



Cabinet Report

Date **11 MAY 2023**

Title **POST 16 TRANSPORT POLICY STATEMENT 2023**

Report of **CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES, EDUCATION AND LIFELONG SKILLS**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The purpose of this paper is to summarise the outcomes of the key stakeholder consultation on the 2023 Post 16 Transport Policy Statement, and to seek Cabinet approval for the 2023 Policy Statement which applies to the 2023 academic year and must be published annually by 31 May.
2. It is a statutory requirement for the Council to consult and publish a Post 16 Transport Policy annually. There are no proposed changes to the 2023 Post 16 policy statement.
3. Post 16 Transport is provided either by the Isle of Wight Council or further education and training providers in accordance with the Post 16 Policy Statement.

RECOMMENDATION

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| 4. That Cabinet approves the proposed Post 16 Transport Policy Statement 2023 as set out in Appendix 1, which incorporates all elements of the previous year's (2022) policy. |
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BACKGROUND

5. Statutory guidance from the Department for Education on Post 16 transport to education and training requires the Isle of Wight Council 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. The policy must be determined and published by 31 May each year.
6. The 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 Isle of Wight Council or further education and training providers.

7. There is no automatic entitlement to local authority funded home to school or college transport once a student is over the age of 16. The Isle of Wight Council has considered its resources and the travel to college opportunities for students. Students can attend a college or school of choice and, if needed, apply to their provider's student support for assistance.
8. The Isle of Wight Council does offer, under discretionary power, a transport service to enable Post 16 students with a Learning Difficulty or Disability (usually with an Education, Health and Care Plan) to access a place that is the closest suitable provision for their needs.
9. Students from low-income families, in care or care leavers may be eligible for a yearly bursary the 16-19 Bursary Fund from the Education Funding Agency. Students and families apply for the bursary directly through their chosen college or Post 16 provider.
10. Statutory guidance clarifies the duty to consult with stakeholders in developing the statement before publication.
11. The Isle of Wight College, school sixth forms and Post 16 training providers also provide travel information for learners. Southern Vectis bus company provide a variety of reduced fare options.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES AND STRATEGIC CONTEXT

12. The recommendation in this report links to the Corporate Plan 2021-25 priority which is to work with local communities to maintain and ensure appropriate local school provision. It supports students with learning difficulty or disabilities to continue into Post 16 training or education.

Responding to climate change and enhancing the biosphere

13. The School Transport Service primarily contracts with Isle of Wight Council approved transport operators to provide vehicles suitable for transporting students with special needs. These operator's license through the Isle of Wight Council meetings its requirement for vehicle emissions. Where the needs of the student allow the service will provide transport through a pass on public bus services.

Economic Recovery and Reducing Poverty

As set out within the corporate plan, this report demonstrates the Council's commitment to work with local communities to maintain and ensure appropriate local school provision and Post 16 transport supports this.

Impact on Young People and Future Generations

14. The decisions the Council makes now not only affect current residents, but may have long term impacts, both positive and negative, on young people and future generations. These impacts may not immediately be apparent or may not emerge for several years or decades. Impacts will be interrelated across the various domains of young people's lives from housing, employment or training, health and the environment.

15. The Isle of Wight Councils provision of transport to certain Post 16 students with learning difficulties and disabilities facilitate those students access to education which in turn may ultimately support their employability. The consultation process invites those young people and their families to contribute to the content of the policy.

Corporate Aims

16. The recommendation in this report directly links to the Corporate Plan 2021-25 priority which is to work with local communities to maintain and ensure appropriate local education provision.

CONSULTATION

17. The Isle of Wight Council key stakeholder consultation on the 2023 Post 16 Transport Policy Statement took place from 13 March 2023 until 31 March 2023. The consultation was available on the Isle of Wight Council website.
18. The Isle of Wight Council wrote to all secondary schools on the Island, the Isle of Wight College, Special Educational Needs and Disability Information Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS) and People Matter inviting them to share with parents and students. There were no comments received following the consultation.

FINANCIAL / BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

19. There is an existing cost to the Isle of Wight Council to provide a transport service for those Post 16 students with a learning difficulty or disability. The annual cost in 2022/23 just exceeded £598,000 out of a £3.6 million overall transport spend. No changes have been proposed to the policy; however, 2023/24 activity is expected to rise with the increase in Education and Health Care Plans (EHCP). Although student numbers may vary slightly, a similar number of vehicles is expected to be required to transport the students to and from home to their education provider. The costs for that service may increase further in line with rising inflation. The transport market has seen rising costs for some time with increasing fuel costs. Also, the number of Post 19 students requiring transport is also under regular review to understand if that cohort is increasing in numbers and associated costs.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

20. Local authorities have a duty to prepare and publish an annual Post 16 Transport Policy Statement. The statement must be published on the Isle of Wight Council's website by 31 May each year for implementation in September 2023.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

21. 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. None of the protected characteristics are impacted.

OPTIONS

22. Option 1. To approve the proposed Post 16 Transport Policy Statement 2023 as set out in Appendix 1 for the 2023/24 academic year.

Option 2. Not to approve the proposed Post 16 Transport Policy Statement 2023 as set out in Appendix 1 for the 2023/24 academic year.

RISK MANAGEMENT

23. The action being taken is to approve an annual Policy Statement which will be published in line with the Isle of Wight Council's statutory duty. Approving the Policy ensures the Council complies with its legal duty to compile, approve and publish a Post 16 Transport Policy Statement. If the Statement is not approved, the Isle of Wight Council would not be compliant with its statutory duties, and staff would have no sound basis on which to consider any requests from families seeking transport assistance for a post 16 students.

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

- Any comment on the 2023 Post 16 Transport Policy Statement
- Any Post 16 travel issues in the stakeholder's respective area

EVALUATION

24. The recommendation is that the Council proceeds with approving the unchanged Post 16 Policy Statement for 2023.

APPENDICES ATTACHED

25. Appendix 1 – Post 16 Transport Statement 2023

BACKGROUND PAPERS

26. This is the link to the online government guidance for Post 16 transport. [Post-16 transport and travel support to education and training \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/guidance/post-16-transport-and-travel-support-to-education-and-training)

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