

Detail of Responses from Consultation – Draft Policy

The information contained in this appendix is taken directly from the responses received.

Why not phased delivery - If you have said 'Disagree' or 'Strongly disagree' above, please briefly say why in the space below:

1. Pupils changing provisions in September 2016 would still have to find ways to get to their schools, possibly at the cost of their parents, some of whom are likely to be on low incomes.
2. I have put strongly disagree because having read the proposed policy, it is worded in such a way that it is not possible to identify the proposed changes from the existing policy therefore without finding and comparing the existing policy with the proposed policy it is not easy to identify what the council are proposing to change which somewhat devalues the purpose of a consultation - an executive summary would assist with this.
3. I don't wish to see this policy come in at all phased in or not
4. My daughter is catholic and attends St Josephs school in Norton. The Catholic secondary school for her to attend would be St Micheals in Billingham, which her older sister attends, and the council provides a transport service for this, and has done since I was at secondary school over 24 years ago. So why the change?? Is this so the penny pinching pencil pushers at Stockton Borough council can line there pockets even further?? Are the council cutting any more school transport services?
5. I currently have 2 boys at St Michael's Catholic Academy and my daughter will be due to start the school in Sep 2017. I chose the faith school for my children as baptised practising Roman Catholics. Previously the Council accepted and faith should be taken into account but now there are saying it doesn't and therefore that suggests the proposed changes are purely motivated by cost rather than a true consideration of what is important.
6. We believe that our Grandchild should be able to attend her RC feeder school St Michaels Billingham (from St Josephs RC Primary Norton) with a safe journey on a school transport bus. Knowing the distance from home, and that there is no safe walking route.
7. The phasing time frame specified is too short. This would exclude siblings who would be attending school the following year.
8. Because I totally oppose the draft policy outlined as it removes my right as a parent to choose the school I wish to send my child to. I am penalised financially. I and my child, family and whole community are clearly indirectly discriminated against since the policy affects faith schools. In my case a Roman Catholic academy. Many people of no faith chose to send their child to the academy due to the community links developed at nursery and primary school level.
9. I don't think the policy should be approved at all.
10. YOU SHOULDNT BE DOING THIS TO ANY STUDENT, REGARDLESS OF WHETHER THEY ARE CURRENTLY IN SECONDARY EDUCATION OR NOT.
11. Your policy is complete discrimination to the Catholic Community. This is an absolute disgrace to democracy in society. I strongly disagree to disadvantage/discourage parents to allow their children a faith school due to petty cost savings by Stockton Borough Council. Very sad.
12. To say that this is to affect "Faith" schools is TOTALLY UNACCEPTABLE in this day and age. This MUST be reconsidered our "FAITH" schools are needed in society - it is wrong to try and make pupils attend other schools where no transport is needed due to the cost involved - this will not go away quietly we will be heard reconsider please!
13. the plan is totally unjust and unfair and is discriminatory to the catholic community
14. This policy should not be approved as it is extremely discriminatory towards children who are catholic and also towards their parents. It is with deep regret that as a catholic myself and as a resident of Stockton where I pay my council tax, I should witness a very underhanded attempt by my council to push through this policy which in the long run will only save somewhere in the region of £20,000 per annum. In the grand scheme of things I am sure there are other ways in which money could be saved. Perhaps, councillors need to look more closely at how much money is wasted in the borough.
15. All children should have a choice.
16. Even the statement to what extent do you agree that the policy 'once approved' - is written as if to disregard any comments from parents and families - you have a legal and moral right to provide transport for children and particularly for children of faith. The new school St Michael's was built to specification around the use of the current feeder schools which includes St Joseph's Norton - you are seeking to exclude children of faith from obtaining transport to their chosen faith school. SBC - Existing Home to School Transport Policy The vision of the Childrens Trust Board is to ensure No Child Left Behind through improving outcomes for the children and young

people of Stockton-on-Tees.. This will be achieved through: delivering easily accessible services through excellent partnership working; working with families to identify needs and provide support at as early a stage as is possible and appropriate; targeting resources to tackle inequalities and gaps in services; encouraging innovative approaches based on evidence of what works well; ensuring robust arrangements to safeguard the health and well-being of all children and 7.3 Religion or belief From September 2008, where a parent has expresses a preference for a school based on the parents religion or belief, then a child/young person aged 11 to 16 from low income families will be provided with free transport to the nearest suitable school preferred on grounds of religion or belief, where they live more than 2 miles, but no more than 15 miles from that school. You should not remove their right to transport to their faith school

17. All children what ever their faith , have a right to transport .
18. Section 8 - parental preference - LAs need to respect parents' religious convictions regarding the education of their children and not discriminate against them by removing free or subsidised transport to a Catholic school if this school is more than three miles from the child's home. There is a well established tradition of feeder primary school children moving to a designated Catholic secondary school. In Stockton this particularly applies to children attending St. Joseph's School Norton moving to St. Michaels Academy, Billingham
19. Because I disagree very strongly to any change in the school transport arrangement as it stands right now. It is an underhand way of ridding Britain of its Christianity and dictating to people what and how they should worship. Dictating that they should not attend faith schools. Dictating to us that you can only attend a faith school if you can afford to send your children. To attack children in this way is abusing them.
20. I do not agree with the policy which restricts a child access to a school of faith.
21. I DONT BELIEVE THAT YOU SHOULD BE DISCRIMINATING AGAINST CATHOLIC CHILDREN AFTER ALL THEY PAY THEIR TAXES TOO IF YOU ARE FUNDING CHILDREN TO GO TO NON FAITH SCHOOLS THEN WHY ARE YOU NOT FUNDING THERE CHILDREN I AM STRONGLY OPPOSED TO THIS AND FEEL THAT STOCKTON COUNCIL HAVE LOST THERE WAY
22. I feel that the proposed changes to the present free transport system from the Billingham and Norton areas to St Michaels Catholic Academy in Billingham is unfair, unjust and discriminatory by the fact that only the Catholic Schools are singled out for such cuts. Changing the present free transport system to chargable will have a huge impact on our childrens education and I firmly believe such proposals should be dropped immediately. I know first hand that the vast majority of parent in the Billingham/Norton areas will not be able to pay the proposed charges for their childrens school transport.
23. You are discriminating against children who choose to send their children to a faith school.
24. We have the right to education. Government rules give us the choice as to were to educate our children. You want to take away the freedom of choice and are going against government regulations. I strongly disagree with your decisions.
25. A catholic education is a right . It's discrimination for you not allow this to happen by taking the bus away from theses catholic children
26. Phasing any type of school transport facility to faith schools or otherwise will severely hinder parents decision on which 'type' of school to send there child.
27. Because it includes the proviso that means the abolition of free school buses to faith schools. This is religious persecution and belongs in Nazi Germany not tolerant Britain.
28. This policy should not be phased in at all.
29. Children who receive free school meals would benefit from free transport however parents whose income is just above this level would need to find £330 pa per child, and would have great financial hardship when having to provide uniforms, meals and transport for possibly 2 or 3 children. Therefore this policy should NOT BE APPROVED
30. Why are you penalising families who wish to have their children educated in a faith school. Is this a way of filling up North Shore Academy? I understand that students from Ingelby Barwick will be given free transport to Eggescliffe Comprehensive - is this fair?
31. I believe it is wrong to discriminate against pupils attending Faith schools and to deny them free school transport. Catholic schools are partly funded by the Diocese and if pupils were to attend the nearest school there would be an extra cost to the Local Authorities for those school places as well as the need for more school places at the secondary schools closest to the Catholic primary schools such as St Paul's in Billingham and St Joseph's in Norton. Many catholic parents would not be able to afford to send their children to St Michael's especially if they have more than one child. I would therefore ask you to reconsider this proposal.
32. This policy if approved will significantly affect the Catholic children & families who currently expect their children to attend St. Michael's Academy Billingham to further their religious upbringing. I strongly oppose these plans which I regard as unfair & unjust & I regard this proposal as descriminatory to a faith community. This would dismantle the faith education of the young people in the Catholic parishes.

