

Draft School Travel Policy 2025-2026 and Post-16 Travel Policy Statement 2025-2026 Consultation

Southampton City Council is consulting on proposals to the draft School Travel Service Policy 2025-2026 and draft Post-16 Travel Policy Statement 2025-2026.

We would like to hear your thoughts on the proposals and any impacts or alternative suggestions you would like us to consider. Now is your opportunity to have your say.

An online version and an easy read version of this questionnaire can be found on Southampton City Council's website at www.southampton.gov.uk/consultations.

You can also email your consultation feedback or queries to yourcity.yoursay@southampton.gov.uk

This consultation closes **Monday 28 October 2024**.

Background

The draft School Travel Service Policy 2025-2026 and draft Post-16 Travel Policy Statement 2025-2026 set out Southampton City Council's approach to the operation of the School Travel Service in Southampton. It sets out the Council's statutory requirements along with local policy.

As part of a routine review of our policy, we are proposing a few changes that we would like to hear your feedback on.

This questionnaire will summarise the key proposals, however the full draft policies are available to read online: www.southampton.gov.uk/consultations

Proposals

Proposal 1 (1 of 2). We are proposing changes to the draft policies to improve clarity and understanding.

We are proposing changes to the draft policies to ensure they are up to date and to make them clearer and easier to understand. For example, we have a travel hierarchy in the current policy to improve transparency and make it clear the order in which travel options are considered. We are proposing to also include a travel hierarchy in the Post-16 Travel Policy Statement 2025-2026 as well to make this clearer for young people and adult learners.

The proposal described here is covered in section 2.9. of the draft Post-16 Travel Policy Statement online: www.southampton.gov.uk/consultations

To what extent do you agree or disagree with this proposal?

- Strongly agree Agree Neither Disagree Strongly disagree

What impact do you feel this may have on you, your business or the wider community?

- A very positive impact
 A fairly positive impact
 No impact at all
 A fairly negative impact
 A very negative impact
 Don't know

If you disagree, or have any comments, impacts, suggestions or alternatives you feel we should consider, please provide details:

Proposal 1 (2 of 2). We are proposing to separate the compulsory School Travel Policy and Post-16 Travel Policy Statement into two separate documents.

Currently we have one policy which covers children, young people and adult learners aged 5 – 25 years old.

We are proposing to separate the document into two policies. The first would cover children of compulsory school age (5 – 16). The second would cover young people of sixth form age (16-18 years, over compulsory school age but under 19 years of age) and adult learners (19 – 25 years, where they are continuing a course started before their 19th birthday). The reason for suggesting this is to align with national policy guidance, make it easier for service users to access age related information, and to make it easier to update the policies when required.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with this proposal?

- Strongly agree Agree Neither Disagree Strongly disagree

What impact do you feel this may have on you, your business or the wider community?

- A very positive impact
 A fairly positive impact
 No impact at all
 A fairly negative impact
 A very negative impact
 Don't know

If you disagree, or have any comments, impacts, suggestions or alternatives you feel we should consider, please provide details:

Proposal 2. Proposed improvements to personal travel budgets offer.

Currently, Personal Travel Budgets (PTB) are an option for travel support for children and young people with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). It is currently a mileage allowance that is given to parents and carers for them to use in any reasonable way to get their child to school.

In the future, we are proposing to improve this offer depending on the circumstances for the parent or carer. We are proposing to offer an additional flexible percentage increase of up to 50% depending upon the circumstances for the parent or carer. For example, they may have other children for which additional financial support towards the cost of breakfast and/or after school club or other childcare would enable them to take advantage of the PTB, the school is outside of the city boundary, or an additional person is required to act as a passenger assistant.

The proposal described here is covered in section 3.17. of the draft School Travel Service Policy online: www.southampton.gov.uk/consultations

To what extent do you agree or disagree with this proposal?

- Strongly agree Agree Neither Disagree Strongly disagree

What impact do you feel this may have on you, your business or the wider community?

- A very positive impact
 A fairly positive impact
 No impact at all
 A fairly negative impact
 A very negative impact
 Don't know

If you disagree, or have any comments, impacts, suggestions or alternatives you feel we should consider, please provide details:

Proposal 3 (1 of 2). Proposed Post-16 travel grant option and contribution charge when a taxi / minibus or wheelchair accessible vehicle (WAV) is provided.

Currently, we offer vehicle transport as a travel option and do not ask for a contribution towards school travel support when we provide a vehicle, that may be a taxi, minibus or wheelchair accessible vehicle (WAV).

In the future, we are proposing to offer a hierarchy of travel support and propose that one of the options will be a distance-based travel grant, and that the provision of vehicle transport will be agreed in exceptional cases only. Where vehicle transport is agreed, we are proposing to ask for a means tested contribution towards the cost based on the distance from the student's home to their education setting.

