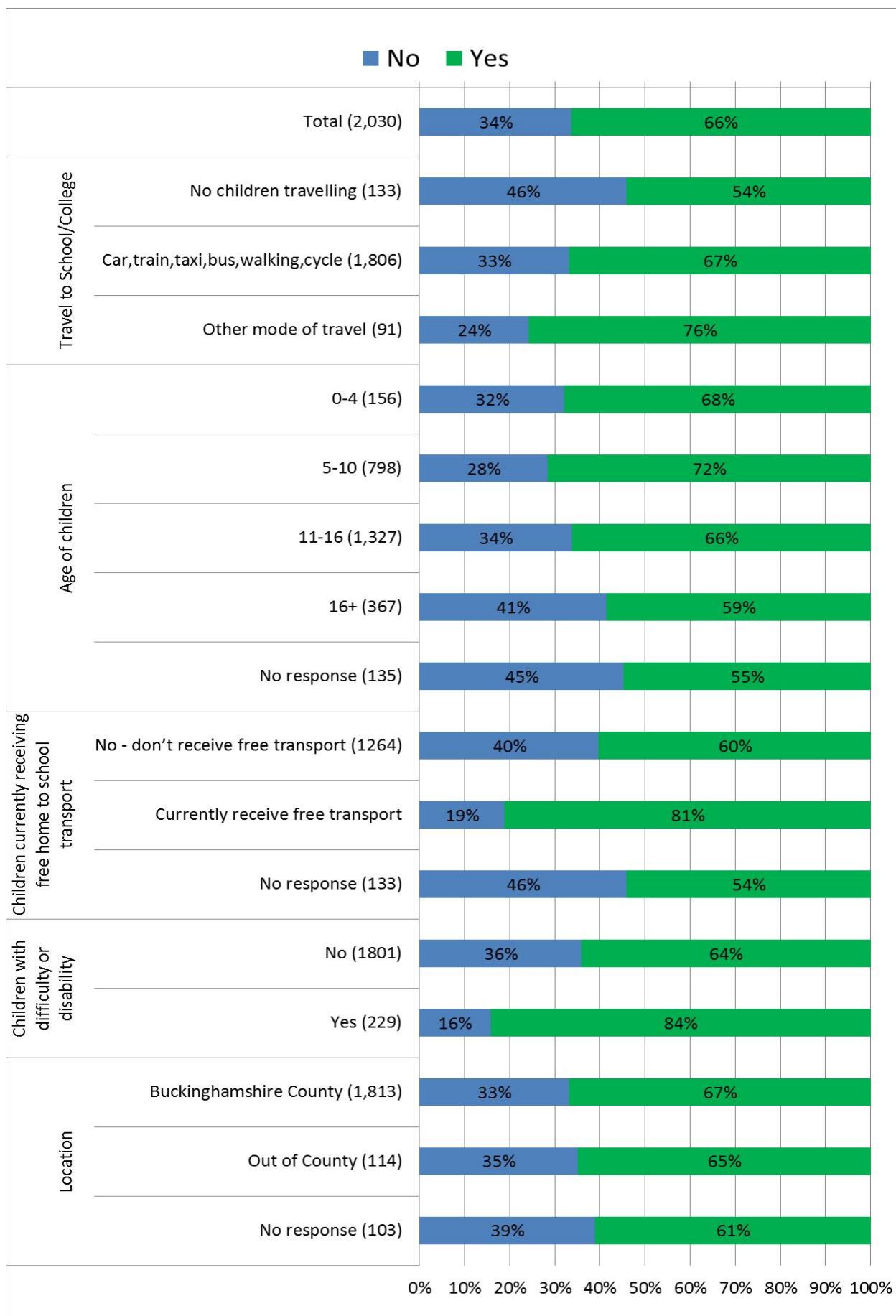
Figure 11

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	66.40%	1,348
No	33.60%	682
TOTAL	2,030	

Figure 12

2,030 respondents answered this question (88%). Two thirds of respondents expressed concerns about their child travelling to school on a public bus route (66%).

**It should be noted that the number of respondents who reported concerns (1,348) is higher than the number of people who reported in Question 1 that their child currently travels to school by bus (1,227).**



**Figure 13**

Differences for demographic groups appear in the chart above. Note that there were a range of different results when comparing the results for the above demographic groups<sup>2</sup>.

The differences between groups that were statistically significant were:

- **Children with a difficulty or disability** – respondents whose child had a disability are more likely to raise concerns about their child travelling to school on a public bus route (84% compared to the 66% average).
- **Age** – respondents with younger children are more likely to raise concerns than those with older children (72% of those with children aged 5-10 years old, compared to the 66% average).
- **Those currently receiving free transport** – respondents in this group are also more likely to raise concerns regarding their child(ren) travelling to school on a public bus route (81% compared to the 66% average).

## **Q6 Key Themes from open text**

Out of the 2,308 respondents to the survey, 1,345 made specific comments in response to Question 6 (58%). Each comment was categorised to understand common themes. Please note a respondent may have mentioned more than one theme in their comment, for example a respondent who commented on safety, reliability and cost would appear in all three categories.

The top three themes were:

- a) Safety
  - b) Routes
  - c) Times
- a) **Safety** — There were 524 comments which referenced safety. Concerns included children travelling on buses with members of the public who are not DBS checked, pupils walking to and from bus stops that are further away and children getting off the bus before they get to school.

*“You don’t know how safe your child is if members of the public use same bus.”*

*“It is not clear from the information provided that the necessary safeguarding requirements will be met.”*

---

<sup>2</sup> Statistical difference tested to a 95% level of confidence

*“Child would have to walk down an unlit and very wet / muddy / overgrown road to reach the bus stop if they used public transport.”*

- b) **Routes** — 494 respondents commented on not having a public bus route near to their home, public bus routes not going directly to the school (with pupils having to change buses) or concerns that public bus routes could be cancelled by the bus companies.

*“I would love there to be a public bus route to my child’s school. At present if they were to use public transport they would have to change buses three times and take 2 hrs to get home.”*

*“Only if the trip is directly to the school without any bus changes.”*

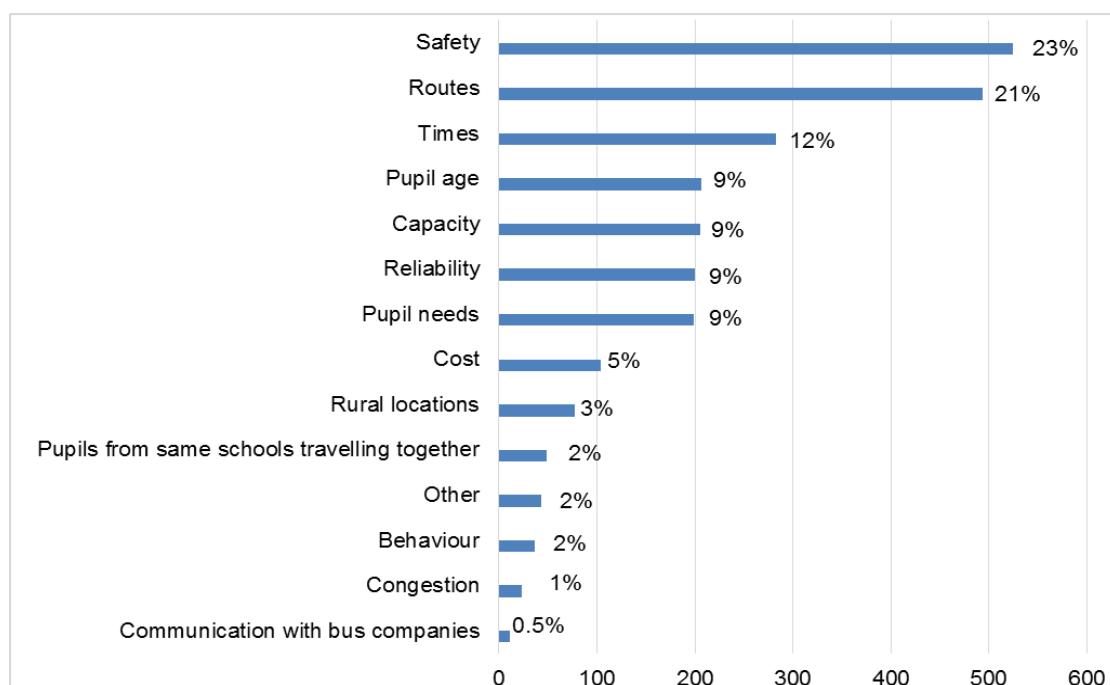
*“But we don’t have a public bus service that runs through our village.”*

- c) **Times** — 283 respondents raised comments regarding public bus timetables not coinciding with school start and finish times. There were also concerns that public bus routes would increase journey times for the children.

*“There is only a partial timetable and no full bus runs at the required times”*

*“It would make the journey to and from school longer so would require leaving earlier/home later in limited day light in Autumn/Winter.”*

*“But what if the public bus is full and he has to catch next bus - and therefore late for school.”*

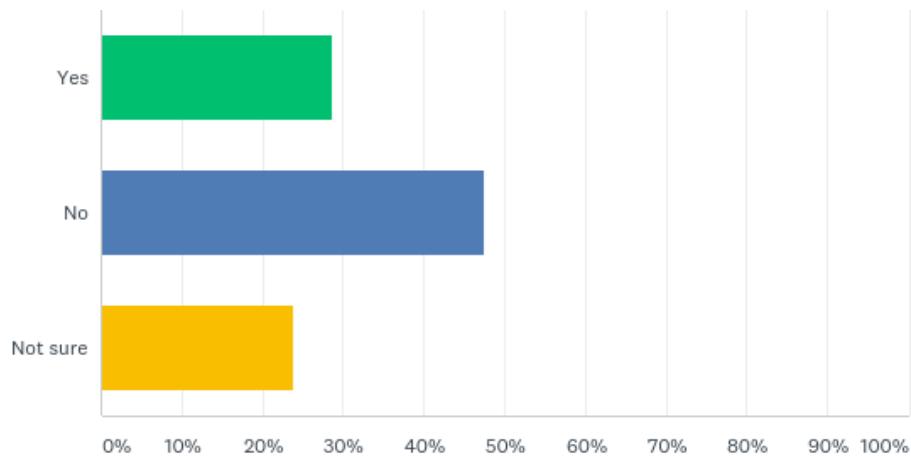


**Figure 14**

Other key themes included concerns about: children being too young to travel on public bus routes without adult supervision; bus capacity and overcrowding; reliability of public buses and the need to ensure that provision was in place for children with disabilities and/or special educational needs.

**Q7. Most school buses provide a single pick up and drop off service each weekday. Would your child benefit from moving to a more flexible public bus route? For example, if they take part in after-school clubs or activities.**

Answered: 2,010   Skipped: 298

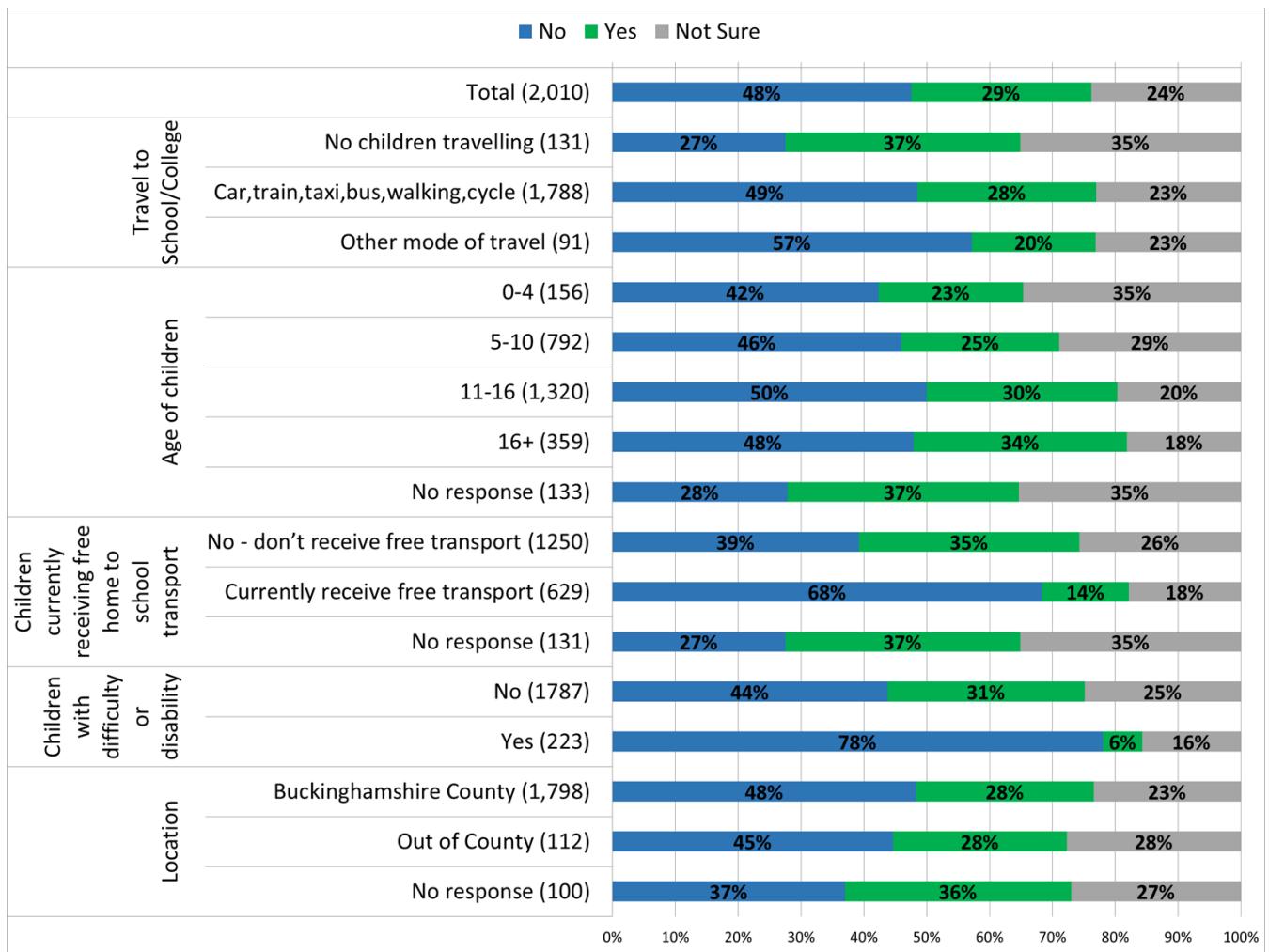


**Figure 15**

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	28.61%	575
No	47.56%	956
Not sure	23.83%	479
TOTAL	2,010	

**Figure 16**

2,010 respondents answered this question (87%). These respondents were most likely to report that their child would not benefit from moving to a more flexible public bus route (48% of people who answered this question). 29% indicated that their child would benefit from this proposal, but 24% reported that they were not sure.



**Figure 17**

Differences for demographic groups appear in the chart above. Note that there were a range of different results when comparing the results for the above demographic groups<sup>3</sup>.

The differences between groups that were statistically significant were:

- **Currently receiving home to school transport** – respondents with children currently receiving free home to school transport are statistically more likely to say flexible bus routes would **not** be beneficial (68% v 48% average).<sup>4</sup>
- **Chidren with a difficulty or disability** – respondents with a child who has a disability are statistically more likely to say flexible routes would **not** be a benefit (78% v 48% average).<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Statistical difference tested to a 95% level of confidence

<sup>4</sup> Significantly different to those with a child not currently receiving free HOME TO SCHOOL transport.

<sup>5</sup> Significantly different to those with a child without a disability.

## **Q7 Key Themes from open text**

Of the total 2,308 respondents, 488 (21%) made specific comments about whether their child would benefit from moving to a more flexible public route. Each comment was categorised to understand common themes with some comments given more than one category. Please note a respondent may have mentioned more than one theme in their comment, for example a respondent who commented on safety, reliability and cost would appear in all three categories. Of the 488 comments, 66 responses did not fall under a common theme and were not categorised. (These are included in the 'other' category).

Themes identified were similar to Question 6 with routes, times and safety being key issues for respondents.

The top three themes were:

- a) Poor bus route/frequency of buses
  - b) Journey times, flexibility and reliability
  - c) Safety
- a) **Poor bus route/frequency of buses** - 137 respondents commented on the quality and frequency of public buses. Comments also mentioned the location of bus stops, length and frequency of journeys. Comments highlighted that there are school routes with no public route from their home to school. This tended to be in rural areas.

*"If the public bus route existed, was frequent, and was reliable!!! It doesn't / isn't."*

*"There is no public bus route running daily near our home, so this will not be helpful."*

*"The public buses in the villages have been increasingly withdrawn. There is no guarantee that the public bus will continue in our area. The public bus takes a lot longer as it is not a direct route, meaning that the children will have to catch the bus at an unreasonably early time."*

- b) **Journey times, flexibility, reliability** – A high number of comments stated views on journey times (28), flexibility (49) and reliability (54) of public transport with some positive views about the flexibility of buses but negative views around the length of journey times and reliability. Some respondents stated that their view would depend on the public route offer.

*"Depends on frequency and timings"*

*"Provided public buses provide similar services without the need to change or lengthy delays"*

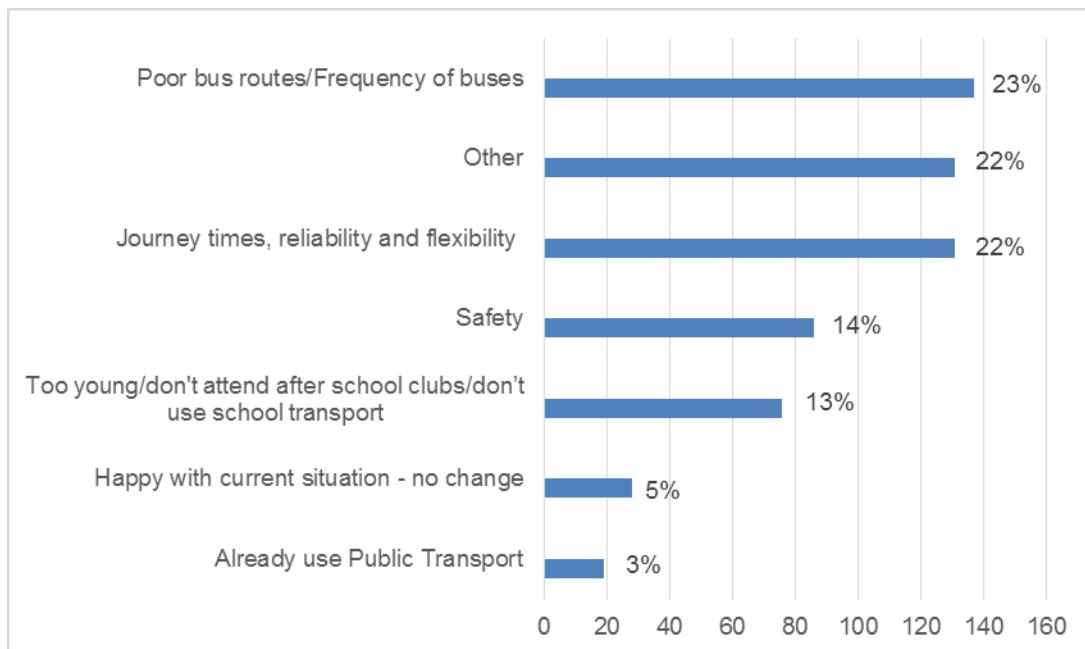
*“Makes complete sense, there should be flexibility”*

*“Public services are not reliable. Would rather pay for a school bus that’s reliable”*

- c) **Safety** – 86 respondents commented on safety of public buses. Comments included concerns around journeys for children from public bus stops to their home, referencing poor street lighting, speed of roads and location of bus stops. Other comments mention perceptions of the safety of public transport compared to school buses and some commented that they would choose to pick their child up from school instead of using public buses.

*“I would rather collect them from school, far safer than public bus.”*

*“It would depend where the stop was e.g. how close to the school/ home.”*

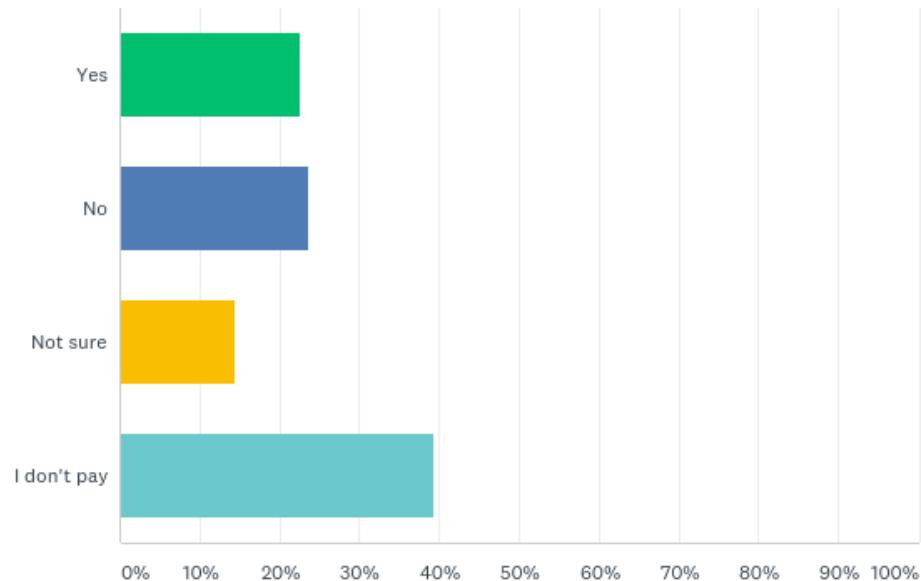


**Figure 18**

Other themes included: some respondents thought their children were too young to use public transport (usually primary school age but older for some individuals); comments that children did not attend after school clubs or they were happy with their current travel arrangements; a small number of respondents already taking advantage of public transport.