33. I feel that this Policy should never apply to children from St Joseph' RC school, Norton, who hope to go to St Michael's Academy, Billingham.
34. I strongly believe this policy should not be implemented, as it feels like discrimination against faith schools.
35. The suggestion of ending free school transport transport to faith schools under section "8. Parental preference" is in direct contravention to section 4 of the same document which categorically states, under the subsection "eligible children" that pupils attending a school between 2 and 15 miles from the registered address where the school is the nearest preferred school on the grounds of religion or belief for children aged 11 to 16 are eligible for free transport.. This seems a very clear directive!
36. The policy discriminates against children who attend Catholic schools
37. i don't think that it's right for transport to be withdrawn for pupils, some of them live too far away to walk or bike and not all have access to cars.
38. I do not think this change in the policy should be adopted.
39. this should not be phased in - you have not given an option to as to whether the existing policy and its provision should be retained or cease - which is the fundamental question. I would like the existing services currently being provided by SBC to be continued and paid for out of SBC budget as per existing policy on schools transportation 7.3
40. I don't think it should be adopted at all. See later comments.
41. I feel strongly that if you would like your child to attend a faith school which is out of the catchment area then at least some of the cost of transport should be met.
42. Children should be allowed to attend a faith school with free transport even if this is not the closest school
43. I believe that the policy is discriminatory against faith school pupils
44. Because we feel it is a discrimination against the catholic community as a lot of families will not be be able to afford the cost of transport and will have no choice but to send their children to a non faith school.
45. I feel that supporting school transport should be seen as essential by the Council.
46. St josephs school has always been a filter school for St Michael's and need a bus service
47. I do not agree this Policy should be implemented, not just whether it should be phased in. This is an extremely strange question to be faced with as it suggests you agree with the notion of implementing the policy at all.
48. As a parent sending a child to a faith school the option of a secondary faith school should still be available without having to worry about costs of transport. Working parents would struggle to afford the costs involved. I have always maintained my child would receive a Catholic education due to the morals and values they uphold
49. The policy should not be implemented at all - never mind phased.
50. This policy discriminates against faith school
51. This policy should not be put in place at all, it is unfair and extremely unjust, especially to Faith schools.
52. I think that Catholic children should be able to go to the nearest Catholic school and they should be able to travel free on the school bus
53. This policy discriminates against faith school and families who wish to send their children to church scools
54. It s discriminatory against children of a Catholic faith. Those families on low income cannot afford to pay for travel and therefore will not be able to send their child to their preferred Catholic school. Savings must be made elsewhere - the future of our children should not be put at risk. For health and safety reasons, faith children should not be expected to walk over 3 miles to a Catholic school every day because their parents cannot afford the travel fees just because of trying to save money. Free transport should be provided for all as it has always done for many years.
55. Although I agree that it should not have an impact on the young people who are currently eligible for school transport, the draft policy is not transparent or fair as it does not take into account other circumstances/ changes, for example, if a child has to move schools in year. It does not consider the impact on pupils whose siblings already go to another school and the impact on families who would then have to consider sending their children to different schools (primary or secondary). It does not take into account the impact of the numbers feeding into other schools as a result of the cost of transport to the families and how that could then lead to oversubscription in some at the expense of others. Mostly - it removes parental choice for those families who are living just above the breadline (FSM or Idaqi index) in a falling economic situation.
56. I feel this discriminates children wishing to attend faith schools
57. The transport should not be phased out because the current policy should not change.
58. This proposal states that parents have chosen Ian Ramsay purely on faith reasons which is why you wish to abolish the free transport. As far as I am aware the council still state that our catchment school is north shore even though it has moved from its previous area of norton to Tilery in Stockton. This means if our children were to go there they would be travelling further than necessary to attend school. Ian Ramsay is much closer therefore it shouldn't be the free bus service you should be reviewing but the catchment school for Stillington. If I'm also correct, Carlton's catchment school is eaglescliffe yet they are also closer to other schools in the borough and people in Stillington are also closer.

59. This policy will force parents of Roman Catholic children from Norton to pay transport costs to St Michael's RC Academy in Billingham and to demonstrate my opposition in the strongest possible terms. I, like many others in the Catholic Church, consider my faith - and that of my children - to be of paramount importance and am only too aware of the fact that the only schools that could possibly nurture this faith for my children within Stockton Borough are OLSB and St Michael's. As all three of my children currently attend St Joseph's school - which is and always has been a feeder school for St Michael's - St Michael's is the obvious and only option. However, the introduction of transport costs would cause serious hardship for my family as our income is very low and the idea of paying out almost £1000 per year (for all three children) is frankly terrifying. This would - in effect - make St Michael's effectively a private school for us ; this despite the fact that I and my family have been financially supporting the Catholic school system in this area for several generations and continue to do so through our parish Church of St Josephs. The disproportionate nature of such cuts (i.e. the financial strain which will be felt especially by the poorest families vs the savings made) is highlighted by the frankly paltry figure the council stand to save of £20000 per year. Put simply, the proposed cuts represent direct discrimination against members of the Roman Catholic community in Norton who have a constitutional right to have their children educated for free in a faith school so I urge you and others involved in this decision (which will be life-changing for many children and families in the area) to reconsider.
60. I believe it should not be phased at all.
61. The Consultation demonstrates a startling lack of understanding of why a non-Catholic School could not be a "suitable" school for a Catholic Child or Student - save in the most exceptional circumstances (e.g. where there were no Catholic Schools available in the region or Country at all). The Council Officials seem to have little (or no) understanding of the requirements of the Canon Law of the Catholic Church as regards the duty of Parents as regards the education of their children.
62. If transport costs are introduced it will affect many families who will not be able to afford this extra financial burden.
63. Because the policy is flawed and discriminatory
64. Oppose the policy as this discriminates against faith only.
65. My daughter goes to St Michaels catholic academy I have a daughter who will go in 2 years the school has always had a school transport my self and brothers and other family members went to the school I was brought up a catholic and my children are been brought up catholic .
66. My children attend St Josephs RC catholic school in Norton. They receive Catholic education in the primary school and I feel they should be able to continue and develop their faith receiving a Catholic education at St Michael RC Academy Billingham. My older children already attend the school and so I would have to send some to St Michaels and some to Northshore due to the costs. If you have 3 children attending St Michaels the cost per year would be nearly a thousand pounds per year making it unaffordable for families. Therefore the choice of school is taken away and the opportunity to continue and develop the Catholic faith is taken away. The catchment zone for St Josephs has not been Northshore Academy but St Michaels RC Academy Billingham and this should continue to happen. What is the percentage of children that have attended any other school apart from St Michaels Billingham from St Josephs Norton over the years very few that I know of ? The odd child going to St Bedes Stockton and the odd few to other schools.
67. Because I don't believe that this policy change should be implemented at all. The idea that we should not qualify for school transport on the basis that there are schools within 3 miles of us that may not be suitable for our child goes against the principle of parental choice. In addition, one of the reasons that one school is unsuitable is because it is a non faith school, this therefore discriminates against our child on the basis of faith. There is another faith school within 3 miles, however, this school is over subscribed and would be unlikely to be able to accommodate the extra influx of children. Finally, millions of pounds of council money are being put into questionable projects such as the proposed Hilton Hotel, (which is likely to get the way of the ill fated Swallow Hotel). It would therefore appear that the funding could be found to continue the free transport policy as was, if the council had the will to do so.
68. This will disrupt current pupils education, especially for some at a crucial time in their education
69. The question is essentially flawed - I do not agree to the policy so cannot comment on the phased delivery.
70. I disagree with the introduction of the policy as a whole - and to introduce it in September 2017 is not feasible. As the policy makes no allowance for faith schools - which applies to Norton children attending St Michaels in Billingham - coupled with the fact that the LA agreed to safe cycle and walking routes, an yet no assurances have been discussed to ensue these will be in place by September 2017. Our own councillor, Norma Wilburn, has also confirmed that walking from Norton cannot be deemed safe. Also no assurances have been made that public transport would be able to cater for an extra 250 pupils. As this journey would require 2 buses and still not reach the school without a walk - this should have been made clear. In fact no alternatives have ever been discussed.
71. The policy is discriminatory towards children attending faith schools
72. strongly oppose this policy as it discriminates against faith schools only.