The proposal described here is covered in sections 2.23. - 2.34. of the draft Post-16 Travel Service Statement online: www.southampton.gov.uk/consultations

To what extent do you agree or disagree with this proposal?

- Strongly agree Agree Neither Disagree Strongly disagree

What impact do you feel this may have on you, your business or the wider community?

- A very positive impact A fairly positive impact No impact at all A fairly negative impact A very negative impact
 Don't know

If you disagree, or have any comments, impacts, suggestions or alternatives you feel we should consider, please provide details:

Proposal 3 (2 of 2). Proposed maximum of 18 hours of travel support over three days a week for eligible Post-16 students.

Currently, we do not say how much travel support we will provide to young people over the age of 16.

In the future, for eligible student over the age of 16, we are proposing the eligibility would be for 18 hours over three days a week. Therefore, the travel support option would only be provided for up to 18 hours over three days.

The proposal described here is covered in sections 1.13. of the draft Post-16 Travel Service Statement online: www.southampton.gov.uk/consultations

To what extent do you agree or disagree with this proposal?

- Strongly agree Agree Neither Disagree Strongly disagree

What impact do you feel this may have on you, your business or the wider community?

- A very positive impact
 A fairly positive impact
 No impact at all
 A fairly negative impact
 A very negative impact
 Don't know

If you disagree, or have any comments, impacts, suggestions or alternatives you feel we should consider, please provide details:

Proposal 4. Proposed requirement for post-19 adult learners to evidence why it is necessary for the Southampton City Council to provide travel support.

Currently, adult learners' eligibility for travel support and the type of provision offered is assessed by Southampton City Council and depends on the learners assessed needs as set out in their EHCP.

In the future, we are proposing that as part of this, post-19 adult learners would be required to provide evidence on why it is necessary for Southampton City Council to provide travel support and why the adult learner cannot use other entitlements for their travel. For example, the use of a mobility vehicle, a bursary or discretionary support from an education setting, or whether the student has support from the council's social care service to assist with travel.

The proposal described here is covered in section 1.22. of the draft Post-16 Travel Policy Statement online: www.southampton.gov.uk/consultations

To what extent do you agree or disagree with this proposal?

- Strongly agree Agree Neither Disagree Strongly disagree

What impact do you feel this may have on you, your business or the wider community?

- A very positive impact
 A fairly positive impact
 No impact at all
 A fairly negative impact
 A very negative impact
 Don't know

If you disagree, or have any comments, impacts, suggestions or alternatives you feel we should consider, please provide details:

Proposal 5. Proposed removal of eligibility for school travel support if parents or carers decide to move and want their child to remain at the same school.

Currently, if parents or carers decide to move house and want their child to remain at the same school, the council may provide school travel support.

In the future, we are proposing that if parents or carers decide to move and want their child to remain at the same school, the child will not normally be eligible for school travel support. This includes all compulsory school years, including years 10 and 11. Parents and carers are encouraged to consider the cost and distance of travel to the existing school as part of move costs. Exceptional circumstances where we might consider school travel support would be a change to the family structure or employment status.

The proposal described here is covered in section 3.28. of the draft School Travel Service Policy online: www.southampton.gov.uk/consultations

To what extent do you agree or disagree with this proposal?

- Strongly agree Agree Neither Disagree Strongly disagree

What impact do you feel this may have on you, your business or the wider community?

- A very positive impact
 A fairly positive impact
 No impact at all
 A fairly negative impact
 A very negative impact
 Don't know

If you disagree, or have any comments, impacts, suggestions or alternatives you feel we should consider, please provide details:

Proposal 6. Proposed reduction in notice given to families if travel support has been granted in error.

Currently, where travel support is found to have been granted in error, one full term of notice is given to allow families time to make other arrangements.

In the future, we are proposing a shorter notice period of either 4 weeks or until the end of the current half term, whichever is the shorter period.

The proposal described here is covered in sections 3.6. and 3.58. of the draft School Travel Service Policy and sections 2.6. and 2.64. of the draft Post-16 Travel Service Statement online: www.southampton.gov.uk/consultations

To what extent do you agree or disagree with this proposal?

- Strongly agree Agree Neither Disagree Strongly disagree

What impact do you feel this may have on you, your business or the wider community?

- A very positive impact
 A fairly positive impact
 No impact at all
 A fairly negative impact
 A very negative impact
 Don't know

If you disagree, or have any comments, impacts, suggestions or alternatives you feel we should consider, please provide details:

Proposal 7. Proposed removal of 'privilege places'.

