

RECORD OF EXECUTIVE DECISION TAKEN BY AN EXECUTIVE MEMBER

This form **MUST** be used to record any decision taken by the Elected Mayor or an individual Executive Member (Portfolio Holder).

The form must be completed and passed to the Chief Officer for Legal, Performance and Democratic Services no later than NOON on the second working day after the day on which the decision is taken. No action may be taken to implement the decision(s) recorded on this form until 7 days have passed and the Chief Officer for Legal, Performance and Democratic Services has confirmed the decision has not been called in.

1. Description of decision

Bedford Borough Council has a number of services that it provides to schools at a fee. The fees and charges applied to these services are reviewed annually to ensure that they are still sufficient to ensure a high quality of service is delivered. Factors such as inflation, rates of pay and costs of materials must be considered when reviewing the fees and charges that are applied, however, wherever possible the costs to the general public have been kept as slow as possible.

Below is a list of decisions taken with regards to services provided to schools:

Careers Advice:**Background**

The Education Act 2011 established the statutory duty to ensure that young people under 19 in England have 'access to careers guidance' support.

Before the 2011 Act, the statutory duty was placed upon the Secretary of State to ensure that a 'Careers Service' was available in all part of England for all young people (primarily 13-18). The Careers Service was provided from 1974-1994 by the Local Education Authorities, from 1994-2001 by contracted careers companies/other providers under contract to the Secretary of State and from 2001-2012 by Connexions Partnerships/Local Authority Connexions Services as part of their wider youth support service functions.

The 2011 Act changed this, placing the duty to 'secure access to independent careers guidance' for their pupils and students upon secondary schools, and therefore, since 2013, it has been the responsibility of schools to ensure Careers, Education, Advice and Guidance is in place within their school.

Since 2013, Bedford Borough Council has offered to deliver Careers Guidance interviews to any secondary school within the Borough who wish to buy in this service from us. Over the years, the schools that we deliver to and the number of hours that we deliver each week has varied and changed from year to year.

Decision: To increase the fees for this service by 10% to ensure that the income generated covers the cost of delivering the service

Education Psychology Services:**Background**

Since 2017-2018 Bedford Borough Council have operated a buyback service for academies and maintained schools for the Education Psychology service, which operates over the course of an academic year. The buyback enables participating schools to engage in a full range of support which includes, assessments, EP consultations, training and access to advice and support. This allows schools to discuss issues impacting on a child or young person with a view to planning a way forward.

The buyback rate did not change until 2022/2023 when the rate was increased by 5% to the current per pupil rate.

Decision: To increase the fees charged to all schools, including both maintained schools and academies by 10%. This is still not a full cost recovery model, which we will be looking to in the future.

Free School Meals Administration:

Background

Bedford Borough Council have historically charged academies for the administration linked to Free School Meals (FSM) as part of the Service Level Agreements in place for the delivery of Education Welfare Services to academies. The level of service provided by our FSM Administrator includes processing applications for Free School Meals and assessing eligibility using the government eligibility checking databases, keeping accurate records as well as informing the schools of current information and updates around FSM guidance.

These charges have not been reviewed since 2017/18.

Decision: To increase the charge to schools to fully cover the cost of delivering the service, this equates to a 20% increase per pupil over the past 5 years. The charges will be calculated using updated FSM data to create a more accurate picture of need.

School Music Service:

Background

Bedford Borough Music Service offers services to both schools and to parents and carers. There is a menu of services available for schools to choose from as well as a range of music lessons for parents and carers to choose for their children.

Decision: To freeze the fees and charges for parents and carers and to increase the fees to schools by 10% in line with the increase in costs to run the service.

Schools Transport:

The council's charges for schools transport are applied to parents and carers. These include charges for bus passes, replacement bus passes, low income bus passes and spare seat schemes. These were all increased by either 5% or 10% last year in line with rising fuel costs and inflation.

Decision: Freeze the charges for members of the public this year.

2. Date of decision

24.05.23

3. Reasons for decision

The increases in charges are required in order to be able to continue to deliver the same standard of service in light of increasing costs and inflationary pressures

4. Alternatives considered and rejected

Freeze all charges, however this would mean that there would be insufficient funds to run the services.

5. How decision is to be funded

Through fees and charges applied to schools, colleges and to parents and carers.

6. Conflicts of interest

Name of all Executive members who were consulted AND declared a conflict of interest.	Nature of interest	Did Standards Committee give a dispensation for that conflict of interest? (If yes, give details and date of dispensation)	Did the Chief Executive give a dispensation for that conflict of interest? (If yes, give details and the date of the dispensation).

The Mayor has been consulted on this decision

Yes – consultation with Portfolio holder

JW

Signed

Jane Walker

..... Date ...24.05.23.....Name of Decision TakerCllr Jane Walker

This is a public document. A copy of it must be given to the Chief Officer for Legal, Performance and Democratic Services as soon as it is completed.

Date decision published:24 May 2023.....

Date decision can be implemented if not called in:6 June 2023.....

(Decision to be made exempt from call in.....NO.....)

