

Scrutiny Board comments and response

Discretionary Transport Scrutiny Review Board – 15 October 2015

1. SCRUTINY REVIEW BOARD MEETING

- 1.1 At its meeting on 21 September 2015, the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee appointed a Review Board to consider proposed savings on the following two areas of discretionary spend on Home To School Transport:
- Travel support for post-16 students from Low Income Families (LIF) and FE link transport; and
 - Travel support for students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)
- 1.2 A summary of the key points made by the Board at its meeting on 15 October 2015 are set out below.

2. REVIEW BOARD COMMENTS WITH RESPONSE

No.	Comment	Response
1	The Board felt more consideration should be given by the Department to the operation of the hardship fund it is proposing to set up to mitigate the impact of the proposed savings for 16-19 year olds from Low Income Families. Given the fund would be administered by the 5 colleges identified in the proposals, the Board in particular asked the Department to give more consideration to monitoring how the fund would be spent. The Board also felt that consideration should be given as to how each application could be looked at on a case by case basis.	Guidance for eligibility, allocation and monitoring of the ESCC Hardship Fund (Appendix 5 of this report) has been circulated to the five post-16 providers which will receive a proportion of the fund, together with the proposed weighted allocations for each institution.
2	The Board were presented with a table setting out a number of potential risks, impacts and mitigations. One potential risk which the Board discussed in detail was the outcome that the proposed savings may deter students from low income families from continuing in Post-16 education. The Board felt that the mitigation to this risk did not produce a significant reduction and therefore asked whether further consideration could be given to how this risk might be reduced further (and if not whether the risk was worth taking).	<p>The Board were considering the original risk table presented as an Appendix for the report to Lead Member on 8 June. Since that time and over the consultation period, the level of perceived risk following mitigation has been reduced from 4 x 4 (impact x likelihood) to 4 x 3 in Appendix 12 to reflect the fact that the mitigations are now considered to be more effective, particularly as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Post-16 providers will have access to EFA bursary funding which can be used to support LIF students. The five East Sussex providers with the highest need will also receive a Hardship Fund allocation to supplement this existing support and specifically target their low income students' transport needs.• As set out in Appendix 9 there appears to

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		<p>be no correlation between provision of free post-16 transport and the levels of 16-19 year olds who are NEET (not in education, employment or training).</p> <p>It should also be noted that the risk measure methodology is not a scientific measure and is not for example take into account the numbers of young people likely to be impacted. There is still a risk that some CYP may be affected, however we hope that these numbers will be low.</p>
3	<p>The Board understood the reasoning behind the proposed targeting of the hardship fund at the 5 colleges identified in the papers before them. However, it was noted that no 6th form colleges would have access to the hardship funding and therefore the Board asked that further consideration be given to this point.</p> <p>The Board also asked for clarification as to what funding 6th Forms may already have in place to support students from low income families.</p>	<p>All providers offering education for 16-19 year olds receive an allocation from the Education Funding Agency (EFA) which is proportionate to their LIF student cohorts. This is explained in Appendix 8.</p>