

## **Maldon District Council: Draft Local Plan – Examination in Public Burnham on Crouch and Southminster Primary School Capacity Statement**

### **1. Summary**

During the course of the above Examination the Inspector asked Essex County Council (“ECC”) and Evolution Town Planning to issue a statement, under Matter 5 – Strategic Housing Growth: Burnham-on-Crouch, concerning the available capacity at Southminster Primary School that might be utilised to accommodate additional pupils that could be generated by new housing in the Burnham area/ Southminster area. This information is set out in the explanatory text in section 2. The Inspector also requested for this information to be translated into numbers of dwellings, which is set out in section 3.

This note has been prepared by Neil Keylock of Essex County Council, Tim Parton of Maldon District Council (MDC), David Barker of Evolution Town Planning, Simon Butler-Finbow of Pigeon Land, Matt Clarke of Boyer Planning, and Andy Butcher of Strutt and Parker. Stephen Clyne of Education Facilities Management (EFM), has advised Evolution Town Planning, Pigeon Land, Boyer Planning and Strutt and Parker on education matters for this note.

The information set out below outlines that over the 15 year period of the draft Local Plan the available capacity at the two primary schools located in Burnham-on-Crouch will be more fully utilised by children residing in the town. As a consequence Southminster residents will, over a number of years, be unable to gain access to places at these schools. However, there will be sufficient capacity available at Southminster Primary School to accommodate all of the children living in the priority admissions area for Southminster Church of England Primary School. As a consequence of the displacement of children from Southminster it is calculated that, the two schools located in Burnham-on-Crouch could accommodate the pupil product generated by around 67 houses in addition to the pupil product that would be generated by the 450 dwellings currently allocated in the Draft Local Plan. Southminster CE Primary School would have sufficient surplus capacity to accommodate the pupil product generated by around 267 houses.

Evolution Town Planning, Pigeon Land, Boyer Planning and Strutt and Parker (“ETP”) state that the capacity of the two Burnham-on-Crouch schools, based on information provided by ECC, (appendix 4 below) is much higher as a net 61 available places equates to 203 family homes. ETP is of the opinion that a middle ground of 80 additional family homes was acknowledged by ECC at the meeting on the 9<sup>th</sup> February as appropriate is appropriate. ETP believe that the Southminster Primary School surplus capacity after any push-back of Southminster pupils is 257 family homes.

## 2. Assessment of capacity at Southminster and Burnham primary schools

The pupil forecasts produced following the Examination for the two primary schools located in Burnham-on-Crouch (Burnham-on-Crouch Primary School and St Mary's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School) and Southminster Church of England Primary School are attached. (See Appendix 1). A map showing the location of the three primary schools which form the Burnham/ Southminster forecast planning group, with the priority admission areas delineated in green, together with the three local plan sites identified is also attached. (See Appendix 2). The net capacities of the 3 schools are as follows: Burnham-on-Crouch Primary School - 417 places, St Mary's CE (VA) Primary School - 210 places (including 30 places in temporary accommodation) and Southminster CE Primary School - 315 places.

EFM advises that ECC treat the three primary schools as a single exclusive planning area (Maldon Group 3) This is made clear in the ECC School Organisation Plans from 2008 through to the Commissioning School Places handbook 2013-18. *For school planning purposes the three primary schools in Burnham-on-Crouch and Southminster are dealt with as a group and their education capacity is administered on a group basis. ECC in its annual School Capacity returns to the Department for Education ("DfE") classifies Maldon Group 3 as 'School Planning Area 8810903' and the DfE assesses the need for additional school places for the area on this area (and in deciding whether there is a forecast shortfall allowing an additional 2% across the area for expressions of parental preference and local flexibility. There is an existing two way flow of pupils between the areas. As such it has been accepted, through grouping and practice, that primary school children from Burnham can (and already do) go to Southminster Primary School (see appendix 4) The Councils dispute ECC's evidence and state this has not been accepted. However School Planning Area 8810903 includes only the Burnham-on-Crouch and Southminster Primary Schools, the capacity of these schools and decisions about pupil places are based on this planning area.*

The forecast scenarios have been produced using the following data: number on roll data taken from the School Census undertaken in October 2014; G.P. registration data provided by NHS England, the housing allocations and trajectories identified within Maldon District Council's Infrastructure Phasing Plan Update and two sites in the area with extant planning permission: CEFAS Laboratory and Southminster Business Park. Developments of less than 10 dwellings with planning permission have been excluded from the forecasts. (See Appendix 3.)

No account has been taken of the rural housing allocation of 420 dwellings, some of which might be accommodated in Southminster, or the 300 windfall allowance, some of which might be accommodated in Burnham-on Crouch/ Southminster. (Planning applications for developments at New Moor Farm (220 dwellings) and Theedhams Farm (94 dwellings) in Southminster CE Primary School's Priority Admissions Area ("paa") have recently been considered by Maldon District Council. Clearly, if such developments were to be granted planning permission then this would significantly reduce the number of surplus place available at Southminster Primary School.) In

addition appeals are being considered in Burnham-on-Crouch for 75 dwellings on the land east of Burnham on Crouch (RE3 reserve site), 40 dwellings at Petticrows Boatyard, and current applications are being considered for 180 dwellings on LDP site S2(j) and 325 dwellings in part on LDP site S2(i) west of Burnham on Crouch.

Evolution Town Planning, Pigeon Land, Boyer Planning and Strutt and Parker believe that Maldon District Council need to assess the level of homes that are likely to be delivered in Southminster as part of the Rural Allocations so that the available capacity for development Burnham-on-Crouch, which unlike Southminster is proposed for strategic growth in the LDP, is understood. Evolution Town Planning, Pigeon Land, Boyer Planning and Strutt and Parker believe that current applications and appeals if allowed in Southminster would significantly exceed the LDP's growth for Southminster to the detriment of more sustainable growth in Burnham-on-Crouch.

The housing mix used to produce the forecasts and the pupil product factors applied to the housing mix are outlined in Appendix 3, which is 80% family houses, 10% 2 bedroom flats and 10% 1 bed properties and bungalows. Essex County Council forecasting methodologies discount completely all 1 bed properties and bungalows as they do not generate school age children and that 2 bed flats generate 0.15 primary school children per dwelling, while 2bed homes and above generate 0.3 primary school children per home. Clearly, if the housing mix varies from the one used to produce the forecasts then so would the pupil product that would be generated from it i.e. a higher proportion of bungalows and 1 / 2 bed flats would reduce the pupil yield whilst a higher proportion of family houses would increase the pupil yield if the overall number of dwellings remained the same.

Evolution Town Planning, Pigeon Land, Boyer Planning and Strutt and Parker note that any limits on housing as a result of limits on education capacity are limits on family homes and are of the opinion that this was acknowledged at the meeting of the 9<sup>th</sup> February.

The forecasts add all of the pupils generated by new housing in Burnham-on-Crouch to Burnham-on- Crouch Primary School rather than sharing it between that school and St Mary's Primary School. This is because St Mary's is a faith school and its admission arrangements relate to faith based admissions criteria rather than a specified geographical area. However, Evolution Town Planning, Pigeon Land, Boyer Planning and Strutt and Parker note that if St Mary's Primary School has capacity it must admit pupils irrespective of faith affiliations or otherwise. Thus its capacity is included in the final analysis of this statement and is done likewise by the DfE.

In terms of forecasting methodology the additional pupils forecast from the new housing are added to the total pupil forecast before housing. The number of pupils to be added to each year group is calculated by dividing each projection of additional

pupils from new housing by the 7 year groups in the primary age group and adding this amount to each year group (Reception to Year 6).

The County Council's methodology is based on the experience that the pupils generated by new housing do not all arrive at the same time as the new housing is built. When new housing is built families quite often have younger children; some will have pre-school aged children and some couples may not have children for several years after they move into their new home. So an additional step is applied to the forecasting process to model a staggered effect i.e. the gradual build-up of pupils from new housing over a number of years, rather than the full pupil product from the new housing being added to the forecasts in the first year of it being built.

The methodology of Evolution Town Planning, Pigeon Land, Boyer Planning and Strutt and Parker is similar, but is based on census data for migrant households for the District, and also models the impact over the whole plan period and beyond when the proposed housing is completed and the transition to 'stock housing' begins to take place. Hence the EFM comments that later in the Plan Period more capacity for new housing emerges.

The County Council's forecasts indicate that there would be sufficient primary school places in Burnham to accommodate the primary aged children who would be generated by the development of 450 dwellings in the town until the school year 2018-19. A deficit in primary school places is forecast from the school year 2019-20 onwards. This deficit grows to around 40 by the school year 2023-24. However, Evolution Town Planning, Pigeon Land, Boyer Planning and Strutt and Parker note that in fact the deficit will not occur as fewer primary pupil applications from Southminster will secure places, as explained below.

As indicated at the Examination the County Council considers that the deficit of primary school places in Burnham could be managed by utilising some of the surplus capacity available at Southminster Primary School.

The October 2014 School Census shows that there was a net influx of around 60 pupils (61 in Appendix 4) from the priority admissions area of Southminster CE Primary School to the two primary schools located in Burnham-on-Crouch, although the numbers of children are not evenly spread across the year groups. (See Appendix 4)

The forecasts indicate that there would be ample room to accommodate all of the pupils from Southminster CE Primary School's paa who would get "pushed back" from Burnham as children from the new housing developments in the town are occupied and parents apply for places in the two Burnham primary schools. As previously indicated the County Council anticipates that this "push back" would take place over a number of years as it applies solely to admissions into the Reception Class each September.