73. This is outrageous!!..St.Michaels has provided fantastic education and morals for years...IT even upgraded to a new build and now you want to penalise the faith of those who attend. This is total discrimination.
74. I feel quite strong that this decision would be detrimental to the schooling and the faith of the families who would be effected by this decision and that it could lead to a legal challenge from the catholic church on a discrimination against the 'Christian Faith' and understand that this cause is currently being discussed and therefore any money saved which is minimal and 'mean minded by the council' would be lost in legal costs to the council and should only be discussed when councillors wish to be elected and should be decided when the council elections occur.
75. I have chosen a school which is a faith school if this was to change it would not be a faith school
76. as a member of the parish I strongly disagree with proposal on school transport, many generations of my family have attended St Michaels as part of our faith, and we want this to continue for our children
77. I feel very strongly on this issue as it will be detrimental to children's futures not allowing them to choose which school they wish to attend. Also for parents/carers who are practising Christians they will be discriminated against having the option for sending their young person to a faith school of their choice taken away from them.
78. If it is not done in a phased way pupils with existing funded passes would lose them. Schools are chosen based on facts that exist at the time, and these should not be changed retrospectively.
79. Disagree with the implementation of the policy
80. I have not yet been given the opportunity to oppose the draft policy and already you are talking of how to implement the policy, which I fundamentally disagree with. I hold the view that in other areas where saving should be made first, before cutting funding to children's transport to school. Were the policy approved after a true and proper consultation, then phasing in the policy is the correct decision.
81. I have 4 children and three of which have used school transport to get to and from school. My fourth child will need school transport to get to our chosen school. I do not drive and could not get her to school myself. I have been fortunate to have church places for my first 3 children but I would be prepared to pay for school transport.
82. I believe that everyone has the right to attend the school of their choice. If parents wish for their children to go to a faith school then transport should be available for them to attend the closest one.
83. I don't think the policy should be approved at all, and therefore there is no need to phase anything.
84. I do not believe the policy should be approved.
85. I don't believe it should happen in the first place. Loaded question
86. I think it's disgusting that children who wish to attend faith schools that don't live on the school's doorstep are being penalised in this way. Parents have a choice of where to send their child and the nearest poor performing school shouldn't be thrust upon them as 'their choice' just because it's closer. There are many more ways in which the council can save money, let's start with that stupid yellow duck.
87. I do not want the changes to take place at all.
88. These children should be given transport to school it is absolutely essential as parents cannot always be available if they work away.

Why is the policy not clear on eligibility - If you have said 'Disagree' or 'Strongly disagree' above, please briefly say why in the space below:

89. I have concerns about the term 'nearest eligible school' - parents in Ingleby Barwick simply do not always have the choice to send their children to the 'nearest' school due to huge over-subscription of secondary school places therefore could end up being disadvantaged.
90. There is too much jargon for some people to follow, just say it straight if you work you will be paying for your child to get on the bus. As usual hitting the tax payer's as per usual.
91. We are very confused with the term of suitable school as the school she would be directed to would not be her RC feeder .Senior School. What is the maximum working tax credit allowance that you talk about?, Where do we stand when we are Grandparents bringing up our Grandchild who only receives Child Benefit and we are her appointed Special Guardians When she is due to go to RC Seniors we will be 65 and 64 Years old.My husband is in poor health at the moment and not working, we are bringing up a Grandchild and I am not able to work as we care for her. How would we know what amount of money we would be living on, and whether we would be able to afford transport costs?
92. The draft sent out does not make it clear. Looked after children and those with special educational needs are mentioned along with low income families. However the draft does not make it clear how those outside of this criteria could be supported when services are threatened.
93. As I have already stated in practice it affects faith schools and is therefore discriminatory.
94. TRANSPORT SHOULD BE AVAILABLE FOR ALL STUDENTS THAT LIVE MORE THAN 3 MILES FROM THE SCHOOL.
95. My church, St Joseph's RC, Norton has informed its congregation that this new policy will mean that preferred parental choice of their children moving on from St Joseph's RC, primary, Norton to St Michael's RC, secondary,

Billingham for children starting school from September 2017 will no longer have the support of Local Authority free school transport, which has been the norm for decades. This seems unfair, to say the least.

