

Individual Executive Member Decision

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| Title of Report: | Home to School Transport Policy 2013-14 |
| Report to be considered by: | Individual Executive Member Decision |
| Date on which Decision is to be taken: | 31 July 2012 |
| Forward Plan Ref: | ID2498 |

Purpose of Report: To approve the Home to School Transport Policy for 2013-14

Recommended Action: Approval of policy

Reason for decision to be taken: Statutory requirement

Other options considered: None

Key background documentation: Home to School Travel and Transport Guidance - DfE
West Berkshire Home to School Transport Policy 2012/13
C&YP PDC Review Report - Executive Report Item
Proposed West Berkshire Home to School Transport Policy 2013/14
West Berkshire Consultation Document - May 2012

| Portfolio Member Details | |
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| Contact Officer Details | |
|-------------------------|---|
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Implications

Policy: As set out in the report
Financial: None
Personnel: None
Legal/Procurement: None
Environmental: None
Property: None
Risk Management: None
Equalities: None

Consultation Responses

Members:

Leader of Council: Councillor Graham Jones

Overview & Scrutiny Management Commission Chairman: Councillor Brian Bedwell

Ward Members: All Members

Opposition Spokesperson: Councillor Alan Macro

Local Stakeholders: Wide consultation on proposed policy amendments including all in receipt of assistance - responses summarised in Appendix C

Officers Consulted: Ian Pearson; Caroline Corcoran

Trade Union: N/A

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| Is this item subject to call-in. | Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No: <input type="checkbox"/> |
| If not subject to call-in please put a cross in the appropriate box: | | |
| The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval | | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council | | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position | | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Considered or reviewed by O&SMC or associated Task Groups within preceding six months | | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Item is Urgent Key Decision | | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Supporting Information

1. Background

- 1.1 Regulations require Local Authorities to determine a Home to School and College Transport Policy annually and publish details in an admissions composite prospectus (West Berkshire Parents Guides to Admissions) to enable parents to consider transportation implications when choosing preferred school places. These guides are published by September each year.
- 1.2 It is proposed that the 2013/14 policy remains unchanged from the 2012/13 policy other than to make minor amendments to the fare-paying scheme and to introduce Independent Travel Training for some SEN pupils where considered appropriate as detailed sections 3.1.2, 3.1.8 and 6.5.5 of the full proposed policy attached in Appendix A.
- 1.3 The Home to School Transport Review has made some recommendations in relation to the Fare paying scheme which amends the Bands, the costs for each band and the method of payment. These are detailed below and have been incorporated into the full proposed policy attached in Appendix A.
 - (1) It is recommended that the council move to a single payment for fare-payers and post 16 applicants to reduce administrative burden and non payment of the second instalment.
 - (2) It is recommended that the bandings and prices be retained as three bands, but the bandings are slightly amended as follows:
 - Band A - up to 2 miles (a reduction from 3 miles)
 - Band B - 2 - 6 miles (the band is increased to begin at 2 miles instead of 3 miles)
 - Band C - greater than 6 miles
- 1.4 A consultation document (Appendix B) outlining the proposed policy was released as in previous years. The document was also placed on the Council's Website for wider access by parents of pupils in Year 10 (due to transfer to post-16 education in September 2012), parents of pupils in Year 5 (due to transfer to secondary education in September 2012) and Parents of pupils in Nursery Schools and Nursery classes due to enter school in the 2012 following notification via schools. It was also issued to all schools and all Early Years providers and parents currently receiving assistance.
- 1.5 Following the consultation responses it is proposed that the policy for 2013/14 is approved for 2013/14 with only the amendments described in 1.2 above relating to introducing Independent Travel Training for SEN children where appropriate and amendments to the fare-payers scheme.

1.6 The Local Government Ombudsman recently reviewed a transport case and found in favour of West Berkshire Council. However, she suggested a few minor wording amendments to the policy, for clarification. The amendments relate to the following and have been incorporated:

- a definition of the 'suitable or nearest school'
- a sentence which outlines the duty to provide free transport for pupils living within statutory walking distance who are unable to walk to school because of the unsafe nature of the route

Appendices

Appendix A – 2013-14 Home to School Transport Policy-proposed

Appendix B – May 2012 Home to School Transport Consultation Document

Appendix C – Summary of Consultation responses