**Q8. If you currently pay for school transport, would you consider moving to a public bus service if it meant that you saved money?**

Answered: 1,988 Skipped: 320

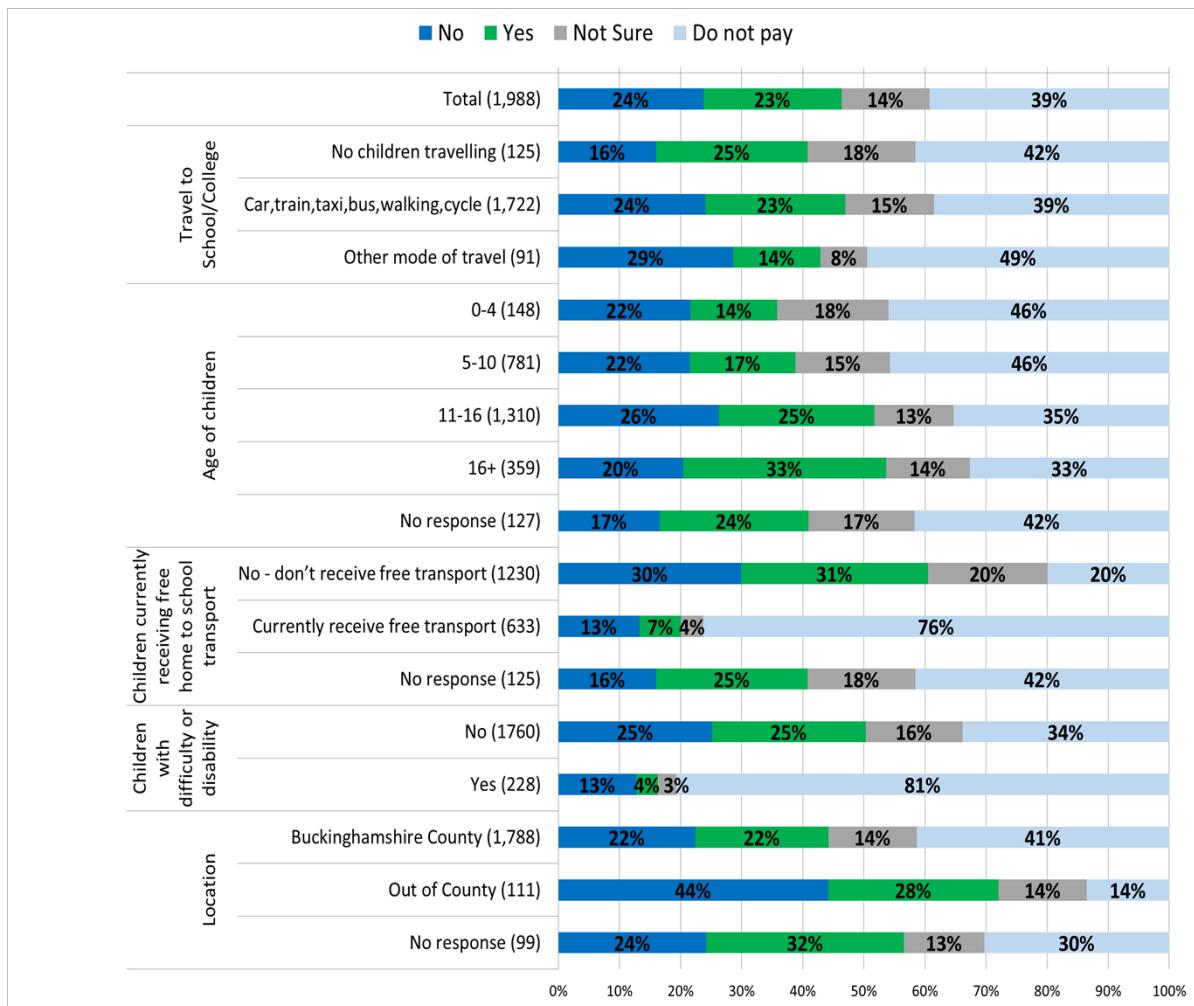


**Figure 19**

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	22.64%
No	23.74%
Not sure	14.39%
I don't pay	39.24%
TOTAL	1,988

**Figure 20**

1,988 respondents answered this question (86%), out of which 780 (39%) stated that they did not currently pay for home to school transport. From the remaining 1208 responses, roughly a quarter of all respondents (24%) would not consider moving to a public bus service if it meant saving money compared to 23% who would consider public transport.



**Figure 21**

Differences for demographic groups appear in the chart above. Note that there were a range of different results when comparing the results for the above demographic groups<sup>6</sup>.

The differences between groups that were statistically significant were:

- **Age** - respondents with older children (aged 16+) are statistically more likely to move to a public bus service if it saved money (33% v 23% average).<sup>7</sup>
- **Not receiving free home to school transport** – respondents with children not currently receiving home to school transport were statistically more likely to switch to a public service if it saved money (31% v 23% average)<sup>8</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Statistical difference tested to a 95% level of confidence

<sup>7</sup> Significantly different to those without a child aged 16+.

<sup>8</sup> Significantly different to those with a child currently receiving free HOME TO SCHOOL transport (7%).

- **Children without disabilities** – respondents with children without a disability are statistically more likely to switch to a public service if it saved money (25% v 23% average).

### **Q8 Key Themes from open text**

Out of the total number of respondents 2,308 to the survey 443 (19%) made specific comments on whether respondents would consider moving to a public bus service if it meant saving money. Each comment was categorised to understand common themes with some comments given more than one category. Please note a respondent may have mentioned more than one theme in their comment, for example a respondent who commented on safety, reliability and cost would appear in all three categories. Of the 443 comments, 48 responses did not fall under a common theme and were not categorised (these are included in the ‘other’ category).

Themes were similar to questions 6 and 7 where safety, journey times, reliability and flexibility being key issues for respondents.

The top three themes were:

- a) Safety and wellbeing
  - b) Journey times, reliability and flexibility of buses
  - c) Depending on saving and options of routes/times available
- a) **Safety and wellbeing** – 144 respondents commented that safety of their children was a high priority for them. Some respondents commented that they would prefer to spend more on a school bus as they deemed this a safer option for their child. Respondents also commented that the general public on buses were a safety concern, locations of bus stops and danger of high speed roads.

*“No, I would rather pay more to ensure my son arrived at school safely and on time.”*

*“This would depend on how the scheme is run. Safety for the children is my paramount concern.”*

- b) **Journey times, reliability and flexibility** – comments were received regarding bus services, particularly in regard to the lack of reliability (74). A number of respondents stated that their views would depend on the routes and proposal if changes were made.

*“Possibly if it was a direct route, which didn't take longer than the current school bus and the timings were suitable.”*

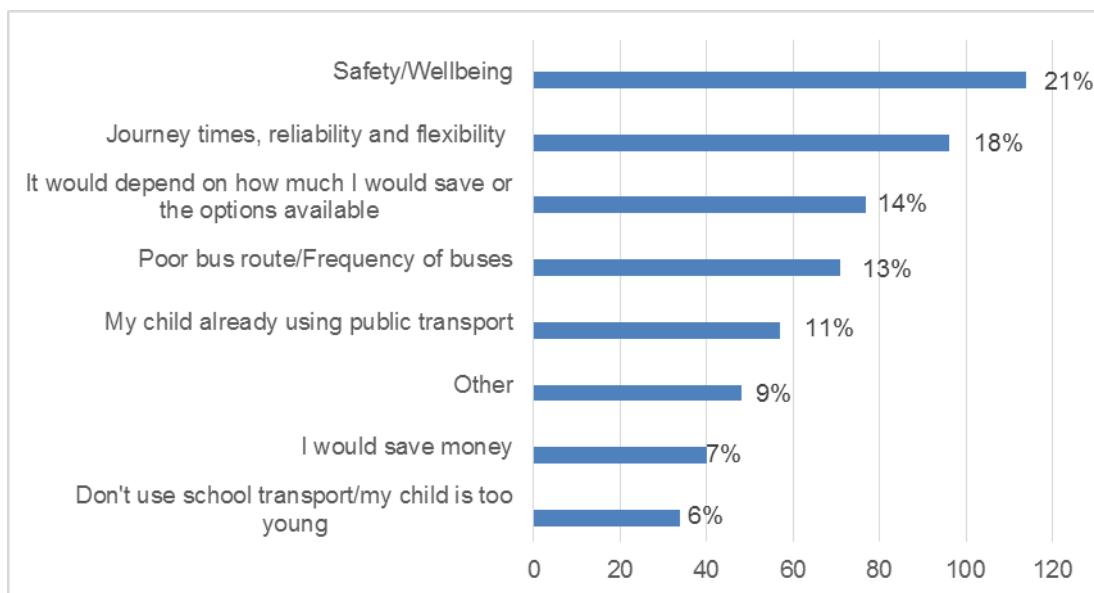
*“It would depend on the saving v the bus stop location (distance and the safety of the walking route to it) and the timing of the service.”*

*"I would for definite however the public bus service has to be far better and frequent."*

- c) **Depending on saving and options of routes/times available – 77** respondents said their decision to switch to public transport would be tied to options for routes, how much they would save and the potential flexibility.

*"Would depend how much less."*

*"It would depend on the saving v the bus stop location (distance and the safety of the walking route to it) and the timing of the service."*



**Figure 22**

Other themes included: parents who already use public transport (57) with some stating it was cheaper and more flexible for them, comments around poor bus routes, frequency of buses.

## 6.2 Proposal 2: Providing statutory free home to school transport to the nearest eligible school (Ivinghoe and Evreham [Iver]).

This will withdraw the historic, discretionary transport arrangements in Ivinghoe and Evreham (Iver). We have offered free transport in these areas that allowed pupils to attend a school that was not their nearest. Withdrawing these historic arrangements will bring Ivinghoe and Evreham (Iver) in line with the rest of the county and eligibility for free school transport would be consistently applied across the county.

### Q9. Do you support this proposal?

Answered: 1,985 Skipped: 323

Figure 23

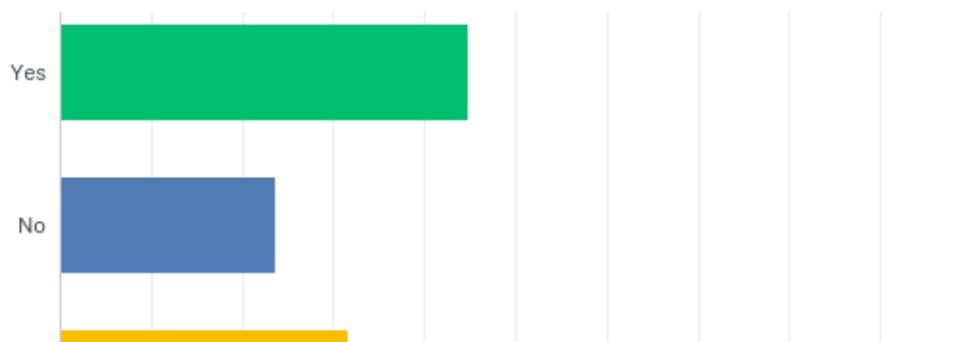
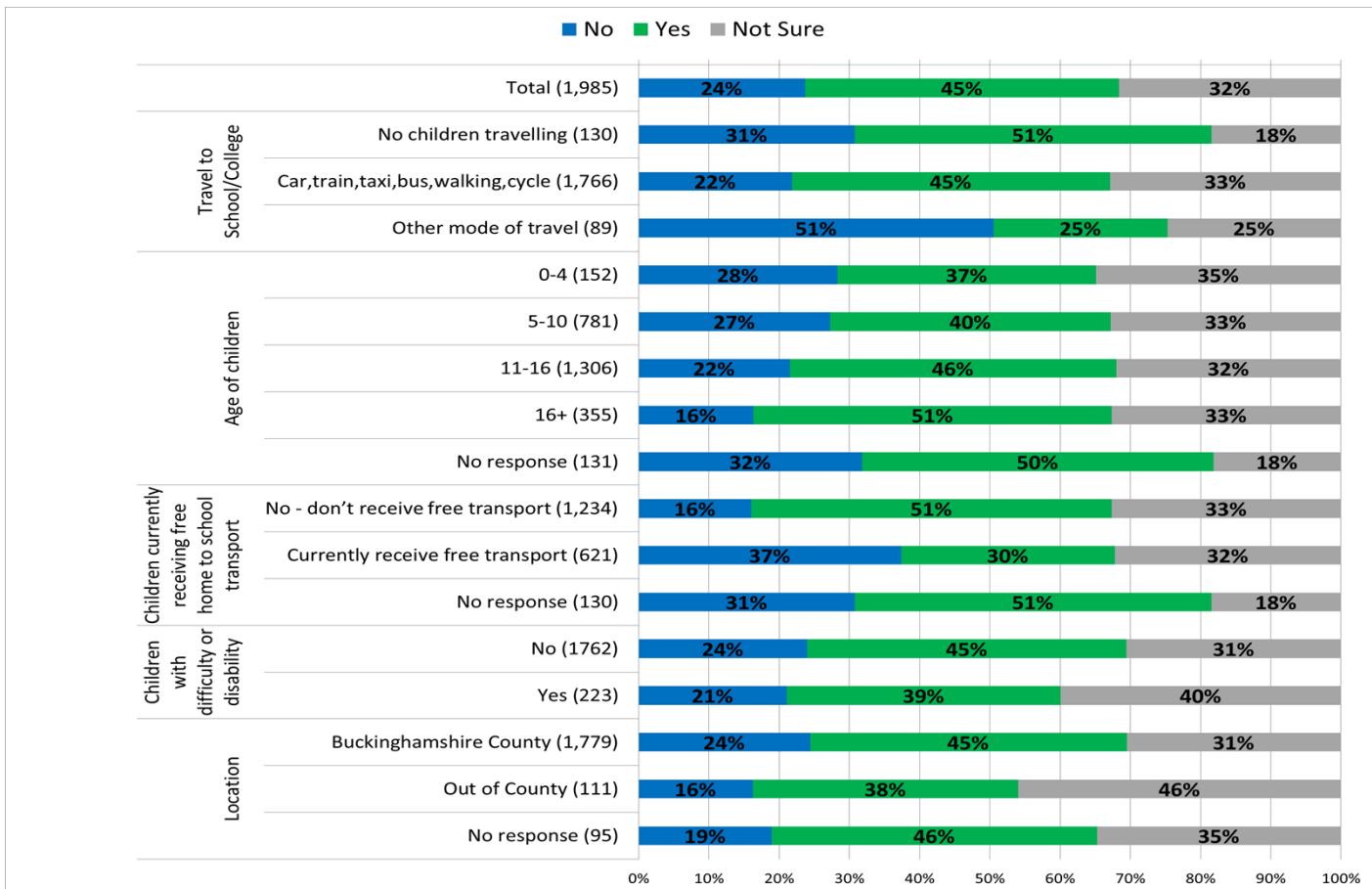


Figure 24



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	44.74% 888
No	23.68% 470
Not sure	31.59% 627
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,985</b>

1,985 respondents answered this question (86%), of which 213 were from Ivinghoe and 245 were from Evreham. Less than half of respondents agreed with the proposal to remove the current discretionary arrangements in Ivinghoe and Evreham (45%), whilst 24% disagreed with the proposal. Almost a third (32%) of respondents were not sure whether they supported the proposal.



**Figure 25**

Differences for demographic groups appear in the chart above. Note that there were a range of different results when comparing the results for the above demographic groups<sup>9</sup>.

The differences between groups that were statistically significant were:

- **Receiving free home to school transport** – respondents with children currently receiving home to school transport were statistically more likely to disagree with removing the discretionary arrangements (37% v 24% average).<sup>10</sup>
- **Age** - respondents with a child aged 11-16<sup>11</sup> or 16+<sup>12</sup> were statistically more likely to be in favour of removing existing discretionary arrangements (46% & 51% respectively v 45% average).
- **Location** – 213 of the respondents were from Ivinghoe and 245 were from Evreham and have expressed strong views as they will be most affected by the proposed changes.

<sup>9</sup> Statistical difference tested to a 95% level of confidence, all respondents, not filtered to Evreham/Ivinghoe area

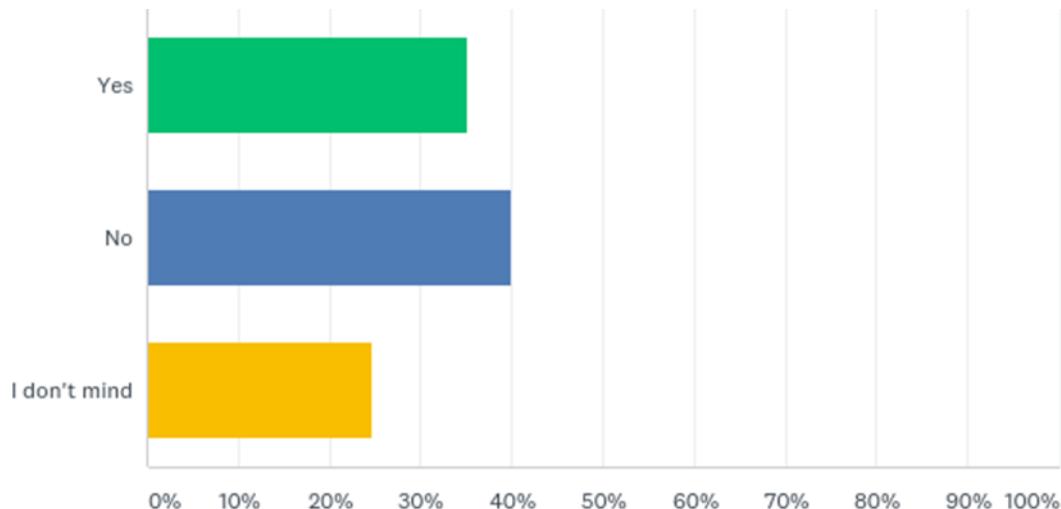
<sup>10</sup> Significantly different to those with a child not receiving free home to school transport

<sup>11</sup> Significantly different to those without a child aged 11-16

<sup>12</sup> Significantly different to those without a child aged 16+

**Q10. Should students in Ivinghoe and Evreham (Iver) who already receive free school transport to a school that is not their nearest eligible school, start paying from September 2020?**

Answered: 1,973    Skipped: 335

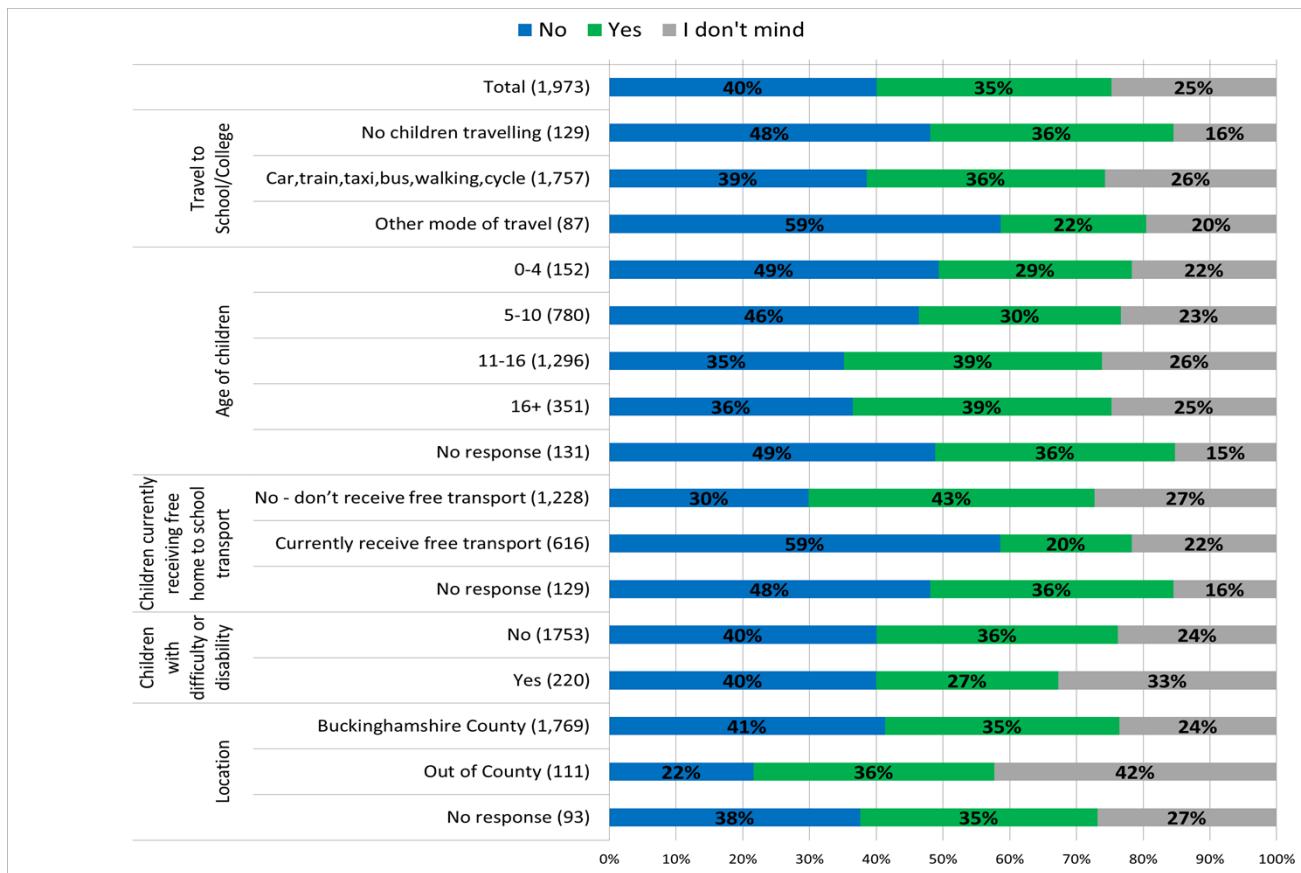


**Figure 26**

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	35.17%	694
No	40.04%	790
I don't mind	24.78%	489
TOTAL	1,973	

**Figure 27**

More than one third of respondents (35%) agreed that students in Ivinghoe and Evreham should start paying from September 2020 with a further 25% of respondents expressing that they don't mind, whilst 40% disagreed. It is worth noting that 213 respondents were from the Ivinghoe area and 245 respondents were from Evreham which would account for 23% of the respondents to this question.