96. This policy is has never been publicised enough for parents/ guardians or carers to make an informed view.
97. pupils are being singled out because of their faith
98. This consultation document should have started with the question "Do you agree with the policy that catholic children are entitled to continue with their education at a catholic secondary school supported by their local council?"It is a disgrace that you have not done so.
99. It is totally unclear how you have arrived at such a decision which appears to be an attack on families of faith particularly when a new school has been built based on the numbers of children attending from St Joseph's in Norton and children from Port Clarence
100. There is no clear explanation
101. Think you have fudged round ,the issue concerning faith schools .
102. Having read the draft policy I understand the criteria set out in the policy but would point out that in 2014 the then Secretary of State for Education continued to attach importance to giving parents the opportunity to choose a school in accordance with their religious beliefs and believed that wherever possible local authorities should ensure that transport arrangements should support the religious preference expressed by parents. The draft policy does not take this preference into consideration.
103. I do not agree with the plan to disband the free school transport for children wanting to attend a faith school. The council are using underhand tactics to rid the area of Christianity. Appalling
104. I feel that singling out Catholic Schools for cuts to their free transport system is unfair and unjust
105. I think the council is overstepping its mark with government education policies.I strongly disagree.
106. Discrimination against Catholic children
107. Just because a school is within a 3 mile radius of home doesn't mean it is the RIGHT school for that child or that child's faith!
108. This policy should never be implemented.
109. Transport is provided by SBC for those pupils who DO NOT OPT to continue their education at Bishopsgarth school, and therefore have their travel costs paid by the local authority. This policy is therefore discriminatory towards those wishing to continue with Roman Catholic education and would not be tolerated by other faith groups.
110. The document is too vague , not enough detail
111. Children attending faith schools would be discriminated against as the catchment areas are significantly larger than those for state schools therefore the authority is arbitrarily dismissing a faith education as unnecessary.
112. The draft Policy does not give children who hope to attend their nearest Catholic School (from St. Joseph's, Norton to St. Michael's Academy, Billingham) the free transport which is their entitlement.
113. It is unclear whether children already attending a school where transport is needed will continue to be provided with this transport, when children starting a new school from September 2017 will not be offered the same service.
114. We are now grandparents having brought up our children in the Catholic school system. Our grandchildren are now being educated in Catholic schools. We believe that to withdraw the free transport to our nearest Catholic school is discriminatory and should not go ahead. North Shore Academy can never deliver the Catholic education that Baptised Catholic children deserve and require.
115. Because subsection 8 completely contradicts the statement in section 4 of the draft document
116. Not all pupils live close enough to walk, bike and not all will have access to cars
117. The only group to be removed from the old policy are pupils who attend a faith school
118. Too many of our parents are borderline poverty with salaries frozen for the last 5 years or more yet cost of living increased. I would vote for the existing policy and provision to be retained and transport to education, including faith education, free.
119. Lots of parents will not be able to afford to send their children to a faith school unless they get some help with the cost of transport.
120. It is clear that pupils from faith schools will be discriminated against
121. 'unsafe' is not defined. It is a weasel-word. The distance of three miles is appalling. Are SBC expecting 8-16 year olds to walk three miles to school? So six miles a day?
122. All primary schools to secondary schools need free transport
123. I understand which children would be free but I do not understand how the Council would implement the best practice described in the DfE document which states 'Local authorities should pay particular careful attention to the potential impact of any changes on low income families (those not eligible under extended rights) whose parents adhere to a particular faith or philosophy, and who have expressed a preference for a particular school because of their religious or philosophical beliefs.'

124. One of the eligible categories is "children who cannot reasonably be expected to walk to school because the route is deemed unsafe", but the policy does not define the criteria for determining whether the route is safe to walk or not. Section 7 states that "Where a route to school is assessed as unsafe for a child to travel alone, the Council will consider whether it is reasonable to expect the child's parents to accompany them, where the route is unsafe" but again, no criteria are laid down as to how the safety of the route will be assessed. I would also suggest that working parents are highly unlikely to be able to accompany children on a walk to school and still make it to work on time. Neither does the appeals procedure section detail any criteria for how the route safety would be assessed if a parent were to appeal on that basis.
125. The policy should put in detail the 'changes' between the existing policy and the new policy. By not doing so it is trying to HIDE the facts that some pupils who would previously have been eligible for free transport to their school of choice, no longer qualify for the free transport.
126. It is not clear at all, the policy is not a workable one, and it smells a little bit like discriminate to me.
127. The policy is clear but wrong
128. Although it is probably clear to many parents, there will be a significant number who are unable to access it due to either literacy or language (EAL) issues as it is complex in structure and written in detailed paragraphs. There should be a friendlier, more accessible leaflet with bullet points used for clarity. A summary document would be very helpful. In addition, finding the link to the survey is not easy for those with literacy issues.
129. I agree that I understand the draft policy but strongly disagree with the draft policy
130. It is clear as far as it goes - but it does not go far enough because it fails to grasp a fundamental principle as it relates to Catholic children and their parents.
131. Section 8 of the draft policy is a significant and discriminatory change from the existing policy - to the detriment of pupils from Faith schools and Academies
132. The council has unequal access to free transport for pupils. If you are a faith family you are discriminated against. This is wrong.
133. It is not made clear whether or not children who are already in receipt of free transport will continue to receive it. It is implied with the statement that the policy will only apply to those children entering or changing school from Sep 2017, but it is not clearly stated that this means that provision will continue for all other children.
134. There are many variables within the 'eligible'. Two of the four bullet points can be open to interpretation. I would suspect the Council would prefer to not have multiple families appealing when misinterpretations are questioned. For example the wording of 'nearest suitable school' is subjective and having attended the consultation evenings many families strongly believe a suitable school is one whereby their faith is practised. The council representatives were clear that 'suitable' is the nearest school irrespective of faith. It is interesting that families on free school meals or receiving maximum tax credit are able to make preferences and receive free transport on the grounds of religion. Surely this could be challenged on the grounds of discrimination. There is a clear message from the Council that it is keen to dismantle faith education. Also, the feelings of the families in Norton about the suitability of the wording 'children who cannot reasonably be expected to walk to school because the route is deemed unsafe' was very much debated during the consultation meetings. The council representative considered walking from Norton to Billingham as 'safe' despite children needing to walk across at least 2 main roads. I have e-mail confirmation from my local councillor agreeing with parents that this is not safe. I would suggest the Council consider removing any ambiguity. Although the Council representatives at the consultation meetings were steadfast in reiterating the removal of faith as a 'suitable' option when considering preferences in education as the main driver for driving this policy forward. This is extremely controversial and guaranteed to lead to multiple challenges. If the Council is not embarrassed or ashamed of cleansing religion from society then be clear in your policy.
135. The policy makes no allowance for faith schools as it fails to recognise that historical links between primary school to secondary school. St Joseph's RC School in Norton feeds in to the St Michaels Academy, and has done for 40 years plus. To now state that the historical link is meaningless because another non-faith school is closer is wrong. On that basis my children will be refused a free bus pass because there is a closer school to my home. However my family are practising Catholics, attend the local Catholic primary school, and attend the natural feeder faith school. However, a parent who receives free school meals at St Josephs Catholic School is allowed to choose the feeder school as its first choice - and not the school closer to their home. This highly discriminative!
136. It appears that the policy discriminates by disadvantaging students attending faith schools only
137. Its very clear the plan is to stop children from attending St. Michaels. The Council is rotten!
138. Unfair again that working parents are disadvantaged
139. no children from faith schools should be given the choice to continue there education in a faith school
140. It is not clear from the draft policy whether transport costs to a faith school will be met by the Authority.
141. Strongly disagree, the policy does not factor in the fact that St Michaels Billingham, is the only suitable secondary school for St Joseph , Norton pupils, Under the councils own guide lines they need to provide free transport.

142. You are asking whether the policy is clear about which children are affected, and not whether I agree with which pupils will or should be affected. The policy is clear about which children are affected.
143. If the closest appropriate school is 3 or more miles from home parents should not be forced to send them to an alternative school that is closer. I believe this is discriminatory.
144. I feel that students from faith schools are being discriminated against. It is clear that students will miss out on spiritual education should the policy be approved.
145. It doesn't specify the impact on Catholic children and children from Catholic families
146. It is clear but this does not make it fair
147. The wording used has specifically been chosen, i.e. 'zone' to suit Stockton Council in terms of profit or budget cuts and maybe even filling less popular educational establishments. St. Joseph's has for time immemorial, been known as and referred to as a 'feeder' school to St. Michael's. Families/ parents have not been made aware of the significance of 'zones'. They may well have made different choices in regards to housing location and schools had this been the case, but it is not. Clarity has little to do with fairness.
148. It's clear but I don't agree with it. There are other exceptions to those indicated in the policy.
149. You are discriminating against parents and pupils on the grounds of their religion, all because you need to save money. Most parents are cash strapped and are just above the threshold to receive working tax credits yet the poorest in our society get penalised time and time again.

