

# Press Release

For Immediate Release 10 June 2015

## Proposal for £1m plus school transport savings

PARENTS are being asked for their views on proposed changes to school transport that could save more than a million pounds.

East Sussex County Council is consulting on the proposals, which would affect travel support for post-16 students from low income families and pre-school and post-16 students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

The council has a statutory duty to provide some transport services to pupils in the county, but spends £1.67 million on services it does not have a legal responsibility to deliver.

It says changes to the way these services are delivered will enable it to support those with the greatest need.

As the authority works towards a three-year savings target of up to £90million, it is reviewing every service it delivers to ensure it is achieving value for money and delivering cost-effective services.

The proposed changes, which would be phased in, could save an estimated £1,160,616 over the three years from 2016. The council would continue to invest more than £9million into statutory transport services.

People are being asked to comment on:

- The removal of travel passes and grants available to post-16 students from low income families and the creation of a hardship fund to ensure those in need can still access support
- Ensuring the council prioritises support to SEND students with the highest level of need by introducing tighter criteria and, where appropriate, encouraging parents to transport their child to pre-school, school sixth form or college
- Increasing the current post-16 SEND transport contribution from £370 to £608, with a 50 per cent reduction for low income families, and introducing the same contribution for families with pre-school children receiving travel support

Stuart Gallimore, county council director of children's services, said: "Historically, the county council has offered school transport services it does not have a statutory duty to provide.

"However, with significant savings to be found in the three years from 2016, this needs to be reviewed. Changes to the policy would bring East Sussex more in line with other authorities where charges are already in place.

"We are setting out the proposed changes so people are aware of the proposals, can take these into account when choosing a college or sixth form place for September 2016, and can comment on the potential impact.

"Any changes approved will not come into effect until September 2016. Students already receiving support will continue to do so."

The consultation, which will include discussions with affected schools and colleges, is now open and people can comment online at [www.eastsussex.gov.uk/haveyoursay](http://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/haveyoursay)

#### NOTES FOR EDITORS

The decision to consult on the proposed changes was taken by Cllr Nick Bennett, lead member for learning and school effectiveness, at his latest lead member meeting on Monday, June 8

Home to School Transport expenditure in 2014/15 was £10.76 million, with around £9.13 million being used to fulfil statutory requirements.

In 2016/17 it is estimated that 204 post-16 students from low income families would be impacted by the proposals, while 94 pre-school and post-16 SEND students would be affected.

Savings have already been made to the home to school transport budget with a number of changes and initiatives including the decision to offer free transport only to the nearest school, the introduction of personal transport budgets for SEND children and young people.

The county council already offers support to SEND students to encourage them to travel to school or college on public transport and help them live a more independent life.

This release resulted in the consultation being featured in the following:

11 June	TV news report BBC	South East Today
11 June	article	Eastbourne Herald
12 June	article	The Argus
12 June	article	Hailsham Herald
21 June	TV discussion BBC	The Sunday Politics Show (with Cllr St Pierre)