**Figure 28**

Differences for demographic groups appear in the chart above. Note that there were a range of different results when comparing the results for the above demographic groups<sup>13</sup>.

The differences between groups that were statistically significant were:

- **Age** – respondents with a child aged 0-4<sup>14</sup> or 5-10<sup>15</sup> were statistically more likely to disagree with the proposal to implement the change from September 2020 in Ivinghoe and Evreham (49% & 46% respectively v 40% average).
- **Not receiving free home to school transport** – respondents without children currently receiving free home to school transport are statistically more likely to agree with the proposal to implement the change from September 2020 (43% v 35% average)<sup>16</sup>
- **Location** – 213 of the respondents were from Ivinghoe and 245 were from Evreham and have expressed strong views as they will be most affected by the proposed changes.

<sup>13</sup> Statistical difference tested to a 95% level of confidence, all respondents, not filtered to Iver/Ivinghoe area

<sup>14</sup> Significantly different to those without a child aged 0-4.

<sup>15</sup> Significantly different to those without a child aged 5-10.

<sup>16</sup> Significantly different to those with a child who is currently receiving free home to school transport.

### 6.3 Proposal 3: Introducing transport charges for students with (SEND) aged 16+

We currently offer free transport to SEND students aged 16+. We are proposing that parents make a financial contribution to the cost of transport. Typically students with SEND have to travel further to attend a school or college that meets their needs.

There are two charging options (1) the flat fee would be £660 per year. (2) If charges were made based on distance between home and school, the fee per year would be banded: Under 4 miles = £660, 4-4.99 miles = £772, 5-6.99 miles = £884, 7-9.99 miles = £998, 10 or more miles £1,111.

#### Q11. Do you support this proposal?

Answered: 1,955 Skipped: 353

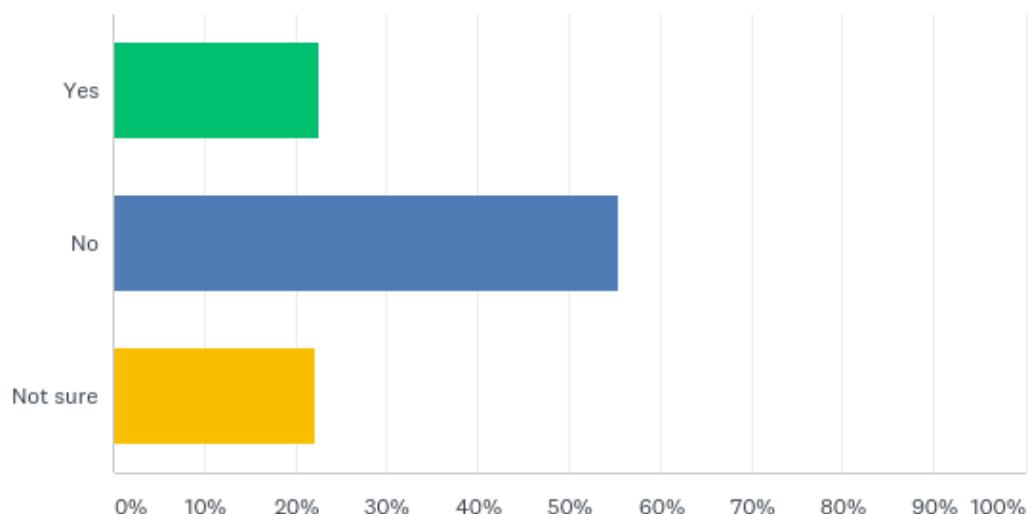
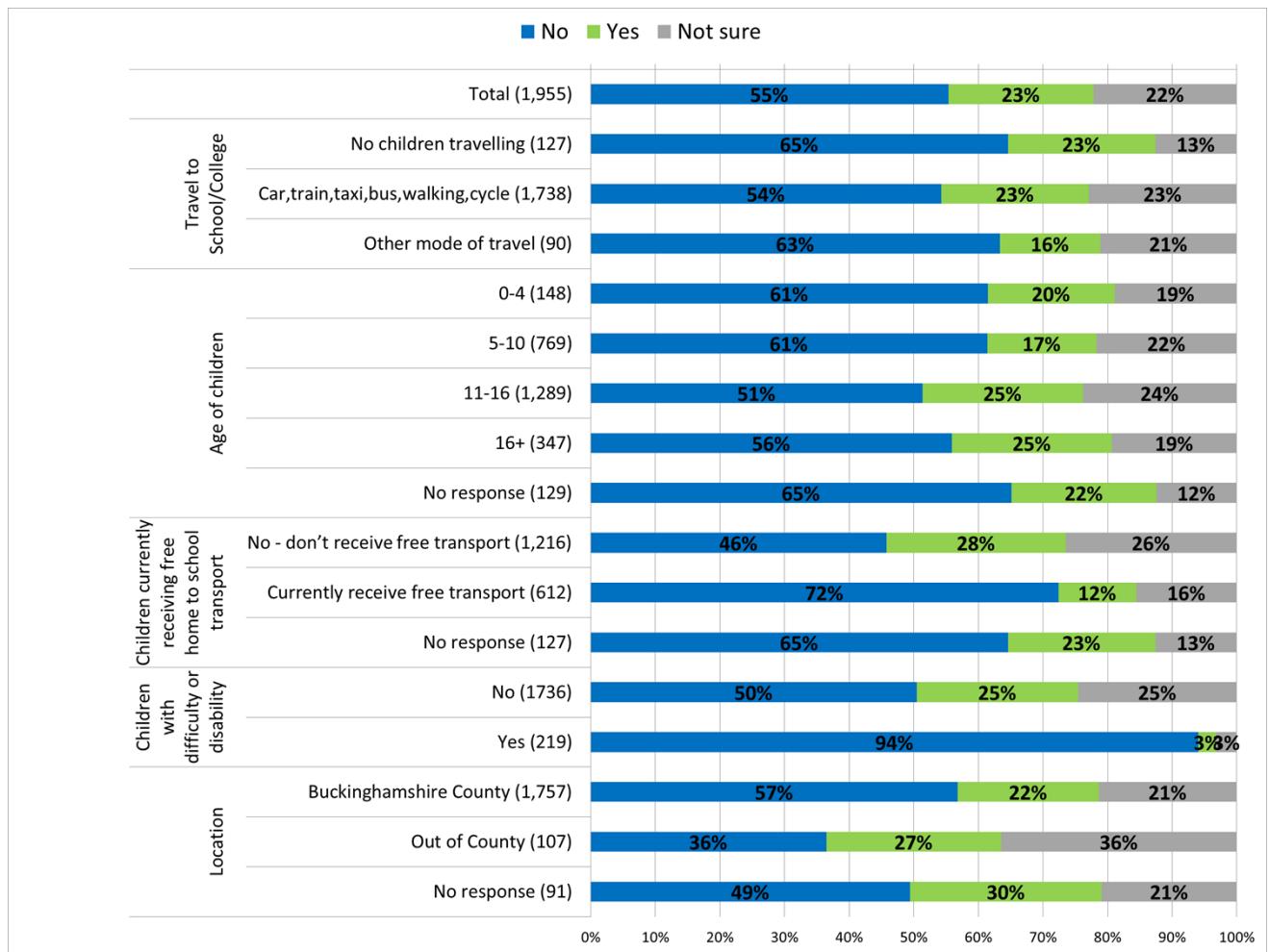


Figure 29

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	22.51%	440
No	55.35%	1,082
Not sure	22.15%	433
TOTAL		1,955

1,955  
respondents

answered this question (85%). More than half of respondents (55%) did not support the proposal for charging options for transport for students with SEND aged 16 or above. 23% supported the proposal and 22% were not sure (45% in total).



**Figure 31**

Differences for demographic groups appear in the chart above. Note that there were a range of different results when comparing the results for the above demographic groups<sup>17</sup>.

The differences between groups that were statistically significant were:

- **Children with disabilities** – respondents with a child with a disability are statistically more likely to disagree with the proposed charge banding (94% v 55%).<sup>18</sup>

## Q11 Key Themes from open text

Out of the total number of respondents (2,308) to the survey 607 (26%) made specific comments on proposals for contribution to transport for students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) aged 16+. Each comment was categorised to understand common themes with some comments given more than

<sup>17</sup> Statistical difference tested to a 95% level of confidence, all respondents, not filtered to Iver/Ivinghoe area

<sup>18</sup> Significantly different to those without a disabled child

one category. Please note a respondent may have mentioned more than one theme in their comment, for example a respondent who commented on safety, reliability and cost would appear in all three categories. 28 responses did not fall under a common theme and were not categorised. (These are included in the ‘other’ category).

Of the 607 respondents who commented, 146 reported to receive free home to school transport for children with a Special Educational Need/Disability/Mobility problem<sup>19</sup>. (It is worth noting that this is out of an overall total of 246 respondents who stated that they received free home to school transport because their child has SEND in response to Q3). The remaining 461 respondents who commented reported that they did not receive free home to school transport for children with SEND<sup>20</sup>. The responses have been separated between these two groups.

The top 3 themes from respondents receiving SEND home to school transport were:

- a) Too expensive/unaffordable.
  - b) Fewer special schools mean longer travel distance, so SEND children shouldn't be penalised.
  - c) Unfair/Discrimination/Penalised for being SEND.
- a) **Too expensive/unaffordable** - 94 of the 146 respondents commented that both proposals were too expensive and unaffordable. Comments also cited other costs required to support a child with SEND. Some comments mentioned making alternative arrangements to avoid the cost by either making other travel arrangements or looking for alternative school.

*“The costs proposed are completely unaffordable and would result in my son having to leave school.”*

*“I know that I would not be able to afford it but I would personally make arrangements that I would take my child to and from school. As I have others without SEN would mean that the school may have to wait with him until I get there to collect.”*

*“Parents of disabled children are already at a financial disadvantage and this proposal will push some families into poverty.”*

- b) **Fewer special schools** - 72 of the 146 respondents commented on how the levels of provision of special schools within Buckinghamshire means that SEND children travel longer distances and therefore should not be penalised as a result.

---

<sup>19</sup> Answering “Yes – special educational need/disability/mobility problem” in Q3

<sup>20</sup> Answer either “No”, “Yes – Over statutory walking distance”, “Yes – Unsafe walking route”, Yes – Low income” in Q3

*“Since there are no special schools close to our home there is no choice but to attend a special school 10 miles away. I don't want to have to send my child 10 miles + to school but what is the alternative when there are no schools that are closer? This proposal would deny access to education for ages 16 + with special needs.”*

*“I would be being penalised based on the distance when through no fault of mine a suitable school for my child's SEN needs is not closer to us. We have not moved away in the time since he was born and are not in a position to move closer to the school.”*

- c) **Unfair/Discrimination/Penalised for being SEND** – 43 of the 146 respondents commented that they felt the proposal was unfair and penalised parents with children with SEND.

*“It is unfair to financially penalise parents who have children with special needs.”*

*“The 2nd charging option is particularly unfair on rural special needs pupils. SEN pupils already have some of the longest journey times in the county.”*

The top 3 themes from respondents **not** receiving SEND home to school transport were:

- a) Unfair/Discrimination/Penalised for being SEND
  - b) Agree that there should be some contribution
  - c) Too expensive/unaffordable
- a) **Unfair/Discrimination/Penalised for being SEND** – 147 commented that they thought the proposal was either unfair or families with children with SEND should not be penalised financially.

*“I think families who send their children to these schools have had to make enough sacrifices (including financial) already.”*

*“I feel this would be seen as punishing parents for having children with additional needs. It's not the parents fault that a suitable school is a certain distance away.”*
  - b) **Agree that there should be some contribution** – 94 thought the proposal was fair with most preferring the flat fee option. However, many commented that this should be means tested (50).

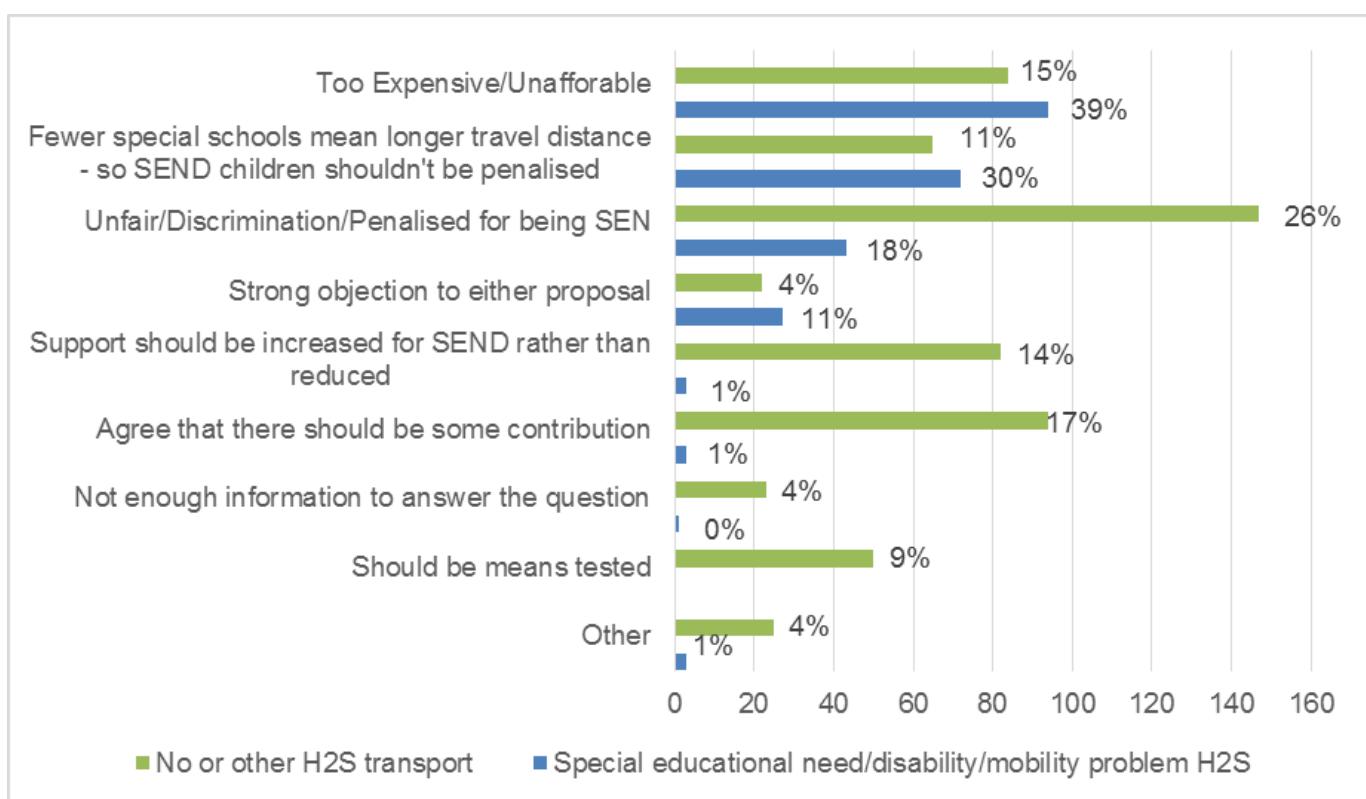
*"But only the flat fee should be charged- those parents should not be paying more if the school attended is further away."*

*"As long as means testing was also involved."*

- c) **Too expensive/unaffordable** – 84 thought that the proposal would be too expensive or unaffordable for families with students with SEND, stating that putting extra finance pressure on these families would be unfair and the proposed amount would be too expensive.

*"Parents who have kids with SEND already have a difficult and I assume a more expensive life. Adding this will cause them more issues."*

*"Having a child with special needs is costly. In many families one parent can't work. It is these families that need the most support."*



**Figure 32**

Other comments included: charging should be financially means tested; support for vulnerable groups such as lone parents; more support should be offered for children with SEND and transport should be free. Comments also mentioned that there was not enough information to comment on the proposals or more information was needed to make a comment. A number of comments expressed strong objection to either proposal. A total of 49 comments expressed strong objection out of a total of 1,955 responses (full comments are available on request).

## Q12. Which of the two charging options do you prefer?

- Flat fee per year
- Fee per year based on distance between home and school
- I don't mind

Answered: 1,719   Skipped: 589

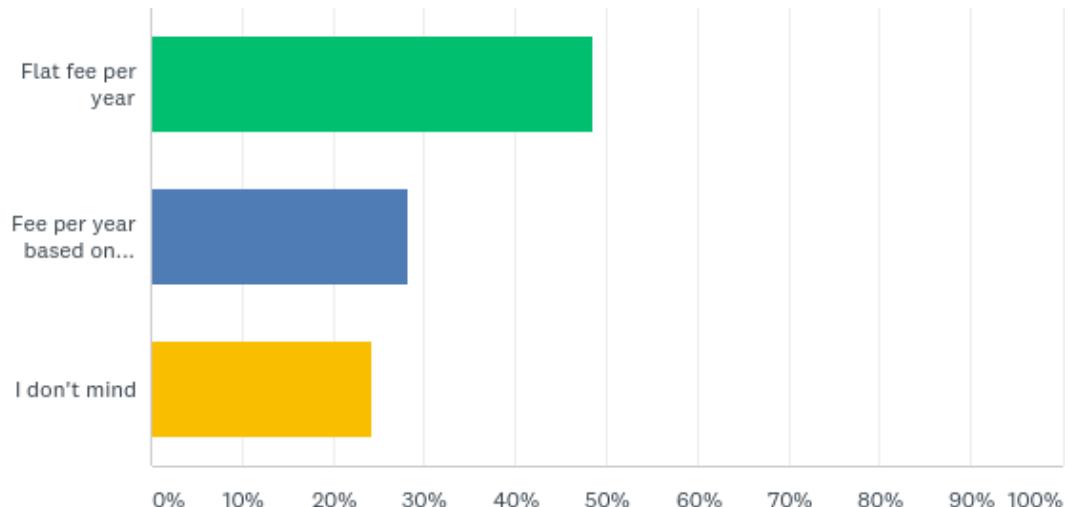


Figure 33

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Flat fee per year	48.46%	833
Fee per year based on distance between home and school	28.33%	487
I don't mind	24.20%	416
Total Respondents: 1,719		

Figure 34

1,719 respondents answered this question (74%). Almost half (48%) of respondents preferred a flat fee per year, with 28% preferring a fee based on distance. Note that almost one quarter of respondents expressed that they did not mind.



**Figure 35**

Differences for demographic groups appear in the chart above. Note that there were a range of different results when comparing the results for the above demographic groups<sup>21</sup>.

The differences between groups that were statistically significant were:

- **Age** – respondents with a child aged 16+ are statistically more likely to prefer a flat fee per year (56% v 48% average)<sup>22</sup>
- **Children with disabilities** – respondents with a child with a disability are statistically more likely to prefer a flat fee per year (70% v 48% average).<sup>23</sup>

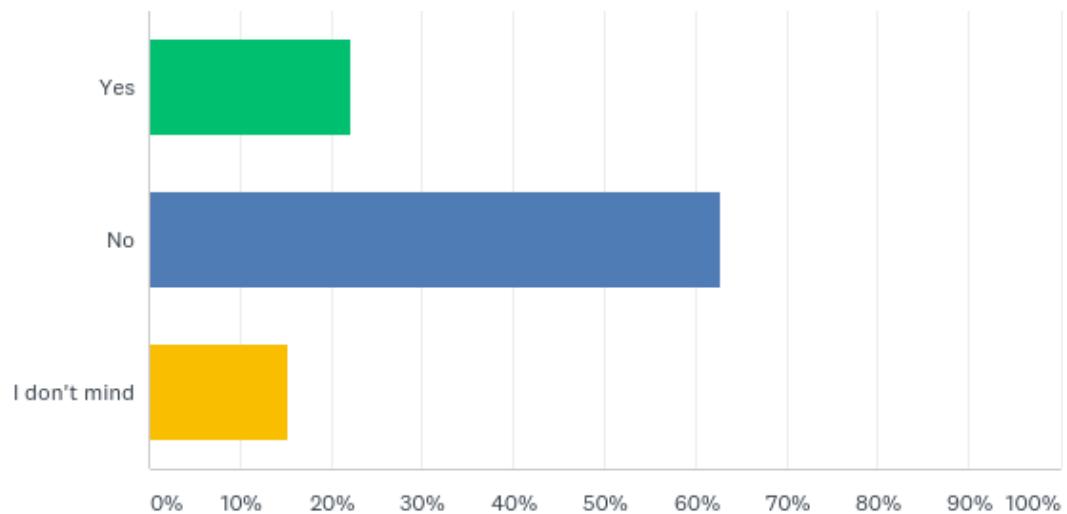
<sup>21</sup> Statistical difference tested to a 95% level of confidence, all respondents, not filtered to Iver/Ivinghoe area

<sup>22</sup> Significantly different to those without a child aged 16+

<sup>23</sup> Significantly different to those without a disabled child.