Agenda Item *

For publication

Bedford Borough Council – Executive

Date 14th May 2023

Report by Chris Morris – Acting Chief Officer for Education, SEND and Schools Infrastructure

Subject - Approval to set fees and charges for academic year 23/24

1. Executive Summary

Bedford Borough Council has a number of services that it provides to schools at a fee and to members of public for education related activity. The fees and charges applied to these services are reviewed annually to ensure that they are still sufficient to ensure a high quality of service is delivered. Factors such as inflation, rates of pay and costs of materials must be considered when reviewing the fees and charges that are applied, however, wherever possible the costs to the general public have been kept as low as possible.

The fees and charges being proposed are in keeping with the decisions set by the previous administration with regards to fees and charges and so provides continuity at this time.

2. Recommendations

For the Mayor and portfolio holder to agree the following:

- a. Careers advice: Decision: To increase the fees for this service by 10% to ensure that the income generated covers the cost of delivering the service

- b. Education Psychology: Decision: To increase the fees charged to all schools, including both maintained schools and academies by 10%.
- c. Free School Meal Administration for Academies: Decision: To increase the charge to schools to fully cover the cost of delivering the service, this equates to a 20% increase per pupil over the past 5 years.
- d. School Music Service: Decision: To freeze the fees and charges for parents and carers and to increase the fees to schools by 10% in line with the increase in costs to run the service.
- e. Schools Transport: Decision: Freeze the charges for members of the public this year.

3. Reasons for Recommendations

The recommended fees and charges for schools being proposed is to cover the costs of delivering that service and to prevent the service being run at a loss to the council. For fees and charges being charged to members of the public, the recommendations are to freeze the costs in recognition of the economic challenges that many families are facing. This has been budgeted for and can be accommodated.

The fees and charges being proposed are in keeping with the decisions set by the previous administration with regards to fees and charges and so provides continuity at this time.

4. Key Implications

(a) Policy

The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), reviewed by Executive on 23 September 2022 requires that fees and charges are maximised as far as practicable having regard to what the market will bear and policy decisions of the Council. This is in order to protect services and minimise the costs otherwise falling to all Council Taxpayers.

(b) Legal Issues

The proposed charges have regard to the various statutory requirements regarding the Council's ability to set fees and charges.

(c) Resource Implications

In considering the 2023/2024 Revenue Budget it was proposed that any increase in fees and charges should consider the current cost of living crisis, prevailing market sensitivities and demand. A number of fees and charges that the authority is required to administer are statutorily set and therefore the authority is unable to influence any impact arising from increases within the affected services.

There are also some charges that are required to reflect the cost of providing the service (also called Full Cost Recovery), and these prices have been adjusted accordingly. It is recognised that the authority is subject to exceptional pay and price pressures that will, in certain scenarios, lead to levels of increases in fees and charges significantly above those that would normally be required. However, the authority has endeavoured to minimise the financial impact on the users of its services.

(d) Risk Implications

The risk in setting any fee and charge is that it does not provide, due to potential volatility in demand and usage, the projected income. In addition, a significant increase in charges may discourage the schools from using a service resulting in an overall reduction in income.

2023 is likely to continue with a degree of uncertainty due to the likely continuing impact of the cost of living crisis and high inflation. It is difficult to predict the likely ongoing impact on the wider and local economy and, consequently, the effect on the income received through fees and charges. There is a robust system of budget monitoring in place and any significant variation against expected income levels will be recognised through this monitoring process.

(e) Environmental Implications

Consideration is given to the environmental impact of setting fees and charges and where possible will encourage behaviour that supports the Council's aims to reduce carbon emissions.

(f) Equalities Impact

In preparing this report, due consideration has been given to Bedford Borough Council's statutory Equality Duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations, as set out in Section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010.

A relevance test has been completed in respect of the general proposal to increase fees and charges broadly in line with inflation. The equality test determined that the activity has no relevance to Bedford Borough Council's statutory equality duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

Where the proposals increase to a fee or charge being higher than the rate of inflation (other than in the case of higher increases in small changes resulting from rounding) a relevance test and, where required, an equality analysis has been conducted in respect of the specific proposal.

5. Details

Careers advice

Background

The Education Act 2011 established the statutory duty to ensure that young people under 19 in England have 'access to careers guidance' support.

Before the 2011 Act, the statutory duty was placed upon the Secretary of State to ensure that a 'Careers Service' was available in all part of England for all young people (primarily 13-18). The Careers Service was provided from 1974-1994 by the Local Education Authorities, from 1994-2001 by contracted careers companies/other providers under contract to the Secretary of State and from 2001-2012 by Connexions Partnerships/Local Authority Connexions Services as part of their wider youth support service functions.

The 2011 Act changed this, placing the duty to 'secure access to independent careers guidance' for their pupils and students upon secondary schools, and therefore, since 2013, it has been the responsibility of schools to ensure Careers, Education, Advice and Guidance is in place within their school.

Since 2013, Bedford Borough Council has offered to deliver Careers Guidance interviews to any secondary school within the Borough who wish to buy in this service from us. Over the years, the schools that we deliver to and the number of hours that we deliver each week has varied and changed from year to year.

Careers Guidance contracts with schools are delivered in line with the academic year i.e. September to July.

The Current Picture

We currently have two careers advisors employed by Bedford Borough to deliver these services. The schools we currently deliver in and the delivery hours/days are shown below. The two advisor posts solely support delivery of careers interviews to the 5 schools shown below.

