

Individual Executive Member Decision

Title of Report:	Home to School Transport Policy 2015/16
Report to be considered by:	Individual Executive Member Decision
Date on which Decision is to be taken:	26 th August 2014
Forward Plan Ref:	ID2862

Purpose of Report: To review and approve the Home to School Transport Policy, Fare Payer Scheme and the post-16 transport statement for 2015/16 (statutory requirement) following consultation.

Recommended Action: To approve the Home to School Transport, Fare Payer Scheme and the post-16 transport statement for 2015/16.

Reason for decision to be taken: Statutory requirement

Other options considered: None

Key background documentation: Home to School Transport Policy, Post 16 Statement, Farepaying Scheme,

Portfolio Member Details	
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Implications

Policy:	The Local Authority must publish the 2015/16 policy and the post-16 statement by 31 st August 2014. New statutory guidance has been incorporated into the policy to ensure the Council meets its statutory duty.
Financial:	Extension of provision for post-16 students as a result of the statutory guidance published February 2014.
Personnel:	None
Legal/Procurement:	None
Environmental:	None
Property:	None
Risk Management:	None
Equalities Impact Assessment:	Yes

Consultation Responses

Members:

Leader of Council:	Gordon Lundie
Overview & Scrutiny Management Commission Chairman:	Brian Bedwell
Ward Members:	N/a
Opposition Spokesperson:	David Allen
Local Stakeholders:	Schools, parents and public consultation on website.
Officers Consulted:	CDLT
Trade Union:	N/A

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 Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission or associated Task Groups within preceding six months		<input type="checkbox"/>
Item is Urgent Key Decision		<input type="checkbox"/>
Report is to note only		<input type="checkbox"/>

Supporting Information

1. Background

- 1.1 West Berkshire Council's Home to School Transport Policy sets out the circumstances in which it will provide free transport to children and young people travelling to school or college. It therefore relates to West Berkshire residents of statutory school age (from the term following 5th birthday to the end of Year 11).
- 1.2 West Berkshire Council's post-16 Transport Statement sets out how the Council will meet the requirements of the statutory guidance for post-16 pupils.
- 1.3 Local Authorities are required by law to provide help for some pupils but may also provide help for others on a discretionary basis, such as through the Farepayer Scheme.
- 1.4 The Council reviews its Home to School Transport Policy, post-16 Transport Statement and Farepayer Scheme annually and is required to consult on proposed changes.
- 1.5 The consultation includes:
 - Home to School Transport Policy 2015/16
 - Post 16 Transport Statement 2015/16
 - Farepayer Scheme 2015/16
- 1.6 The changes are outlined in section 2 below.

2. Transport Consultation 2015/16

- 2.1 The consultation was available on the West Berkshire Council website between 27th June and 8th August 2014. It was also highlighted to statutory school age parents through the school's newsletter and text systems. Post-16 parents who already use the fare payer scheme were advised by letter. Respondents were asked for their views on the following proposed changes:

Home to School Transport Policy 2015/2016

- The definition of an available route (previously known as a safe route) has been refined to provide clarity.
- Special Educational Needs pupils in a mainstream school – the policy has been extended to clarify that low income families qualify in certain circumstances
- Reference to the School Transport Behaviour Code has been included
- Discretionary entitlement for post-16 students to places on the school bus, at a discretionary rate has been included
- Low income families can pay for 6th form transport in instalments.
- Exceptional circumstances has been extended to include 6th form students
- Discretionary entitlement is now subject to re-assessment for each academic year.
- Revised appeals process, matching national guidance
- Clarity regarding transport complaints
- Clarity re transport consultation

Discretionary Fare Payer Scheme 2015/2016

- This scheme now guaranteed for 6th form students on existing bus routes, as per the Home to School transport policy
- The prices have been updated
- The date for the opening of the application window has been updated.
- The methodology for allocating places has been altered, in response to feedback from parents.
- Non-West Berkshire residents can access spare places left after West Berkshire residents allocations