It should be made clear that not all of the children living within Southminster CE Primary School's paa will get "pushed back" to this school as the number of primary aged children residing in Burnham increases. This is because of the current admissions arrangements of the two primary schools located in Burnham. The admissions arrangements for St Mary's CE (VA) Primary School are predominantly faith based rather than geographically based i.e. based on regular church attendance rather than where the child resides. The admissions arrangements for Burnham-on-Crouch Primary School give priority to children with a sibling attending the school over those children living in the priority admission area for the school, so it would take a number of years for the "sibling link" to work out of the school's admissions process.

EFM state that: It will be a maximum of six years for the entire sibling cohort to work out of the system within the net 30 pupils at Burnham Primary that commute in from Southminster. The numbers will decrease year on year from year 1. EFM state that the 30 children pushed back from Burnham Primary school means that the school can support the development of another 100 family homes on top of the 450 already proposed for Burnham-on-Crouch. EFM believes It was acknowledged by ECC at the meeting of the 9<sup>th</sup> February that it would be sensible to reduce this to 80 homes to take account of any unforeseen circumstances that might limit this capacity.

It was suggested at the examination that it would be reasonable for children moving into new housing in Burnham to attend Southminster CE Primary School if they could not be accommodated at the two Burnham primary schools. Whilst Southminster Primary School is located within 3 miles of the proposed Local Plan sites in Burnham there is currently no safe walking route available between Burnham and Southminster. As a consequence all of the children living in Burnham who were allocated a place at Southminster CE Primary School would be entitled to free home to school transport for the duration of their primary education. As some of the children are likely to be young (the majority of children start their primary education in the year in which they reach 5 years of age), this is likely to add significantly to the cost of providing transport as escorts would need to be provided on the vehicles. Essex County Council is concerned that parents would be resistant to their children having to be transported to a primary school in the neighbouring settlement.

Evolution Town Planning, Pigeon Land, Boyer Planning, and Strutt and Parker note that the transportation of primary school children is not unusual, and is currently undertaken elsewhere in Essex through the provisions of the Essex County Council Developer Contributions Guide. EFM state: It has been held at appeal that using existing school capacity and school transport is more sustainable than making new provision, (APP/J0405/A/11/2152198/NWF Land South of Newton Leys Drayton Road MK17 0EE).

The final sentence (starting Essex County Council is concerned) of the paragraph above but 1, fails to recognise the ECC adopted policy on school transport. Nowhere in policy is concern expressed. This policy is attached as Appendix 5.

“Orminston Rivers Academy and several primary schools operate bus and coach travel to their schools. Whilst much of the travel is paid for by Essex County Council some children can use this service for payment. Stephensons and Fords operate most of the local contracts.” (www.Dengie.org.uk)

Maldon District Council’s growth strategy within the submitted LDP has sought to locate growth in the most sustainable locations of the District, where there is appropriate available infrastructure, or the potential to improve infrastructure capacity, to support growth. Through the LDP, the Council has sought to locate growth in sustainable locations which would allow residents to access services and facilities, through the most sustainable transport options of walking and cycling.

### 3. Potential impact of surplus places on new housing

The pupil forecast information for the primary schools located in Burnham-on-Crouch and Southminster indicate that over the 15 year draft Local Plan period the two schools located in Burnham-on-Crouch could accommodate the pupil product generated by around 67 houses, in addition to the pupil product that would be generated by the 450 dwellings currently allocated in the Draft Local Plan. Southminster CE Primary School could accommodate the pupil product generated by around 267 houses. The calculations used to produce these figures are attached as Appendix 6.

EFM calculate that the capacity the Burnham primary schools for additional homes is 80 family homes above the 450 proposed in the LDP. This takes account of the 36 pupils going to school in Burnham from Southminster and the 6 pupils who go to school in Southminster from Burnham, This gives a capacity of 100 homes, at the meeting on the 9<sup>th</sup> February EFM believe it was acknowledged by ECC that and on the basis that the use of 80% of this capacity is sensible, EFM calculate that Burnham primary schools have a capacity for 80 family homes in addition to the 450 homes previously assumed.

The forecasts assume that the Burnham primary schools and Southminster CE Primary School would operate at 100% capacity. However, the National Audit Office noted in its report on “Capital funding for new school places” that the Department for Education considers that on average a figure of 5% surplus places was the bare minimum needed for local authorities to meet their statutory duty to provide sufficient school places with operational flexibility, while enabling parents to have some choice of schools. In the context of Burnham/ Southminster 5% surplus places would represent some 47 places, the equivalent of 157 2,3,4 bed houses.

EFM state: This is a mis-quote. *1.16 The Department compiled its estimate of places required by examining local authorities’ forecast data for pupil numbers in 2014/15 and existing capacity in May 2010 in each authority, and, for county councils, for each district within that authority. It then calculated the number of extra places*

*needed to achieve a surplus of places of at least 5 per cent in each authority or district<sup>1</sup>. The Department adopted this planning assumption in the context of a challenging spending review when preparing its funding bid to HM Treasury. It considered that on average 5 per cent was the bare minimum needed for authorities to meet their statutory duty with operational flexibility, while enabling parents to have some choice of schools. As at September 2010, 37 of 152 authorities were forecasting a surplus of primary places of below 5 per cent by 2014/15 without any spending on new places, while another 62 would be in deficit, with fewer primary places than children.*

Thus for 2010 bidding round it was 5% across Maldon district and not Burnham. For the current bidding round it was 2% for each school planning area. Applied to Burnham this would be 12 places and not 31. But Burnham is not a planning area so it would be calculated as a zero supplement on a significant surplus across the Burnham/Southminster.

The DfE guidance (Feb 2015) says: *Shortfalls are calculated by comparing the forecast pupil numbers in academic year 2018/19 to capacity in each [school] planning area. **We uplift pupil forecasts by 2 per cent at [school] planning area level<sup>2</sup>**, to support an operating surplus. We aggregate these shortfalls to give shortfall estimates for each local authority. Surpluses are counted as ‘zero’, and are not used to offset shortfalls in other planning areas. These shortfalls are then adjusted to take account of the funding which authorities will receive from the 2013-15 and 2015-17 basic need allocations, to fund places for the academic period 2012/13 to 2017/18. The assumption is that authorities will, with that prior funding, be able to create all of the places their SCAP 2012 and SCAP 2013 data (which underpin the previous 2013-15 and 2015-17 allocations) indicated they would need by 2017/18.*