Why not meet cost of Faith School pupils' home to school transport - If you have said 'Disagree' or 'Strongly disagree' in the above question, please briefly say why in the space below:

150. I disagree parents should have the right to choose a faith school after all parents are responsible for their child's development and we'll be, often these schools are not close to home & extra pressure should not be placed on any family who decide to choose a faith school.
151. It is discriminatory based on faith
152. This should be their schooling right as part of their faith. If the school is not the closest faith school of that denomination then I would agree
153. No suitable faith school in the near area.
154. If this policy comes in it should be across the board for whom ever chooses to go to a faith school regardless of working or not, you are all in the same boat of getting your children to the school, everyone should pay. This is the only thing you never had to get checked on or asked how much you may earn, well that's out the window if the new policy is implemented.
155. It's a form of racism that our children are being discriminated against because of their faith.
156. Faith schools and academies are an important asset to our education system. It seems contrary to sustainable travel and transport to expect that parents should drive children to such schools if no transport is provided.
157. The proposals are purely financially motivated and do not take into account fairness, faith and the legitimate expectation the children of faith can travel free of charge. St Michael's is the only suitable school for my children given their faith it is more than 3 miles away from our home and my children could not safely walk or bike to school.
158. If a parent chooses a faith school for their child and does not have the income to provide the cost of their transport, you cannot discriminate against them because of the circumstances that they fall into.
159. The local authority must remain impartial and non-discriminatory. It therefore should be responsible for the cost of home to school transport for ALL children regardless of faith or belief. Children invariably go to their nearest primary school and some of these are faith schools. The parents have accepted and agreed with their ethos to do so. These schools feed into specific secondary schools forming part of a community link. A faith school from my experience is about developing the whole person enabling them to bring positive qualities to Stockton and their country, The local authority should support these ideals.
160. It is discriminatory to base transport decisions upon faith.
161. It is discriminatory to children attending faith schools.
162. A child who has attended a Catholic Primary School has the right to attend a Catholic Secondary Academy, to deny them is being discriminatory. Parents who cannot afford to pay the transport costs are also being discriminated against.
163. JUST BECAUSE SOME PARENTS WOULD PREFER THEIR CHILD TO ATTEND A FAITH SCHOOL, IT DOES NOT MEAN THAT THEY SHOULD HAVE TO PAY EXPENSES THAT THEY WOULDNT NORMALLY HAVE TO IF THEIR CHILD WAS SENT TO A LOCALS OWN SCHOOL. THIS IS DISCRIMINATION.
164. It is unfair, to say the least.
165. Faith should not determine how each Human being is given support to fantastic faith education.

166. see previous comments
167. everyone should have the same rights regardless of belief
168. It is appalling that as St Joseph's school which has extremely strong links with St Michael's and no links with North Shore and is also not even mentioned in the school transition policy should be expected to attend North Shore where they will have no real access to or support with their own religion.
169. Children educated in a Catholic primary school should be allowed to finish their education in a Catholic secondary school. They need continuity and having faith supports them throughout their lives, including during transmission from primary to secondary school. Please refer to articles 12 and 14 Unicef Rights of a Child and think carefully about changes you intend to make. Ask the children, listen to their opinions, their faith is part of their identity. They are taught to be open to other beliefs and cultures, to respect everyone. Please respect their faith choice. ,
170. 7.3 Religion or belief From September 2008, where a parent has expresses a preference for a school based on the parent's religion or belief, then a child/young person aged 11 - 16 from low income families will be provided with free transport to the nearest suitable school preferred on grounds of religion or belief, where they live more than 2 miles, but no more than 15 miles from that school. This should still apply and you would be wrong to change and exclude children of faith from supported transport
171. Parents should not be responsible for their choice based on faith if that is the nearest faith school for their child to attend
172. We are a democratic society ,where all are welcome ,whatever their faith,discriminating against religious groups is unfair an unacceptable.
173. Catholic parents have undertaken to educate their children in the catholic faith when they make baptismal promises on behalf of their children and should not be discriminated against when exercising their right to choose what they consider to be the best school to meet their child's needs. I believe we already pay 10% towards the cost of our schools for the privilege of ensuring a Catholic education for our children and have done so over a long period of time.
174. Why shouldn't parents choose the faith school of their choice, why should they be penalised if they cannot afford to send their children to the school they believe is the best choice for their child. Why should parents be forced to remove their family faith from their child's education? Majority of children who cannot afford to send their children to their chosen faith school will have to attend North Shore, I personally have worked for North Shore and I was directed that I was not allowed to mention any kind of faith whatsoever, this is fundamentally wrong, this is a Christian country,
175. This is discrimination against people because of their religious belief. I thought this was illegal. We live in Norton, our daughter was educated at St Joseph's Norton and then went to St Michael's Billingham for a continuation of her faith education; this has been a natural route followed for decades by RC families in Norton. It's now being suggested that Northfield Academy is a suitable secondary school for current St Joseph's pupils, a non RC school. How can this be a "suitable" alternative to St Michael's? This removal of funding for a bus from Norton to St Michael's is discriminating against the Catholic members of the Norton community, determined by whether they are on school dinners or not. Would the same rules be applied to different ethnic group I wonder?
176. I disagree with this policy change and feel it is discriminatory
177. I DO NOT THINK THAT THIS IS A GOOD DECISION FROM STOCKTON BOROUGH COUNCIL I BELIEVE THAT NOT TO FUND TRANSPORT TO SCHOOL FOR FAITH SCHOOLS IS A VERY LOW THING TO DO IF YOU ARE FUNDING NON FAITH SCHOOL TRANSPORT THEN I CAN ONLY THINK THAT THIS IS BLATANT DISCRIMINATION AND FEEL THAT STOCKTON COUNCIL HAVE LOST THE PLOT I AM STRONGLY OPPOSED TO THIS PROPOSED POLICY
178. Why single out faith schools, in this case we are talking about the catholic faith, totally unjust to even consider such changes.
179. Families make a faith choice when a child is born. Why should they not be treated the same as others and have the right to attend a faith school where transport is provided by the local authority? They are being targeted because they have made a choice for faith! I could understand if you cut transport costs to all schools, but this is not the case. You need to be fair as an Authority and with this proposal you are not.
180. Discrimination of pupils, families ,faith just to save money.
181. It is incredibly important that children are allowed to have their education reflect the beliefs of the community they are brought up in. All children of faith should I have equal opportunity to attend a school where their faith is supported, it should not become about how close to the school they live. Your proposal would make it difficult for children to attend a faith school if it is not their closest school. A child's up bringing in a faith community should not be a post code lottery.
182. You are taking the rights away from Catholic children
183. Every other faith is catered for with in our borough. Discrimination towards catholic schools is frankly appalling. SBC website advertises the help offered to children with English as a 2nd language, help for

Romany and travelling children yet the catholic faith is now to be denied the opportunity to continue their secondary school faith just through lack of suitable transport in a situation where NEITHER of the 2 local to Norton (St.Michaels or OLSB) schools provide adequate transport! They should not be MADE to attend North Shore school simply because it is the closest! Ridiculous!! I made the decision to send my daughter to St.Michaels in Sept 2017 simply based on the fact the transport facility was there. I now find that my son, who will start in Sept 2017 will not receive this which will mean me having to attempt to get him there and get my youngest daughter to St.Josephs primary at the same time. Please advise how parents can split themselves in two!!?.