**Q13. Should SEND students aged 16+ who already receive free school transport start paying from September 2020?**

Answered: 1,939 Skipped: 369

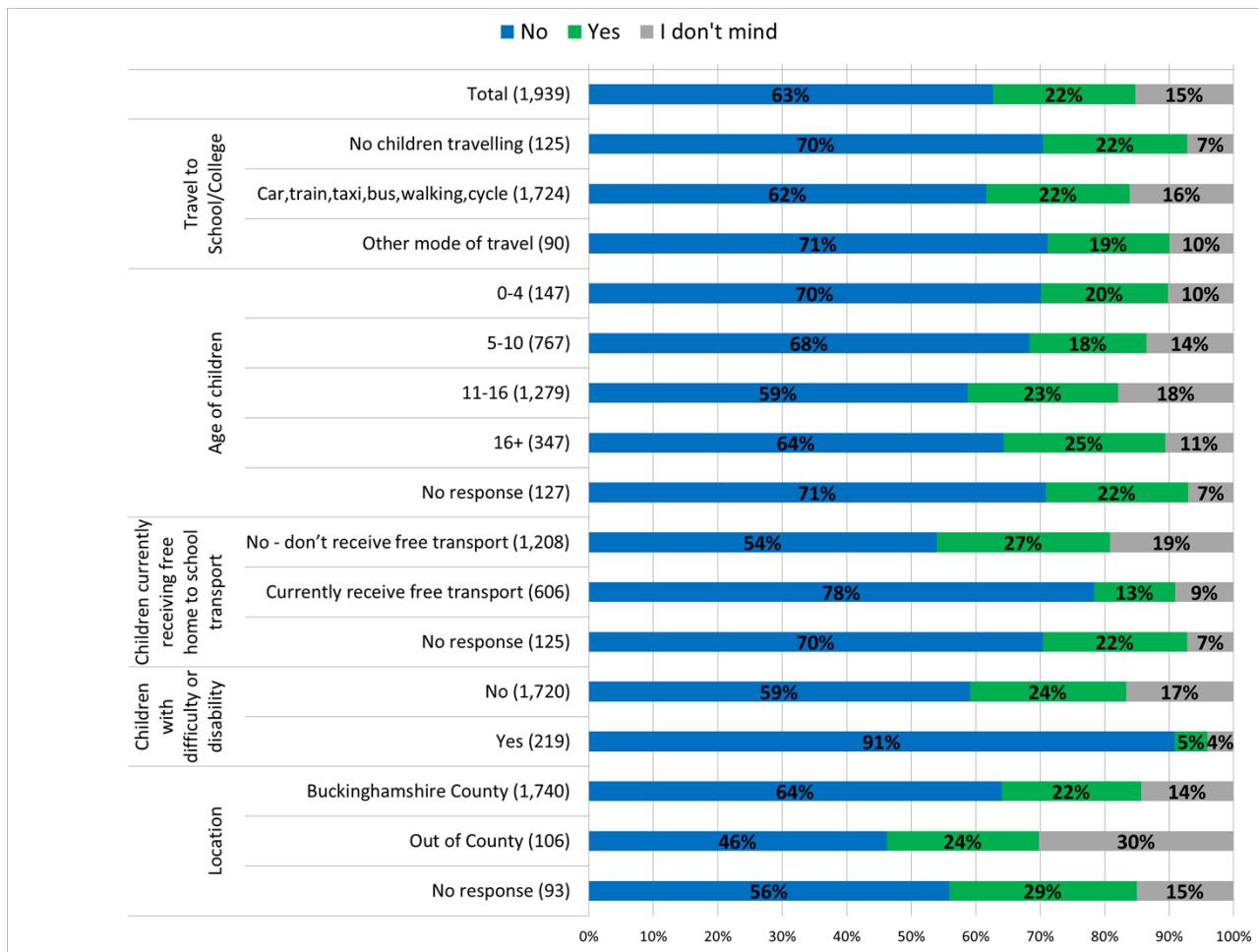


**Figure 36**

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	22.07%
No	62.66%
I don't mind	15.27%
TOTAL	1,939

**Figure 37**

The majority of respondents (63%) did not agree that SEND students aged 16+ should start paying for transport to school from September 2020. 22% agreed with the proposal with 15% stating they did not mind.



**Figure 38**

Differences for demographic groups appear in the chart above. Note that there were a range of different results when comparing the results for the above demographic groups<sup>24</sup>.

The differences between groups that were statistically significant were:

- **Those currently receiving free home to school transport** – respondents with a child currently receiving home to school transport are statistically more likely to disagree with implementing charging 16+ SEN students from September 2020 (78% v 63% average)<sup>25</sup>
- **Children with disability** – respondents with a child with a disability are statistically more likely to disagree with implementing charging 16+ SEN students from September 2020 (91% v 63% average).<sup>26</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Statistical different tested to a 95% level of confidence, all respondents, not filtered to Iver/Ivinghoe area

<sup>25</sup> Significantly different to those with a child not currently receiving free home to school transport

<sup>26</sup> Significantly different to those without a disabled child

## 7. Feedback from Consultation Events

19 events were held and consisted of:

- **11** Council public meetings for all to attend held in venues across Buckinghamshire (in total 59 residents attended).
- **1** SEN Parent Forum facilitated by FACT Bucks.
- **2** sessions specifically for parents with SEN children.
- **1** session with the Youth Voice Executive Committee.
- **4** sessions with transport operators.

### 7.1 Public Meetings

The following table lists the public meetings events that were held:

<b>SEN Transport Public Consultation Meetings 7:00 - 9:00pm</b>	<b>Venue</b>	<b>No of attendees</b>
Monday 5 November 2018	Buckingham Primary School	<b>0</b>
Tuesday 6 November 2018	Grange School	<b>0</b>
Wednesday 7 November 2018	Misbourne School	<b>2</b>
Thursday 8 November 2018	Cheddington Combined School	<b>17</b>
Monday 12 November 2018	Iver Village Junior School	<b>Approx. 30</b>
Wednesday 14 November 2018	Millbrook Combined School	<b>0</b>
Thursday 15 November 2018	Newtown School	<b>1</b>
Monday 19 November 2018	Princes Risborough Primary Academy	<b>3</b>
Tuesday 20 November 2018	Great Marlow	<b>3</b>
Wednesday 21 November 2018	Winslow CE School	<b>2</b>
Monday 26 November 2018	The Amersham School	<b>4</b>

The key themes raised at the public meetings were (listed in order of popularity):

- Charging and the cost of transport;
- Current arrangements in Iver and the impact of proposed changes;
- Safety and safeguarding in general;
- Availability of bus routes and reliability of providers;
- SEND.

### 7.2 SEN Parent Forum and dedicated sessions for parents with children with SEN

A SEN Parent Forum was held in November 2018 and facilitated by FACT Bucks, a representative group of parents and carers of children and young people with SEND. In addition two further sessions were held for parents with children with SEN. The key issues and concerns expressed at these events from attendees were:

- The proposed charges would have an adverse impact on families with children with SEN due to the fact that many of these families are already under financial stress.
- Some children with SEN may be able to use a school bus but would not be able to use a public service due to the unpredictability of services and the potential for students to disembark at the wrong destination.
- FACT Bucks acknowledges that the proposal to introduce transport charges for students with SEND aged 16 years+ has been designed to minimise impact on families and are in line with fee levels for other young people in this age bracket.
- The consultation should have made it clear that different statutory arrangements exist for young people aged 19 years and over who attend educational settings.

### **7.3 Young People's Views**

A key part of this consultation process was to hear the views of young people. The Youth Voice Executive Board provided invaluable assistance in co-designing a simple questionnaire to gather the views of young people about travel to school.

The questionnaire was presented and amended with the Youth Voice Executive Committee on Wednesday 5 December 2018. 14 young people were in attendance at this meeting.

The final questionnaire was sent out to committee members to complete within their schools, with a deadline of 19 December 2018. 99 responses were received although not all 99 responded to every question (5 of the 99 responses received were from the SEND Youth Forum).

The questionnaire was distributed to young people through youth organisations, with assistance from the Council's Youth Service (please refer to Appendix B for a copy).

Respondents included young people attending mainstream schools and colleges, and young people with SEND.

The key findings from this questionnaire are as follows:

- The most popular form of transport used by young people to travel to school is public bus (30%), followed by school bus (25%) and then on foot (18%).
- In response to a question “what were the most important things to you about your journey”, the top answer was “being on time” (74%), followed by “feeling safe” (10%), and “feeling confident on my own” (3%).

## 7.4 Transport Operator sessions

Sessions were held between September and December 2018 with all current providers with whom the Council has contracts to provide home to school transport, including public bus providers such as Arriva. The engagement sessions were productive with providers demonstrating that they were interested in running routes. They also put forward helpful suggestions to re-configure routes to maximise coverage in rural areas by grouping contracts.

These sessions were valuable in identifying the challenges and potential solutions to ensuring an effective and efficient transport service is delivered.

Date of Meeting	Discussion items to inform the Consultation
<b>24th September 2018:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Information provided relating to the <b>Contract Renewal Action Plan 2018/19</b>.</li><li>Information provided relating to the Council's new procurement portal (<b>Pro Contract</b>) in order to register and participate in future requests for quotes.</li><li>Introduction to the <b>Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS)</b> provided and opportunities for further training.</li></ul>
<b>22nd October 2018:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Information provided about <b>Contract Terms &amp; Conditions Documentation</b> and proposed changes.</li></ul>
<b>26th November 2018</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Information provided relating to <b>Tender Documentation</b> and further information relating to the <b>Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS)</b>.</li></ul>
<b>10th December 2018:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>Workshop</b> for Operators provided in order to address any outstanding issues following previous Stakeholder events</li></ul>

These series of meetings demonstrated active positive engagement with transport suppliers. Consideration was given to the running of key routes and the possibility of bundling the more profitable routes with ones less profitable to ensure that rural areas are not left without transport. Consideration was also given to how to work with communities to provide local shuttle services that could join larger networks, as well as how to implement digital solutions in the future so that residents could book and view transport delivery in real time.

Overall, these sessions were valuable in identifying the challenges and potential solutions to ensuring an effective and efficient transport service is delivered.

## 8. Summary

The following table sets out the key themes drawn from the consultation process and findings, and the Council's proposed response to these:

Consultation findings	
<b>Key themes from question about use of public transport (Q6. We are proposing to move some school bus routes to public bus routes. Do you have any concerns about your child travelling to school on a public bus route?)</b>	<b>The Council will:</b>
<p>1) <b>Safety</b> – Residents expressed concerns regarding the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children travelling on buses with members of the public who are not DBS (Disclosure Barring Service) checked</li> <li>• Pupils walking to and from bus stops that are further away</li> <li>• Children getting off the bus before they get to school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aim to set up a partnership agreement with our suppliers in order to ensure safeguarding, reliability and quality of the transport provision</li> <li>• Establish standard checks against which suppliers must comply</li> <li>• Have robust strategies in place to manage Passenger Assistants and Drivers ensuring children's' safety (Transporting children and/or vulnerable adults constitutes a 'regulated activity' under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act).</li> <li>• Undertake regular monitoring through compliance officers to assure the quality of service and ensure appropriate safety standards</li> <li>• Publish a clear complaints process.</li> </ul>
<p>2) <b>Routes</b> – Residents raised comments on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not having a public bus route near to their home</li> <li>• Public bus routes not going directly to the school (with pupils having to change buses)</li> <li>• Concerns that public bus routes could be cancelled by the bus companies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to work with service suppliers to ensure that where practical, routes are available in rural areas</li> <li>• Review performance and contract monitoring so that suppliers are delivering against agreed outcomes</li> <li>• Implement Mandatory Training for Operators/Drivers/Passenger Assistants as well ensure they sign up to our Code of Good Practice; our partnership agreement includes mandatory training for all suppliers.</li> <li>• Over time, develop mixed provision to include community offer which will widen provision of transport in more rural areas.</li> </ul>

3) <b>Times</b> – Residents raised comments regarding the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public bus timetables not coinciding with school start and finish times.</li> <li>• There were also concerns that public bus routes would increase journey times for the children.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to work with service suppliers to ensure that routes are at appropriate times to coincide with start and end of school day.</li> </ul>
<b><i>Themes from question about increased flexibility (Q7. Most school buses provide a single pick up and drop off service each weekday. Would your child benefit from moving to a more flexible public bus route? For example, if they take part in after-school clubs or activities).</i></b>	<b><i>The Council will:</i></b>
4) <b>Poor bus route/frequency</b> – Residents commented on the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The quality and frequency of public buses.</li> <li>• The location of bus stops, length and frequency of journeys.</li> <li>• There are school routes with no public route from their home to school (This tended to be in rural areas).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Address these issues together through tighter control of contracts as set out in point 2 Some of these issues are outside the scope of the consultation</li> <li>• Continue to work with service suppliers to ensure that where practical, routes are available in rural areas</li> <li>• Review performance and contract monitoring so that suppliers are delivering against agreed outcomes</li> </ul>
5) <b>Journey times</b> – there was a significant number of residents who expressed views the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Journey times</li> <li>• Flexibility and reliability of public transport.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to work with service suppliers to ensure that where practical, routes are available in rural areas and links to school routes.</li> <li>• Review performance and contract monitoring so that suppliers are delivering against agreed outcomes</li> <li>• Have an even better ‘grip’ and management of the market so as to creating a competitive climate</li> <li>• Incentivise a competitive market to encourage a wider range of stakeholders to be involved</li> </ul>
6) <b>Safety</b> - Comments included concerns on	

<p>the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Journeys for children from public bus stops to their home, referencing poor street lighting, speed of roads and location of bus stops.</li> <li>• Perception of the safety of public transport compared to school buses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aim to set up a partnership agreement with our suppliers in order to ensure safeguarding, reliability and quality of the transport provision</li> <li>• Establish standard checks against which suppliers must comply</li> <li>• Undertake regular monitoring through compliance officers to assure the quality of service</li> <li>• Publish a clear complaints process.</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Themes from question about paid for transport and option of cheaper travel (Q8. If you currently pay for school transport, would you consider moving to a public bus service if it meant that you saved money?)</i></b></p>	<p><b><i>The Council will:</i></b></p>
<p><b>7) Safety</b> - Residents responding to this question highlighted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That the safety of their children was a high priority for them.</li> <li>• Some respondents commented that they would prefer to spend more on a school bus as they deemed this a safer option for their child.</li> <li>• Respondents also commented that the general public on buses were a safety concern, locations of bus stops and danger of high speed roads.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aim to set up a partnership agreement with our suppliers in order to ensure safeguarding, reliability and quality of the transport provision</li> <li>• Establish standard checks against which suppliers must comply</li> <li>• Undertake regular monitoring through compliance officers to assure the quality of service</li> <li>• Publish a clear complaints process.</li> </ul>
<p><b>8) Journey times</b> - Comments were received regarding bus services, particularly in regard to the lack of reliability.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to work with service suppliers to ensure that where practical, routes are available in rural areas and links to school routes.</li> <li>• Review performance and contract monitoring so that suppliers are delivering against agreed outcomes</li> </ul>
<p><b>9) Potential for savings and availability of routes and times</b> -Residents said their decision to switch to public transport would depend on the options for routes and in particular what potential savings could be achieved and the potential flexibility of</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with service providers to optimise routes so that all users can benefit from efficiencies in costs</li> <li>• Work with service providers to continue to develop flexibility of routes through development of a mixed provision</li> </ul>

routes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review of contracts – scrutiny of procurement and cost</li> </ul>
<b>Themes from Post 16 charging (Q11 – Introducing transport charges for students with (SEND) aged 16+)</b>	<b>The Council will:</b>
<b>10) Too expensive</b> - Residents are concerned about the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cost of transport if charges are implemented for Post 16 SEND pupils.</li> <li>A number commented that both proposals were too expensive and unaffordable.</li> <li>Comments also cited other costs required to support a child with SEND.</li> <li>Some comments mentioned making alternative arrangements to avoid the cost by either making other travel arrangements or looking for alternative school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that it is clearly communicated that charges would be a contribution. The cost of transport will remain heavily subsidised as the average cost per Post 16 SEND pupil is £3,500 per year.</li> <li>Incentivise suppliers to be more competitive which will have an impact on the reducing the cost of transport</li> <li>Work with colleges and other education establishments to help those who require financial support access bursaries.</li> <li>To rationalise routes and bus sizes to be more cost effective.</li> </ul>
<b>11) Fewer special schools</b> – Residents commented on how the levels of provision of special schools within Buckinghamshire could mean that SEND children travel longer distance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review current sufficiency of SEND provision so that the appropriate support is available to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND.</li> </ul>
<b>12) Unfair or discriminatory</b> - Respondents commented that they felt the proposal was unfair and penalised parents with children with SEND. Residents who did not receive SEND home to school transport commented that they thought the proposal was either unfair or families with children with SEND should not be penalised financially.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to make transport arrangements for those requiring specialised provision</li> <li>Undertake a transport assessment for every young person prior to their transition to Post-16 education.</li> <li>Develop the Independent Travel Training which will upskill students who have the potential to travel supported or unsupported on public transport.</li> <li>To implement charges that are consistent for all Post 16 students whether they have SEND or not</li> </ul>
<b>13) Some contribution is reasonable</b> – Residents who did not receive SEND home to school transport thought the proposal was fair with most preferring the flat fee option. However, many commented that	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduce a financial contribution based on distance banding; this is in line with current charging for mainstream Post 16 students</li> <li>Work with colleges and other education establishments to support those who</li> </ul>

this should be means tested.

require it to access financial support via bursaries.

- Continue to have exceptional circumstances taken into account to allow consideration of a reduced contribution in the case of extreme financial hardship.

# Appendix A – Copy of Consultation Questionnaire

## Introduction

We need to think differently about our Home to School Transport Service because increased demand will be unaffordable in the future within our limited budget. Revising the way the service is provided gives us the opportunity to support more young people to travel independently as well as making better use of public transport routes. Full details of our proposals for a modern Home to School Transport Service are set out in our draft policy.

Currently, we spend £15.1million on home to school transport. Of that, £12.7million is spent to meet our statutory duty to provide free transport to eligible students. We also provide transport for 4,810 children at a cost of £2.4m in accordance with other statutory transport duties and powers.

This consultation covers:

- Changing how we provide school transport – greater integration of school bus services with public bus services
- Only providing free home to school transport to the nearest eligible school, withdrawing historic, non-statutory transport arrangements in Ivinghoe and Evreham (Iver)
- Introducing transport charges for students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) aged 16+

The Council is seeking your views on the draft policy in order to inform a cabinet report in March 2019. It is proposed that if the draft policy is adopted, all new applications will be processed in line with the new policy. We would also like your views on whether the policy should be phased in for students who already receive transport under the current arrangements.

We want to hear from you and invite you to complete this short questionnaire. You may also be interested in attending one of our drop-in information events and full details of these can be found [here](#).

Please be assured that the information you provide here will be used only for the purposes of this consultation, will be kept confidential and will be stored securely in line with data protection laws.

## Questions

### About your family

**1. Do you have children in your household that travel to school or college?**

*Please select all that apply*

- No
- Yes – By car
- Yes – By bus
- Yes – By taxi
- Yes – By train
- Yes – Walk
- Yes – Cycle
- Yes - Other (please state) \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Which age group(s) are your children in? Please select all that apply**

- 0-4
- 5-9
- 11-16
- 16-19
- 19-25

**3. Do your children receive free Home to School transport? Please select all that apply**

- No
- Yes - Over statutory walking distance
- Yes - Unsafe walking route
- Yes - Low income
- Yes - Special Educational Need/Disability/Mobility problem

**4. Which of the following descriptions apply to your child? Please select all that apply**

- Specific learning difficulty
- Moderate learning difficulty
- Severe learning difficulty
- Profound & multiple learning difficulty
- Social, emotional and mental health
- Speech, language and communication needs
- Hearing impairment
- Visual impairment
- Multi-sensory impairment
- Physical disability

- Autistic spectrum disorder
- Other difficulty / disability

**5. What is your full postcode?**

## The proposals

### **Proposal 1: Changing how we provide school transport**

We are proposing to move some school bus routes to public bus routes.

