



Purpose: For Decision

# Cabinet report

Date	<b>15 JULY 2021</b>
Title	<b>POST 16 TRANSPORT POLICY STATEMENT 2021</b>
Report of	<b>CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES, EDUCATION AND SKILLS</b>

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The purpose of this paper is to approve the Post 16 Transport Policy Statement 2021, 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. This was re-issued in January 2019 and recommended a particular format for the policy statement which was adopted for the Council's statement.
3. Isle of Wight Council (IWC) 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 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.
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. 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 IoW 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 for young people and students.

### STRATEGIC CONTEXT

9. The policy statement fits within the Council's commitment to the Outcome in the 2019-2022 Corporate Plan that "All young people will have the best start in life so that they can fill their potential," It supports students with learning difficulty or disability to continue into post 16 training or education.

### CONSULTATION

10. The public consultation, which invited comments, on the 2020 Post-16 Transport Policy Statement ran from 3 February 2021 to 17 March 2021. The authority proposed that the existing policy was rolled forward without change to apply for the coming academic year.
11. Over the period the authority wrote to its secondary schools and Isle of Wight College. No responses were received.
12. The policy statement is normally approved before 31 May, in line with statutory guidance. The local elections resulted in this decision being delayed this year.
13. All Post-16 settings receive a bursary fund, from central government, that can be used to support students facing hardship. It is appropriate for this to be used to support transport costs.

### FINANCIAL / BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

14. There is an existing cost to the IWC of to provide a transport service for those students with a learning difficulty or disability £217,300. This is in-line with the budget. No substantive changes have been proposed to the policy and so 2021/22 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. The number of Post-19 students requiring transport is also under regular review.

### LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

15. Local authorities have a duty to prepare and publish an annual transport policy and must have regard to statutory guidance in its preparation. The policy must be published on the authority's website by 31 May each year.

### EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

16. 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 issues arose last year during the application of the policy. Those with a disability are supported by the policy. No adverse impact in regard to race, culture, gender, or disability arising from this report has been identified.

## OPTIONS

17. To approve the proposed 2021 Post-16 Transport Policy Statement as set out in Appendix 1.
18. Not to approve the proposed 2021 Post 16 Transport Policy Statement as set out in Appendix 1.

## RISK MANAGEMENT

19. 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. If the statement is not approved IWC 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

20. The proposed policy statement maintains the authority's current offer for post-16 students and ensures that IWC have met their statutory duty to consult on, compile, approve and publish the annual statement. The statement has undergone the required consultation process inviting comment from stakeholders on the following:
  - Any comment on the 2021 Post-16 Transport Policy Statement
  - Any post-16 travel issues in the stakeholder's respective area.

## RECOMMENDATION

21. To approve the proposed 2021 Post-16 Transport Policy Statement as set out in Appendix 1.

## APPENDICES ATTACHED

Appendix 1 - Post 16 Transport Statement

## BACKGROUND PAPERS

- [Post-16 transport and travel support to education and training \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)
- [Department for Education \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

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