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<sup>1</sup> My emphasis

<sup>2</sup> ibid

## Appendix 1

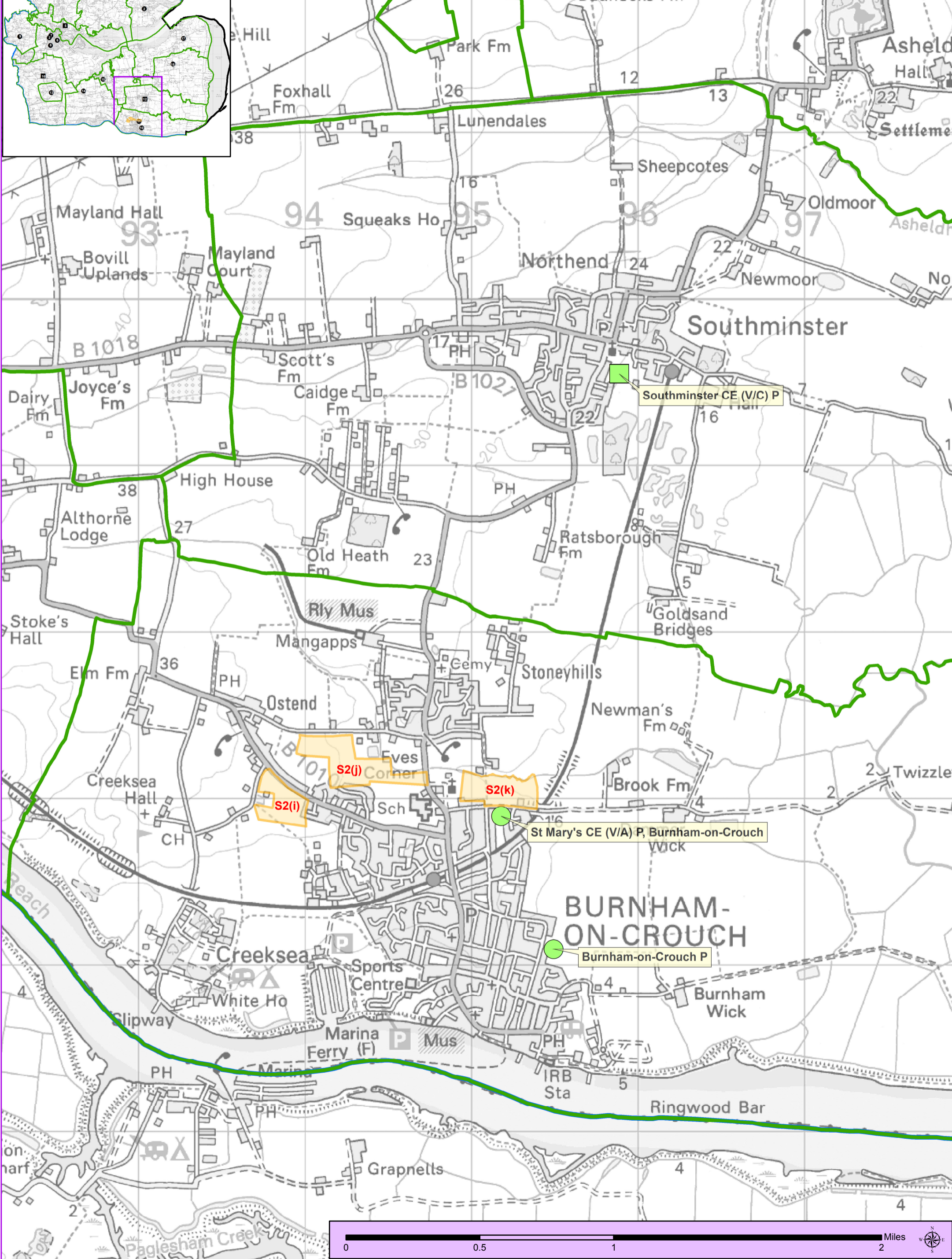
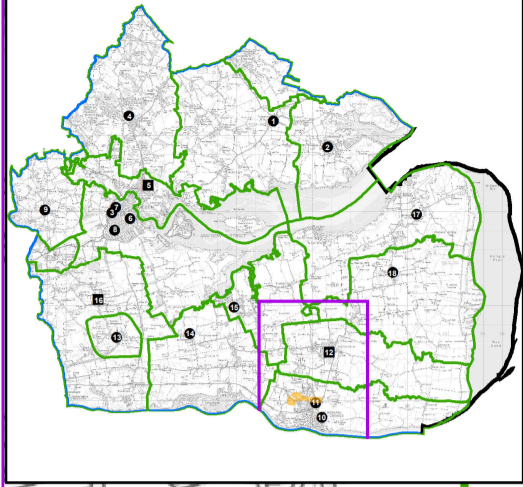
AUT 2014/15 BASED FORECASTS AND FORECASTS USING HOUSING AS IDENTIFIED BY MALDON DC INFRASTRUCTURE DELIVERY PLAN														
2310 Burnham-on-Crouch Primary				Forecast before Housing							Forecast with Housing Surplus/ Deficit			
Year	Capacity	PAN	Yr R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total	Total with Housing Potential Pupils	Year R with Housing Potential Pupils	Total	Reception Year
2014/15	417	60	53	47	49	42	57	58	34	340	340	53	77	7
2015/16	417	60	50	53	47	49	42	57	58	356	360	51	57	9
2016/17	417	60	44	50	53	47	49	42	57	342	366	47	51	13
2017/18	417	60	53	44	50	53	47	49	42	338	384	60	33	0
2018/19	417	60	48	53	44	50	53	47	49	344	415	58	2	2
2019/20	417	60	48	48	53	44	50	53	47	343	434	61	-17	-1
2020/21	417	60	48	48	48	53	44	50	53	344	447	63	-30	-3
2021/22	417	60	48	48	48	48	53	44	50	339	451	64	-34	-4
2022/23	417	60	48	48	48	48	48	53	44	337	454	65	-37	-5
2023/24	417	60	48	48	48	48	48	48	53	341	459	65	-42	-5
2024/25	417	60	48	48	48	48	48	48	48	336	454	65	-37	-5
2025/26	417	60	48	48	48	48	48	48	48	336	454	65	-37	-5
2026/27	417	60	48	48	48	48	48	48	48	336	454	65	-37	-5
2027/28	417	60	48	48	48	48	48	48	48	336	454	65	-37	-5
2028/29	417	60	48	48	48	48	48	48	48	336	454	65	-37	-5
3450 St Mary's CE (V/A) P, Burnham-on-Crouch				Forecast before Housing							Forecast with Housing Surplus/ Deficit			
Year	Capacity	PAN	Yr R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total	Total with Housing Potential Pupils	Year R with Housing Potential Pupils	Total	Reception Year
2014/15	210	30	29	30	30	35	20	30	27	201	201	29	9	1
2015/16	210	30	30	29	30	30	35	20	30	204	204	30	6	0
2016/17	210	30	30	30	29	30	30	35	20	204	204	30	6	0
2017/18	210	30	30	30	30	29	30	30	35	214	214	30	-4	0
2018/19	210	30	30	30	30	30	29	30	30	209	209	30	1	0
2019/20	210	30	30	30	30	30	30	29	30	209	209	30	1	0
2020/21	210	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	29	209	209	30	1	0
2021/22	210	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	210	210	30	0	0
2022/23	210	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	210	210	30	0	0
2023/24	210	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	210	210	30	0	0
2024/25	210	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	210	210	30	0	0
2025/26	210	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	210	210	30	0	0
2026/27	210	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	210	210	30	0	0
2027/28	210	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	210	210	30	0	0

2028/29	210	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	210	210	30	0	0	
<b>2095</b>	<b>Southminster</b>			<b>Forecast before Housing</b>								<b>Forecast with Housing</b>		<b>Surplus/ Deficit</b>	
<b>Year</b>	<b>Capacity</b>	<b>PAN</b>	<b>Yr R</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Total with Housing Potential Pupils</b>	<b>Year R with Housing Potential Pupils</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Reception Year</b>	
2014/15	315	45	20	26	38	28	25	28	25	190	190	20	125	25	
2015/16	315	45	21	20	26	38	28	25	28	186	192	22	123	23	
2016/17	315	45	24	21	20	26	38	28	25	182	194	26	121	19	
2017/18	315	45	19	24	21	20	26	38	28	176	196	22	119	23	
2018/19	315	45	21	19	24	21	20	26	38	169	192	24	123	21	
2019/20	315	45	21	21	19	24	21	20	26	152	179	25	136	20	
2020/21	315	45	21	21	21	19	24	21	20	147	176	25	139	20	
2021/22	315	45	21	21	21	21	19	24	21	148	178	25	137	20	
2022/23	315	45	21	21	21	21	21	19	24	148	178	25	137	20	
2023/24	315	45	21	21	21	21	21	21	19	145	175	25	140	20	
2024/25	315	45	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	147	177	25	138	20	
2025/26	315	45	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	147	177	25	138	20	
2026/27	315	45	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	147	177	25	138	20	
2027/28	315	45	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	147	177	25	138	20	
2028/29	315	45	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	147	177	25	138	20	
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>Forecast before Housing</b>								<b>Forecast with Housing</b>		<b>Surplus/ Deficit</b>	
<b>Year</b>	<b>Capacity</b>	<b>PAN</b>	<b>Yr R</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Total with Housing Potential Pupils</b>	<b>Year R with Housing Potential Pupils</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Reception Year</b>	
2014/15	942	135	102	103	117	105	102	116	86	731	731	102	211	33	
2015/16	942	135	101	102	103	117	105	102	116	746	756	102	186	33	
2016/17	942	135	98	101	102	103	117	105	102	728	764	103	178	32	
2017/18	942	135	102	98	101	102	103	117	105	728	794	111	148	24	
2018/19	942	135	99	102	98	101	102	103	117	722	816	112	126	23	
2019/20	942	135	99	99	102	98	101	102	103	704	822	116	120	19	
2020/21	942	135	99	99	99	102	98	101	102	700	832	118	110	17	
2021/22	942	135	99	99	99	99	102	98	101	697	838	119	104	16	
2022/23	942	135	99	99	99	99	99	102	98	695	841	120	101	15	
2023/24	942	135	99	99	99	99	99	99	102	696	844	120	98	15	
2024/25	942	135	99	99	99	99	99	99	99	693	841	120	101	15	
2025/26	942	135	99	99	99	99	99	99	99	693	841	120	101	15	
2026/27	942	135	99	99	99	99	99	99	99	693	841	120	101	15	

2027/28	942	135	99	99	99	99	99	99	99	693	841	120	101	15
2028/29	942	135	99	99	99	99	99	99	99	693	841	120	101	15

**Appendix 2 - Location of primary schools in Burnham-on-Crouch / Southminster with strategic housing allocation sites**

Strategic Growth	Ref	Site	Total	Primary Priority Admissions Area
Burnham-on-Crouch Strategic Allocations	S2(i)	West of Burnham-on-Crouch	180	Burnham-on-Crouch Primary
	S2(j)	North of Burnham-on-Crouch (West)	180	Burnham-on-Crouch Primary
	S2(k)	North of Burnham-on-Crouch (East)	90	Burnham-on-Crouch Primary



### Appendix 3

#### Impact of new housing as identified by Maldon District Council's Revised Infrastructure Delivery Plan

<b>Burnham</b>	<b>2014/15</b>	<b>2015/16</b>	<b>2016/17</b>	<b>2017/18</b>	<b>2018/19</b>	<b>2019/20</b>
S2(i)West of Burnham-on- Crouch	0	30	40	40	40	30
S2(j) North of Burnham-on-Crouch (West)	0	0	50	50	50	30
S2(k) North of Burnham-on- Crouch (East)	0	0	30	30	30	
CEFAS Laboratory			14			
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>Southminster</b>						
Southminster Business Park	0	39	39	39		
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>60</b>

Housing figures include Local Plan sites and any housing sites over 10 units with planning permission.

<b>Housing mix</b>	<b>Primary factors</b>	<b>Secondary factors</b>
10% - 1 bed/ bungalow	0	0
10% - 2 bed flats	0.15	0.1
80% - 2,3,4 bed houses	0.3	0.2

Example: A development of 180 dwellings:

18 - 1 bed/ bungalows	18 x 0	= 0
18 - 2 bed flats	18 x 0.15	= 2.7
144 - 2, 3, 4 bed houses	144 x 0.3	= 43.2

Total primary pupil product = 45.9 (46)

**Appendix 4**

Flows of pupils between the 3 primary schools in the Burnham/ Southminster forecast planning group based on October 2014 school census

<b>Year group</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>Total</b>
Burnham-on-Crouch Primary from Southminster CE Primary School's paa								
	12	4	2	5	2	9	2	<b>36</b>
St Mary's VA Primary School Burnham from Southminster CE Primary School's paa								
	3	4	4	10	4	4	2	<b>31</b>
Total pupils attending Burnham-on-Crouch primary schools from Southminster CE Primary School's priority admissions area.								
	15	8	6	15	6	13	4	<b>67</b>
Southminster CE Primary School from Burnham-on-Crouch Primary School's paa								
	1	0	1	2	2	0	0	<b>6</b>
Net flow Southminster CE Primary Schools paa to Burnham-on Crouch Primary Schools paa								
	14	8	5	13	4	13	4	<b>61</b>

# EDUCATION TRANSPORT POLICY

February 2015

Version created February 2015

# ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL STATEMENT OF EDUCATION TRANSPORT POLICY

## Introduction

Essex County Council has a statutory duty to make arrangements to provide free home to school transport for some children of compulsory school age and discretion whether to provide transport for others.