Schools are approached every academic year to enquire whether they require any additional hours, so the number of schools who have bought in our services and the number of hours they require changes from year to year.

School	Delivery per week	Advisor 1 or Advisor 2
Goldington Academy	1 day per week	Advisor 1
Wootton Upper School	13 hours per week + an additional 3 parents evenings each year	Advisor 1
Lincroft Academy	Half a day per week	Advisor 1
Mark Rutherford School	1 day per week	Advisor 2
Sharnbrook Academy	2 days week	Advisor 2

Charges

Charges made to schools for career guidance interviews remained the same from 2013 – 2017. In 2018, there was an increase of around 5.7%, however since this date, charges have remained the same.

The agreed menu of services and hours available on offer to schools and the charges that were applied from 2018 are below:

Schedule	Cost to schools holding an SLA with Bedford Borough	Ad Hoc Work Charges*
Cost per hour	£27**	£35
Cost for 1 day delivery per week	£203	£260
Annual charge for 1 day delivery per week for 38 weeks	£7,695	
Annual charge for 2 days per week for 38 weeks	£15,390	
Annual charge for 3 days per week for 38 weeks	£21,546 (20% discount applied to any school wanting to buy in 3 or more days per week)	

*The Ad Hoc charges were implemented for any secondary school wanting to buy in the service on an ad hoc basis throughout the year, however, no schools have bought in any ad hoc services since 2020, although these are no longer promoted to schools as there is no capacity within the service to deliver any additional hours.

**The hourly rate was calculated based on a BBU09 grade post, including on costs

Current delivery and charges to schools

School	Delivery per week	Annual Charge	Notes
Goldington Academy	1 day per week	£7,695	
Wootton Upper School	13 hours per week + an additional 3 parents evenings each year	£13,662	£13,338 for 13 hours delivery a week + £324 for the 3 parents evenings
Lincroft Academy	Half a day per week	£3,078	20% discount applied when Lincroft were part of the Sharnbrook Academy Trust, as 3 days a week were being bought in across the Trust
Mark Rutherford School	1 day per week	£7,695	
Sharnbrook Academy	2 days per week	£12,312	20% discount applied when Sharnbrook were part of the Sharnbrook Academy Trust, as 3 days a week were being bought in across the Trust
Total Income from Schools		£44,442	

Cost to deliver this Service to School as of financial year 2022/23

Advisor	Annual Salary	On Costs	Total
Advisor 1 (Term Time only post – 0.68 FTE)	£19,861	£5,378	£25,239
Advisor 2 (Term Time only post – 0.61 FTE)	£17,875	£4,715	£22,590
Team Leader			£3,244 (5% of total cost for this post per year)*
Matrix Standard Renewal (Quality Kite Mark review every 3 years)			£500 every 3 years so roughly £166 per year
Total cost to the LA			£51,573

*Line management of these posts and contract management of the Service Level Agreements sits with the Team Leader for Statutory Support Services. It is estimated that around 5% of the Team Leaders role is dedicated to the line management of the contracts and the advisors each year, which equates to around £3,244 per year.

Options Available

- Option 1 – To keep the charges at the current levels and not apply any increases to schools

- Option 2 – To increase the charges to schools in line with the increases to staffing costs as well as any forecasted staff inflation costs. The outcome of doing this would be to ensure that delivery of this service to the academies is at full cost recovery.

In the last 2 years, staffing costs for the advisor roles has increased by about 12.5%. If we were to increase our hourly charge by 10% in line with the recommended increase for other fees and charges to academies, this would bring the charge up £29.70 per hour, which could be rounded up to £30. We could also consider removing the 20% discount currently applied to Lincroft and Sharnbrook as of Autumn 2023, as the two schools are no longer buying in 3 days a week.

The table below shows what the charges would look like to the current schools who buy in the service if we increased our charges by a minimum of 10% to cover current staffing costs. However, we may need to consider whether a 10% increase also covers any further staffing costs forecasted from April 2023 onwards, or whether a bigger increase is needed.

School	Delivery per week	Current Charge	Proposed Charge	Notes	Difference in charge to school
Goldington Academy	1 day per week	£7,695	£8,550		£855 increase
Wootton Upper School	13 hours per week + an additional 3 parents evenings each year	£13,662	£15,184	£14,820 for 13 hours delivery a week + £364.20 for the 3 parents evenings	£1,522 increase
Lincroft Academy	Half a day per week	£3,078	£4,275		£1,197 increase
Mark Rutherford School	1 day per week	£7,695	£8,550		£855 increase
Sharnbrook Academy	2 days per week	£12,312	£17,100		£4,788 increase

Total Income from Schools		£44,442	£53,659		£9,217
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- Option 3 – To cease delivery of CEIAG services to schools and withdraw the menu of careers service delivery currently available.