**6. Do you have any concerns about your child travelling to school on a public bus route?**

- Yes
- No

**Please give details**

**7. Most school buses provide a single pick up and drop off service each weekday. Would your child benefit from moving to a more flexible public bus route? For example, if they take part in afterschool clubs or activities.**

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

**Comments**

**8. If you currently pay for school transport, would you consider moving to a public bus service if it meant that you saved money?**

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

**Comments**

**Proposal 2: Provide statutory, free home to school transport to the nearest eligible school. This will withdraw the historic, non-statutory transport arrangements in Ivinghoe and Evreham (Iver).**

We have offered free transport in these areas that allowed pupils to attend a school that was not their nearest. Withdrawing these historic arrangements will bring Ivinghoe and Evreham (Iver) in line with the rest of the county and eligibility for free school transport would be consistently applied across the county.

**9. Do you support this proposal?**

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

**Comments**

**10. Should students in Ivinghoe and Evreham (Iver) who already receive free school transport to a school that is not their nearest eligible school, start paying from September 2020?**

- Yes
- No
- I don't mind

**Proposal 3: Introducing transport charges for students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) aged 16+**

We currently offer free transport to SEND students aged 16+. We are proposing that parents make a contribution to the cost of transport. There are fewer Special Schools than other schools in the county, and typically students with SEND have to travel further to attend. Therefore the contribution will reflect the average cost of all 16+ students.

There are two charging options (1) the flat fee would be £660 per year. (2) If charges were made based on distance between home and school, the fee per year would be banded: Under 4 miles = £660, 4-4.99 miles = £772, 5-6.99 miles = £884, 7-9.99 miles = £998, 10 or more miles £1,111.

**11. Do you support this proposal?**

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

**Comments**

**12. Which of the two charging options do you prefer?**

- Flat fee per year
- Fee per year based on distance between home and school
- I don't mind

**13. Should SEND students aged 16+ who already receive free school transport start paying from September 2020?**

- Yes
- No

- I don't mind

Thank you for completing our questionnaire. Updates on the consultation and subsequent decisions will be posted on our website ([LINK](#))

## **Appendix B – Copy of Young People’s Questionnaire**

### **Modernising Home to School Transport**

We are running a consultation to ask your views on changes being made to the Council’s Home to School Transport arrangements.

The consultation covers:

- Changing how we provide school transport – integrating school and public bus services
- Only providing free home to school transport to the nearest eligible school, withdrawing historic, non-statutory arrangements in the Ivinghoe and Evreham areas
- Introducing transport charges for students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Full details of the consultation can be found at:

[www.buckcc.gov.uk/schooltransportsurvey](http://www.buckcc.gov.uk/schooltransportsurvey)

We are particularly interested in what is important to young people in Buckinghamshire when they are travelling to and from school and college. We would also like to learn what is most important to you when you are deciding with your families what transport arrangement you will use to get there.

This questionnaire has been designed in partnership by Buckinghamshire County Council and the Youth Voice Executive Board. We will only use the information you provide for this consultation.

**Q1 - How do you currently travel to school or college? Please select all that apply**

On foot (walk, scooter, etc)	
By car – my parent drives	
By car – car share arrangement	
By car – I drive myself	
By school bus	
By public bus	

By minibus	
By taxi	
By bicycle	
By train	
Other – Please state	

**Q2 - What do you like best about how you travel?**

It's quick	
It gets me where I want to be on time	
It makes me feel independent	
It means I can change my day and routine without much fuss	
It's clean and comfortable	
I can travel with my friends	
The cost – it's a cheaper option	
Other – Please state	

**Q3 - What is most important to you about your journey?**

Feeling safe	
Being on time	
Travelling with people I know and trust	
Travelling with people who are friendly, helpful and nice to me	
Feeling confident on my own	
Other – Please state	

**Q4 - Please tell us how satisfied you are with the transport you currently use in the following areas.**

5 – Very satisfied

4 – Satisfied

3 – Neither satisfied or dissatisfied

2 – Dissatisfied

1 – Very dissatisfied

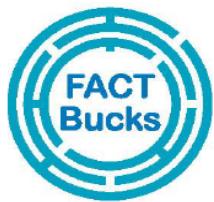
Reliability and arriving on time	
Comfort and quality of the vehicle	
Professional and polite drivers	
Safe and problem free journey	
Overall transport experience	

**Q5 – If the proposals were accepted, what concerns do you have about the transport you might use to get to school/college? Please select all that apply**

I don't have any concerns	
Buses aren't on time and would make me late	
The condition of the bus	
Safety and security on the bus	
Cost of travel	
Buses don't run regularly in my area	
Behaviour of other people on the bus	
Seeing different drivers all the time	
It might be a longer journey	
Other - Please state	

**Q6 – Do you have any other suggestions that might improve transport that takes you to school or college?**

# Appendix C – Organisational Response from FACT Bucks



Families and Carers Together in Buckinghamshire

## Please find below our response to the consultation.

### About your family

This section has been left blank as this response is on behalf of an organisation

\* 1. Do you have children in your household that travel to school or college? *Please select all that apply*

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> No             | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes - by bus           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes - by car   | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes - by walking       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes - by train | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes - by cycling       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes - by taxi  | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) |

Not Applicable

2. Which age group(s) are your children in? *Please select all that apply*

- |                                  |                                  |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 0 - 4   | <input type="checkbox"/> 16 - 19 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 5 - 10  | <input type="checkbox"/> 19 - 25 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 11 - 16 |                                  |

3. Do your children receive free home to school transport?

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> No   |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes - over statutory walking distance                              |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes - unsafe route to school                                       |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes - low income   |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes - special educational needs or disability or mobility problems |  |

4. Which of the following descriptions apply to your child? *Please select all that apply.*

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Specific learning difficulty            | <input type="checkbox"/> Hearing impairment          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate learning difficulty            | <input type="checkbox"/> Visual impairment           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Severe learning difficulty              | <input type="checkbox"/> Multi-sensory impairment    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Profound & multiple learning difficulty | <input type="checkbox"/> Physical disability         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Social, emotional & mental health       | <input type="checkbox"/> Autistic spectrum disorder  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Speech, language & communication needs  | <input type="checkbox"/> Other difficulty/disability |

5. What is your full postcode please?

## Proposal 1: Changing how we provide school transport

6. We are proposing to move some school bus routes to public bus routes. Do you have any concerns about your child travelling to school on a public bus route?

- Yes  
 No

Please give details

Some children with SEN may be able to use a school bus but would not be able to use a public service. Reasons for this could include:

- The unpredictability of the public bus service (drivers, other passengers, equipment)
- Deliberate (or accidental) non-disembarkation at school
- Accidental (or deliberate) non-disembarkation at home

This change could therefore trigger the need for additional travel training or use of a taxi, offsetting some of the savings.

7. Most school buses provide a single pick up and drop off service each weekday. Would your child benefit from moving to a more flexible public bus route? For example, if they take part in after-school clubs or activities.

- Yes  
 No  
 Not sure

Comments

Children with SEN are often unintentionally excluded from before- and after-school activities by the inflexibility of their home-to-school transport. Subject to the provisos in the answer to question 6 the timetabling of suitable public transport options at more flexible times could help reduce this.

8. If you currently pay for school transport, would you consider moving to a public bus service if it meant that you saved money?

- Yes  
 No  
 Not sure  
 I don't pay

Comments

Currently very few children with SEN pay to use school transport.

## Proposal 2: Providing statutory free home to school transport to the nearest eligible school

**Any children with SEN impacted by these changes would be impacted in the same way as other children so this section has been left blank.**

9. This will withdraw the historic, non-statutory transport arrangements in Ivinghoe and Evreham (Iver).

We have offered free transport in these areas that allowed pupils to attend a school that was not their nearest. Withdrawing these historic arrangements will bring Ivinghoe and Evreham (Iver) in line with the rest of the county and eligibility for free school transport would be consistently applied across the county.

Do you agree with this proposal?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

10. Should students in Ivinghoe and Evreham (Iver) who already receive free school transport to a school that is not their nearest suitable school have to start paying from September 2020?

- Yes
- No
- I don't mind

### Proposal 3: Introducing transport charges for students with SEND aged 16+

11. We currently offer free school transport to students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) aged 16+. We are proposing that parents make a contribution to the cost of transport.

There are fewer Special Schools than other schools in the county, and typically students with SEND have to travel further to attend. Therefore the contribution will reflect the average cost of all 16+ students.

There are two charging options (1) the flat fee would be £660 per year. (2) If charges were made based on distance between home and school, the fee per year would be banded: Under 4 miles = £660, 4-4.99 miles = £772, 5-6.99 miles = £884, 7-9.99 miles = £998, 10 or more miles £1,111.

Do you support this proposal?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

Comments

The feedback from our members and other families with SEN is that any additional charges on families of children with special needs would have a harsh impact. Many of these families are under financial stress as a result of increasing costs of living, stagnant wages and benefits, and cuts to other services such as short breaks, children's centres, libraries etc.

As an organisation FACT Bucks recognises that the proposal has been designed to minimise the impact on families. In particular the fee levels have set at levels to maintain equity with other children in this age bracket and as a result the county would continue to fund the majority of the cost of home to school transport without any statutory obligation to do so.

It should have been made clear in this consultation that different statutory arrangements exist for young people aged 19 and over who attend educational settings.

#### 12. Which of the two charging options do you prefer?

- Flat fee per year
- Fee per year based on distance between home and school
- I don't mind

#### 13. Should SEND students aged 16+ who already receive free school transport start paying from September 2020?

- Yes
- No
- I don't mind

# Post 16 Statement

## Transport policy statement for learners aged 16–18 (and those with Education, Health and Care Plan up to age 25)

**Name of Local Authority:** Buckinghamshire County Council  
**Department Responsible:** Children's Services

### 1. Summary of Policy Statement and Main Objectives

Local Authorities have a duty to prepare and publish an annual Transport Policy Statement (TPS) specifying the arrangements for the provision of transport or otherwise that the authority considers it necessary to make, to facilitate the attendance of all persons of sixth form age receiving education or training.

Buckinghamshire County Council is committed to ensuring that sixth form students (including those with Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) up to age 25 if they started on course prior to 19<sup>th</sup> birthday) have access to educational opportunities at school, college or other training establishment, enabling them to acquire the knowledge, skills and experience necessary for them to pursue their chosen careers and, more importantly, to meet the challenge of employment and personal development in the future.

This Policy Statement describes the assistance with transport costs that is available to Buckinghamshire sixth form aged students (including those with Education, Health and Care Plan up to age 25 if they started on course prior to 19<sup>th</sup> birthday).

This statement is published in line with the statutory duties under the Education Act 1996, including s.509AA and s.509AB and takes into account the Department for Education statutory guidance – Post 16 transport to education and training – October 2017:

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/post-16-transport-to-education-and-training](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/post-16-transport-to-education-and-training)

### 2. Details of all concessionary / free fares, discounts, subsidies, passes or travel cards available for learners aged 16-18 and who provides them, plus details of any costs to the learner.

The following section provides detail of assistance available to those full-time students aged between 16 and 19 years and those with an EHCP having started a programme of learning before the age of 19.

Most transport operators offer special tickets for students. Details are given below.

## **Arriva**

Arriva offer daily, weekly monthly and annual zone tickets for their buses; and students are entitled to a student discount. Student NUS, ISIC, or College ID card and number will be needed to validate your ticket.

## **Chiltern Railways**

Chiltern Railways offer season tickets for periods of a week, month, month + (a more flexible ticket) or a year.

Holders of monthly or longer Season Ticket or Travelcard Season Ticket valid to High Wycombe station can use their ticket for free travel on local Arriva buses within the High Wycombe urban area at any time of day, 7 days a week. Holders of monthly or longer Season Ticket or Travelcard Season Ticket valid to Aylesbury station you can use this ticket for free travel on local Arriva, Silver Rider, Water Rider and Purple Route 7 buses within the Aylesbury urban area at any time of day, 7 days a week.

Holders of monthly or longer Season Ticket or Travelcard Season Ticket valid to Aylesbury Vale Parkway station you can use your ticket for free travel at Monday to Friday peak times on Arriva bus 16 to/from Steeple Claydon, Westcott, Quainton and Waddesdon.

## **Carousel Buses**

Buses offer daily, weekly and monthly zone tickets. There is a number of special discounts for Buckinghamshire College Group students. Please contact the bus company for information on cost and availability.

[www.carouselbuses.co.uk](http://www.carouselbuses.co.uk)

## **16-25 Railcards**

Railcards are available for full-time students between the age of 16 and 25 years. This allows holder to receive one-third off most off-peak rail fares.

[www.16-25railcard.co.uk/](http://www.16-25railcard.co.uk/)

## **Citizen Card**

Buckinghamshire residents aged 16 and 17 are entitled to the 'Make More Citizen Card'. The Citizen Card entitles card holders to travel on buses at a reduced single fare within Arriva's Aylesbury and Wycombe zone and Carousel Buses' zones 1, 2 and 3. The card is only valid for journey after 9am on weekdays and all day at weekends. More information and application forms can be found at:

<https://www.buckscc.gov.uk/services/transport-and-roads/buses-and-trains/apply-for-a-make-more-citizencard-for-16-17-year-olds/>

## **Other transport providers**

Other transport providers may offer discount schemes, please contact them direct for details.

### Schemes Offered by Colleges

The following colleges also operate their own schemes:

#### **Buckinghamshire College Group (campuses at Aylesbury, Wycombe & Amersham)**

The Buckinghamshire College Support Scheme can provide students with assistance to cover costs including travel costs. This is paid directly into a bank account. Students can apply for travel support if they are aged 16-19, live more than 3 miles away from Aylesbury College and have a household income of less than £28,000. This support is dependent upon 90% attendance by the student.

For more information please see the Financial Support pages on the College Website [www.aylesbury.ac.uk](http://www.aylesbury.ac.uk) or contact:

Student Services on 01296 780213 or [studentservices@aylesbury.ac.uk](mailto:studentservices@aylesbury.ac.uk)

The College also provides a number of bus services. Examples of the routes are:

- Marlow to/from High Wycombe Campus (via Bourne End and Wooburn Green)
- Princes Risborough to/from Amersham Campus (via Great Missenden);
- High Wycombe town centre to/ from High Wycombe Campus;
- Hemel Hempstead to Amersham Campus;
- Chesham to High Wycombe Campus (via Amersham, Beaconsfield, Holtspur, Loudwater);
- Shuttle between Amersham station and Amersham Campus.

These services run at the beginning and the end of the day only and are intended for students for whom there is otherwise no suitable public bus or train service. The College also provides minibus transport for certain students who are eligible to receive support.

The College is continually reviewing its transport provision and further details are available from the College website: [www.buckscollegegroup.ac.uk/travelling-to-college](http://www.buckscollegegroup.ac.uk/travelling-to-college)

#### **Berkshire College of Agriculture (BCA)**

For students who travel from home every day, the college runs a subsidised transport service covering a wide area operating 20 routes in total. The service picks up from 10 mainline railway stations – Camberley, Reading, Slough, Maidenhead, Uxbridge, Amersham, Aylesbury, Bracknell, High Wycombe and Hounslow – with a total of 96 stops across the 20 routes.

More information on the Discretionary Learner Support Fund can be found on the Fees & Funding page of this website. For those students who drive, we have extensive free car parking. Just register your vehicle with the transport department during enrolment. The College is continually reviewing its transport provision and further details are available from the College website:

[www.bca.ac.uk/parents/transport/](http://www.bca.ac.uk/parents/transport/).

### **Henley College**

The college offers a number of services serving Buckinghamshire  
[www.henleycol.ac.uk/](http://www.henleycol.ac.uk/)

For enquiries please call 01491 634006 or 01491 634010, or email:  
[studentservices@henleycol.ac.uk.](mailto:studentservices@henleycol.ac.uk)

More information can be found on the College Website:  
[www.henleycol.ac.uk/apply/costs- and-fees/](http://www.henleycol.ac.uk/apply/costs-and-fees/)

### **Other Colleges**

Other colleges may be able to assist with transport costs, for further information please contact the Student Services department of the college.

### **Buckinghamshire University Technical College (UTC)**

Learners from low income households may be eligible to apply for help from the Bucks UTC.

For further information please visit the Bucks UTC's website:  
[www.buckinghamshireutc.co.uk](http://www.buckinghamshireutc.co.uk), email: [info@buckinghamshireutc.co.uk](mailto:info@buckinghamshireutc.co.uk)  
or call on 01296 388450

### **Paid-for Travel Scheme for School Sixth Form / year 12 students:**

Where there is spare capacity on home to school buses, places may be sold to 6th form learners who do not qualify for any other transport provision. The Paid-for Travel Scheme fare rate is available on the Paid-for school transport and Post-16 Transport web pages. For more information and to apply for a place please see the paid-for school transport website or contact Client and Public Transport team via the Contact Us form on the website.

Paid-for school transport website:  
[www.buckscc.gov.uk/services/education/school-transport/paid-for-school-transport/](http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/services/education/school-transport/paid-for-school-transport/)

School Transport website:  
[www.buckscc.gov.uk/services/education/school-transport/](http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/services/education/school-transport/)

Contact us form:  
[www.buckscc.gov.uk/client-transport-contact-form](http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/client-transport-contact-form)

**3. Support for learners, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or those facing other difficulties in following their programme of learning**

**Buckinghamshire County Council's Scheme:**

Students may be able to obtain assistance with travel if they live in the Buckinghamshire County Council area and are unable to travel independently because:

- They are unable to access a viable public transport system **and**
- They have Special Educational Needs, a disability or mobility difficulty.

You can join this scheme if you meet **all** of the following criteria;

- live in Buckinghamshire, **and**
- are under 19 years of age or started a course before your 19<sup>th</sup> birthday and have an EHCP naming that provision, **and**
- the programme of learning is full-time (i.e. at least 540 plus guided learning (planned and funded) hours per year), **and**
- are unable to access a viable public transport system due to your Special Educational Needs, disability or mobility difficulty, **and**
- live more than 3 miles from the school / college (education provider), as measured by the County Council or you are unable to walk the distance to school / college because of Special Educational Needs, a disability or mobility difficulty, **and**
- are attending the **nearest** establishment that provides the full time programme of learning or work placement that they wish to follow. Assistance with travel may be provided in exceptional circumstances to an establishment that is not the nearest, but is within a reasonable distance of the nearest establishment. In the case of a student with an EHCP the establishment must be named in the plan and if more than one is named, be the nearest to the home address.

If you meet all of the above criteria and begin your current course prior to your 19th birthday we will provide travel assistance until you complete the current course.

Where a student has a learning difficulty or a disability, a transport needs assessment must be completed by the SEN team as part of the annual review process. Transport will be arranged / sourced appropriate to the student's needs.

A student / student's family can apply to the Council for help with transport costs for Post-16 education. The level and type of travel assistance will vary depending upon individual circumstances. A student / student's family may already be in receipt of some / all of the following which would help to determine the level of funding required from the Council:

- Free School Meals;
- Maximum level of Working Tax Credit;
- Any level Universal Credit;
- Council Tax Reduction (previously known as Council Tax Benefit).

Young people commencing Post-16 provision who have an Education Health and Care

Plan (EHCP) will have the name of the Post-16 institution that they will be attending named in that Plan. Should a young person with an EHCP choose to attend a Post-16 institution other than that which is named in their EHCP, then this may impact on the level of travel assistance that can be provided. Young People with an EHCP have the right to request a personal budget for some or all of the provision. Transport costs could be considered as part of a personal budget if a young person is entitled to Post-16 travel assistance. In making a decision, the Council would have to be satisfied that:

1. Any different arrangements would meet the needs of the child/young person; and
2. No additional costs would be incurred by the Council.

Charges are based on the distance travelled, and start at £660 for the school year, unless the mode of travel assistance offered is less than these amounts, when the full amount for the travel assistance would be payable. The contribution can be paid in monthly instalments.

Details of the 2018/19 academic year charges are below:

<b>Band</b>	<b>Distance from home to school</b>	<b>Annual charge</b>
1	Under 4 miles	£660
2	4 – 4.99 miles	£772
3	5 – 6.99 miles	£884
4	7 – 9.99 miles	£998
5	10 miles or more	£1,111

As in line with previous years, these charges are subject to annual review.

### **Mileage allowance for entitled students**

In limited circumstances, we may agree for you to claim a mileage allowance for travelling by car or motorcycle. If you are entitled to a mileage allowance it will be for one return journey per day. However, we do have the right to offer you public transport or an existing transport service instead if the mileage allowance is not the cheapest option. If we agree to give you a mileage allowance, we will send you a claim form each term and you will need to complete this with sign off from the school / college and return to the Transport Team.

### **What transport will be provided?**

Entitled students will be allocated transport or travel assistance appropriate to their assessed needs. This may be specialised if they require equipment to enable them to be transported. In other cases they may receive a travel pass for either a dedicated school bus (6th form / year 12 eligible students) or public transport service. We have the right to limit places to a specific service that is available only at the beginning and end of a normal academic day. We do not issue travel passes for single outward or homeward journeys only.

## **Independent Travel Training for learners who face difficulty with transport**

The Council is working with schools and colleges to seek to promote a programme of Independent Travel Training, so that students will ultimately be able to travel on their own. For some students Independent Travel Training (ITT) would not be appropriate due to their complex needs, but where students have the potential to benefit from Independent Travel Training it is expected that those students will participate in the programme.