This document sets out Essex County Council's Home to School Transport Policy and describes how the Council fulfils its duties and exercises its discretionary powers as required under the Education Act 1996 and subsequent legislation.

Parents have a legal duty and a responsibility to ensure that their statutory aged children attend school regularly and to make any necessary arrangements to ensure that they attend school. The County Council is required to provide transport to those eligible under the law and this policy, to children and families resident within the administrative area of Essex County Council.

## Provision for children of compulsory school age

**The following policy will apply until the end of the 2014/15 academic year.**

Essex County Council in accordance with its statutory duty will provide free home to school transport for children of compulsory school age to the designated (catchment) school from their home address who meet the 'qualifying distance' criteria which are:

- 2 miles or more for children below the age of eight
- 3 miles or more for children aged eight and above

For children aged eight the change in entitlement to free transport will be implemented from the start year four.

Distances are measured by way of the shortest available walking route, using the County Council's geographical information system. The legal definition of an 'available route' is a route along which a child, accompanied as necessary, can walk and walk with reasonable safety to school.

Statutory entitlement is extended to those from low income groups. Children from low income groups are defined as those who are entitled to free school meals, or those families whose annual taxable household income is less than £16,190\* and are in receipt of their maximum level of Working Tax Credit (WTC).

Children aged above the age of 8, but under the age of 11, from low income families will be entitled to travel assistance where they live two miles or more from and are attending their designated school.

\*As of 2012/13 and subject to annual parliamentary change, to which all references in this policy should be considered.

Children in years 7 – 11 from low income families are entitled to transport where they attend one of the three nearest schools to their home address providing those schools are between 2 and 6 miles from their home address by the shortest available walking route.

This statutory entitlement is extended to those children from low income families who are attending their designated faith school which is 2 miles or more, but not more than 15 miles from home by the shortest available walking route. For Roman Catholic (RC) schools, the 'designated faith school' for this purpose is the school which the RC Diocese and the County Council have agreed as the RC school for the area of the home address. In the case of other faiths, transport will only be provided to the nearest school of that faith, if the relevant income and distance criteria are met.

Where a child is admitted to a school which is nearer to the home address than the designated school but which is still beyond the statutory walking distances, an entitlement to transport exists. The relative distance of the two schools will be measured using the nearest road route.

When a child cannot obtain a place at the designated school for the home address, the County Council will, subject to the qualifying distance being met, provide transport to the next nearest school with space to admit. For transport to be awarded in this particular instance, the parent must provide evidence that they have applied for and been refused a place at the school which is the designated school for their home address and any other schools closer than the school offering admission.

Where a parent gains a place for their child at their preferred school, either having not applied to their designated school or having given the designated school a lower preference, an entitlement to transport will not exist. Similarly, where a parent rejects an offer of a place at the nearest school, transport to another school will not be provided.

For children in years 8-11 and 1-6 (inclusive) from September 2015 moving into the county or within the county, the relevant provisions of the policy and eligibility criteria set out above will apply.

### **Route Inspections**

Where a parent/carer wishes to challenge the availability of a walking route, they may do so in writing, outlining their concerns to the Education Transport and Awards Team.

Routes are inspected by officers of the County Council using the 'Road Safety GB Guidelines on Assessment of Walked Routes to School'. Should a parent/carer wish to challenge the decision they are referred to a Member

Appeals Panel to make a decision on behalf of the Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning.

Where a route or part of a route is considered unavailable to be walked, transport will be provided to those students who would otherwise have to use that route to get to and from school where there is no alternative available walking route that can be used that is less than the qualifying distance criteria.

Where a route is deemed unavailable it will be reviewed on a 5 yearly basis, or sooner where the County Council is carrying out works that may make the route available. Where a route previously considered to be unavailable becomes available, transport will no longer be provided to any new applicants for transport assistance. Those applicants who have been entitled to transport due to an unavailable route will be provided with transport until the end of the academic year in which the route is re-assessed or given one full terms notice, whichever is longest, before transport will be withdrawn.

**Policy for applications for transport to commence and be provided from September 2015 onwards (children in Year Groups 7 and Reception in the 2015-16 Academic Year).**

Essex County Council in accordance with its statutory duty will provide free home to school transport for children of compulsory school age to the nearest available\* school for their home address who meet the 'qualifying distance' criteria which are:

- 2 miles or more for children below the age of eight
- 3 miles or more for children aged eight and above

For children aged eight the change in entitlement to free transport will be implemented from the start year four.

\*An available school is determined to be a maintained school or academy within the administrative area of Essex County Council.

Where a parent gains a place for their child at their preferred school, either having not applied to their nearest school or having given the nearest school a lower preference, then transport will not be provided. Similarly, where a parent rejects an offer of a place at the nearest school, transport to another school will not be provided.

In the event that a faith, selective or out of county school is the nearest available school an entitlement to transport will exist to that school as well as the nearest other maintained school or academy within the Essex County Council area, providing the distance criteria is met.

Distances are measured by way of the shortest available walking route, using the County Council's geographical information system. The legal definition of an 'available route' is a route along which a child, accompanied as necessary, can walk and walk with reasonable safety to school

Statutory entitlement is extended to those from low income groups. Children from low income groups are defined as those who are entitled to free school meals, or those families whose annual taxable household income is less than

£16,190\* and are in receipt of their maximum level of Working Tax Credit (WTC).

Children aged above the age of 8, but under the age of 11, from low income families will be entitled to travel assistance where they live two miles or more from and are attending their nearest available school.

Children in years 7 – 11 from low income families are entitled to transport where they attend one of the three nearest available schools to their home address providing those schools are between 2 and 6 miles from their home address by the shortest available walking route.

This statutory entitlement is extended to those children from low income families who are attending their designated faith school which is 2 miles or more, but not more than 15 miles from home by the shortest available walking route.

For Roman Catholic (RC) schools, the 'designated faith school' for this purpose is the school which the RC Diocese and the County Council have agreed as the RC school for the area of the home address. In the case of other faiths, transport will only be provided to the nearest school of that faith, if the relevant income and distance criteria are met.

When a child cannot be offered a place at the nearest school for the home address, the County Council will, subject to the qualifying distance being met, provide transport to the next nearest school with space to admit. For transport to be provided in this particular instance the parent must provide evidence that they have applied for and been refused a place at the school which is the designated school for their home address and any other schools closer than the school offering admission.

### **Route Inspections**

Where a parent/carer wishes to challenge the availability of a walking route, they may do so in writing, outlining their concerns to the Education Transport & Awards Team.

Routes are then inspected by officers of the County Council using the 'Road Safety GB Guidelines on Assessment of Walked Routes to School'. Should a parent/carer wish to challenge the officers' decision they are referred to a Member Appeals Panel to make a decision on behalf of the Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning.

Where a route or part of a route is considered unavailable to be walked, transport will be provided to those students who would otherwise have to use that route to get to and from school where there is no alternative available walking route that can be used that is less than the qualifying distance criteria.

Where a route is deemed unavailable it will be reviewed on a 5 yearly basis, or sooner where the County Council is carrying out works that may make the route available. Where a route previously considered to be unavailable, becomes available, transport will no longer be provided to any new applicants for transport assistance. Those applicants who have been entitled to transport

due to an unavailable route will be provided with transport until the end of the academic year in which the route is re-assessed or given one full terms notice, whichever is longest, before transport will be withdrawn.

### **Provision for children below compulsory school age**

Essex County Council will also provide home to school transport at the beginning and end of the school day for a child admitted to mainstream infant and primary schools who is still aged 4. Transport will not be provided to assist with midday journeys for part-time early years' admission.

### **Children Looked After**

There is a separate policy for the provision of Children Looked After. However, transport will be considered exceptionally for children who are 'looked after' in years 10 and 11 where they move placement within those year groups in order to provide continuity of education. All other cases will be considered under the Council's Essex Children's Social Care Transport policy.

### **Provision for children attending a faith school**

Following consultation in 2010/11, the provision of transport assistance to those attending faith schools was formally withdrawn to all students who commence(d) in year 0 or 7 in a faith school from September 2012 onwards.

Those students who currently receive subsidised transport will continue to receive this until the end of their current phase of education, either primary or secondary, or until the point at which they leave their current school. For those attending secondary faith schools a contribution of £110 per term will continue to be payable.

Since September 2012 transport is only provided to those attending faith primary and secondary schools who qualify under the low income policy set out on page 4. Such pupils are required to meet the statutory distance criteria for their age group.

### **Provision for children attending a selective school**

Free transport will be provided for families who qualify under the Low Income policy as defined on page 3, and who live 2 miles or more from the school as measured by the shortest available walking route.

Free transport will also be provided to those children for whom the selective school is the nearest school to their home address as measured by the nearest road route subject to a qualifying distance of 3 miles or more as measured by the nearest available walking route.

### **Motability Allowance**

The parents of some children may be in receipt of the higher rate mobility component (HRMC) of the Disability Living Allowance (DLA). This is the gateway to the Motability Scheme that supplies vehicles, adapted or not, in return for the DLA, usually on contract hire terms. If a child is the HRMC recipient and the family obtain a vehicle through the Motability scheme, then the vehicle is expected to be used for the benefit of the disabled child and the Council will offer reimbursement of 45p per mile to allow the family to utilise that vehicle to take their child to and from school.

### **Additional support available in extenuating circumstances**

Recognising that the Authority's discretionary powers should not be unreasonably fettered by its general policy, the Council will consider and may agree requests for home to school transport where there are considered to be exceptional circumstances.