184. Faith schools are truly comprehensive in their intake. In that they take from all sections of society within the immediate locality. They are therefore less selective than other schools who try to bump up their admissions or amend their admission criteria to suit their agenda. It is dicriminatoty to abolish free transport only to these schools. If we as a country were to abolish Faith schools completely then I would understand but as it stands this looks like persecution.
185. The Local Authority should support parental choice.
186. The policy discriminates against those choosing a faith school, whereas transport is provided for pupils opting to go to Conyers or Egglecliffe schools and not Bishopsgarth. North Shore cannot provide a dedicated Catholic RE specialist, a chapel or formation / support through the Catholic RE curriculum, or the opportunity for a weekly mass as is now available at both St. Josephs and St. Michaels.
187. I would want my children to be educated in a faith school, that is why I had them baptised
188. I feel that Catholic families are being discriminated against by the decision of Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council to stop funding for free transport to faith schools. Children have a right to Catholic education, regardless of location, and this decision to stop funding breaks this right, in my opinion. Parents may feel the need to send their children to a non-faith school due to the financial inability to pay for transport to their faith school, which is also a violation of the child's right to a Catholic education. Therefore, Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council should urgently reconsider their decision to revoke funding for faith schools only.
189. discriminatory in my opinion
190. Financial considerations for families should not be dismissed lightly as many families struggle to keep their head above water generally but do not always trigger benefits & would therefore find it impossible to fund transport for several children.
191. It is vital that the Local Authority continues to provide free transport to Catholic children from Norton to the nearest Catholic secondary school which is in Billingham. St. Joseph's has been a feeder school to St. Michael's since the 1960s and to remove the free transport now is totally unjust and unfair and is blatantly discriminating again Catholics. It is the right of parents to be able to send their children to a Catholic school and if this school is not within walking distance, then the Local Authority has a duty of care to provide free transport to the child/children.
192. Parents choosing faith schools are doing so on the basis that the education the child receives will support their faith. If this policy goes ahead it will result in faith schools taking a larger number of none faith pupils and vice versa and will significantly impact on the individual pupils.
193. Catholic children need a Catholic education. St Michael's Billingham is the nearest Catholic Secondary School for St Joseph's Primary,Norton pupils. Free transport should continue to be provided by the council in order that our Catholic children are not discriminated against.
194. In effect this would ensure the destruction of faith schools since many parents could not afford the expense that would be involved.. Is this the intention?
195. This is discriminating children attending a faith school. The children effected by the change may have a closer school to them but is not a faith school. Why should these children be discriminated against by having there travel paid for by the council when children attending non faith schools don't. Discrimination in this way is unfair for children who have been brought up attending church and faith primary schools. Many of the children effected already attend one of the faith feeder schools
196. Why should it be faith schools only that have transport withdrawn
197. Please refer to Government Statutory Guidance to Local Authorities July 2014, sections 38 - 42. In particular, "The Secretary of State expects local authorities to consider all possible options before they disturb well established arrangements, some of which have been associated with local agreements or understandings about the siting of such schools." This guidance also references article 14 of ECHR & warns about the possible impact on low income families (which may not access benefits or FSMs)
198. Faith Schools should not be excluded from free transportation and I would vote to retain the existing policy and it's service provision
199. Surely this is religious discrimination if not intolerance and is therefore illegal! If not illegal it is immoral and, bearing in mind how often politicians of all parties brag that this is an "inclusive" society, it is politically incorrect! Parents are supposed to have a choice of school, if they can't afford that choice they have NO

- CHOICE!! What if the nearest State school is full, will the council spend thousands, if not hundreds of thousands, of pounds extending that school? Where will the savings be then?
200. if the only faith school available to your child is some distance away then I believe that some help be given towards the cost of getting your child to that school. The cost of transport for most families, especially if they have more than one child wanting to attend a faith school, will be very hard for them to pay.
 201. Children whose lives are enhanced by attending a faith school which supports their beliefs should have the right to do so without being in effect charged!
 202. This may result in action being taken against the council on the basis of discrimination
 203. I feel that children who are members of faith church should be entitled to attend a faith school and not have to pay for transport if the school is not feasible.
 204. I feel that the statement above strongly suggests that the Local Authority is discriminating on the grounds of religious belief.
 205. Faith is a red herring. Pupils and parents need choice in schools, due in the main to extremely poor provision by the LEA.
 206. Catholic schools need catholic primary school to be filler schools . St josephs Norton has always been a filler school for the catholic St Michaels school has been for as long as Incan remember
 207. I think that children should be provided with transport to the nearest school of their faith on the same basis as children are provided with transport to non-faith schools. The effect of paying for school transport will effectively take many families to the same level of income as those qualifying for maximum working tax credit, without any recompense.
 208. I believe in this matter, the Local Authority should pay closer attention to the supportive DfE statutory guidance in this matter which states: The department strongly supports local authorities in developing cross-cutting approaches to home to school travel and transport. Relevant considerations would include sustainability, delivering value money and finding school and parent friendly solutions. This could be through strong partnerships between local authorities and academies, the use of Department for Transport policies and practices, such as Local Transport Plans and Local Sustainable Transport fund (see Further information) and partnership with parents, for example to allow them to top up transport costs through the payment of fees in order to maintain the provision. Also: The local authority should engage with parents and clearly communicate what support they can expect from the local authority. In addition: Where charges are imposed, good practice suggests that children from low income groups (those not eligible for extended rights, either due to being just outside financial eligibility or live outside of the distance criteria and therefore not in receipt of free travel) should be exempt. Section 38 clearly states 'Local authorities need to respect parents'™ religious and philosophical convictions as to the education to be provided for their children'. One perfunctory paragraph in Section 8 of the draft policy is a long way from being respectful., as is the divisive and leading question above. Again in Section 40: The Secretary of State...believes that wherever possible, local authorities should ensure that transport arrangements support the religious or philosophical preference parents express. In many cases these schools may be more distant and therefore the provision of transport and the avoidance of unreasonable expenditure on transport are encouraged. Section 41 is again of paramount importance as it highlights the importance of funding those children who come from low income backgrounds but who fall outside of the extended rights duty.
 209. The draft policy considers all schools in the area as being equally suitable for all pupils. It regards the sending of Catholic children to the nearest Catholic school as solely a matter of parental preference. This does not take into account long-standing arrangements that were put in place many decades ago to reflect the fact that Catholic schools have much larger catchment areas than non-faith schools. Catholic Secondary schools in the area have always had named feeder Primary schools which pupils naturally progress from, and the Council provided travel assistance to reflect the fact that Catholic schools were often further away than non-faith schools. The new policy is not at all in the spirit of the DfE guidance on this matter, which in paragraphs 40 and 41 respects the right of parents to send their children to faith schools, encourages local authorities to provide assistance with travel, and states that where long-standing arrangements have been put in place for children outside the usual eligibility criteria, these arrangements should not be disturbed before consideration of all possible options. In the past, the Stockton local authority have indeed used their discretion to extend transport arrangements beyond the extended rights duty, based on the understandings about the siting of such schools. By implementation of this new draft policy, which cuts off these discretionary arrangements, the local authority is not considering any alternative options at all and is therefore in direct contravention of the DfE guidance.
 210. Parents of children attending faith schools should not be penalised for their faith and have the added costs of transport
 211. It is an absolute right, stated in law, for a pupil to chose to attend a school based on their faith and to remove the free transport because of their faith is grossly unfair and discriminatory.