It is a programme of support that aims to enable a young person to become an independent and safe traveller; as a result it covers topics such as road safety, personal safety, journey planning and coping strategies.

If it is identified through a transport needs assessment process that travel training would be an option for an individual student, a referral can be made by the SEN Officer on their behalf. On receipt of a referral, the team will evaluate the suitability of travel training for that particular student, and where appropriate begin a personalised programme of training to meet their needs.

If a place is offered and a parent refuses to consent to their child attending independent travel training, their child's eligibility may be reviewed and future travel arrangements may be offered on the condition that their child attends the training in the future. Continued refusal may lead to withdrawal of travel assistance, although consideration will be given to individual circumstances.

### **When to apply for travel assistance or support**

You can apply any time after you know where you have been offered a place at school / college and you are encouraged to submit your application as soon as possible. All students need to apply on an annual basis.

### **What to do if your travel pass is lost or stolen**

If your travel pass is lost or stolen, you will need to send a cheque or postal order for £13 (payable to Buckinghamshire County Council) with a written request for a replacement. You must quote your student reference number, name, address and date of birth, and send your cheque and written request to Client and Public Transport. An online payment option is also available to pay for replacement passes.

<https://www.buckscc.gov.uk/services/education/school-transport/paid-for-school-transport/>

### **Raising a concern**

Any parent wishing to make a formal complaint, or challenge a decision on transport will find additional information outlined in the Home to School Transport Policy.

It may be necessary to refer your complaint to the relevant provider or institution if the complaint is not something that the Council can resolve.

**Points of contact for learners seeking transport support e.g. Council / college, bus company contacts**

**Local Authority:** Buckinghamshire 16-plus Travel Scheme

Eligibility	SEN Team County Hall Aylesbury BUCKS HP20 1UZ	Phone: 01296 382269 Email: <a href="mailto:sen@buckscc.gov.uk">sen@buckscc.gov.uk</a> Contact Us form: <a href="http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/sen-team-contact-form">www.buckscc.gov.uk/sen-team-contact-form</a>
Queries on transport use	Client and Public Transport County Hall Aylesbury BUCKS HP20 1YZ	Phone: 01296 387439 Contact Us form: <a href="http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/client-transport-contact-form">www.buckscc.gov.uk/client-transport-contact-form</a>

**Colleges:**

<b>Buckinghamshire College Group:</b>	
<b>Amersham Campus</b> Stanley Hill Amersham BUCKS HP7 9HN	<a href="http://www.amersham.ac.uk">www.amersham.ac.uk</a> Phone: 0800 614 016 E-mail: <a href="mailto:info@amersham.ac.uk">info@amersham.ac.uk</a>
<b>High Wycombe Campus</b> Spring Lane Flackwell Heath High Wycombe BUCKS HP10 9HE	
<b>Aylesbury Campus</b> Oxford Road Aylesbury BUCKS HP21 8PD	<a href="http://www.aylesbury.ac.uk">www.aylesbury.ac.uk</a> Phone: 01296 588588 E-mail: <a href="mailto:enquiries@aylesbury.ac.uk">enquiries@aylesbury.ac.uk</a>
<b>East Berkshire College</b>	<a href="http://www.eastberks.ac.uk">www.eastberks.ac.uk</a>
<b>Langley Campus</b> Station Road Langley Berks SL3 8BY	Phone: 0845 373 2500 E-mail <a href="mailto:info@eastberks.ac.uk">info@eastberks.ac.uk</a>
<b>Windsor Campus</b> St Leonards Road Windsor Berks SL4 3AZ	

<b>Berkshire College of Agriculture</b> Hall Place Burchetts Green Maidenhead Berks SL6 6QR	<a href="http://www.bca.ac.uk">www.bca.ac.uk</a> Phone: 01628 824444 or 0800 0711666 Online enquiry form: <a href="http://www.bca.ac.uk/contact/get-in-touch/">www.bca.ac.uk/contact/get-in-touch/</a>
<b>Central Bedfordshire College</b> Kingsway Dunstable Beds LU5 4HG	<a href="http://www.centralbeds.ac.uk">www.centralbeds.ac.uk</a> Phone: 01582 477 776 Email: <a href="mailto:enquiries@centralbeds.ac.uk">enquiries@centralbeds.ac.uk</a>
<b>Henley College</b> Deanfield Avenue Henley on Thames Oxon RG9 1UH	<a href="http://www.henleycol.ac.uk">www.henleycol.ac.uk</a> Phone: 01491 579988 E-mail: <a href="mailto:info@henleycol.ac.uk">info@henleycol.ac.uk</a>
<b>Milton Keynes College</b>	<a href="http://www.mkcollege.ac.uk">www.mkcollege.ac.uk</a>
<b>Bletchley Campus</b> Sherwood Drive Bletchley Milton Keynes, MK3 6DR	Phone: 01908 684444 E-mail: <a href="mailto:info@mkcollege.ac.uk">info@mkcollege.ac.uk</a>
<b>Chaffron Way Campus</b> Woughton Campus West Leadenhall Milton Keynes MK6 5LP	
<b>Silbury Campus</b> 200 Silbury Boulevard Milton Keynes MK9 1LT	
<b>Moulton College</b> West Street Moulton Northampton NN3 7RR	<a href="http://www.moulton.ac.uk">www.moulton.ac.uk</a> Phone: 01604 491131 Email: <a href="mailto:enquiries@moulton.ac.uk">enquiries@moulton.ac.uk</a>
<b>West Herts College</b>	<a href="http://www.westherts.ac.uk">www.westherts.ac.uk</a>
<b>Watford Campus</b> Hempstead Road Watford WD17 3EZ	Phone: 01923 812000 E-mail: <a href="mailto:admissions@westherts.ac.uk">admissions@westherts.ac.uk</a>
<b>Kings Langley Campus</b> Langley Waters, Home Park Kings Langley, WD4 8LZ	
<b>Dacorum Campus</b> Marlowes Hemel Hempstead HP1 1HD	

### **Connexions Buckinghamshire**

Connexions Buckinghamshire 0845 313 3413 [www.connexionsbucks.org.uk](http://www.connexionsbucks.org.uk)

## **School Transport Travel information:**

Details of home to school transport services are available from:

BCC Client & Public Transport Team  
County Hall  
Aylesbury  
BUCKS HP20 1YZ  
Phone: 01296 87439  
Contact Us: [www.buckscc.gov.uk/client-transport-contact-form](http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/client-transport-contact-form)

## **National Traveline**

For country wide bus and rail timetable information: [www.travelinesoutheast.org.uk](http://www.travelinesoutheast.org.uk)

Buckinghamshire Travel Information Service: [www.buckscc.gov.uk/transport/buses-and-trains/](http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/transport/buses-and-trains/)

This website provides comprehensive information about public transport services in Buckinghamshire - covering all bus, coach and train services.

A Journey Planner service is available as are numerous publications and maps.

## **Buses:**

<b>ARRIVA</b> Customer Services FREEPOST ANG 7624 Luton LU4 8BR  Phone: 0844 800 44 11 E-mail: via contact form at <a href="http://www.arrivabus.co.uk/contact-us/">www.arrivabus.co.uk/contact-us/</a>	<b>MARSHALLS COACHES</b> Firbank Way Leighton Buzzard Beds LU7 4YP  Phone: 01525 376077 or 01525 381145  Email: <a href="mailto:info@marshalls-coaches.co.uk">info@marshalls-coaches.co.uk</a> <a href="http://www.marshalls-coaches.co.uk">www.marshalls-coaches.co.uk</a>
<b>CAROUSEL BUS</b> Carousel Buses Ltd Unit 2, Hughenden Avenue, High Wycombe HP13 5SG Phone: 01494 450151 Email: <a href="mailto:info@carouselbuses.com.uk">info@carouselbuses.com.uk</a> <a href="http://www.carouselbuses.co.uk/">www.carouselbuses.co.uk/</a>	<b>MOTTS TRAVEL</b> Garside Way Stocklake Aylesbury Bucks HP20 1BH Phone: 01296 398300 Email: <a href="mailto:info@mottstravel.com">info@mottstravel.com</a> <a href="http://www.mottstravel.com">www.mottstravel.com</a>

<b>FIRST BUS BERKSHIRE AND THAMES VALLEY</b> First Coldborough House Market Street Bracknell, RG12 1JA Phone: 01344 782222 <a href="http://www.firstgroup.com/">www.firstgroup.com/</a>	<b>REDLINE BUSES</b> 8 Gatehouse Way Aylesbury HP19 8DB Phone: 01296 426786  <a href="http://www.redlinebuses.com/">www.redlinebuses.com/</a>
<b>STAGECOACH MIDLANDS</b> Main Road, Far Cotton Northampton NN4 8ES Phone: 08456 6001314 Email: <a href="mailto:midlands.enquiries@stagecoachbus.com">midlands.enquiries@stagecoachbus.com</a>	<b>RED ROSE TRAVEL</b> Oxford Road, Dinton Aylesbury Bucks HP17 8TT Phone: 01296 747926 Email: <a href="mailto:office@redrosetravel.com">office@redrosetravel.com</a> <a href="http://www.redrosetravel.com/">www.redrosetravel.com/</a>
<b>STAR TRAVEL</b> Contact via e-form at <a href="http://www.startravelbuses.co.uk">www.startravelbuses.co.uk</a>	<b>LANGSTON &amp; TASKER</b> 23 Queen Catherine Road Steeple Claydon Buckingham MK18 2PZ Phone: 01296 730347
<b>TURNERS MINIBUSES</b> 105 Ashridge Road Chesham Bucks HP5 2PZ Phone: 01494 791771	<b>MAGPIE TRAVEL</b> Binders Industrial Estate Cryers Hill High Wycombe Bucks HP15 6LJ Phone: 01494 715381
<b>Z&amp;S</b> Unit 5 Chamberlain Road Aylesbury Bucks HP19 8DY Email: <a href="mailto:office@zands.co.uk">office@zands.co.uk</a>	

### Trains:

<b>NATIONAL RAIL ENQUIRIES</b> <a href="http://www.nationalrail.co.uk">www.nationalrail.co.uk</a> Phone: 08457 484950	<b>LONDON MIDLAND TRAINS</b> Customer Services Team London Midland PO Box 4323 Birmingham B2 4JB Phone: 0844 811 0133 or 0121 6342040 from a mobile <a href="http://www.londonmidland.com">www.londonmidland.com</a>
<b>CHILTERN RAILWAYS</b> Customer Services Banbury ICC Merton Street Banbury Oxfordshire, OX16 4RN Phone: 08456 005 165 <a href="http://www.chilternrailways.co.uk">www.chilternrailways.co.uk</a>	<b>FIRST GREAT WESTERN LINK</b> Customer Services Team First Great Western Freepost SWB40576 Plymouth PL4 6ZZ Phone: 0345 7000 125



# Legislation for Home to School Transport

The Education Act 1996 sets out various statutory duties and powers in relation to travel arrangements for attendance at school and other educational institutions.

- Duty to promote sustainable modes of travel to meet school travel needs (sustainable modes of travel strategy), requires prior assessment of school travel needs and facilities and services for sustainable modes – s.508A;
- Duty to make such travel arrangements as the local authority considers necessary to secure suitable home to school travel arrangements for eligible children – these must be provided free of charge. Eligibility includes distance to school, disability and safe walking routes - S.508B;
- Power to make school travel arrangements as the local authority necessary for other children – LA may pay in whole or in part for such arrangements – s.508C;
- Duty to have regard to statutory guidance on s.508B and s.508C– s.508D;
- Power to provide a child with travel assistance or reasonable travel expenses for purpose of child attending early years education otherwise than at school – s.509A;
- Duty to prepare transport policy statement for persons of sixth form age, setting out transport provision and financial assistance in respect of reasonable travelling expenses, to facilitate attendance of persons of sixth form age at educational institutions – s.509AA (must include to what extent arrangements are for facilitating attendance by disabled persons and persons with learning disabilities – s.509AB);
- Duty to have regard to statutory guidance on S.509AA – s.509AB(5);
- Duty to consult on transport policy statement made under s.509AA – s.509(6) and (7);
- Duty to have regard, in exercising their travel functions, to wish of parents to be provided with faith based education – s.509AD;

Section 508A of the Education and Inspection Act 2006 places a duty on the Council to promote sustainable travel to school. Each academic year we publish a Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy now known as the “Getting to School Strategy”. This sets out how we will promote the use of sustainable modes of travel to schools, colleges and other education centres. It includes the transport needs of students aged 16+, and pupils with Special Education Needs or Disabilities. Sustainable travel means forms of transport that reduce congestion and improve health. This includes buses, trains, walking and cycling.

<https://www.buckscc.gov.uk/services/transport-and-roads/transport-plans-and-policies/getting-to-school-strategy-smots/>



## **Our duty to make travel arrangements for eligible children – s.508B**

Section 508B of the Act deals with the duty on local authorities to make such travel arrangements as they consider necessary to facilitate attendance at school for eligible children. Schedule 35B of the Act defines eligible children – those categories of children of compulsory school age (5-16) in an authority's area for whom free travel arrangements will be required. These are set out below. Reference is made to qualifying school, which means a maintained school, including a special school, an academy, city colleges, a special school approved under section 342 of the Education Act 1996, a pupil referral unit or alternative provision academy, an independent school where this is the only school named in the EHC plan maintained for a child with SEN or whether it is the closest school to the child's home if more than one school is named.

### **Statutory walking distances eligibility**

Provide free transport for all pupils of compulsory school age (5-16) if:

- (1) they are a registered pupil at a qualifying school which is:
  - Beyond 2 miles (if below the age of 8); or
  - Beyond 3 miles (if aged between 8 and 16); and
- (2) no suitable arrangements have been made by the Council for boarding accommodation for the child; and
- (3) no suitable arrangements have been made by the Council for enabling him to become a registered pupil at a qualifying school nearer to his home.

Children will also be eligible under this criteria if they are receiving education at a place other than a school pursuant to arrangements under s.19(1) of the Education Act 1996 and a child who is temporarily receiving education at a place other than the school where they are a registered pupil during a period of exclusion.

### **Special educational needs, a disability or mobility problems eligibility**

Make transport arrangements for children who (1) have special educational needs or a disability or mobility problems, (2) are a registered pupil at a qualifying school which is within walking distance, (3) no suitable arrangements have been made by the Council to enable the child to become a registered pupil at a qualifying school nearer to his/her home and (4) having regard to their SEN, disability or mobility problems, the child cannot reasonably be expected to walk to school. Children will also be eligible under this criteria if they are receiving education at a place other than a school pursuant to arrangements under s.19(1) of the Education Act 1996.

### **Unsafe route eligibility**

Make transport arrangements for (1) registered pupils at a school which is within the statutory walking distance, (2) when no suitable arrangements have been made by the Council for enabling the child to become a registered pupil at a qualifying school nearer to his/her home, and (3) by having regard to the nature of the routes which the child could reasonably be expected to take, he/she cannot reasonably be expected to walk to the school. Children will also be eligible under this criteria if they are receiving education at a place other than a school pursuant to arrangements under s.19(1) of the Education Act 1996.

### **Extended rights eligibility**

Provide free transport where pupils are entitled to free school meals under s.512ZB(4) of the Education Act 1996 or the parent with whom the child is ordinarily resident is in receipt of maximum Working Tax Credit if:

- they are aged 8 to 10 years and they are a registered pupil at a qualifying school which is beyond 2 miles from their home and no suitable arrangements have been made by the Council for enabling them to become a registered pupil at a qualifying school nearer to their home;
- they are aged 11 or over and they are a registered pupil at a qualifying school which is between 2 and 6 miles and there are not three or more suitable qualifying schools nearer to their home; they are aged 11 or over and they are a registered pupil at a qualifying school which is between 2 and 15 miles and their parent has expressed a wish, based on the parents' religion or belief, for their child to be provided with education at that school and having regard to that wish, there is no suitable qualifying school which is nearer to the child's home;
- Children will also be eligible under this criteria if they are receiving education at a place other than a school pursuant to arrangements under s.19(1) of the Education Act 1996.

### **Guidance on provision of transport arrangements under s.508C**

Section 508C of the Act provides Local Authorities with a power to provide transport for children who are not eligible for free transport. The section confirms that the local authority should consider what school transport arrangements are necessary and that such arrangements could include provision of transport and with the consent of a parent, arrangements for a child to be accompanied, arrangements for the payment of the whole or part of a person's reasonable travelling expenses and arrangements for the payment of allowances in respect of particular modes of travel. Delivering this provision currently costs £2.4m. The statutory guidance – Home to School Travel and Transport Guidance, July 2014 – confirms that charges can be made, but consideration should be given to whether these should apply to children from low income groups. The guidance emphasises that it is a matter for an individual local authority to determine whether and how to apply their discretion in relation to this

power, as it is best placed to determine local need and circumstances and that local authorities will need to balance demand for a broad range of discretionary travel against budget priorities.

## **Post 16 transport**

Section 509AA of the Education Act 1996 requires local authorities to prepare an annual transport policy statement specifying the arrangements for the provision of transport or otherwise that the local authority considers it necessary to make for facilitating the attendance of sixth form age students at schools, including academies, and colleges providing further education and any establishment which the local authority secures the provision of education or training. This statement should specify the arrangements that the local authority considers it necessary to make for the provision of financial assistance in respect of reasonable travelling expenses for these students and should specify the transport arrangements and financial assistance proposed by local schools and further education colleges.

Section 509AB of the Education Act 1996 requires local authorities to include in their statements arrangements for facilitating the attendance of students with disabilities or learning difficulties. The local authority should ensure that any transport arrangements for those attending full time education or training at establishments other than maintained schools are no less favourable, including for students with learning difficulties or disabilities. It should set out the extent to which the arrangements it has put in place pursuant to the transport statement prepared under section 509AA facilitates the attendance of young people with special educational needs and disabilities. In considering what arrangements are necessary to make, the local authority shall have regard to the following:

- The needs of those for whom it would not be reasonably practicable to attend a particular establishment to receive education or training if no arrangements were made;
- The need to secure that persons in their area have reasonable opportunities to choose between different establishments at which education or training is provided;
- Their duties under s.15ZA(1) of the Education Act 1996 in relation to persons of sixth form age (duty to secure that enough suitable education and training) is provided to meet the reasonable needs of persons of sixth form age and persons aged 19 and over with an EHC plan;
- The distances and journey times between the homes of persons of sixth form age and establishments at which education or training suitable to their needs is provided;
- The cost of transport to the establishments and any alternative means of facilitating the attendance of persons receiving education or training there.

The statutory guidance – Post 16 transport to education and training, October 2017 – confirms that whilst local authorities do not have to provide free or subsidised transport, they must take account of all relevant matters, such as the needs of their population, local transport infrastructure and resources when assessing what is required in terms of transport provision and financial assistance.

The statutory guidance provides further information on what the local authority should have regard to when assessing transport arrangements:

- The needs of those who could not access education or training provision if no arrangements were made. Local authorities need to satisfy themselves that they have made arrangements that are necessary to facilitate young people's participation in education or training. This requires a consideration of the needs of the most vulnerable or socially excluded. The needs of young people with SEN or disabilities should be specifically considered;
- The need to ensure young people have reasonable opportunities to choose between different establishments. Policies should be supportive of reasonable choice; including enabling young people to choose courses outside their local authority boundaries and choosing an establishment which is not the one closest to their home;
- Distance from students' home to establishment. This is particularly relevant when considering young people in rural areas and the guidance states these people should not be worse off financially because they may need to travel further. The statutory walking distance should be considered as a benchmark in defining a young person's ability to walk to access education or training. A young person's ability to walk may be impacted by a learning difficulty or disability;
- Journey time. Young people should be able to reach their education or training without incurring stress, strain or difficulty that would prevent them from benefitting from the education provided. Therefore, young people should not have to make several changes of public service bus to get to their education or training if this would result in an unreasonably long journey time. Best practice suggests that secondary school age children can be expected to travel up to 75 minutes each way to access learning and similar expectations should apply to young people of sixth form age;
- The cost of transport. Support should be targeted on those young people who need it most, particularly those with a low income. Local authorities may ask for a contribution to transport and in determining this it should ensure such a contribution is affordable, supports families on low incomes and takes account of those with SEN or disabilities being more likely to remain in education or training for longer than their peers. The availability of 16-19 bursary funding can be taken into account in assessing need for financial help and for this reason, local authorities should set out an average cost per young person of post 16 transport in their area before any subsidies are deducted. This will enable transparency in terms of understanding the extent of the local authority subsidy;

- Alternative means of facilitating transport. Alternatives suggested in the guidance are cycle schemes, moped schemes and independent travel training. The latter is particularly relevant for young people with SEN or disabilities;
- Non-transport solutions. This can include peripatetic teachers, mobile provision and e-learning options to facilitate learner access to education and training;
- Preference based on religion or belief. Local authorities should have regard to any preference for a particular establishment based on religion or belief.

# Needs Assessment

## Introduction

Buckinghamshire County Council is committed to providing a sustainable model of transport provision in Buckinghamshire. This includes ensuring that there are effective transport arrangements for sixth form age students attending schools, colleges and other educational establishments.