The overriding expectation is that parents should undertake their legal responsibility to get their child(ren) to and from school and as such the Council will need to be satisfied that the parent has demonstrated why they, for social, medical, financial or personal reasons cannot undertake this duty.

The determination will be based on evidence received to support the case whether transport is necessary in order for the child to receive an education. Consideration will be given as to whether the circumstances could have reasonably been foreseen by the parent/carer. For example, moving to temporary accommodation owing to flood damage cannot be foreseen whereas choosing a school other than a child's nearest school and realising following this decision that transport is not available could be foreseen and researched

From September 2014 applications will be means tested as part of the overall assessment process and the transport offered will be determined by the level of income received.

Family Income	Support to be offered if case considered to be exceptional
£16,190 and below	Fuel reimbursement at 45p per mile or equivalent transport on existing contract vehicle/public transport ticket;
£16,190 – £30,000	Fuel reimbursement at 45p per mile or a payment of £250 per term towards the cost of transport;
£30,000 – £42,475	fuel reimbursement at 45p per mile or a payment of £150 per term towards the cost of transport;
£42,475 +	No contribution normally made.

From September 2014 there will also be a deadline by which applications under this part of the policy must be received. The Council currently allows applications to be made throughout the academic year. From September 2014 an application window will take effect, that is open from 1 March until 30 September each year for new starters, which then reopens for 1 January to close again on 31 January in each academic year. We will still accept applications outside this period at our discretion where family circumstances change e.g. a house move or drop in income).

Where it is decided that a child does not qualify for exceptional transport it remains the parent/carer's responsibility to ensure school attendance or consider transferring the child to a more local school.

The following scenarios outline examples where transport will be considered, based on evidence to support a case.

## **1. Medical condition of the child**

If a child cannot get to and from school owing to a medical condition transport will be considered for a short period of time while the condition is resolved. The parent/carer would need to outline why they are unable to get their child to school themselves and provide medical evidence from a GP or consultant outlining their child's medical condition, why it prevents them walking the 'x' miles from their home to school and how long this is likely to be the case. Parent/carers also need to provide income/benefit evidence to allow us to consider the case.

Transport assistance will only be provided for the length of time stated in medical evidence provided.

Example case:

Child has a broken leg and is unable to walk 1 mile to primary school. Mum is a single parent and works with an income of £15,000 per year. Free transport would be awarded to the child as they cannot physically walk the distance and the parent cannot fund an alternative or drive her child to school. Mum would be required to provide evidence from the GP or consultant confirming the injury and defining a length of time that transport would be required.

## **2. Medical condition of the parent**

If a child cannot get to and from school owing to parent/carer suffering from an unforeseen injury or illness consideration will be given to provide transport for a short period while the parent/carer recovers. Where the illness/injury is long term consideration will be given in continuing to provide transport assistance should the child be in attendance at their nearest school. Where a parent/carer had elected to send their child to a school further away than their nearest school, they will need to consider transferring them to a local school as assistance cannot be provided long term for children attending what is not their nearest school.

This would be considered for a maximum of three academic terms in order for families to consider local schools or make their own transport arrangements.

Applicants are required to provide detailed medical evidence from the GP or consultant outlining why the parent/carer is unable to walk or drive their child to and from school and for what period of time. Parent/carer does also need to provide income/benefit evidence to allow us to consider whether a contribution towards the cost of that transport is required.

Transport will only be provided for the length of time stated in medical evidence provided.

Example case:

Child is attending their nearest primary school, living 1.8 miles away. Mother is going into hospital for an operation and medical evidence has confirmed this and states that parent cannot walk or drive for 10 weeks. Father works full time and earns £27,000 per annum. Transport assistance would be agreed for 10 weeks only within the terms set out in the table above.

If the child was of secondary school age they would be expected to be able to walk this distance to and from school.

### **3. Family residing in temporary accommodation and on the housing list**

Where a family has been temporarily re-housed consideration will be given to provide transport assistance to the child's current school for one term at a time whilst they are waiting for permanent housing providing the distance criteria is met. This would be considered for a maximum of three academic terms in order for families to find alternative accommodation or make their own transport arrangements.

Parent/carers would need to provide evidence from the district/borough council or housing association stating that the family have been made unintentionally homeless and are subsequently in temporary accommodation awaiting permanent housing. The letter would also need to confirm the temporary address and the approximate timeframe for the family to be housed permanently. Any transport provided will be a term at a time. Parent/carers also need to provide income/benefit evidence to allow us to consider whether a contribution towards the cost of that transport is required.

Where a family are considered to be intentionally homeless exceptional transport assistance would not be provided.

Example case:

Single parent has been declared unintentionally homeless by Braintree District Council. They have been placed in temporary accommodation and are on the housing list. Transport assistance would be agreed to the child's current school whilst permanent housing is sought for one school term initially. Should an extension to transport assistance be required the parent would be required to submit termly updates from Braintree District Council or the housing association with regard to the likely timescale in which permanent accommodation would be found and up to date evidence of income or receipt of benefit.

Once the family have acquired permanent accommodation consideration for exceptional transport assistance to the existing school can only be given if the child is in years 6, 10 or 11 (examination years). If the permanent housing meant that the child did not meet the criteria required and the child was in any other year group the parent/carer would be required to seek admission to the local school or to take on the responsibility for getting their child to and from school.

#### **4. Mother/Father moved into a refuge**

This scenario mirrors that of a temporary accommodation application.

Evidence from the refuge is required stating that the parent/carer and children are currently residing with them and an approximate timescale until permanent accommodation will be found. Parent/carer's will also need to provide income/benefit evidence to allow us to consider the case. The distance criteria is still required to be met.

Example case:

Mother moved into a women's refuge to escape domestic violence and provides a confirmation letter from the refuge to support the application. Transport assistance would be agreed for one term and then extended as appropriate. Once the family have been permanently rehoused consideration to transport assistance can only be given if the child is in years 6, 10 or 11 (exam years).

If the permanent housing meant that the child no longer had an entitlement under the standard policy and was in any other year group the mother would be required to seek admission to the local school or to take on the responsibility for getting her child to and from school.

#### **5. Child Looked After**

Consideration will be given to provide transport assistance for looked after children that have moved placement during years 6, 10 and 11 so

that they can complete their exams at their current school, providing the distance criteria is met. Where a child has changed address outside of years 6, 10 and 11 transport assistance cannot be provided.

Evidence would need to be provided from social care that the child has changed placements during those exam years. Provided this evidence was received transport assistance would be put in place until the child reaches the end of year 6 or 11. Where a child moves placement again we would require further confirmation from social care to keep this arrangement in place.

## **6. Bullying**

Essex County Council has a duty to support schools in dealing with the issue of bullying and in enforcing their anti-bullying procedures before considering an application for transport. If a school has not been given ample opportunity to resolve bullying issues that are identified, consideration to transport assistance to an alternative school cannot be provided

Where a parent can evidence that the school has exhausted their anti-bullying procedures and subsequently advised that they cannot resolve the bullying and recommends that the child leaves their school, transport assistance can be considered to the nearest school with space available at the time of the move provided the distance criteria is met.

The school would need to provide evidence clearly stating that they have recommended that the child move schools due to unresolvable bullying issues and that they support this fully. The Education Transport & Awards will liaise with the Admissions team to ensure that the child was admitted into the nearest school with space available at the time of admission.

Example case:

A parent applies for transport to their nearest available school, 5 miles away, following bullying issues at their child's nearest school along with a letter from their nearest school outlining that there had been serious bullying issues that they haven't been able to resolve and that they subsequently support the child in transferring schools. Transport assistance could be awarded as the nearest available school would then be considered their nearest available school.

If the parent had not allowed the nearest school to exhaust their anti-bullying procedures or transfers their child to a school further away than the nearest available school, transport assistance cannot be considered.

Other circumstances may be considered but these will be considered on a case by case basis on the evidence provided at the time of the application.

### **Provision of Passenger Assistants on education transport**

It should be assumed in all cases where transport is provided by Essex County Council that a passenger assistant will not be present on the vehicle.

Passenger assistants will only be provided in the following situations:

- Where a Health & Safety issue is apparent following a County Council Risk Assessment
- The journey time is one hour or more
- The number of students travelling on the vehicle is 25 or more
- Where a Double Decker Bus is being used

Passenger assistants for SEN purposes are assessed on a case-by-case basis as outlined in the SEN Passenger Assistants section on page 19

### **Withdrawal of transport provided in error**

Where a child has been awarded in error, Essex County Council has the right to withdraw this after first considering the circumstances of each case to determine whether there are exceptional reasons for provision to continue.

Consideration cannot be given to those who simply cannot meet their parental responsibility to get their own child to school following the removal of transport. This would have been expected to have been taken into account at the time of admitting the child into school, as would have been the case had the error not been made.

Where it is decided to withdraw transport, one terms notice is given. This approach has been supported by the courts in the case of *Rootkin v Kent County Council* (1981).

### **Provision of transport for after school activities**

The provision of transport to non-statutory education or clubs does not fall within the Local Authorities statutory duties and therefore cannot be authorised. However, it is agreed that the County Council should assist schools to make late and out of school hours arrangements, with any additional costs arising being financed through the schools' delegated budget or by parents/carers.

### **Provision of transport for Foreign Exchange Students**

Essex County Council does not provide transport to Foreign Exchange Students during their exchange programme. We would encourage schools to speak with the operators of Essex County Council's contracted vehicles to make arrangements for these students. Any additional costs arising should be financed through the schools delegated budget or by parents and carers.

### **Provision of transport for Year 6 Induction/Transition Days**

Essex County Council do not fund additional cost associated with the transportation of those students from year 6 who attend induction days at their secondary schools. We would encourage schools to speak with the operators of Essex County Council's contracted vehicles to make arrangements for these students. Any additional costs arising should be financed through the schools delegated budget or by parents and carers.