*The option agreed on would be implemented from September 2023 onwards

Consideration needed and potential risks

- Option 1 – The current income from the schools does not cover the costs to the local authority as it stands at the moment, so to continue as it is, means delivering this service at a loss to the council of £7,131. This would mean that £7,131 would need to be funded by general fund or grant income and not at full cost recovery.
If any schools decided to reduce their buy in or cease buying in from September 2023 onwards, then further costs of delivering the service on an ongoing basis would continue at further costs to the council. Schools do not inform us until the summer term, whether they wish to continue with the buy in each academic year.
- Option 2 – Any increases to charges could mean that schools who currently buy in this service, may decide to source their career interview delivery from another provider, if they can find it at a lower rate. If some or all schools decide not to continue to buy in this service, then the staffing costs of the two advisors would need to be absorbed within the councils general fund or grant income, as no income would be covering these costs. Longer term, this might mean consideration is needed as to whether these roles can be funded on an ongoing basis or whether the roles could be used to work towards other priorities i.e. NEET support and tracking and post 16 tracking as a whole.
The proposed uplift of 10% covers staffing costs as they stand this financial year (2022/23), however consideration may need to be taken into account as to whether further increases to staffing costs are due to take place from April 2023 for next financial year and whether a 10% increase is enough.
There are no other risks to the council with regards to us no longer delivering careers interviews in the schools, with regards to our own statutory duties to track and monitor young people from Year 11 – Year 13.
- Option 3 – same as for option 2.

Education Psychology Services

Background

Since 2017-2018 Bedford Borough Council have operated a buyback service for academies and maintained schools for the Education Psychology service, which operates over the course of an academic year. The buyback enables participating schools to engage in a full range of support which includes, assessments, EP consultations, training and access to advice and support. This allows schools to discuss issues impacting on a child or young person with a view to planning a way forward.

The buyback rate when introduced was set at £10.66 per pupil, and this rate did not change until 2022/2023 when the rate was increased by 5% to the current per pupil rate of £11.19.

The Current Picture

The Education Psychology buyback is well received with all bar 3 schools and academies across Bedford Borough buying back into the service.

The service provides the following:

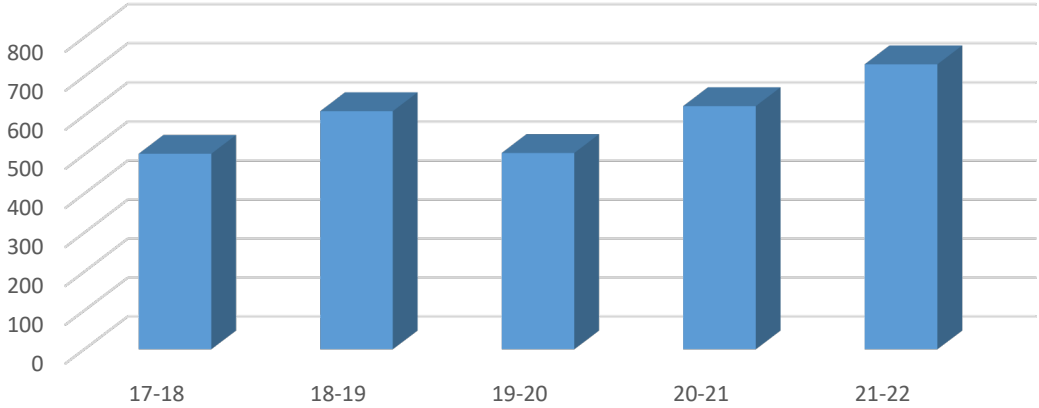
- Statutory work as required under the SEND Code of Practice 2014
- Assessment of pupils with a range of identified Special Educational Needs or Disability (SEND), including those with more complex needs.
- EP Consultations (previously known as Drop Ins).
- Support to the SENDCo to develop whole school/setting provision and practice, including provision management, establishing a graduated approach, effective deployment of resources, and monitoring and reviewing the impact and effectiveness of interventions.
- Support to develop quality first teaching and learning.
- Group supervision for Teachers and Teaching Assistants.
- Problem analysis, identification and assessment leading to intervention, planning and reviews of pupil progress.

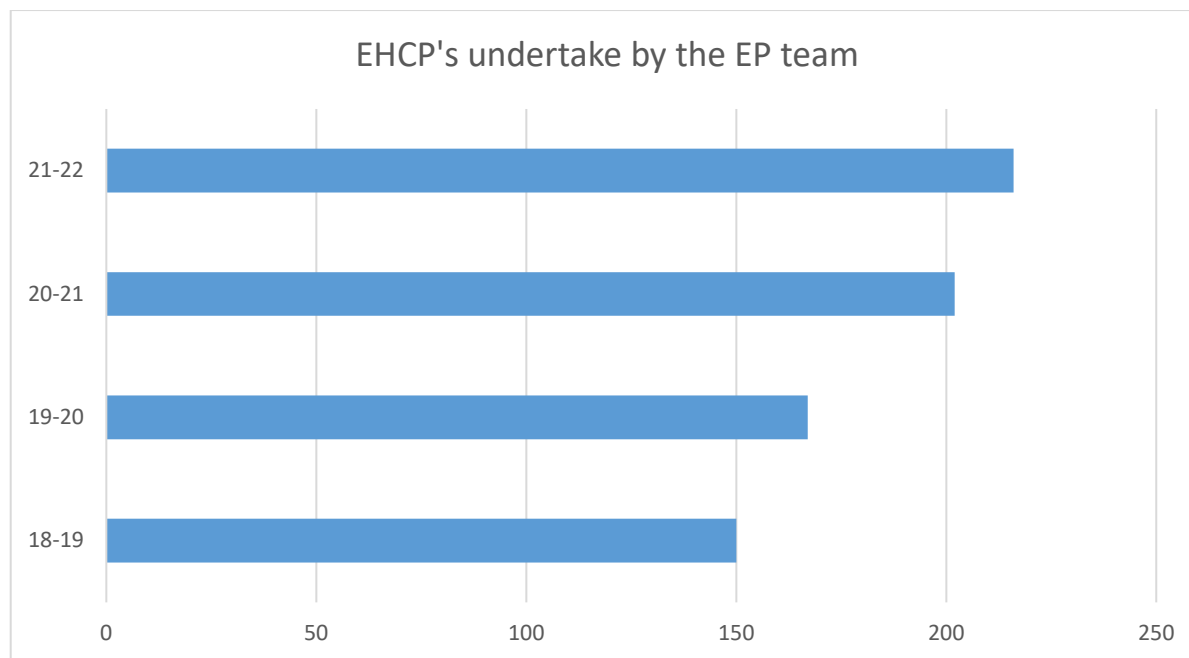
- Behaviour management, including pupils at risk of exclusion and Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA).
- Assessment, advice and intervention such as Cognitive Behavioural Approaches (CBA), Lego Based Therapy and Video Interaction Guidance (VIG). VIG can be used to support both parents and teaching staff to develop positive relationships with children and young people, and to improve teaching practice.
- CPD on topics including: cognitive skills, selective mutism, working memory, dyslexia, and learning difficulties, ADHD, PACE Maths, Trauma and Attachment, and Why do we sleep?
- Ongoing advice and guidance regarding changes in SEN and Disability Policy. This can be delivered as termly meetings for heads, governors and senior staff.

