

Home to School Transport Consultation Results

July 2020

1. Background

The Warwickshire 'Home to School Transport Policy' consultation took place between Monday 8th June 2020 and Friday 17th July 2020 using Warwickshire County Council's (WCC) consultation platform, service newsletters and social media to communicate the consultation with the various stakeholders. The online survey received 416 responses with a further two comments received by email.

In the online survey, respondents were asked for their level of agreement for the proposed change to the definition of a pupil's qualifying school. Respondents were also asked if there were any specific impacts they considered this proposal may have or if they would like to provide any further comments to the proposed change in question.

2. Key Messages

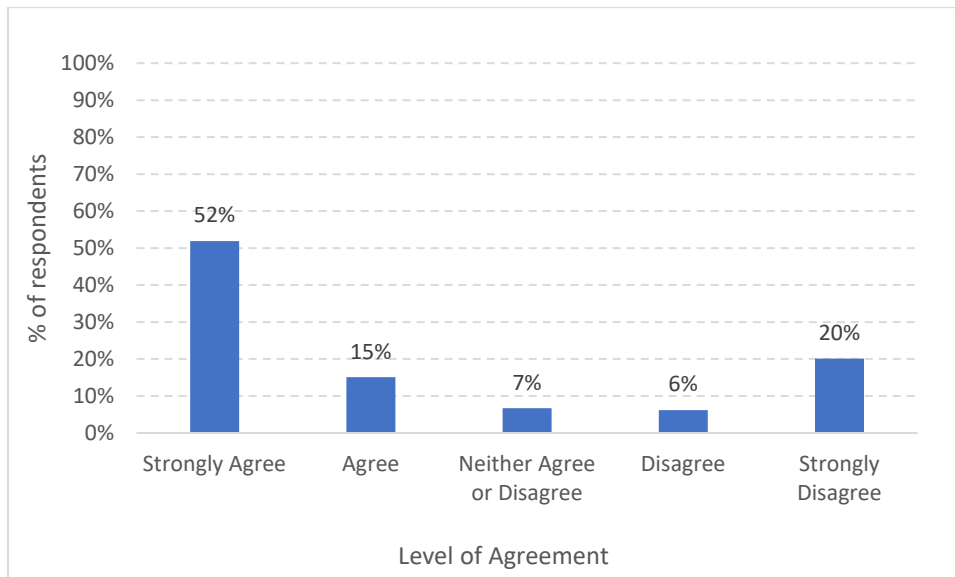
- The majority of respondents (67%) supported the proposed change to the definition of a pupil's qualifying school
- Of those respondents who provided further comment, almost a third commented that this change would have a positive impact on pupils and families, providing a fairer approach and more choice for families.
- A number of respondents mentioned the proposal benefiting those whose nearest school is not their priority area school and having a positive impact on rural communities.
- Across the various levels of agreement respondents felt that the policy would still disadvantage those pupils that attend selective education.
- Comments from those respondents opposed to the change included the opinion that the policy would still disadvantage those pupils that attend selective education and those families wanting to attend a faith-based school. A number of respondents felt that transport should be free to whichever school a pupil chooses to attend to support parental choice and provision that is best suited to the individual pupil.

3. Survey responses

3.1 Respondents were asked 'to what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed change to the definition of the qualifying school for a pupil'?

The majority of respondents (67%) supported ('strongly agree' combined with 'agree') the proposed change to the definition of a pupil's qualifying school. Conversely, just over a quarter (26%) of respondents were opposed ('strongly disagree' combined with 'disagree') to the proposal (Figure 1).

Figure 1 Levels of agreement for proposed change to the definition of a pupil’s qualifying school



3.2 Respondents were asked to provide further comments in relation to the proposed change

A total of 236 respondents chose to leave a response to this question. The open-ended responses have been analysed to draw out key themes. A full list of all the themes identified can be found in Figure 2.

- Almost a third of respondents commented that this change would have a positive impact on pupils and families, providing a fairer approach and more choice for families.
- A number of respondents mentioned the proposal benefiting those whose nearest school is not their priority area school and having a positive impact on rural communities.
- Some respondents (10%) felt that the policy would still disadvantage those pupils that attend selective education
- Similarly, a number of respondents felt that the policy change would still disadvantage those families wanting to attend a faith-based school
- A number of respondents, the majority of who disagreed with the proposed change, felt that transport should be free to whichever school a pupil chooses to attend to support parental choice and provision that is best suited to the individual pupil.
- Across the various levels of agreement there was concern regarding the cost of transport for low income families.