### **Provision of transport to children who move school in years 10 and 11 or when they are above compulsory school age**

Essex County Council do not automatically provide home to school transport for children in years 6, 10 and 11 or post-16 whose home address changes such that the establishment they attend is no longer the designated or nearest establishment. Instead, consideration will be given on an individual basis to provision being made as an exception to normal County Council policy.

Sometimes, families and children, through no choice of their own, experience serious disruption in their home circumstances. This can cause particular difficulty for a young person in their GCSE examination years if they have to move address and are not able to remain at their previous school where they have started a course of study.

In order to help young people achieve their full potential and to succeed in their GCSE examinations, where a child who is attending school in Essex in years 6, 10 and 11 has to move in exceptional circumstances to a new address in Essex they will be provided with transport from their new address to their previous school. Exceptional circumstances will be defined; for example death of a parent, move from family home because of family issues such as repossessions, family violence.

This does not apply to planned moves where parents are making a choice to move to a new area. Where this is the case, home to school transport cannot be provided and the parent/carers must take on the responsibility of getting their children to school.

## Children with special educational needs, disability or mobility problems

### General statement

This statement refers to children, whether in mainstream or special provision, with special education needs, a disability or mobility problems and/or about whom the LA maintains a statement of special educational needs (or an Education, Health and Care Plan).

Some children have complex and profound needs that can only be met by attending a Special School or Enhanced provision such as a Hearing Impaired Unit. This includes:

- Children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN)
- Children undergoing statutory assessment in a School.

Please note: Not all children with SEN statements require special transport arrangements. Children with a statement of SEN should be transported to school in a manner that assists their readiness to engage in learning on their arrival at school and ensures both their comfort and safety.

An entitlement to home to school transport exists where the following criteria is satisfied:

- A child with a statement of SEN qualifies for home to school transport under the mainstream criteria outlined previously within this policy.

or

- A child attends their nearest appropriate school\* as determined by officers of the Statutory Assessment Service, and meets the qualifying distance criteria outlined previously, but in principle:
  - 2 miles or more for children below the age of eight.
  - 3 miles or more for children aged eight and above.
  - In addition, where a child's SEN or mobility difficulties prevent them from being able to walk to school even when accompanied by a responsible adult.

An assessment of a child's SEN or mobility difficulties will be carried out by Education Transport & Awards based on evidence provided by the parent/carer upon application. The following list, though not exhaustive, will be considered:

- A child is physically disabled and would require the use of a wheelchair to undertake the journey to school.
- A child's emotional and behavioural difficulties will create a clear health and safety hazard to themselves or others on the journey to school. Where this is the case exceptional transport would be provided and reviewed, where appropriate.
- The length of the walk to school would prevent the child from being in a fit state to be educated upon arrival. Where this is the case exceptional transport would be provided and reviewed, where appropriate.

\*The determination by the Statutory Assessment Service is the nearest appropriate school that **can** meet the child's needs and not the school that **best** meets the child's needs. Where a parent/carer exercises parental choice in choosing a school further away than the nearest appropriate school, the Statutory Assessment Service will name that school but state that this is not the nearest appropriate school and insist that they sign a transport disclaimer. At this point the parent takes on all financial responsibility of getting their child to and from school and as such Essex County Council cannot award an entitlement to home to school transport.

Where a child held a statement of SEN up to the age of 16, and progresses on to attend a Further Education college they are no longer classed as having a statement of SEN and will be assessed against the Post 16 mainstream policy.

Essex County Council (the LA) has a duty to transport eligible children to and from their main place of residence to their appropriate educational placement to allow attendance during normal school hours.

Where appropriate a referral will be made via the SEN Transport Assessment Team to the Travel Training team to initiate an assessment for the child's suitability for Independent Travel Training. This would benefit those children by enabling them to travel independently from home to school or college which would give them the confidence in future to travel independently.

### **Inter-site/additional transport**

In exceptional circumstances, the school named in a child's statement cannot provide the equipment or provision that has been identified as part of the child's statutory education. This may include a hydra pool to meet a recognised need for hydra therapy. Where the Statutory Assessment Service confirm that the requested trip to meet the provision does make up part of a child's statutory education outlined within their statement, inter school transport will be provided.

Transport will not be provided for additional provision outside of what is named in the statement to form a child's statutory education. Non statutory provision would be classed as, but not exhaustive to:

- Extra-curricular school activities e.g. school plays, sports days, parent evenings.
- Child development groups or consultation services.
- Medical or dental appointments, as these should be arranged out of school hours.
- Therapy sessions such as speech or occupational therapy outside of statutory education, or where it is statutory but the named school can meet the need.
- Breakfast clubs, after school clubs, or out of school activities.
- Returning home for private family functions where the child attends a residential school.
- Child minders or private nurseries, before, during or after school hours.
- School trips.
- Swimming clubs.
- Covering sickness or exclusion due to poor behaviour.
- Inter site transport not required to meet statutory education, as outlined above.

## **Pre-school provision**

For pre-school children with special educational needs attending a specialist unit such as a speech and language or hearing impaired unit at a special school early years class, a designated nursery in a mainstream school or a pre-school provision attached to a mainstream school, transport will be provided subject to the distance criteria being met..

The LA will consider whether to exercise discretion to provide free transport having regard to the child's individual needs.

If agreed, transport would be provided for both journeys to support SEN pre-school provision. This would include where a child is only in attendance for half a day. Once the child begins statutory education, transport will only be provided at the start and end of the school day in line with the standard policy criteria.

In all cases the decision whether to exercise discretion will be taken by Education Transport and Awards on a case by case basis.

## **Part time hours**

Home to school transport will not meet part time hours arranged by schools, parent/carers and the Statutory Assessment Service and as such transport arrangements should be taken into account when bespoke hours are being set for a child.

However where exceptional circumstances can be evidenced to show that the child is unable to partake in a full day's schooling Education Transport & Awards may consider short term transport if a reintegration plan can be provided outlining the child's return to full time education.

Example case:

A child's medical needs had prevented them from attending school for six months. The school and parent/carer have arranged for the child to have two weeks at half a day and then full days from the third week. Transport would be considered to support the two week reintegration if the parent/carer was unable to undertake the mid-day journey and there was an on-going entitlement to transport.

In all cases where exceptional transport is exceptionally agreed, either the ingoing or outgoing journey must be at the start or end of the school day so that the child can utilise the existing transport vehicle at one end of the school day.

## **SEN children attending out of county placements**

In exceptional circumstances, it may be necessary to place children with complex and severe needs in Out-of-County schools. These may be Independent or non-maintained Special Schools. This would occur where appropriate provision to meet the needs of a child as specified in their Statement of Special Educational Needs is not available within the administrative boundaries of Essex County Council.

Such children are eligible for transport arrangements which minimise the length of journey time as much as possible, taking into account other children attending that

school required to be collected en route. Therefore references to time restrictions are not applicable.

Parents/carers are responsible for the transport and costs for visits to prospective schools prior to admission in line with the home to school policy for all other schools. There will be exceptions to this policy, each of which will be considered on their merits based on the circumstances of the case. The request should detail why support should be provided and give details of any personal and/or family circumstances which prevent the parent undertaking the journey. Where exceptions are granted we would look to initially provide petrol reimbursement to the family to facilitate the visit. Where this is not possible we will work with the family to identify the best way to support any transitional arrangements.

### **Annual Reviews**

Attendance at annual reviews is the responsibility of parents/carers. In the cases of financial hardship for low income families attending an annual review at an out of county school, Education Transport & Awards **may** authorise a reimbursement of fuel or public transport tickets. The parent/carer would need to provide benefit evidence to support this. The definition of a low income family can be found on page 3. Families that do not meet the criteria on page 3 will not be considered for an award.

### **Weekly/Fortnightly boarding placements**

Transport will be provided to take children to school on a Sunday evening, or Monday morning, as directed by the school and to collect children to take them home at the end of the designated school week, or earlier as directed by the school for planned or unplanned early closures.

### **Termly residential placements**

12 single journeys from home to school and school to home will be provided each academic year. This will consist of trips required at the start and end of each term, and at other school closure times, i.e. half term breaks.

### **Permanent (52 week) residential placements**

12 single journeys from home to school and school to home will be provided each academic year. These are at the discretion of the parents, school and child and need to be booked at least 10 days in advance through our Passenger Transport Coordination Centre.

Any additional trips will be the responsibility of the parent. Where there is a risk of a placement breakdown Education Transport & Awards may consider providing reimbursement of fuel or public transport costs in order to support additional trips on a short term basis so that the child can be supported back into full time boarding.

### **Children Looked After (CLA) with statements of SEN**

For the purposes of the Home to School Transport the policy for 'looked after children' is the same as for children for whom ECC is not the Corporate Parent.

However, in circumstances where a child's foster placement changes where the child is in year 6, 10, or 11 as outlined on page 12

### **Facilitating inclusion in mainstream provision for children attending Special Schools**

Where a child with a statement of special educational needs on roll at a special school is attending a designated mainstream secondary school for whole day sessions as part of a formal integration programme, transport will be considered exceptionally by Education Transport & Awards...

### **Provision of Passenger Assistants**

A passenger assistant will only be provided following the outcome of an assessment of the child's Special Educational Needs and/or medical needs in order to meet the needs of the children travelling to and from school. This determination will be made by the Education Transport and Awards team in liaison with the Passenger Transport Co-ordination Centre taking into account:

- A child's medical needs, particularly where rescue medication is required. (See SHTTS section for more information on page 18).
- Where an individual child's needs create a clear danger or health and safety risk to themselves and other passengers on the vehicle.
- Where an assessment of the children on the vehicle and the journey to be undertaken highlight a clear danger or health and safety risk to all passengers on the vehicle.