The above are all seen as 'non-statutory' and statutory. The non-statutory work is why it was deemed a service we can trade at an EP team. There is a legal requirement for an EP to carry out work under the SEND Code of practice which must be funded by the council and this cannot be traded. This includes any work under the remit of those who are 0 to 25 years of age and are subject to an Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP). This is seen as statutory work and why part of the EP team budget is council funded.

The demand for both the statutory and non-statutory work has increased significantly over the last 3 years. It should also be noted that having access to Education Psychology at 'SEN Support' and as part of a graduated response to support can have a large cost saving impact further down the line; in councils where Education Psychology is only accessed via a request for an EHC assessment they have seen a large increase in the numbers of requests for EHC assessments and the demand for Education Psychologists has exceeded capacity. By funding some of the statutory elements of the Education Psychology 'buy back' service, the council will be saving funding on the core statutory elements of the EP service as part of an EHC assessment. The charts below shows the increase in the traded work and the second one looks at statutory work.

EP Buy Back
Referrals / traded





Current Charges and Income for Education Psychology Buyback

A review of the current level of work involved with the buyback and the cost associated with this work, has demonstrated that the per pupil rate is much lower than the rate of recovery, and as such the income generated by the buyback is not resulting in a full cost recovery for the service.

The current rate charged to schools is £11.19 per pupil, which results in a total income of £270,710 for 2022/23.

Actual Cost to deliver this service to schools for 2023/2024

Post	FTE	Buyback %	Cost Centre	Total Budget	Buyback Cost
Manager for School Support Services	1	40%	44109	121,189.98	48,476

Educational Psychologist	3.5	70%	45201	263,671.59	184,570
Assistant Psychologist	2.6	90%	45201	109,065.10	98,159
Admin	2.09	75%	45201	26,910.78	20,184
				520,837.45	351,389

The current % of time spent by management and members of the Education Psychology team have been used to calculate the cost of the buyback service, which based on the budget for these posts equates to £351,389.

Options Available, Considerations and Risks

- **Option 1** – To keep the current charge of £11.19 per pupil in place, and 1 school block purchase of 10 assessments at £525 per assessment. If the charge was to remain at £11.19 and the existing school buying back a block of 10 assessments (rather than the full buyback) at £525 per assessment, it would generate an income of £270,710. This would mean that £87,120 would need to be funded by general fund or grant income, as we would not be meeting full cost recovery for this service. The cost to schools of this option is shown in **Appendix A**.
- **Option 2** – To increase the charge to schools to cover the cost of delivering the service, at full cost recovery. This would mean increasing the charge to £14.81 per pupil in order to cover the costs of delivery totalling £356,588. The option to buyback assessment block at £525 per assessment has been left in for the current school this affects. This equates to an increase of 32% on the hourly rate to schools. The impact to schools of this option is shown in **Appendix A**.
- **Option 3** – To increase the current charge of £11.19 per pupil by 10% to £12.31 which is in line with other fees and charges and would generate income of £297,280. This would reduce the impact of increase to full cost recovery straight away to Schools and Academies. The impact to schools of this option is shown in **Appendix A**.
- **Option 4** – To increase Mainstream Schools per pupil rate by 10% to £12.31 in line with other fees and charges and to increase Academies in line with full cost recovery from £11.19 to £14.81. This would generate income of £332,715. The impact to schools of this option is shown in **Appendix A**.

Summary of Options

The Table below summaries the income that would be generated for each option, as well as the deficit of the cost to deliver the service which would need to come out of general fund or grant income.