Currently, a spare place on a contract vehicle may be offered to a child who is not entitled to travel support. This is known as a 'privilege place'. Privilege places can be withdrawn if they are needed for eligible children. A contributory charge of £750.00 per annum is paid towards the cost of this travel. Currently, there is no one using this service.

In the future, we are proposing to no longer offer spare places known as 'privilege places' to any child who is not entitled to travel support. The only time we may consider a request is for a child who lives at the same address as another child who is entitled to travel support and would be travelling on the same vehicle. The privilege place could still be withdrawn if it was needed for eligible children and we would propose to keep the contributory charge of £750 the same.

The proposal described here is covered in section 3.18. of the draft School Travel Service Policy online: www.southampton.gov.uk/consultations

To what extent do you agree or disagree with this proposal?

- Strongly agree Agree Neither Disagree Strongly disagree

What impact do you feel this may have on you, your business or the wider community?

- A very positive impact
 A fairly positive impact
 No impact at all
 A fairly negative impact
 A very negative impact
 Don't know

If you disagree, or have any comments, impacts, suggestions or alternatives you feel we should consider, please provide details:

Proposal 8. Proposed increase in the number of nearest suitable schools that families can list in their school application form.

Currently parents or carers who wish to apply for travel support must list their nearest suitable school on their school application form.

In the future, we will be proposing that parents and carers list their nearest three suitable schools on their school application form. This is to ensure that all three nearest suitable school options can be considered for admission to reduce the number of children who may become entitled to travel support due to distance.

The proposal described here is covered in section 1.8. and 3.25. of the draft School Travel Service Policy online: www.southampton.gov.uk/consultations

To what extent do you agree or disagree with this proposal?

- Strongly agree Agree Neither Disagree Strongly disagree

What impact do you feel this may have on you, your business or the wider community?

- A very positive impact
 A fairly positive impact
 No impact at all
 A fairly negative impact
 A very negative impact
 Don't know

If you disagree, or have any comments, impacts, suggestions or alternatives you feel we should consider, please provide details:

Reading the draft policies

Have you read the proposed draft policies?

- Yes, all of it
 Yes, some of it
 No

If you have read the proposed draft policies, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The draft policies are easy to understand	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The draft policies provide sufficient information	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If there were parts of the draft policies that you did not understand or you feel need more information, please provide further details:

About you

Which of the following describes your interest in this consultation?

Please tick all that apply.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> As a parent or carer of a child that receives school travel support or Post-16 Travel support | <input type="checkbox"/> Someone that works, visits, or studies in Southampton |
| <input type="checkbox"/> As a child, young person or adult learner that receives school travel support or Post-16 Travel support receives school travel support | <input type="checkbox"/> A private business |
| <input type="checkbox"/> As a school or college staff member | <input type="checkbox"/> Public sector organisation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> As a supplier or potential supplier of transport services to the council | <input type="checkbox"/> Third sector organisation (e.g. voluntary or community groups and charities, etc) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resident of Southampton | <input type="checkbox"/> Employee of Southampton City Council |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resident elsewhere | <input type="checkbox"/> Political member |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |

If other, please specify:

Only answer the following questions about your postcode, sex, gender, age, ethnicity and disability if you are responding as an individual, and not as a private business and public or third sector organisation.

What is your postcode?

This is used for geographical analysis only and will not be used to identify or contact you.

What is your sex?

Male

Female

Prefer not to say

Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?

Yes

No

Prefer not to say

If no, please write in your gender identity:

What is your age?

Under 18

25 - 34

45 - 54

65 - 74

Prefer not to say

18 - 24

35 - 44

55 - 64

75+

How would you describe your ethnic group?

Asian or Asian British

White other

Black, Black British, Caribbean or African

Other ethnic group

Mixed or multiple ethnic groups

Prefer not to say

White British

If other, please specify:

Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last 12 months or more?

Yes

No

Prefer not to say

If yes, do any of your conditions or illnesses reduce your ability to carry out day-to-day activities?

Yes, a lot

Not at all

Yes, a little

Prefer not to say

What happens next?

The consultation closes on **Monday 28 October 2024**. After this date, all feedback will be analysed and considered before a final decision is made.

Please return completed surveys to:

*Consultations,
First Floor, West Wing,
Civic Centre,
Southampton,
SO14 7LY.*

Alternatively, please hand completed surveys back to any Southampton City Council-run library.

The information collected about you during this survey will only be used for the purposes of research. We may use it to contact you about this. We will only share your information with other organisations or council departments if we need to. We may also share it to prevent, investigate or prosecute criminal offences, or as the law otherwise allows. Please be aware that any comments given on this form may be published in the report. However, the council will endeavour to remove any references that could identify individuals or organisations. Our Privacy Policy (<http://www.southampton.gov.uk/privacy>) explains how we handle your personal data, and we can provide a copy if you are unable to access the Internet.