The consideration for passenger assistants will be made by Education Transport & Awards and Passenger Transport Coordination Centre based on evidence received from all relevant parties and will be reviewed regularly, where appropriate and whenever a contract is re-tendered.

### **Respite Transport**

Some children who have complex SEN or medical needs obtain a care plan through Social Care outlining that they require a set amount of respite visits, of which Education Transport & Awards authorise transport. The transport provided is from the school to the respite home and vice versa and cannot be provided to and from the child's home address.

Respite transport is not provided to children that do not have respite provision written into their care plan, or additional visits over and above the set agreement. It is also not provided to respite homes not recognised by ECC, even where they badge themselves as respite. These are treated in the same manner as after school clubs such as Stepping Stones and PARC.

Where a child is entitled to respite their social worker makes applications for transport, and as such the parent/carer cannot apply direct. Specialist Healthcare Tasks Transport Service (SHTTS)

## Specialist Healthcare Tasks Transport Service (SHTTS)

See embedded documents below



SHT Transport  
Service Spec.docx



SHTTS Process - New  
Case.pdf



SHTTS Process -  
Guidance Notes.doc



SHTTS Process - RA  
Review and Refreshe

## Post 16 Transport Policy for 2015/16 (01.09.15 – 31.08.16)

### **Purpose**

*The purpose of the Post 16 Transport Policy is to facilitate access to education for students aged 16-18.*

### **Policy**

The duty placed on local authorities in respect of the provision of transport to post 16 students requires a transport policy statement to be prepared and published in each year, by 31 May, disclosing the provision being made by the County Council for this group. The County Council has a discretion which it can use to offer financial assistance towards a person's reasonable travel expenses.

For transport from September 2014 the Council considers any application for Transport assistance for a person of sixth form age against this policy.

Assistance will only be provided where the following circumstances apply, and the student is attending the nearest appropriate maintained establishment offering the majority of the chosen course(s), and that establishment is more than 3 miles by the shortest available walking route from the home address:

#### **i. Low income families**

Provide transport assistance to qualifying low income families, subject to a contribution from the student/parent of £450 per annum. This being based on 50% of the average cost of post 16 transport provision in Essex. The option will be available to pay this in termly instalments over the academic year. Children from low income groups are defined as those who are entitled to free school meals, or those families whose annual taxable household income is less than £16,190\* and are in receipt of their maximum level of Working Tax Credit (WTC).

#### **ii. Statemented SEN (EHCP) students**

Where a post 16 student has a statement of SEN or an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and is attending the school named within their statement/plan as the nearest appropriate school for their post 16 education – public transport will be promoted for this group and travel training referrals will be made for all students with the expectation that they will be assessed for suitability for training by the end of the first term of post 16 education. A charge for transport will be made on a sliding scale based on the income of the family at the time of application. Low income families, as defined in (i) will be required to contribute £450 towards the cost of transport. All other applicants will be required to make a contribution of £900 towards the cost of transport.

### **iii. Students with SEN who are no longer statemented**

Those students who had a statement of SEN or EHCP in year 11 who will be attending a school or college to continue their education and require additional support to do so. Low income families, as defined in (i) will be required to contribute £450 towards the cost of transport. All other applicants will be required to make a contribution of £900 towards the cost of transport. All applications will be considered based on the evidence provided to support the claim at the time of application.

### **iv. Other Students**

Other students will be able to purchase public transport tickets from the Local Authority but this will be on a full cost recovery basis and only on existing routes, in place at the time of application, where capacity allows. Bespoke transport or individual taxis will not be provided. Families would be able to take advantage of the bulk purchasing power of the County Council and pay a reduced rate for transport on existing services. The cost of transport for this group will be £900 per year, per student.

## ***Amplification of the policy***

### **General terms of provision**

1. Whilst the Council is not required, by law, to provide financial support for the transport of Post 16 students, it will continue to provide assistance in this area from September 2014 under its new policy. Eligibility will be conditional upon the student attending, on a full time basis, the nearest establishment offering the majority of the course.
2. The transport provided to eligible students should be the most cost effective to the County Council and will take the form of a travel pass to use on an existing school contract bus, public bus or train.
3. Taxis will not be provided. The only exceptions to this will be for those students with severe physical or learning difficulties where, upon receipt of sufficient evidence, taxi provision will be considered alongside other options such as Independent Travel Training.
4. Connecting transport will not be provided to a pick-up point (e.g. bus stop or railway station) that is less than 3 miles from the student's home address. Where connecting transport is provided it will be in the form of existing public or school contract transport only. Essex County Council will not procure new vehicles in the absence of existing transport routes. Where there is no existing transport in place students/parents will be responsible for travel arrangements to the nearest pick-up point regardless of distance.

5. In the absence of any existing public or school contract transport to a pick up point, upon request, a fuel allowance of 17p per mile can be considered (to and from that point) providing the journey is over 3 miles. This will be up to a maximum claim of £4.95
6. The legal requirement to provide education transport where the route is deemed unavailable to be walked, accompanied as necessary, only applies to students of statutory school age. Therefore, such circumstances will not confer an entitlement to transport assistance for post 16 students.
7. Where students wish to attend colleges outside of the county e.g. Central London, Ipswich or Cambridge, transport will be provided to the nearest mainline or underground station to the students address. Students will be responsible for making their own arrangements from the mainline or underground station to their respective college/sixth form.
8. Transport services will not be tailored to meet individual timetables but consideration will be given whenever possible to minimise inconvenience to students. Specific transport will not be provided if the public or contract school bus timetables are not in line with that of the student. In such circumstances students are expected to make suitable adjustments to their travel arrangements.
9. In situations where, as a result of the course chosen by the student, the journey time is lengthy, whilst transport assistance will still be provided, the student/parent will be responsible for managing that journey.
10. Transport assistance is not provided to learners undertaking work placements, apprenticeships or traineeships. In these circumstances learners are advised to contact their employer or learner provider.

### **Age**

To be eligible for assistance a student must be under 19 years of age at the beginning of the first year of their course. For courses starting in the autumn term the academic year starts on 1 September. For the avoidance of doubt, a student who has already attained or will attain the age of 19 on or before 31 August in the calendar year of their first application for assistance with Post 16 transport will not be eligible for support from the scheme. Any student aged 19 or over on 31 August in the calendar year of their application, will only be eligible to apply for support if they can demonstrate explicitly that their course is a continuation of one on which they have already successfully completed the first year of study, having started the course prior to attaining the age of 19. The onus will be on the student to prove continuous study.

If a student is 19 or over and is attending a course as part of a formal or informal care plan, and is not eligible for support from the Post 16 transport scheme, they will need to seek support from an alternative funder/provider for the transport necessary to enable them to access that course.

Where the course the student is studying is on a split site i.e. one day in Colchester Institute (Colchester Campus) and one day at Colchester Institute (Clacton Campus) transport will only be provided to eligible students to the main qualifying campus.

For students with a current statement of special educational needs, the school named in this statement will be considered the appropriate establishment to the students' home address provided the school named in the statement was determined by the Statutory Assessment Service. Where parents have asked for a school to be named, transport will remain the responsibility of the parent.

If a student has been entitled to transport to a specialist school for their statutory school years and they are continuing their education at this school they will continue to be entitled to transport (on payment of the charge) as it will be considered that this school is the nearest establishment that offers the course the student is pursuing and that can best meet their needs.

*If the student was originally awarded transport to school as an exception to the usual home to school transport policy, there is no automatic entitlement for assistance to continue. Such cases will be assessed individually under current policies. If additional information is submitted to support such applications, this will be taken into consideration at the time of assessment.*

Where a student has been entitled to transport to a specialist school for their statutory school years and they have decided to move to another establishment to complete their schooling they will not automatically be entitled to transport. Their application will be assessed according to the Post 16 Transport Policy and from the information we have received from their school.

### **Changes to the Policy**

Should any significant changes be proposed to this policy or the associated Post 16 Transport Policy Statement, the Council will carry out the necessary consultation processes in line with the relevant Department for Education guidance; giving schools, parents, colleges and young people the opportunity to comment. Details will, as a minimum, be available on the Council's website.

### **Appeals**

*If a student is refused transport as they are not attending the nearest appropriate establishment they may appeal against this decision on the basis that the cost to Essex County Council for transport to the establishment of the student's choice is the same or less than the cost of provision to the nearest appropriate establishment. In these cases the charge will still be payable.*

Furthermore they will also be able to appeal where the student is attending the nearest establishment offering a specialised course despite other elements of the course being available at a nearer establishment. In all instances, each case will be considered on its merits as part of the appeals process. Not all requests will be agreed in these instances. There is no precedent set in these cases.

Staff in Education Transport and Awards will provide in writing the reasons for the rejection of an application at the point of assessment. If you wish to appeal against this decision an appeal must be made in writing, which should include documentary evidence to be produced to support the appeal. All appeals against a refusal of assistance should be made to Education Transport and Awards. Appeals will be considered by senior officers in this team. It is our target to reach a decision on all appeals within 10 working days of receiving all of the required documentary evidence.

Each appeal is considered on its individual merits and is not intended to set a precedent for any similar case. Once the appeals procedure has been exhausted, that decision is final and other than communication of the decision and the reason behind it, no further correspondence will be entered into, unless the appellant produces further evidence to be considered.

Any concerns about the way in which transport is provided should be taken up with the Passenger Transport Team.

### ***Change of Address***

Where a student changes address during their Post 16 course they must re-apply to the scheme and will be re-assessed using their new address details. All the policy criteria will continue to apply. E.g. if the chosen establishment is no longer the nearest offering the course the student will no longer be entitled to assistance. If there are exceptional reasons why the move is necessary an application may be made for special consideration (see appeals)

### ***Payment of a charge***

Students who fulfil the County Council's criteria for assisted transport will have to contribute to the cost of their transport. All participants in the scheme will be required to pay an annual charge dependent on their circumstances. This can be paid termly in advance or in full for the year.