Option	School type	Rate	Pupil numbers	Income	Difference to cost of delivery to be covered by general fund or grant income
1	All	11.19	23,723	£ 270,710	£85,878
2	All	14.81	23,723	£ 356,588	FULL COST RECOVERY
3	All	12.31	23,723	£ 297,280	£59,308
4	Mainstream	12.31	9,549	£ 117,548	£23,873
	Academies	14.81	14,174	£ 215,167	
All above options include one assessment package for 10 assessments at £525 per assessment. Total: £5,250					

Free School Meals Administration for Academies

Background

Bedford Borough Council have historically charged academies for the administration linked to Free School Meals (FSM) as part of the Service Level Agreements in place for the delivery of Education Welfare Services to academies. The level of service provided by our FSM Administrator includes processing applications for Free School Meals and assessing eligibility using the government eligibility checking databases, keeping accurate records as well as informing the schools of current information and updates around FSM guidance.

The Current Picture

In November 2017, a £2.43 per pupil charge was agreed for Academies and Free Schools through de-delegation. This charge was calculated based on a percentage of the post that provided this service, divided by the number of pupils on roll at that time who came under the deprivation distribution factor.

The charge to the school was then calculated by charging £2.43 per FSM unit for each school, previously based on the Oct 2017 census information (see table below).

This charge was implemented for academic year 2018/19 and this charge has remained unchanged since then. The FSM Administration is undertaken by a Business Support Officer role, grade BBU06. Around 95% of the officer's role is dedicated to FSM Administration across all schools within the Borough, so it is estimated that around 65% of the role is spent on the FSM administration for non-maintained schools, taking into consideration the total FSM units combined across academies and free schools.

The current Service Level Agreements that are in place run from September – July each academic year.

Current Charges and Income for FSM Administration

The current income from schools for FSM admin is currently £13,648.

Cost to deliver this service to schools as of financial year 2022/23

Role	Proportion of Role dedicated to this service	Cost (including on costs and overheads)
Business Support Officer (BBU06)	65%	£20,165
Team Leader for Management oversight (BBU13)	5%	£3,244*
TOTAL cost to the LA		£23,409

*Line management of this post and contract management of the Service Level Agreements sits with the Team Leader for Statutory Support Services. It is estimated that around 5% of the Team Leaders role is dedicated to this, which equates to around £3,244 per year.

As we are not currently operating this service at full cost recovery, as things stand at the moment, £9,761 is currently being funded out of general fund or grant income.

Options Available, Considerations and Risks

- **Option 1** – To keep the current charge of £2.43 in place but apply this rate to the updated FSM units from the Oct 2022 census as shown in appendix A. This is £0.08 more than the de-delegated charged to mainstream schools for FSM of £2.35.

Since 2018/19, the total FSM units across non-maintained schools has increased from 5616.46 to 7917.40 units. If the charge was to remain at £2.43, this would bring in an income of £19,239, which would mean that £4,170 would need to be funded by general fund or grant income, as we would not be meeting full cost recovery for this service.

- **Option 2** – To increase the charge to schools to cover the cost of delivering the service, at full cost recovery, using updated FSM data as shown in appendix A.

This would mean increasing the charge to £2.96 (£23,409/7917.40) in order to cover the costs of delivery. The table below shows what the charges to each school would be, based on their current FSM units, which have been taken from the October 2022 census data. However, we may need to consider whether a rate of £2.96 will cover any increase to staffing costs from April 2023 onwards, or whether a slightly higher rate is required.

- **Option 3** – To increase the current charge of £2.43 by 10%, in line with other fees and charges increases to academies (to £2.67) as shown in appendix A.

Summary of Options

The Table below summaries the income that would be generated for each option, as well as the deficit of the cost to deliver the service which would need to come out of general fund or grant income.

Option	Income	Difference to Cost of Delivery to be covered by general funds or grant income
1	£19,239	£4,170
2	£23,436	FULL COST RECOVERY
3	£21,139	£2,270

Music Service

Summary

The fees and charges for the Music Service is updated from the start of each new school academic year. The Music Services are charged to parents, schools and academies.

Music Service Fees and Charges

The current charges for the academic year 2022/23 and proposed charges for the academic year 2023/20234 are set out in **Appendix A** to this note.

Music Service charges are effective from September each year. The current charge shown relates to 2022/2023 academic year. The proposed charges shown from 01/09/2023 relate to 2023/2024 academic year.

This paper sets out the 3 options that are available for a decision.

Options available

There are three options to consider charging parents, schools and academies in the academic year 2022/2023, which would become effective from September 2023.

- Option 1 – To keep the charge at the current levels and not apply any increase. To add in new charges for new services to be provided and remove charges no longer required.
- Option 2 – To remove the charges no longer required, add in new charges for new services to be provided and increase the ongoing charges by an inflationary increase of 5% as shown in **Appendix A**.
- Option 3 – To remove the charges no longer required, add in new charges for new services to be provided and increase the ongoing charges by an inflationary increase of 10% as shown in **Appendix A**.

Schools Transport

Summary

The fees and charges for the transport services are updated from the start of each new school academic year. The transport services are only charged to parents. These costs were revised from September 2017 as part of the savings target for Children's Services.

Current Average Costs based on operational routes 2022/23

Mainstream - The average cost per student has increased this year from £1,213 to £1,355 per annum which represents an increase of approx. 12%.

The average cost incorporates mainstream expenditure across small vehicle taxis as well as big bus services; the majority of Post 16 applicants travel by big bus however, the higher price of some small vehicle transport inflates the overall average cost per child.

