



**Cabinet – 9<sup>th</sup> March 2018**

## **Mainstream and SEN Home to School Transport policy**

### Comments from the Liberal Democrat Group

The Liberal Democrat Group remains totally opposed to these reductions which will affect some of the most vulnerable children and young people in Leicestershire. We do not believe they are justified or necessary and once again the Cabinet has largely ignored the response to the consultation questions which in some cases drew an 80% rejection to the principle of reducing the current service.

The consultation responses set out very clearly the implications of pressing ahead with the reductions as currently proposed. Families are telling you that many of them will not be able to afford the additional costs to get their children to school or college that often involves long distances due to unsuitable provision in local mainstream schools which does not meet the special needs of their children. The Liberal Democrat Group does not believe the revised offer of a £330 / 50% discount for low income families goes far enough and will still lead to inequality.

We are completely opposed to the removal of traditional transport provided directly by the Council for all eligible children between 16 and 18. What is the response to families that are unable to transport their children to school due to work commitments or because they do not have access to a car?



With regard to the removal of mainstream post 16 transport this will discriminate against young people living in isolated rural areas. We are surprised that Conservative members, many of whom represent rural areas, are willing to support the complete withdrawal of home to school transport arranged by the Council. Furthermore the proposed annual travel grant of £150 for young people from a low income background is frankly derisory when set against the actual cost of travelling 10 - 15 miles a day to continue their education. This of course supposes that a commercial bus service exists which is why being able to access school transport arranged by the Council is so important for children and young people in rural areas.

Approving these reductions today marks a new low in the Council's response to austerity and the impact of Government cuts to local services on which so many people depend.

Simon Galton  
Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group