For low income families the charge will be £450 and for all others the charge will be £900.

The following criteria will qualify the family as a low income family:

- The household is in receipt of Child Tax Credit/Working Tax Credit with an annual income of less than £16,190,
- Income Support
- Jobseekers Allowance (Income Based)
- Pension Guarantee Credit equivalent to/less than Jobseekers Allowance (Income Based).
- Income Related Employment and Support Allowance

The assessment is based on household income. There are no grounds on which an individual is exempt from the charge. For the purposes of the assessment of household income, this includes all sources of income to the

household as a whole and only Disability Living Allowance will be disregarded. Documentary evidence demonstrating income and benefit entitlement must be provided to support such a request.

If you qualify under low income criteria your circumstances change part way through the year you must let us know.

### ***Hearing Impaired Students***

Students with Hearing Impairments will be eligible to transport assistance to the nearest educational establishment to their home address that can offer them a deaf peer group as well as the nearest establishment that offers their course. Other needs, such as visual impairment would be considered on an individual basis, based on the needs of the student. The charge will still be applicable in these cases unless the student is in receipt of benefits or the income level outlined above.

### ***Parental Choice***

Where a parent has decided that they do not wish for their child to go to the school or college that the Statutory Assessment Service has decided can meet the student's needs and decide to seek a placement at an alternative establishment, transport will not be provided. The implications of transporting their son/daughter to an establishment other than the school which has been assessed as nearest school that can meet a child's needs should be considered and alternative arrangements should be made.

### ***Independent Travel Training***

Students who are assessed as able to receive Independent Travel Training with the County Council's Travel Trainers will be offered this training. This will help the students become more independent and confident in their everyday lives and give them skills for life. If the training is successful the student will be provided with the appropriate ticket for the transport and route they have been trained on and will be expected to use this method to get from home to school/college. Taxis will not be provided to students once successful training has been completed.

For more information about this scheme please visit

[www.travel-training.co.uk](http://www.travel-training.co.uk)

### **Residence**

To qualify for assistance from the scheme a student must ordinarily be resident in the UK with settled status, living within the administrative boundaries of Essex County Council at the time of their application.

The DfE has determined that asylum seekers and refugees and their children must be provided with transport in accordance with policy to access provision appropriate to their age, abilities and aptitudes. Such applicants will be considered for assistance under the terms of the scheme provided they are living within the administrative boundaries of Essex County Council at the time of their application.

### **Deadline for applications**

For Post 16 Transport Applications an application window will operate between 1 March until 30 September each year for new starters which then reopens for 1 January to close again on 31 January in each academic year. We will consider circumstances of applications made outside of this window where someone's circumstances changed unexpectedly (eg a house move or drop in income).

### ***Progression***

It is not necessary for students to demonstrate academic progression to qualify for assistance under the scheme.

### ***Reimbursement of the Charge***

If transport assistance is no longer required part way through a term, a partial reimbursement of the charge may apply, provided all tickets/passes have been returned and are received within the timescales stated in the table below. When calculating a reimbursement for tickets/passes received after the first day of a term an administrative charge of £60 will apply. The following levels of refund will be payable after the administration charge has been taken:

<b>Length of time ticket/pass has been used</b>	<b>Refund Due</b>
Up to 4 weeks	75%
4 to 8 weeks	50%
Over 8 weeks	0%

No reimbursement will be paid during the summer term.

### ***Petrol Reimbursements***

The County Council may offer the parent/carer of an entitled student petrol reimbursement to transport their child(ren) from home to school/college instead of providing the student with a taxi or public transport ticket. Parents/Carers can indicate their interest in petrol reimbursement on their application form. An assessment will be made at the time of allocating transport and where it is appropriate an offer will be made to the parent/carer. If the parent/carer is in a position to assist with all or part of the journey reimbursement will be paid. Reimbursements are paid to the parent/carer for the return journey, i.e. the journey to the school or college with the student and the return journey home and vice versa. If the parent/carer receives reimbursement the contribution applicable will be deducted from the final payment. They will be reimbursed once the claims exceed this amount. For example if the applicant is due to receive £700 in reimbursement for the year

they will receive £250 (£700 - £450 (low income charge)). If they were required to pay £900 we would suggest family undertake transport themselves as the reimbursement would not cover the charge for transport.

If a parent/carer requests reimbursement but there is a suitable County Council contract vehicle that the student would be able to travel on, the student would be allocated the contract vehicle and reimbursement would not be considered unless suitable evidence to support the case was provided or the County Council contract was discontinued. It is important to note that reimbursement will only be considered where the cost to the County Council of providing reimbursement is the same or less than the cost of organised transport.

### ***Enquiries***

Officers within Education Transport and Awards are responsible for the assessment and entitlement of applications for Post 16 Transport Assistance. If a student qualifies for Transport Assistance under the policy, their details will be sent to the Passenger Transport (PT) Team where officers are responsible for allocating the most appropriate transport and notifying the applicant in writing of the award offered. It is important that students and parents address any enquiries related to the assessment of applications to Education Transport and Awards ([educationawards@essex.gov.uk](mailto:educationawards@essex.gov.uk)) and queries about the arrangement of transport to Passenger Transport ([passenger.transport@essex.gov.uk](mailto:passenger.transport@essex.gov.uk)).

### **Independent Travel Training**

Travel Training helps students become more independent and confident in their everyday lives and give them skills for life.

Officers within Education Transport & Awards or the Passenger Transport Team may refer children for an assessment of their ability to undertake training where public transport would be the most cost effective form of transport, but their special educational needs (or other exceptional circumstances) mean, that they are not ready to travel independently. In this circumstance a contract vehicle will be provided in the interim whilst training is undertaken as well as the appropriate public transport ticket.

Prior to undertaking the training, the child will meet the travel trainer for an initial assessment and to discuss the journey. If the training is successful the student will be provided with the appropriate ticket for the route they have been trained on, provided they have an entitlement to transport. Contract transport will not be provided to students once successful training has been completed.

Where a child resides under the statutory walking distance to school but is awarded a short term transport award due to their SEN or mobility needs, a referral to training may also be made to learn the walk to school.

Referrals for training can also be made direct to the Travel Training Team at any time by parents/carers, schools or centres even when a child isn't entitled to home to school transport. The parent/carer will be required to purchase the public transport ticket where this is the case.

For more information about this scheme please visit:

<http://www.essex.gov.uk/education-schools/travel-school/travel-training>

## **Provision of Bicycle Allowance for entitled children**

### **Cycle allowance**

An allowance of £50 per term may be paid to parents of secondary age children who are entitled to free transport but wish to use a cycle to travel to school.

Such allowances will only be payable where the cost of transport would exceed the amount of the cycle allowance. Allowances will not be payable to children travelling on any other form of transport.

### **Cycle Purchase Scheme**

ECC will consider that, instead of issuing yearly bus passes, it will make available a one-off arrangement for parents/carers to purchase a bicycle, safety kit, (e.g. helmet, fluorescent jacket etc.), and road safety training for children to a value not exceeding £250 per child.

This would be on the understanding beforehand that:

- responsibility for ownership and liability for maintenance, insurance, and safekeeping is transferred to the child and/or parents/carers
- successful completion of mandatory road safety (e.g. Bikeability) training course by the child, with continued safe use of the bicycle and consideration for others including motor vehicles, cyclists, and pedestrians between home and school using cycle-ways, roads, and other public access, and
- parents/carers would be required to sign a ECC declaration form accepting the conditions of the scheme
- 

Where a child's parents/carers purchase a bicycle for the child under this scheme, it is on the understanding that this would replace any other transport support for the remainder of his/her education. If a bicycle were subsequently lost, damaged, or stolen, it would then be the responsibility of his/her parents/carers to provide a suitable roadworthy replacement bicycle for the child.

There would be no further recourse for other transport support from ECC for the completion of his/her period of statutory education unless the circumstances for the family changed meaning that the child was unable to use a bike in the future.

## **Student Behaviour**

Individual transport cannot be provided for behavioural issues involving children attending mainstream schools. The incident will be referred to Passenger Transport Team/Student Behaviour Team who may issue a

warning or recommend a ban be signed off by the Head of School Admissions and Transport.

Where this suspension is invoked it will be the parent's responsibility to transport the child to their educational placement.

### **Child failing to travel on transport**

When a child fails to utilise transport provision without justification for three consecutive days transport will be suspended pending investigation as to the cause by the Council. This will only be reinstated where the child and their family assure the Council that the child will use the transport provision in place in the future.

If the child then fails to use the transport again a decision may be made to suspend that provision for the remainder of that term in consultation with the Head of School Admissions and Transport.

Where this suspension is invoked it will be the parent's responsibility to transport the child to their educational placement.

Any concerns about the way in which transport is provided should be taken up with the Passenger Transport Team on 0845 603 2200.

### **Appeals Procedure**

Staff in Education Transport and Awards will provide in writing the reasons for the rejection of an application at the point of assessment. An appeal is considered to be where an applicant has no further evidence to add to their case but is still unhappy with the decision. An applicant cannot appeal against the Education Transport Policy where there are no circumstances to support the case as the policy criteria itself as it is based on statutory law and decisions made by the elected members of Essex County Council.

All appeals against a refusal of assistance should be made in writing or e-mail to Education Transport and Awards. Each appeal is considered on its individual merits and is not intended to set a precedent for future cases.

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

Appeals will be considered by an officer senior to the previous decision maker in a two part process:

- Stage 1 - consideration will be made by the Education Transport Awards Team Manager
- Stage 2 - a full and final decision will be made by the Head of School Admissions and Transport.

It is our target to reach a decision on all appeals within 10 working days of receiving all of the required documentary evidence. No further

correspondence will be entered into following stage 2 unless the appellant produces further evidence to be considered.