SEND - The average cost per student has increased this year from £4,475 to £4,922 per annum which represents an increase of approx. 10%.

From September 2023 a revised Post 16 SEND transport policy will introduce Personal Travel Budgets (PTB), where this is deemed to be the most efficient means of transport support. Those in receipt of a PTB will receive a banded payment based on the distance from home to establishment. Applicants will not be charged a fee to access the PTB; fees will only apply where contracted transport is awarded. It is expected that PTBs will reduce expenditure on taxis procured for Post 16 SEND transport provision.

Increased costs related to routes tendered/extended for 2022/23

Where viable routes were extended for the 2022/23 academic year; market information and comparative experience of Eastern Region Local Authorities informed that extending contracts and awarding a 5% uplift ensured some level of control over the increased costs.

Retenders were required for some routes; results varied; some significant uplifts were observed however in some instances prices remained relatively static.

Details of current charges

Table 1 below shows the charges that were confirmed for the transport services for the academic year 2022/2023.

Table 1

Annual charge for bus passes	Period of Charge	Charges for 2022/23	% increase against Charges for 2021/22
Post 16 bus pass M/Stream	Annual	£1,014	(+9%)
Post 16 bus pass SEND	Annual	£445	(+9%)
Spare Seats Scheme (Previously Privilege Pass Scheme)	Termly	£353	(+9%)
Low Income Fee Post 16 (M/Stream & SEND)	Annual	£214	(+5%)
Low Income Fee Spare Seats Scheme	Termly	£71	(+5%)
Replacement Pass	N/A	£12	(+20%)

The Table below shows the Number of Students up to this point in the academic year 2022/2023 who have accessed the Transport services.

2022/2023	SEN Students	Mainstream Students
Total	494	1672
P16 Full	29	50
P16 Low Income	24	1

Options available

There are 3 options considered for parent charges in the academic year 2023/2024 which would become effective from the Autumn Term 2023. These options are shown in table 2 below.

- Option 1 – To keep the charge at the current levels and not apply any increase
- Option 2 – To increase the charge by an inflationary increases, in line with 2022/2023 increase as shown in table 1.
- Option 3 – To increase the charge by an inflationary increase of 10% in line with other fees and charges.

Table 2

Annual charge for bus passes	Period of Charge	Charge for 2023/2024 Academic Year Option 1	Charge for 2023/2024 Academic Year Option 2	Charge for 2023/2024 Academic Year Option 3
Post 16 bus pass M/Stream	Annual	£1,014	£1,105	£1,115
Post 16 bus pass SEND	Annual	£445	£485	£490

Privilege bus pass	Termly	£353	£385	£388
Low Income Fee Post 16 (M/Stream & SEND)	Annual	£214	£225	£235
Low Income Fee Privilege	Termly	£71	£75	£78
Replacement	N/A	£12	£14	£13

Replacement Bus Passes

Options for increases to replacement bus pass charges have been shown. However, a 20% increase was imposed for 2022/23 and it is recommended that there is no change made for 2023/24

Inflation and Price indices

The consumer inflation rate as at December 2022 is 9.2%.

The rate of inflation is the change in prices for goods and services over time.

Decisions Required:

- To agree on which option to proceed with to charge parents from Autumn Term 2023.
- To agree to retain replacement bus passes at the current charge of £12 per bus pass

6. Summary of Consultations and Outcome

The briefing notes that formed this document were shared with the Liberal Democrat / Labour Executive Committee as part of the previous administration who were in agreement with the proposed fees and charges.

7. Ward Councillor Views

Report Contact Officer: Chris Morris, Acting Chief Officer for Education, SEND and Schools Infrastructure

File Reference:

Previous Relevant Minutes:

Background Papers:

