



PAPER C

Purpose: For Decision

Committee report

Committee	CABINET
Date	13 JULY 2017
Title	POST 16 SCHOOL TRANSPORT POLICY STATEMENT
Report to	CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN SERVICES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The purpose of this paper is approve the Post 16 Transport Policy Statement 2017, following the consultation.

BACKGROUND

2. Statutory guidance from the Department for Education on post-16 transport to education and training requires local authorities to prepare and publish an annual transport policy statement each year specifying the arrangements for the provision of transport for persons of sixth form age in education or training.
3. Isle of Wight Council and its post-16 providers are committed to ensuring transport is available to enable students to access education and training as set out in the policy statement. The support is provided either by the Council or post-16 providers.
4. There is no automatic entitlement to free home to school or college transport once a student is over 16. The authority has considered its resources and the travel to college opportunities for students. Students can attend a college of choice and, if needed, apply to their college's student support for assistance.
5. The Council does offer, under discretionary powers, a transport service to enable 16+ students with a statutory assessment of their learning difficulty or disability to access a place that is the closest suitable provision for their needs.
6. Students from low-income families, in care, or care leavers may be eligible for a yearly bursary through the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund from the Education Funding Agency. This fund replaced the Education Maintenance Allowance in September 2012 and offers students from the most vulnerable families greater financial support towards the cost of staying in further education. Students and their families apply for the bursary directly through their chosen college/post-16 provider.

7. Statutory guidance clarifies the duty to consult with stakeholders in developing the statement before publication.
8. The Isle of Wight College, school sixth forms and post-16 training providers also provide travel information for learners. Southern Vectis provide a variety of reduced fare options for young people and students.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

9. The policy statement fits within the Council's commitment to PRIORITY 2, KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE AND IMPROVING THEIR EDUCATION, within the Corporate Plan. It supports students with learning difficulty or disability to continue into post 16 training or education.

CONSULTATION

10. The public consultation on the 2017 Post-16 Transport Policy Statement ran from 9 May 2017 to 6 June 2017. The authority proposed that the 2016 policy was rolled forward without change to apply for the coming 2017 academic year. Responses were invited by completing a dedicated online survey. There were no responses to the consultation.
11. Additionally the authority wrote to its secondary schools, studio school and Isle of Wight College on 9th May allowing the same timetable for comments but again none were received.

FINANCIAL / BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

12. There is an existing cost to the IWC of £640,000 to provide a transport service for those students with a learning difficulty or disability. No changes have been proposed to the policy and so 2017/18 costs are expected to be broadly in line with current figures as, although student numbers may vary slightly a similar number of vehicles will be required to transport the students to and home from their provider.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

13. Local authorities have a duty to prepare and publish an annual transport policy. The policy must be published on the authority's website by 31 May each year but due to the timing of elections and subsequent committee dates the date was missed. The Department for Education are aware that the timing of elections had created this delay and that we are working to bring this to the council as soon as possible.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

14. The council, as a public body, is required to meet its statutory obligations under the Equality Act 2010 to have due regard to eliminate unlawful discrimination, promote equal opportunities between people from different groups and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it. The protected characteristics are; age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. No adverse impact in regard to race, culture, gender, or

disability arising from this report has been identified. The existing policy has been in place for almost a year and no issues for any of the protected characteristic groups were raised. The policy provides a positive effect for those with a learning difficulty or disability as it details support for this group.

OPTIONS

15. Option 1. To approve the proposed 2017 Post-16 Transport Policy Statement as set out in the Appendix.

OR

16. Option 2. Not to approve the proposed 2017 Post 16 Transport Policy Statement as set out in the Appendix.

RISK MANAGEMENT

17. The action being taken is to approve an annual policy statement which in turn goes on to be published in line with the Council's statutory duty. In approving the plan there is no risk as it ensures that the Council complies with its legal duty requirement to compile, approve and publish a statement. Although the statutory date has been missed following the recent elections the DfE have been advised. If the statement is not approved Isle of Wight Council would not be compliant and officers would have no basis on which to consider any requests from families seeking transport for a post 16 student in their family. Without the policy, restricting the offer to its current service would be difficult and additional costs would likely occur.

EVALUATION

18. The proposed policy statement maintains the authority's current offer for post-16 students. When agreed it meets the requirement to finalise and publicise the Post-16 Transport Policy Statement. Transport, where appropriate, will be provided, in the new School Year

The statement has undergone the required consultation process inviting comment from stakeholders on the following:

- Any comment on the 2016 Post-16 Transport Policy Statement
- Any post-16 travel issues in the stakeholder's respective area

RECOMMENDATION

19. To approve the proposed 2017 Post-16 Transport Policy Statement as set out in the Appendix.

APPENDICES ATTACHED

20. [Appendix](#) – Post 16 Transport Statement

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