## Context

All Local Authorities must prepare and publish an annual transport policy statement. The statement must specify the arrangements for the provision of transport, or otherwise, that the authority considers necessary to make to facilitate the attendance of all students of sixth form age receiving education or training. This responsibility is extended up to age 25 for students who have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and have commenced a course of study before their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Over the last 5 years the total number of children and young people (0-25) living in Buckinghamshire with an EHCP has increased by 28.2% (895) to almost 4,000. During the same period the school population in Buckinghamshire has increased by 7.7%.

Part of the increase in SEND numbers since 2014 can be attributed to the new EHCP legislation increasing the age range of EHCPs to 0- 25 from 0-19 for statements of SEND.

### **Assessment of travel needs: The needs of those for whom it would not be reasonably practicable to access education or training provision if no arrangements were made**

Buckinghamshire has a range of travel options for students of sixth form age, including concessionary fares on buses and trains and arrangements made by local colleges. In addition, the Council seeks to encourage students to travel to school independently and to use sustainable modes of travel, such as walking or cycling. These travel options meet the needs of the vast majority of the Post 16 population.

Buckinghamshire is a mix of urban and rural areas. The proposed changes to home to school transport aim to ensure that the transport offer to families in rural areas is improved through widening access to routes and integrating them with the local bus services. These changes will ensure that all residents in rural areas, including Post 16 students, will have increased access to bus services, enabling them to use public transport to travel independently to their educational establishment.

However, it is recognised that young people with SEND or a disability are more likely to have to travel further to a school or college offering a suitable course due to the number of available appropriate education establishments, and are therefore more likely to have difficulties accessing transport arrangements.

This section provides information on the needs of students with SEND or a disability.

For the current cohort of children and young people with SEND who have EHCP at Post 16, the primary SEND need has been recorded as follows:

### **Primary Need (Post 16 students)**

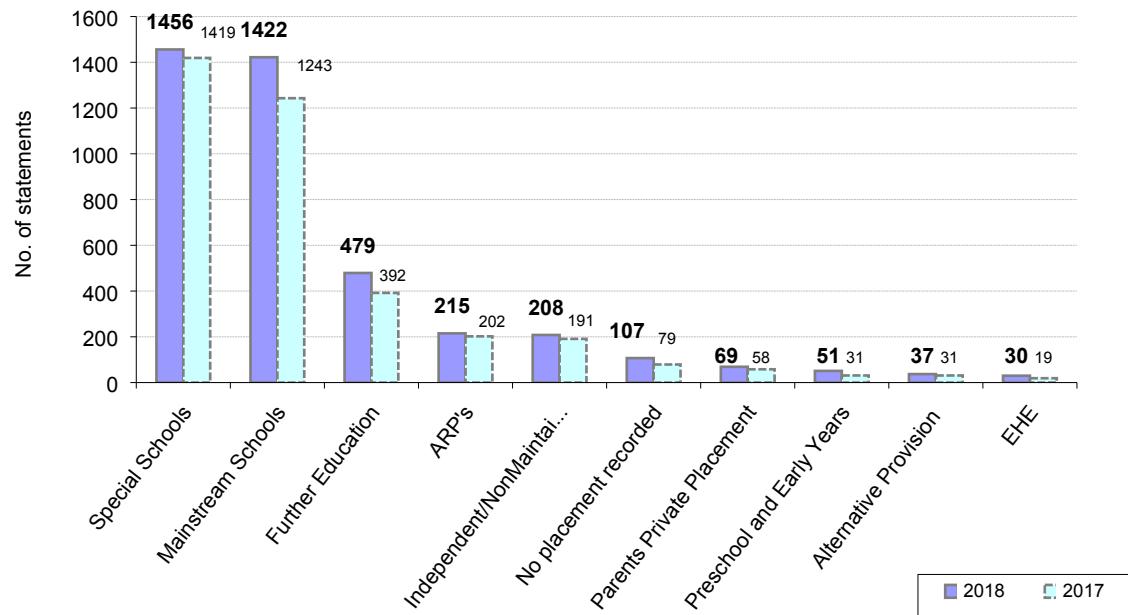
Primary need of Post 16 Pupils	Dec-18	Dec-17	Dec-13
Moderate Learning Difficulties	205	182	63
Speech, Language and Communication Needs	117	109	67
Behaviour, Emotional and Social Development Needs / Social, Emotional & Mental Health	111	77	31
Specific Learning Difficulties	34	20	16
Severe Learning Difficulties	53	49	29
Autistic Spectrum Disorder	277	252	71
Physical Difficulties	66	56	19
Hearing Impairment	24	19	5
Visual Impairment	7	12	7
Multi-Sensory Impairment	1	0	0
Profound and Multiple	4	4	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>899</b>	<b>780</b>	<b>312</b>

The table above shows the scale of the increases in the SEND population and the increase in complexity of demand. Demonstrating those children with the highest level of need, there is a 247% increase in pupils with physical difficulties since 2013. The provision of transport for this group is inevitably more complex. Based on this, we need to ensure that our policy and transport services are both appropriate to meet the specific travel needs of the students and sustainable to meet predicted levels of need in the future.

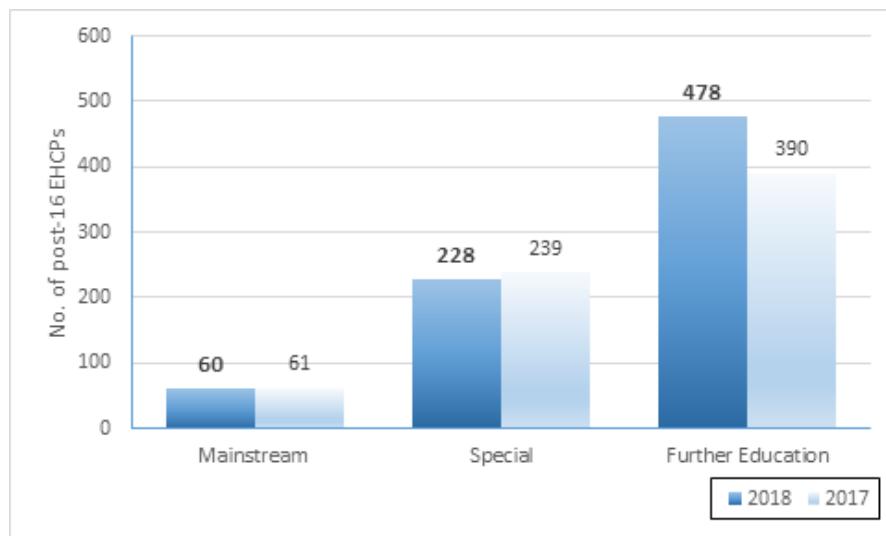
### **Educational provision for students with SEND**

The percentage of children with EHC plans recorded as attending special school placements and independent or non/maintained schools has decreased from December 2017, while mainstream school placements (including pre-school) and the proportion of Further Education placements has increased. However, the overall number of students within each provision has increased due to the overall increase of students with SEND. There are more FE colleges locally than special provisions, so journey times for some students may be shorter.

## Summary of placements at 31 December 2018 - All ages



## Summary of Post 16 placements at 31 December 2018



Post 16 placements have increased in further education, but decreased in mainstream and special schools. The increase in the size of the cohort means there are more students attending overall.

In the current year, 400 students with EHCPs are being transported to 6<sup>th</sup> form, both within and outside the Local Authority, in special schools and FE colleges. In addition, there may be students without an EHCP who are unable to access a viable public transport option due to their needs, disabilities or mobility issues. The extension of the age range of learners through the establishment of EHCPs to 25 (from 19) has resulted in an increase in the numbers of students attending FE colleges and this is likely to continue across the next five years.

The following table provides information on the current modes of transport used by Post 16 SEND students.

## Current transport provision for Post 16 SEND

Transport Type		2018 Customer %	2015 Customer %	2013 Customer %
Adapted - this is the most expensive form of transport	This is likely to be a shared or solo taxi/minibus that is wheelchair adapted. A PA may also accompany if loading/unloading help is needed.	3	10	1
Not Adapted but with a personal assistant (PA) – this is the second most expensive form of transport	This is usually a taxi or minibus with Passenger Assistant. The presence of a PA is established through a risk assessment and will be reviewed regularly.	9	3	1
Not Adapted - this is the third most expensive form of transport	May be a school bus or a taxi. More likely to be a school bus if the student is at their nearest mainstream school setting. However for students with SEND attending specialist provision the type is most likely to be a taxi which may be shared but often is solo and door to door.	53	22	45
Rail Passes ( this is the fourth most expensive form of transport)	Rail passes are only used if they are cost effective for the particular journey	3	4	19
Local Buses – economical method	Purchase of a bus ticket on a local bus – only a possible solution if buses travel the route required and child is capable to manage any changes required	13	28	26
Mileage Claim – economical method	Parents may claim mileage from the transport team. This is only a viable option if it is the least expensive one.	7	10	2
Other Reimbursement ^ Types - economical method	The most common form of this type of reimbursement is for colleges running their own buses.	12	13	7
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>100*</b>	<b>100*</b>	<b>100*</b>

\* may not total 100% due to rounding

^ e.g. reimbursement to college for their transport provision, commercial service provided on an invoice basis, or parent reclaiming taxi fares

The Council is arranging for independent travel training to be offered to Post 16 students who need help in accessing the public transport network or travelling to their educational establishment independently. This will provide valuable life skills for these students and enable them to develop independence as they transition into adulthood. Some Post 16 students with SEND or mobility difficulties will still need assistance with travel, either on a temporary basis whilst they receive independent travel training or on a longer term basis depending on their ongoing needs.

For students who require additional support travelling to and from their chosen place of study, arrangements will be made if they are unable to access public transport or transport provided by the educational establishments. This will be subject to an individual assessment taking the following areas into consideration:

- Mobility
- Medical
- Behaviour
- Vulnerability (including age, young parents, NEET)
- Practicality
- Training

The assessment will take into account any information provided by parents, the school, other professionals who know the child and, when appropriate, the student and will be reviewed regularly.

**The need to ensure that young people have reasonable opportunities to choose between different establishments at which education and training is provided.**

There is reasonable choice within the County, and there are also opportunities to attend schools and colleges in neighbouring authorities, and these are clearly shown in Appendix 1. Appendix 2 shows the locations of all the Special Schools with sixth forms in Buckinghamshire.

Students with SEND may find that there are less suitable courses offered within the county than for students without SEND. For this reason, students with SEND may need travel assistance to attend an establishment that is further away than their nearest school or college. Students with SEND should be supported with travel assistance in attending the nearest establishment that provides a full time programme of learning or work placement that they wish to follow.

In addition, there may be exceptional circumstances when it is reasonable for a student to choose an establishment that is not the nearest, but is still within a reasonable distance of the nearest establishment. This establishment may be outside of the county. If a student has an EHCP, the nearest establishment will be the establishment named in the EHCP and if two are named, will be the one which is nearest to the home address.

**The distance from the learner's home to establishments of education and training**

As demonstrated in Appendices 1 and 2, there is a reasonable spread of education establishments across the county. We have considered the distances for the current cohort of

SEND students for which we provide travel assistance to so that they can attend education. It is accepted that students with SEND may have to travel further to their educational establishment than students without SEND. It is also accepted that some students with SEND may have difficulty walking or cycling to school to a greater extent than students without SEND. Therefore, travel assistance may need to be provided for those students living within 3 miles of their educational establishment if they can demonstrate that they are unable to walk this distance.

Within Buckinghamshire there are the following specialist provisions for Post 16 SEND Pupils:

### **Post 16 specialist provision within Buckinghamshire**

Name of school	Designation	Age of pupils	Area	Latest OFSTED
Furze Down	A range of needs	All through	Aylesbury - Winslow	Outstanding (October 2018)
Pebble Brook	MLD	Secondary	Aylesbury	Good (September 2018)
Stocklake Park	A range of needs	Secondary	Aylesbury	Good (November 2014)
Chiltern Way Federation	SEMH/ASD	Year 6/6 and secondary	Aylesbury - Wendover	Good (June 2018)
Alfriston	MLD (Girls)	Secondary	Chiltern & South Bucks – Beaconsfield	Outstanding (January 2018)
Heritage House	SLD	All through	Chiltern & South Bucks – Chesham	Good (July 2018)
Stony Dean	MLD/ASD/SLCN	Secondary	Chiltern & South Bucks – Amersham	Outstanding (November 2014)
Chiltern Wood	MLD/ASD/SLCN	All through	Wycombe	Good (January 2019)

Provision is spread throughout the county, and across the three administrative districts (Aylesbury, Wycombe and Chiltern / South Bucks). There is little specialist provision in the far north or far south of the authority, with the majority of specialist schools based near to the largest population centres.

Due to the locations of specialist provision and the different range of needs as detailed in the above table, a student may have to travel further to their nearest appropriate school due to their identified SEND. For example, a pupil with Social, Emotional, Mental Health (SEMH) needs that lives in Wycombe may have to travel to Wendover, as this is the only school designated to support these pupils.

Pupils within Buckinghamshire can also access a variety of college provision. The Buckinghamshire College group has campuses in Aylesbury, Wycombe and Amersham. Course options vary between campuses.

The Local Authority has a duty to ensure that SEND pupils are placed within the nearest setting which can meet their identified needs, but is restricted to the locality of special schools and the college campus' which offer specific courses.

There is no evidence that young people in rural areas are more disadvantaged in attending education than young people in more urban areas, as there is a reasonable distribution of educational establishments across the county and on the borders of our most rural geographical areas. Pupils are entitled to apply for bursaries to assist with funding transport and other expenses.

### **The journey time to access different establishments**

It is accepted that students with SEND are more likely to have to travel further to their educational establishment than students without SEND and as such routes via public transport may exceed 75 minutes each way. As a general rule if a transport route exceeds this time, the Council accepts that it may need to provide alternative travel assistance. The Council also regularly reviews local bus routes to ensure ease of travel for students.

### **The cost of transport to schools and colleges**

Students without SEND are currently responsible for funding their travel to school or college by accessing concessionary fares and in appropriate cases bursaries. Whilst students with SEND may have to travel further to their educational establishment or need assistance with transport, they can still access the same financial support as students without SEND.

It is recognised that transport arrangements for students with SEND may be more expensive than for students without SEND and the current average cost for students who receive support from the Council is £3,500 per annum. The current charge for students (academic year 2018-19) without SEND is £660 (subject to annual review) and therefore it is reasonable to require a financial contribution from students with SEND that broadly reflects the cost of transport for students without SEND, but also takes account of the distance travelled, as this increases the cost of transport. The introduction of charging Post 16 SEND students will ensure the following:

- The contribution is broadly in line with the cost of travel for students without SEND;
- The contribution is affordable for learners and their parents.

Families with students who have SEND and plan to continue in education would be able to apply for financial support to assist with the cost of travel. Bursaries of up to £1,200 a year are available for the most vulnerable groups.

Bursary support is not restricted to SEND students, as those who live in areas where there are no viable transport links would also be supported to attend education or training.

The County Council publishes its Sustainable Modes of Transport Strategy each year. This initiative supports the council's vision in relation to sustainable transport options in particular projects such as walking bus, independent travel training, revised safe walking and cycle routes.

Details of the current strategy can be found here:

<https://www.buckscc.gov.uk/services/transport-and-roads/transport-plans-and-policies/getting-to-school-strategy-smots/>

### **Alternative means of facilitating attendance at establishments**

In line with the principle of increasing independence during the journey to adulthood, it is anticipated that students should be developing skills to enable them to use public transport. We appreciate that this will not be possible in all cases due to the additional identified needs of some students.

There are a number of travel assistance solutions that may assist students who have additional needs, such as:

- Independent travel training
- Offer of passenger assistant
- Specialised transport
- Mileage allowance

### **Preference based on religion**

The Council has no information to show that students with or without SEND have difficulties accessing educational establishments chosen based on their religion or belief.

### **Non-transport solutions to facilitate learner access**

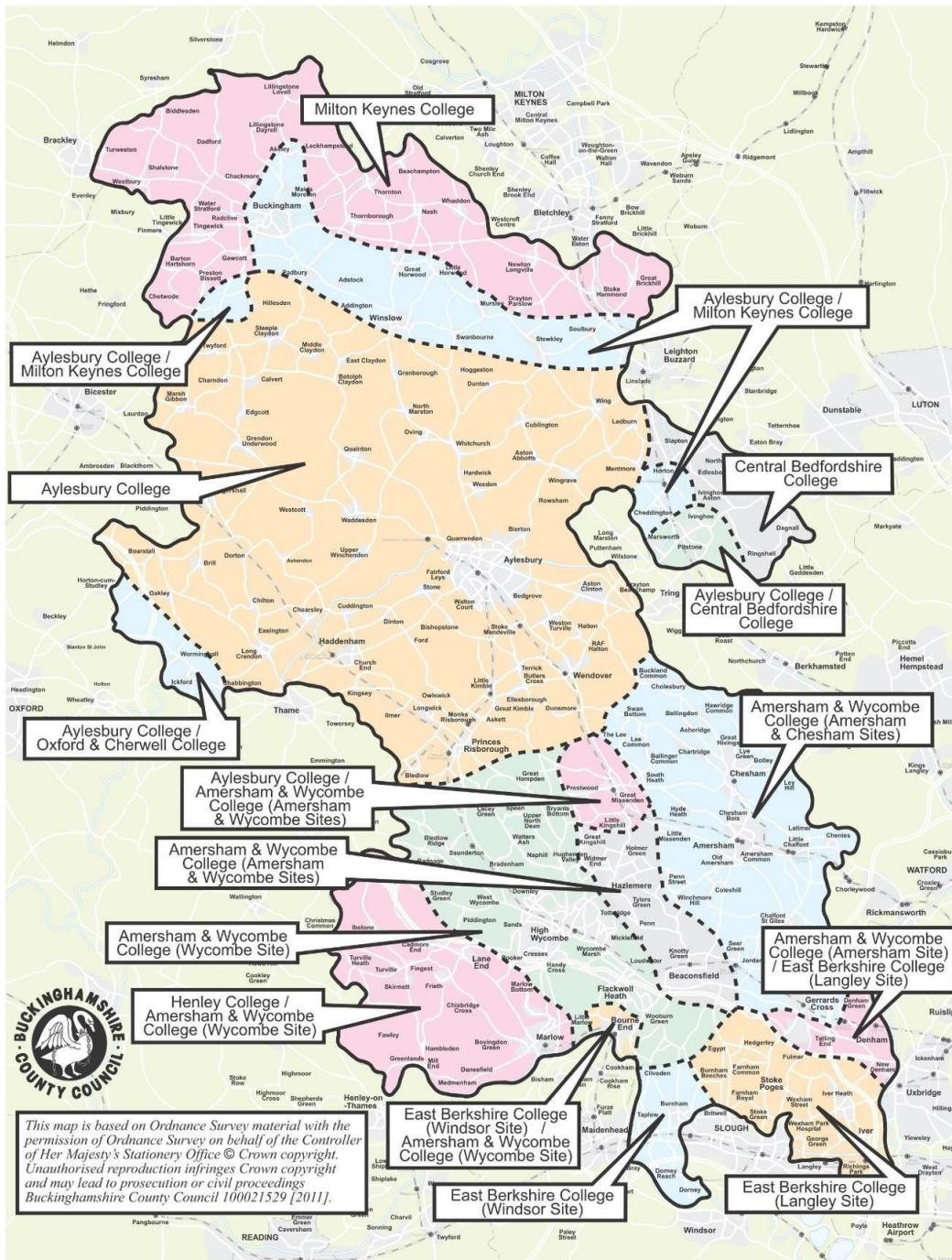
The EHCP will set out specific educational provision, which may include the offer of educational support outside a traditional college or school setting. If a student with or without SEND has a temporary mobility difficulty that causes difficulties with travel to school or college, then the establishment should be considering what reasonable adjustments could be made to allow the student to access the curriculum. Individual circumstances should be taken into account when assessing whether a student needs temporary assistance with travel or whether an alternative non transport solution could assist.

### **Conclusion**

The Council has considers the needs of its local Post 16 population, the location of schools and colleges and the availability of transport networks in assessing what transport support and financial assistance should be offered to Post 16 students to facilitate attendance at educational establishments.