Post-16 Transport Statement 2015/2016

- The Statement has been re-drafted following the publication of revised statutory guidance in February 2014.
- The statement includes information on exceptional circumstances, feedback, complaints and consultation.
- The Statement should be read in conjunction with the updated:
 - Travel Guide for 16-19 year old students
 - Home to Schools Transport Policy
 - Behaviour Code

Travel Guide for 16-19 year old students

- Re: 16-19 Bursary scheme – the Guide will be updated in Summer 2014 and will include commentary from each school and College about the use of the bursary and whether students can apply for support with transport.

2.2 During the consultation phase the government issued revised Statutory Guidance (July 2014). This was reviewed in detail, and as a result for clarity, a) the wording under Qualifying School now includes reference to the Education Health and Care Plan and b) more detail was included to expand the explanation about the Appeal Stage. The policy was fully compliant with the new Statutory Guidance.

3. Responses

- 3.1 There were 9 respondents who logged into the online consultation. However, none of the respondents chose to comment on the proposals.
- 3.2 One paper based response was received in support of the introduction of a subsidised rate for sixth form students.
- 3.3 Councillor Allen responded and welcomed the changes and amendments that had been made. He proposed that the eligibility for paying by instalments be extended to all families who receive working tax credit. This change was agreed.

4. Equalities Impact Assessment Outcomes

- 4.1 There is no decision to be made and therefore no Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken (EIA stage 1 completed below).

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 It is recommended that the proposed changes are implemented and the Home to School Transport Policy, Fare Payer Scheme, Post-16 Transport Statement and 16-19 Travel Guide are agreed for 2015/16, subject to the minor amendments noted in 2.2 and 3.3. above.

APPENDIX A

Equality Impact Assessment – Stage One

Name of item being assessed:	Home to School Transport Policy and post-16 Transport Statement for 2015/16 - Consultation
Version and release date of item (if applicable):	
Owner of item being assessed:	Caroline Corcoran
Name of assessor:	Caroline Corcoran
Date of assessment:	

1. What are the main aims of the item?
To agree the Home to School Transport Policy, Fare Payer Scheme and post-16 Transport Statement for 2015/16.

2. Note which groups may be affected by the item, consider how they may be affected and what sources of information have been used to determine this. (Please demonstrate consideration of all strands – age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation)

Group Affected	What might be the effect?	Information to support this.
Age	Positive impact	The policy applies to all children of statutory school age. The proposed 2015/16 policy includes provision for Post 16 students.
Disability	Positive impact	The policy contains criteria for pupils with a disability and the circumstances where transport may be granted in the case of parental disability.
Gender	Positive impact	Gender is not a distinguishing factor in the application process and allocation of school transport.
Race	Positive impact	Race is not a distinguishing factor in the application process and allocation of school transport.
Belief	Positive impact	Belief is not a distinguishing factor in the application process and allocation of school transport.
Location	Positive impact	The policy takes account of urban transport difficulties and seeks to ensure that rural pupils and students are not disadvantaged

Further comments relating to the item:

3. Result (please tick by double-clicking on relevant box and click on 'checked')
<input type="checkbox"/> High Relevance - This needs to undergo a Stage 2 Equality Impact Assessment
<input type="checkbox"/> Medium Relevance - This needs to undergo a Stage 2 Equality Impact Assessment
<input type="checkbox"/> Low Relevance - This needs to undergo a Stage 2 Equality Impact Assessment
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Relevance - This does not need to undergo a Stage 2 Equality Impact Assessment

For items requiring a Stage 2 equality impact assessment, begin the planning of this now, referring to the equality impact assessment guidance and Stage 2 template.

4. Identify next steps as appropriate:	
Stage Two required	
Owner of Stage Two assessment:	
Timescale for Stage Two assessment:	
Stage Two not required:	

Name: Caroline Corcoran

Date: 11.08.14