Figure 2 Key Themes derived from comments made in relation to proposed change

Comment Theme	Count	%
Positive Impact/Fairer/increase choice	75	32%
Nearest School not catchment school	29	12%
Still disadvantages those attending selective education	24	10%
Transport should be free to all schools	20	8%
Aligns with Admissions Policy	15	6%
Transport to Faith Schools/Consideration of Faith	14	6%
Will benefit rural communities	14	6%
Need to consider low income families	11	5%
Reduce Traffic/Car use/Supports sustainable travel	11	5%
Transport to non secular education	10	4%
Need to ensure siblings can attend same school	9	4%
An Increase in Traffic	7	3%
Low income families attending selective education	5	2%
Post 16 Eligibility	5	2%
SEND Pupils	5	2%
Unclear on what is being proposed/why change is being proposed	5	2%
Financial cost	4	2%
Continuation of eligibility for current pupils	3	1%
Rural villages negatively impacted by proposals	3	1%
Single parent families/shared arrangements	3	1%
Impact on vacant seat scheme	2	1%
Transport for out of county residents	2	1%
Consider travel time rather than distance	1	0%
County border villages and out of county schools	1	0%
Ethnicity	1	0%
Method of assessment of places available	1	0%
Removes Choice	1	0%
Vulnerable children	1	0%

(Base = 236 respondents who provided comment)

3.3 Some quotations from respondents related to the top three themes

Positive Impact/Fairer/increase choice

“More positive choices for disabled pupils or those with SEND needs”

“Parents will now not have to choose between non secular education or paying unaffordable transport costs”

“More options for parents. The cost of transport should not be the deciding factor for parents when deciding on their child’s school. This has a negative effect on hard working low income families.”

“Fairer access to transport for all pupils to their school instead of penalising them if it not their geographical nearest”

Nearest School not catchment school

“Your current policy discriminates against those in the most isolated locations who are more likely to have a catchment school which is not physically closest.”

“It means people who can't afford £800 for a bus pass can send their children to the same school as their friends instead of having to go to the closer school because it's cheaper.”

“The current policy makes no sense to provide free transport to the nearest qualifying school when children are likely to go to the priority school and are also unlikely to gain a place at the nearest school, which is not the priority school. Also, the nearest school does not provide transport which again makes the policy irrelevant.”

“It would be much fairer and sensible to change the policy to include transport to the priority school, which is where children are likely to go to. The policy needs to reflect the school admissions criteria.”

Still disadvantages those attending selective education

“Excluding transportation to selective schools continues to be discriminatory”

“You are still discriminating kids from non affluent families that study hard to get I to selective schools therefore reducing social mobility.”

“I would love to see this change extended to include selective schools - these are part of the state school system, are provided or supported by the local authority, are applied to through the local authority”

3.4 Respondent Profile

As illustrated in Figure 3, the majority of respondents to the survey were female (72%), of White British ethnicity (80%) and aged between 30-59 years (83%). The largest proportion of respondents were resident in Warwick District (44%) and Stratford on Avon District (28%).

Figure 3: Respondent Profile		Count	%
Gender	Female	300	72%
	Male	73	18%
	Non-binary	2	0%
	Prefer not to say	34	8%
	Not Answered	7	2%
Age in years	Under 18	2	0%
	18 – 29	8	2%
	30 – 44	198	48%
	45 – 59	145	35%
	60 – 74	23	6%
	75 +	2	0%
	Prefer not to say	32	8%
	Not Answered	6	1%
Long standing illness or disability	No	339	81%
	Yes	25	6%
	Prefer not to answer	45	11%
	Not Answered	7	2%
Ethnicity	White British	332	80%
	Other White background	15	4%
	White Irish	7	2%
	Asian or Asian British - Indian	6	1%
	Mixed - White and Black Caribbean	4	1%
	Black or Black British - African	2	0%
	Other Asian Background	1	0%
	Mixed - White and Asian	1	0%
	Gypsy or Traveller	1	0%
	Chinese	1	0%
	Arab	1	0%
	Prefer not to say	37	9%
	Not Answered	8	2%
Religion	Christian	184	44%
	No religion	163	39%
	Any other religion or belief	4	1%
	Hindu	3	1%
	Sikh	3	1%
	Spiritual	2	0%
	Buddhist	1	0%

	Muslim	1	0%
	Prefer not to say	48	12%
	Not Answered	7	2%
Sexuality	Heterosexual / straight	338	81%
	Bi / bisexual	5	1%
	Other	2	0%
	Prefer not to say	61	15%
	Not Answered	10	2%
District/Borough	North Warwickshire Borough	9	2%
	Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough	15	4%
	Rugby Borough	77	19%
	Stratford on Avon District	115	28%
	Warwick District	183	44%
	Non-Warwickshire resident	14	3%
	Other	3	1%

(online survey base count of 416)