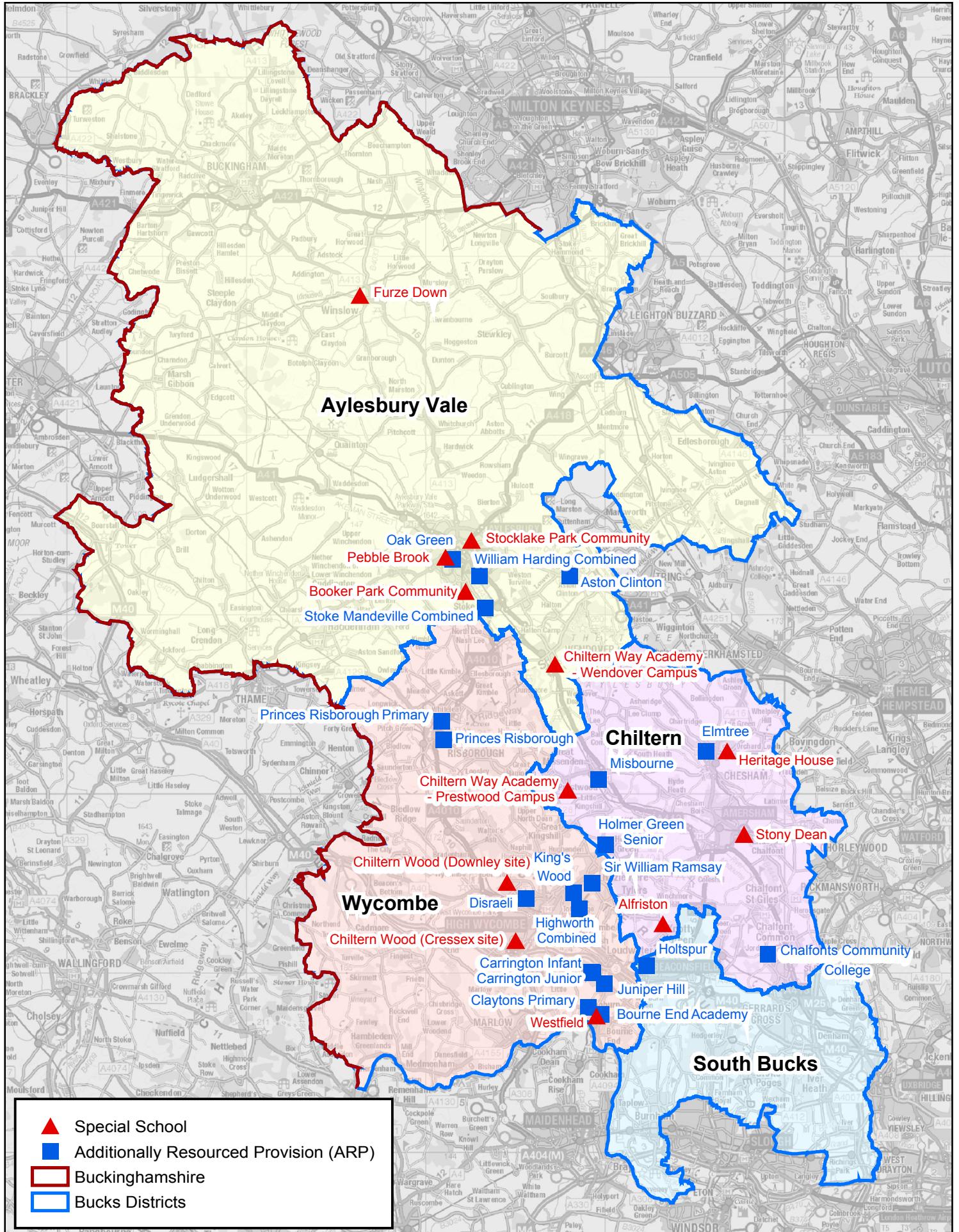
## Appendix 1 – Map showing Nearest Colleges

### Which Is My Nearest College For Travel Purposes?



**Appendix 2** – Map of locations of Special Schools and Alternate Resourced Provision in Buckinghamshire

*Please see next page*



Scale: 1:270,000 at A4

This map is reproduced from Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings.  
© Copyright Buckinghamshire County Council  
Licence No. 100021529 2013

Imagery © GeoPerspectives.com

0 1.25 2.5 5 7.5 10  
Kilometers

Produced by School Management Support Team, November 2017

## Buckinghamshire Special Schools & Additionally Resourced Provision





# Equality Impact Assessment

*When completing this Equality Impact Assessment, please refer to the accompanying guidance document available on the intranet [here](#).*

## **Part 1: Basic details**

<b>Project title</b>	Home to School Transport
<b>Is this a new or existing document/service?</b>	Proposed changes to existing services
<b>Responsible officer</b>	Tracey Lawrence
<b>Job title</b>	SEN Programme Manager
<b>Contact no.</b>	07557 587167
<b>Team</b>	Education Team
<b>Service</b>	Children's Services
<b>Business Unit</b>	Children's Social Care & Learning
<b>Date started</b>	September 2018 (Updated 30 Jan 2019)
<b>Date completed</b>	Final assessment date following updates through development

## **Part 2: Purpose and Objectives**

2.1	<b>What is the purpose of the project or change?</b>	<p>Increased demand for home to school transport is creating significant budget pressures and the Council continues to exceed the planned budget even with changes to practice and improving earlier access to schools. The increase in population growth, as well as cuts in government funding, have made the current position unsustainable.</p> <p>The Council currently provides over and above the statutory transport requirement and therefore the purpose of this project is to review current practice and implement changes in line with the resource available, while also ensuring statutory duties are met.</p> <p>Revising the current offer also presents an opportunity to support more young people to travel independently in line with current policy.</p>
2.2	<b>What are the key objectives of the project or change?</b>	<p>The objective of the project is to review and update the Home to School Transport Policy leading to changes in delivery.</p> <p>The review will have a particular focus on the 4 areas listed below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SEN Post 16 Free Transport.</li> <li>• Paid-for Transport.</li> <li>• Evreham Promise.</li> <li>• Ivinghoe Promise.</li> </ul>

		<p>The drivers underpinning the work include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial Sustainability - The current financial position is unsustainable. The cost for transport continues to exceed the planned budget due to increasing demand and pressures against current policy provision. It is important that the Council ensures that children and young people in Buckinghamshire are able to access high quality and sustainable services.</li> <li>• Promoting Independence - The Council is committed to fulfilling its statutory duties in accordance with the Children and Families Act 2014 and the Care Act 2014. Young people need to be adequately prepared for adulthood by encouraging and enabling them to access education, as well as develop their independence.</li> <li>• Environment – The effects of growth on our environment need to be mitigated by introducing and implementing environmental laws and fostering good practice. Tackling air pollution and concentrating on improving air quality and cleaner transport, as well as lowering pollutants, are key elements of the Sustainable Modes of Transport Strategy.</li> </ul>
2.3	<b>Which other functions, services or policies may be impacted?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School Bus Networks</li> <li>• Public Bus Networks</li> <li>• Further Education (FE) College Transport</li> </ul>
2.4	<b>Who are the main stakeholders impacted by this project or change?</b>	<p>The main stakeholders who will be impacted by the proposed revisions to the Home to School Transport Policy and Post 16 Transport Policy Statement are those children and young people who are currently accessing 'paid-for' transport, post 16 SEN pupils aged 16-19 (and up to 25 years they started their course before aged 19), and pupils receiving free transport in the Evreham and Ivinghoe regions as a result of historic transport agreements, although children receiving free school transport may be affected as alternative modes of transport are utilised.</p>
2.5	<b>Which other stakeholders may be affected by this project or change?</b>	<p>Stakeholders who may be affected include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents/carers</li> <li>• Schools and colleges</li> <li>• Transport providers</li> </ul> <p>Feedback from respondents is available in the consultation report.</p>

## **Part 3: Data and Research**

3.1	<p><b>What data and research has been used to inform this assessment?</b></p> <p><b>Demographic data</b></p> <p>Buckinghamshire has a total population of approximately 534,700. 30% of the population is aged 0-24 years, slightly higher than the South East (24%). The population overall has increased by 29,400 (4.6%) from 2011 to 2016 and is projected to increase by 107,200 (20%) from 2015 to 2039.</p> <p>Although a largely rural or semi-rural county, a quarter of residents live within the towns of Aylesbury and High Wycombe. A third of residents live in rural areas, compared to 20% across the South East (ONS Mid-Year Estimates 2015).</p> <p>Approximately 122,200 children and young people under the age of 18 years live in Buckinghamshire. This is 22.9% of the total population in the area (534,700 people), which is slightly above the English average of 21.3%. Currently, the population aged 0-19 tends to be clustered to the South of Buckinghamshire in Wycombe, Chiltern and South Buckinghamshire. There are fewer young people in the more rural areas. By 2031, Aylesbury and Wycombe will be home for 70% of 0-19 year olds.</p> <p>To accommodate the rising population in the County, significant housing development is anticipated in Buckinghamshire. From 2013 – 2033 it is estimated that there is a need for 9,600 affordable homes and 15,000 top of the range dwellings across Buckinghamshire. The majority of new house builds will be around Aylesbury and High Wycombe and around the northern County border with Milton Keynes.</p> <p>The drivers of population growth among children and young people in Buckinghamshire are mainly due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Births</b> - Between 6,000 to 6,300 births annually (birth rates are higher in the most deprived 20% of Buckinghamshire; 72 births compared to 62 average births per 1,000 women in Buckinghamshire).</li> <li>• <b>Migration</b> - Families with young children and adults often move to Buckinghamshire, and a large proportion of young people aged 15 -19 years leave the County.</li> <li>• <b>Housing growth</b> - Latest estimates suggest that the population of Buckinghamshire is 534,700. 30% of the population are aged 0-24 years, which is slightly higher than for the south east region (24%).</li> <li>• <b>Deprivation</b> - Deprivation is often linked to higher levels of need within communities around the County. It is used as an indicator of need, and although it is not the only predictor for actual need in the community, it is regarded as a substantial contributing factor.</li> </ul> <p>Buckinghamshire is the second least deprived county in England according to the 2015 Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD). At a district level, Chiltern district is the third least deprived local authority (out of 326 local authorities) in England, and the least deprived in Buckinghamshire, ahead of South Bucks (25th least deprived), Wycombe (34th) and Aylesbury Vale (44th). Nevertheless, there are pockets of more significant deprivation in some localities within the County.</p>
-----	--

	<p>The most deprived Buckinghamshire residents are situated in Aylesbury and High Wycombe. Aylesbury Vale is the only district with areas in Rank 2, the worst rank for Buckinghamshire for overall deprivation. These areas are Quarrendon and Southcourt.</p> <p><b>Profile of SEND pupils</b></p> <p>There are approximately 4,000 children and young people with SEND who are supported by the Council, most of whom are placed within Buckinghamshire. 200 children are placed out of county, 200 are placed in independent provisions and approximately 70 are placed in early years provision. There are also approximately 200 children with disabilities of which 85% have special educational needs.</p> <p>Over the last 5 years the total number of children and young people (0-25) with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) has increased by 28.2% (895). During the same period the maintained and academy school population in Buckinghamshire has increased by 7.7%.</p> <p>Department for Education (DfE) published data on Buckinghamshire shows that in January 2018 the percentage of children with Statements/EHCPs based on where the pupil attends school is 3.1% while the figure for England is 2.9% and the average for Buckinghamshire's statistical neighbours is 2.8%.</p> <p>Part of the increase in EHCP numbers since 2014 can be attributed to the new SEN legislation that increased the age range of those eligible. Statements of SEN covered the 0-19 age group; the new legislation extended the age range to cover the 0-25 age group.</p> <p>There is also an increasing complexity of need e.g. profound and multiple disabilities which has increased by 63% between 2009 and 2013. Increased prevalence of Autistic Spectrum Disorder is also notable (93% increase over last 5 years).</p> <p>2.5% of children and young people with a Statement/EHCP who are known to the Children with Disabilities (CWD) Team are looked after children, compared to 0.05% of the general children and young people population, making this cohort a particularly vulnerable group.</p> <p>Key information on population data and protected characteristics is summarised below.</p> <p><b>Age</b></p> <p>A comparison of projected changes from 2016 to 2031 identifies substantial differences between districts. The largest growth across all age groups is expected in Aylesbury Vale, which is also where the highest population of young people in Buckinghamshire is expected (38% of the estimated 0-19 year old population by 2031).</p>
--	--

	<p>Highest growth is expected in the 10-14 year old and 15-19 year old age categories, highlighting the need for sufficient services to meet the needs of this section of the population as they travel to school.</p> <p><b>Disability</b></p> <p>The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) chapter on Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) has identified an increase in the number of children aged 0-16 years taking up the Disability Living Allowance, with particular increases in Aylesbury Vale. From 2012 to 2015, there was a 9% increase in claimants. As well as the number of children who will be eligible for SEND services, complexity of need has increased.</p> <p>Link:  <a href="http://www.healthandwellbeingbucks.org/s4s/WhereILive/Council?pagelid=2098">http://www.healthandwellbeingbucks.org/s4s/WhereILive/Council?pagelid=2098</a></p> <p>Children and young people with SEND are 15% more likely to be eligible and claiming free schools meals.</p> <p>13.4% of the population stated that they had a long-term health problem or disability that limits their day-to-day activities to some extent (2011 Census). 7.8% reported that their activities were limited a little and 5.6% said that they were limited a lot. Buckinghamshire has similar proportions across districts.</p> <p><b>Gender</b></p> <p>The gender breakdown in Buckinghamshire is 51% female and 49% male, which is similar to the national average.</p> <p>In line with national data, there are a greater number of male pupils with EHCPs compared to female pupils. Data shows that in Buckinghamshire, boys are over 2½ times more likely to have a plan than girls. 72% of the pupils with EHCPs are male (2821) while they account for 51% of the whole school population (Oct 18). This is reflected nationally with 4.2% of boys and 1.6% of girls having an EHCP.</p> <p><b>Pregnancy and maternity</b></p> <p>There were 7,244 conceptions in Buckinghamshire in 2013. In 2014, there were 5,989 live births of which over a third were born to mothers from Aylesbury Vale or Wycombe district. Mothers in Buckinghamshire have a slightly older age profile than England but the majority of mothers are aged between 30-34 years at the time of delivery. Mothers in the most deprived quintile of the population have a higher birth rate than in the least deprived quintile. This information is used to assist with the planning of school places.</p> <p><b>Marriage and civil partnerships</b></p> <p>Information not relevant for the purpose of this consultation</p>
--	--

	<p><b>Race</b></p> <p>In Buckinghamshire, 21% of the 0-19 population are from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) or Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds, compared to the South East average of 14% (Census 2011). There has been an increase in BAME groups compared to white groups (82% increase from 2001 – 2011) and a forecast increase of 62% in BAME groups from 2011 – 2031 across the Buckinghamshire population.</p> <p>It is estimated that BAME groups aged 0-19 year will increase from 26,000 in 2011 to 47,000 by 2031. Asian and Asian British are expected to be the largest groups. In 2011, the BAME population was much younger than the white population in Buckinghamshire.</p> <p>It is estimated that there will also be distinct differences by town across the County with High Wycombe and Greater Aylesbury likely to see the greatest increases in BAME population growth by 2033.</p> <p>3.5 children in every 100 pupils attending Buckinghamshire Schools with an Asian or White ethnic origin have an EHCP (Dec 2018). This rises to 3.6 for pupils with a Black ethnic background and 4.0 for those with a Mixed background.</p> <p>The proportion of pupils with EHCPs is greatest amongst Roma/Roma Gypsy (7.0%) and White/Black Caribbean (6.3%) groups. However, caution is recommended in interpreting this data due to the small numbers in some categories.</p>	<p><b>Religion or belief</b></p> <p>69% of people in Buckinghamshire stated that they followed a religion, compared to 68% in England (Census 2011). The 0-19 year old population differs slightly from the Buckinghamshire figure. A lower proportion reported to be Christian (53.7%) compared to Buckinghamshire (60.5%) and a higher proportion reported to be Muslim (8.4%) compared to Buckinghamshire (5.1%).</p> <p>A high proportion of 0-19 year olds who stated they were Muslim live in Wycombe (14%) but this figure is lower for Chiltern (4%) and South Bucks (4%). There were slightly higher numbers of Sikh and Hindu groups in the South Bucks compared to the rest of the County.</p> <p><b>Sexual orientation and transgender</b></p> <p>The Buckinghamshire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) estimated that there are likely to be approximately 7,500 people aged 16 and over who consider to be gay/lesbian/bisexual.</p>
3.2	<p><b>Have any complaints on the grounds of discrimination been made in</b></p>	<p>There have been no direct complaints received regarding the proposals However, the survey demonstrated that a number of respondents were not supportive of the proposed changes.</p>

	<b>relation to this project?</b>	
3.3	<b>Please provide evidence of these.</b>	See Appendix 2 to the Cabinet report.
3.4	<b>What positive impacts have been established through research findings, consultation and data analysis?</b>	<p>The agreed extension of independent travel training in line with changes in policy will ensure that as far as possible, students are supported to make their own travel arrangements.</p> <p>Independent Travel Training supports young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to engage in activities which support outcomes associated with growing independence.</p> <p>The Council recognises that Independent Travel Training has the following immediate benefits for the student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enables the students to be more independent and use his or her own initiative.</li> <li>• Improves self-confidence.</li> <li>• Enables students to access positive social, educational and professional development activities.</li> <li>• Reduces the student's reliance on family, friends and professionals and builds resilience.</li> <li>• Helps to improve social skills and maintain relationships.</li> <li>• Can have physical health benefits where the student walks all or part of the way.</li> </ul> <p>To prepare children for adulthood it is expected that where appropriate, the majority of young people beyond the age of 16 will travel independently to their place of education.</p>
3.5	<b>What negative impacts have been established through research findings, consultation and data analysis?</b>	Changing the transport offer to SEND post 16 children to introduce a financial contribution means that all parents/carers/students eligible for assistance will be charged according to distance banding. Dependent on their needs some children with SEND may have less choice about where they go to school in comparison to mainstream children and therefore may fall into the higher charging bands. However the highest charges are still less than the actual cost of providing the transport (average cost £3,500 per annum) and is broadly in line with the average cost for students without SEND.
3.6	<b>What additional information is needed to fill any gaps in knowledge about the potential</b>	<p>It is acknowledged that those in receipt of services are vulnerable and there is a need for sensitivity in making any changes to the transport arrangements. SEND post 16 transport has been reviewed on a number of occasions and the impact of any changes have been considered.</p> <p>The following mitigations apply to all of the options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changes relating to the Evreham and Ivinghoe Promises will be introduced in September 2020 to enable parents who are making their school and college choices to express their preferences in the light of</li> </ul>

	<b>impact of the project?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the new policy as secondary transfer preferences have to be expressed prior to 31 October 2018 for September 2019 entry.</li> <li>The changes for both new and current post 16 students with SEND will take effect from September 2019. This is because post 16 students make their school/college decisions based on exam results at the end of the summer term and therefore will be able to make their choices in the light of the changed transport policy.</li> <li>The new policies allow for exceptional circumstances to be taken into account to offer support above normal eligibility. Consideration is given to children that fall outside of the eligibility criteria to ensure their needs are met. In line with legislation we will also offer an appeals process.</li> </ul> <p>There will be a robust Communications Plan to ensure that consistent messaging is provided to residents, with details of how and when they can expect changes to transport provision within their communities across the County.</p>
--	---

#### Part 4: Testing the impact

**Within this table, please indicate (✓) whether the project will have a positive, negative or neutral impact across the following nine protected factors and provide relevant comments.**

*Note 1: Listing a negative outcome does not mean the project cannot continue.*

*Note 2: This is an opportunity to identify and address issues for improvement*

		Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Neutral Impact	What evidence do you have for this?	Improvement Actions Required
4.1	<b>Age</b>	X	X		<p>Positive impact – Expansion of the provision of Independent Travel Training. This is designed to have long term positive outcomes for young people that extend into adulthood, providing them with social, educational, personal and emotional development opportunities.</p> <p>Negative impact – School age children may be negatively impacted in that their mode of transport may change and in particular locations they will no longer receive free home to school transport. In particular Post 16 students with SEND are</p>	<p>A phased introduction for the Evreham and Irvinghoe changes, so that current pupils are not impacted.</p> <p>A Communications Plan will ensure parents/carers understand the changes and are</p>

					<p>negatively impacted when comparing the current offer to the new offer that brings in banded charges according to distance travelled in line with the offer to mainstream post 16 children. While transport would still be available, charges would apply for existing and new pupils.</p>	<p>therefore able to plan accordingly.</p> <p>The financial contribution to Post 16 students with SEND is still less than the average cost of transport for these students.</p> <p>Exceptional circumstances based on extreme financial hardship could be considered to reduce the financial contribution levied.</p> <p>The Council will liaise with schools and colleges to promote the availability of financial bursaries.</p>
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Disability</b>	X	X		As above in age for Post 16 students with SEND.	As above in age.
<b>4.3</b>	<b>Gender</b>			X	No identified impact	
<b>4.4</b>	<b>Marriage / Civil Partnership</b>			X	No identified impact	
<b>4.5</b>	<b>Pregnancy / Maternity/ Paternity</b>			X	No identified impact	
<b>4.6</b>	<b>Race</b>			X	There is a higher representation of BAME groups with SEND therefore any proposed changes will have a greater impact on these children and young people.	As above in age.
<b>4.7</b>	<b>Religion/ Belief</b>			X	No identified impact	
<b>4.8</b>	<b>Sexual Orientation</b>			X	No identified impact	
<b>4.9</b>	<b>Trans-gender</b>			X	No identified impact	

4.10	<b>Carers</b>		X	Negative Impact – Changing the transport offer to SEND post 16 children to bring it in line with mainstream post 16 transport provision means that all parents/carers not eligible for free transport will be charged according to distance banding. Dependent on their needs some SEND children may have less choice about where they go to school in comparison to mainstream children and therefore may fall into the higher charging bands. However the highest charges are still less than the actual cost of providing the transport.	As above in age.
------	---------------	--	---	---	------------------

#### **Part 5: Director / Head of Service Statement**

<p>I am fully aware of the duties required of Buckinghamshire County Council (BCC) under the Equality Act 2010 and I have read our Equality Strategy.</p> <p>I am satisfied that this Equality Impact Assessment shows that we have made every possible effort to address any actual or potential unlawful discrimination.</p>	<b>Name</b> Sarah Callaghan
	<b>Signature</b>
	<b>Date</b> 30 Jan 2019