212. This discriminates against children choosing to attend faith schools.
213. The extended rights do not cover the issues involved, we need the free bus service to continue without conditions.
214. I think that faith school pupils should have free transport if they live within a reasonable distance.
215. Why should poorer people be denied the right to send their children to the school of their choice simply because they cannot afford the bus fare
216. Parents should have the right to send their children to school and not be discriminated against due to their faith.
217. Selecting to remove transport for faith schools only is, I believe, discriminatory. If the council were reviewing home to school transport across the whole borough and including each school in this consultation, then this would be a more fair and balanced approach. Children have the right to practice their faith, Article 14 of The United Nations 'Convention on the Rights of the Child' states 'Every child has the right to practise their religion'. This practising of their religion includes being educated within a religious ethos both at home and at school. A state school may be closer for a child to walk to, but it does not meet this right. If the Government has signed up to this agreement, then I believe it is the duty of local officials to ensure this is possible for all children. Many families may not meet the free school meal requirement, but as we know, there are many families who are 'working poor', the cost of transportation for these families could be potentially unfeasible.
218. Firstly, this is a very poorly worded question for the public to understand and will lead to confusion. Secondly, quite simply, you are removing parental choice. Some parents will not be able to choose the best school for their child as they will not be able to afford to send their children to the nearest church school. This will really affect families in many ways, such as having to send siblings to different schools, being unable to ensure that their children are in a school that is distinctively Christian (as is the case in Stockton) and creating uncertainty about the longterm impact on transport. There is no clear understanding about what the longterm impact could be on the area, especially school numbers. We could end up with the ridiculous situation where children cannot go to their chosen church school (due to financial reasons) so have to attend the local community school. This then fills up the community school, meaning that other children have to be bused elsewhere - possibly to the very same church school!! Finally, there are many other children who are given free transport in Stockton, for eg at Ingleby Barwick.
219. There should be equal opportunities for all
220. This is a historical arrangement and the school is not an unreasonable distance.
221. The draft policy states that income would be a factor in obtaining free transport yet I am on a low income as a single parent and would not qualify. Being eligible for a free bus to the school all being it for the reasons of faith would mean I wouldn't have big transport costs to get my child to a school which is closer than the school which the council believe should be our catchment school. I would not be able to afford paying for transport for my children and as they would be in different schools (primary & secondary), one would have to be taken in late everyday just so I could take them myself which could have an impact on their education as well as having a truancy officer knocking on my door due to persistent lateness which would be something I could do nothing about
222. This would be akin to a tax on faith which is nothing short of discrimination in the worst possible terms!
223. As I stated in my previous question there is a need to LA to satisfy the needs of the faith community. What I do not understand is why this free transport is being removed for the faith community when free transport will still be available to students in Ingleby Barwick. I would like to talk with someone about this.
224. Strongly disagree, this decision implies that parents who wish their children to continue in a faith school are being prevented from doing so by removing the transport. The savings that are to be made are minimal in comparison to other things the council are funding.
225. Pupils who have chosen a school based on faith should have the means of getting to that school when chosen over another school or academy that may be closer, but that does not have the same ethos.
226. The proposed policy could be found to be discriminatory as against Parents who are Catholic and who wish, and need, to follow the teaching of the Catholic Church. There are risks as regards the provisions of the European Convention on Human Rights - notably rights deriving from articles 8, 9 and 10 amongst others.
227. Section 4 would restrict the traditional rights and customs enshrined in law from before the 1870 Education Act, when religious bodies provided much of the elementary education provision, through the 1902 Balfour Act, enshrining the 'Dual System' and through the major Education Acts of 1944 and 1988 and accompanying changes to educational provision, until the present day. This has included two world wars and numerous recessions, far worse than the current one, triggered by the greed of the banking services and global interests. Throughout all this time, no matter what the economic circumstances, the rights of the faith communities to have equality of educational provision for their children has been paramount and recognised in law and in custom by all governments, local and national, political persuasion notwithstanding. To restrict transport for all attending Faith Schools and only allow it to selected categories is to prevent, in real terms,

many students' entitlement to attend their nearest Faith School. [see also Section 8] The nature of population distribution of those who are entitled to attend Faith Schools means that the majority are not living in the locale of their Faith School. This has been especially so since the expansion of secondary provision in the 1960s where Diocesan Authorities co-operated with the then LEAs to locate these schools on green field sites. Crucial to this was the provision of 'free transport' [NB not free as members of Faith Communities pay their fair share of rates and taxes!]. There is also an inherent bias and discrimination as it is still the case that Faith Schools have a higher proportion of pupils from relatively lower socio-economic groups. Section 8 can be interpreted as completely denying the rights of the Faith Communities that have been enshrined in English education law, practice and custom for the last hundred and twenty years to equality of access to appropriate educational provision. It has taken the term 'reasonable' and given it a whole new definition, inconsistent with previous practice, which is, in fact, wholly unreasonable.

228. This is a clear example of discrimination. Children in Norton will not be transported to St. Michaels', whilst children in Ingelby Barwick will be transported to schools of their preference. This is unequal, must be challenged. This proposal is inadequate and discriminatory and cannot be adopted by a Labour Council.
229. St Michaels has always had free transport for children from Norton
230. My children attend St Josephs RC catholic school in Norton. They receive Catholic education in the primary school and I feel they should be able to continue and develop their faith receiving a Catholic education at St Michael RC Academy Billingham. My older children already attend the school and so I would have to send some to St Michaels and some to Northshore due to the costs. If you have 3 children attending St Michaels the cost per year would be nearly a thousand pounds per year making it unaffordable for families. Therefore the choice of school is taken away and the opportunity to continue and develop the Catholic faith is taken away. The catchment zone for St Josephs has not been Northshore Academy but St Michaels RC Academy Billingham and this should continue to happen. What is the percentage of children that have attended any other school apart from St Michaels Billingham from St Josephs Norton over the years very few that I know of ? The odd child going to St Bedes Stockton and the odd few to other schools. The children should have stability from moving on from the primary school to Secondary school which is a very anxious time for all children and years of building up the relationship with St Michaels Academy should not be broken due to costs.
231. The primary school that our children attend is in the catchment area for a faith school 3.7 miles away. This has been the case since 1972. The other local faith school would not be able to accommodate all of the primary children from local faith schools. The proposed policy changes fail to take such circumstances into account when proposing that we should not qualify for free transport.
232. Is this just the start of SBC doing away with Faith Schools ? This is a blatant attack on Schools of Faith. So really SBC are not bothered about diversity and equality because they are prepared to take away the chance of children of faith attending a School of their faith. This is an attack on communities of Faith and goes against the councils own policies on equality and diversity in such an obvious way. How many parents will be able to send their children to a faith school if this goes ahead. Yet I know of pupils of no religion being offered a school place in the neighbouring town. So SBC must be prepared to transport these children of no faith! This all adds up to discrimination against students/people of Faith and it stinks!
233. As noted previously it is discriminatory to allow parents of children on maximum tax credits or free school meals to be able to make a preference of faith when considering education establishments. All parents have a right to make a preference based on their faith and the Education Act dictates authorities 'should have regard (amongst other things) to any wish of his parents for him to be provided with education which religious education is that of the religion of the parent' and should 'be provided free of charge' if the nature of the route is deemed unsafe. It also states that local authorities may pay whole or part of the cost 'as they see fit'. It is disappointing that the council has not considered any alternative options regarding payment and it has an all or nothing approach. The lack of alternative options from the council is clear in the 19/5/16 Cabinet Papers that stipulate 'none' have been explored prior to drafting the proposed policy. Paragraph 40 of the Governments Statutory Guidance on Home to School Transport reminds LA's of the importance of parents rights to 'choose a school in accordance with their religious beliefs'. It doesn't state that this choice should be dictated by their income which is the route the Council has taken when drafting its new policy. Further evidence that a 'suitable' school should include a parents right to prefer a faith school, irrespective of their household income is found in Article 2 of the European Convention on Human Rights (which the government signed up to as an arm of the government the council did too). It concurs that 'no person should be denied the right to education ... the state shall respect the right of parents to ensure education and teaching in conformity with their own religious and philosophical conviction.'
234. As long as the school is a natural feeder from the primary then then the LA should be responsible for the cost of home to school transport. To date no other measures have been put in place. The school is not within safe walking distance - as agreed by Councillor Norm Wilburn. The children need to cross the A19, and several