Appendices: Appendix A: Fees and Charges for Music Service

Category	Description	Details	VAT Rate	Scenario 1 No Change			Scenario 2 5.0%			Scenario 3 10.0%			Key Notes
				Current Charge	Uplift 0%	Charge from 01/09/2023	Current Charge	Uplift 5%	Charge from 01/09/2023	Current Charge	Uplift 10%	Charge from 01/09/2023	
School Charges	Instrumental Project. A term of whole class instrumental tuition on a particular instrument. 60 minutes each week including set up. This includes resources and support for teachers on how musical learning and progression can be evidenced and developed further.	11 x 60 minutes and a consultation meeting	0%	320.00	0.00	320.00	320.00	16.00	336.00	320.00	32.00	352.00	
School Charges	Winter Wonderland – A whole class singing project in which children develop vocal and performance techniques and learn a range of winter-themed songs from a variety of styles, periods, cultures and traditions. Ideal for a school end of term performance or the creation of a celebration video to share with parents.	Autumn term only 11 x 30 minutes (schools will need to book a minimum of 2 projects) and a consultation meeting	0%	160.00	0.00	160.00	160.00	8.00	168.00	160.00	16.00	176.00	
School Charges	Singing Project. A term of whole class vocal development. 60 minutes each week including set up. This includes resources and support for teachers on how musical learning and progression can be evidenced and developed further.	11 x 60 minutes and a consultation meeting	0%	320.00	0.00	320.00	320.00	16.00	336.00	320.00	32.00	352.00	
School Charges	Supported Delivery Singing Project. A term of support in preparation for a concert. This includes 5 x online sessions and access to online resources for a year.	6 x 30 minute online sessions, a training session, and access to online resources for a year. Performance at the Corn Exchange.	0%	140.00	0.00	140.00	140.00	7.00	147.00	140.00	14.00	154.00	
School Charges	Creative Project. 6 week bespoke project that uses creative musical activities to enrich and enhance students' learning based on a curriculum area of the school's choice. This includes resources and support for teachers on how musical learning an progression can be evidenced and developed further.	6 x 60 minutes and a consultation meeting	0%	280.00	0.00	280.00	280.00	14.00	294.00	280.00	28.00	308.00	
School Charges	Creative Project. 6 week bespoke project that uses creative musical activities to enrich and enhance students' learning based on a curriculum area of the school's choice. This includes resources and support for teachers on how musical learning an progression can be evidenced and developed further.	6 x 30 minutes (schools will need to book a minimum of 2 projects) and a consultation meeting Years 1 and 2	0%	140.00	0.00	140.00	140.00	7.00	147.00	140.00	14.00	154.00	
School Charges	Pathways Project. A term of group tuition (no larger than 15) to support young people in the next stage of their musical journey towards small group and individual tuition.	11 x 60 minute sessions	0%	385.00	0.00	385.00	385.00	19.25	404.25	385.00	38.50	423.50	
School Charges	Nurture Pathways - A project designed to make music accessible to children with SEND or other barriers to learning. This will encourage social interaction, co-operation, language development, and communication skills such as sharing and taking turns through musical activities.	11 x 60 minute sessions for up to 8 students with similar difficulties	0%	385.00	0.00	385.00	385.00	19.25	404.25	385.00	38.50	423.50	
School Charges	DJ Pathways - this offers students an opportunity to learn how to DJ using DJ controllers, computers and professional DJ software (all provided as part of the project)	11 x 60 minute sessions for up to 25 students	0%	962.50	0.00	962.50	962.50	48.13	1010.63	962.50	96.25	1058.75	
School Charges	Training for teachers	A range of training is offered to schools (groups and individuals) based on an hourly charge	0%	35.88	0.00	35.88	35.88	1.79	37.67	35.88	3.59	39.47	
School Charges	Instrument hire: Category A individual instrument	Termly fee	0%	15.00	0.00	15.00	15.00	0.75	15.75	15.00	1.50	16.50	
School Charges	Instrument hire: Category B set of instruments 1-5	Termly fee	0%	26.27	0.00	26.27	26.27	1.31	27.58	26.27	2.63	28.90	
School Charges	Instrument hire: Category B set of instruments 6-15	Termly fee	0%	42.03	0.00	42.03	42.03	2.10	44.13	42.03	4.20	46.23	
School Charges	Instrument hire: Category B set of instruments 16-35	Termly fee	0%	63.04	0.00	63.04	63.04	3.15	66.19	63.04	6.30	69.34	
School Charges	Instrument hire: Category C set of instruments 1-5	Termly fee	0%	10.00	0.00	10.00	10.00	0.50	10.50	10.00	1.00	11.00	
School Charges	Instrument hire: Category C set of instruments 6-15	Termly fee	0%	26.27	0.00	26.27	26.27	1.31	27.58	26.27	2.63	28.90	
School Charges	Instrument hire: Category C set of instruments 16-30	Termly fee	0%	42.03	0.00	42.03	42.03	2.10	44.13	42.03	4.20	46.23	
School Charges	Instrument delivery charge	Standard Rate	0%	57.79	0.00	57.79	57.79	2.89	60.68	57.79	5.78	63.57	
School Charges	Charanga Membership for primary schools per school per year	Standard Rate This cannot be subject to an uplift because it is a subsidised rate agreed with Charanga	0%	192.00	0.00	192.00	192.00	0.00	192.00	192.00	0.00	192.00	
School Charges	Charanga Membership for secondary schools per school per year	Standard Rate This cannot be subject to an uplift because it is a subsidised rate agreed with Charanga	0%	260.00	0.00	260.00	260.00	0.00	260.00	260.00	0.00	260.00	
Parental Charges	Individual Instrument Hire	£10 for the 1st term and then £15.38 a term thereafter	0%	10.00	0.00	10.00	10.00	0.50	10.50	10.00	1.00	11.00	
Parental Charges	Individual Instrument Hire	£15.38 a term	0%	15.38	0.00	15.38	15.38	0.77	16.15	15.38	1.54	16.92	
Parental Charges	Termly charge subsidised rate	£5 to cover 1 year	0%	5.13	0.00	5.13	5.13	0.26	5.39	5.13	0.51	5.64	
Parental Charges	Membership of Bedford Kids Chorus	Monthly fee	0%	5.00	0.00	5.00	5.00	0.25	5.25	5.00	0.50	5.50	
Parental Charges	Membership of Bedford Rock School	Monthly fee	0%	15.00	0.00	15.00	15.00	0.75	15.75	15.00	1.50	16.50	
Parental Charges	Membership of Digital Beats	Monthly fee	0%	15.00	0.00	15.00	15.00	0.75	15.75	15.00	1.50	16.50	
Parental Charges	Membership of Urban Academy	Monthly fee	0%	15.00	0.00	15.00	15.00	0.75	15.75	15.00	1.50	16.50	