- other 2 lane roads with no pedestrian crossings at any point. I understand the residents of Wynyard will be entitled to a free school bus on this basis, but Norton residents are not due to the pedestrian viaduct over the A19. Even though this is only a small part of the journey it is still an unsafe environment for a 12 year old child to walk through on dark mornings/afternoon. However there is still the issue of crossing at the busy junction at Billingham bottoms and the crossing of the old A19. Another alternative is public transport - but I doubt the current network of buses could cope with an additional 250 pupils every morning and afternoon. Perhaps parents may take to dropping of children at school. However local residents have not been consulted on the possibility of the additional vehicles in an already known traffic hotspot. A place in which the police have been contacted on numerous occasions to settle disputes with blocked access etc.
235. For many students and their families, education is not just about grades but being giving the opportunity to attend a school which supports and develops their faith also. This discriminates against students making that choice.
 236. strongly oppose this policy as it discriminates against faith schools only.
 237. Of course the Council should be responsible...Why would they feel they shouldnt ??..Its the education of the community..Open your eyes for heavens sake
 238. We are a Christian country and this also allows for pupils to have places in state schools which will be taken by this children if this policy is approved so nothin is gained by the council.
 239. Families should have a right to chose a school which is not only there for academic learning but to support individual beliefs and values
 240. if free transport is unavailable is our place still guaranteed at st michael's
 241. By not paying transport costs the local authority give be denying parents and children a free choice of school because parents would now have to factor in cost of transport as well as the type (faith or non faith) ethos and quality of teaching.
 242. The promotion of faith is important in the UK and all efforts should be made to encourage this. This then IS the responsibility of the Local Authority to assist wherever possible in this promotion.
 243. The selection of a faith school for family's with strong faith / belief, is not an optional but a requirement.
 244. By cutting transport funding to faith schools for children who do not have extended rights you are making it difficult, very difficult and in some cases impossible for some children to follow their faith in school. If for reasons of faith or belief a child & parent choose a faith school which is not the closest school to home, they should still be entitled to free school transport. I believe what you are proposing is wrong and immoral, if not illegal, because you are effectively discriminating on the basis of religion.
 245. You should support people's beliefs of religion. You have provided it since 1972 so why change it now. You obviously believed in it back then.
 246. My child is a Christian and attends church. our preferred Christian school is over 3 miles away and we should not be penalised for that
 247. If the closest faith school is 3 or more miles from home parents should not be forced to send them to an alternative non-denomination school that is closer. I believe this is discriminatory.
 248. Surely if the faith school comes under your local authority then you have to give them the same services as you would any other school, i understand about cutting costs, but how are these pupils meant to get to school. This is one of the poorest areas in the country, do you seriously suggest that parents can afford this?
 249. Students should not be discriminated against because of their faith or belief. Students should have a choice of which school to attend, and should have provision of free transport, regardless of which school they attend.
 250. Catholic families should have the right to choose a Catholic education for their children even if this means the school they choose is a little farther from home. No child who chooses a Catholic education should be denied it on the basis of cost. This could have huge implications on our Catholic schools, who rely on their current feeder schools to retain numbers, and I strongly believe this could be viewed as an attack on the Catholic church itself.
 251. Should be responsible for cost of transport for all pupils or none. Unfair to discriminate.
 252. I think it's ridiculous, by removing this service you're effectively responsible for the downfall of faith schools in the area. If they only take in children nearby, they'll have to take in a higher rate of non-religious pupils and we'll end up with no faith schools. You provide transport for other schools, why are faith schools in the spotlight?
 253. I don't know sufficient about other faiths but what I do know is that as a Catholic, attending a Catholic School is integral to being a Catholic. It may indeed differ in this respect to other faiths - I don't know. The schools have a whole ethos which is felt throughout school life. It is not a 'preference'; not as the representative said at the consultation "the parents fault". It is who we and our families are. Our identity. Catholic Schooling is central to being a Catholic. There is not a Catholic Secondary School in Norton. A bus has always been available (free) to St. Michael's. We wouldn't necessarily of chosen to live here nor chose St. Josephs if that wasn't the case. Because of the paramount importance of Catholic schooling to our faith, in this instance I

feel it is religious discrimination despite what has apparently previously been said in the Court of Human Rights. Was it because of how the information was represented? Also, not that I would consider it, the school which is now deemed to be in our zone would I'd say be a 40 minute walk away for an eleven year old, which is too far. It is also through areas which I wouldn't feel comfortable him walking through by reputation. Transport there would cost no less.

254. People are entitled to make this choice and the council receive enough money from council tax, so should manage their funds better.
255. Parents who wish to continue in faith schools may not have the ability to meet the costs of the transport to the faith school
256. Pupils attending a faith school should not be singled out and expected for their parents to pay based purely on the basis of faith choice

Why not meet cost of LAC transport - If you have said 'Disagree' or 'Strongly disagree' above, please briefly say why in the space below:

257. Yes a child whom may be taken into care, shouldn't have the more worry put on them that they may have to change school, we are not monsters with are catholic after all.
258. Being taken into care is an emotionally disruptive time. These children are experiencing real turmoil and everything possible should be done in their best interests to keep stability in as many areas as possible including the school attended.
259. Stockton council will NOT endeavour to ensure that a looked after child will remain in the faith school they previously attended because they are too free in deciding that all children should give up the faith school of their choice. What confidence should anyone have in Stockton council continuing to pay for looked after children attending their previous faith school?
260. I agree that children in the care of the authority would need free transportation but disagree as it discriminates against children not in the care of the authority but still have a requirement for free transport
261. So if you are of "Faith", then you cannot expect the same. More discrimination!
262. A looked after child should have as much stability as possible, therefore every effort has to be made to extend suitable transport for as long as possible.
263. All students, regardless of background should have transport costs paid for.
264. All children have the right to stability in education. To put families in the position whereby they are forced due to finances to have their child attend a school which is so different to their Primary School in ways that are so important to them is so wrong.
265. transport fees should be paid by the Council for the whole time the child is in school. Not for a provisional 6 months