

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**Decision Report**

Decision Maker:	Executive Member for Education
Date:	3 June 2015
Title:	2015 Post-16 Transport Policy Statement
Reference:	6673
Report From:	Director of Children's Services

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1. Executive Summary

1.1. The purpose of this paper is to inform the Executive Member on the consultation carried out regarding the 2015 Post-16 Transport Policy Statement, taking comments from schools, colleges/post-16 providers, and young people aged 16-19 into account while considering the content of the statement. The paper also presents the detail of the proposed 2015 Post-16 Transport Policy Statement.

2. Contextual information

- 2.1. Statutory guidance from the Department of Education on post-16 transport to education and training requires local authorities to prepare and publish an annual transport policy statement by 31st May each year specifying the arrangements for the provision of transport for persons of sixth form age in education or training.
- 2.2. Hampshire County 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 County Council or post-16 providers.
- 2.3. 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.
- 2.4. The County Council does offer, under discretionary powers, a transport service, on receipt of an annual parental contribution, 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.

- 2.5. 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.
- 2.6. New statutory guidance clarifies the duty to consult with stakeholders in developing the statement before publication.
- 2.7. Hampshire colleges and post-16 providers provide travel information for inclusion in the statement; listing transport and travel schemes offered, any college owned bus services, local public transport links and discounted or subsidised season tickets available to students.

3. Outline of proposals being consulted upon

- 3.1. That the Executive Member approve the proposed 2015 Post-16 Transport Policy Statement with minor amendments. The statement has undergone the required consultation process inviting comment from stakeholders on the following:

- Any comment on the 2014 Post-16 Transport Policy Statement
- Any post-16 travel issues in the stakeholder's respective area

4. 2015 Transport policy statements for students in further education aged 16–18 and continuing students aged 19 (Annexe A)

- 4.1. In February 2015 approval was given to increase the annual contribution paid towards the cost of transport to £525 for 2015/2016. This is payable by one lump sum or three termly instalments of £175.
- 4.2. In February 2015 the criteria for exemption from the £525 annual contribution was revised to match the eligibility criteria for statutory free school meals (FSM). The qualifying benefits are:
 - Income Support
 - income-based Jobseekers Allowance
 - income-related Employment and Support Allowance
 - support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
 - the guaranteed element of State Pension Credit
 - Child Tax Credit (provided the family is not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
 - Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for 4 weeks after a family stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
 - Universal Credit

This allows for a more efficient application process in determining whether an applicant is exempt from the contribution. Families in receipt of FSM can be

cross-checked with the relevant college/school/post-16 provider via the national database.

- 4.3. From September 2014 the Statement of Special Educational Needs and Section 139a Learning Difficulty Assessment has been replaced, in accordance with the 2014 Children and Families Act, by the Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). The statement criteria for those eligible to receive transport assistance has been amended to include those in receipt of an EHCP alongside those in receipt of a Statement of SEN or Section 139a.
- 4.4. Colleges and post-16 providers were contacted in March 2015 and then at regular intervals to request travel information for inclusion in the statement appendices. Colleges from whom no timely response was received were advised that information previously given in the 2014 Post-16 Transport Policy Statement would be published in lieu of more recent information.
- 4.5. The public consultation on the 2015 Post-16 Transport Policy Statement ran from 22 March 2015 – 8 May 2015. Responses were invited by email or by completing a dedicated online survey. There have been 60 responses to the public consultation. These have been taken into consideration when compiling the statement for publication.

5. Impact Issues

- 5.1. No adverse impact in regard to race, culture, gender, or disability arising from this report has been identified. However, to ensure that the 2015 Post-16 Transport Policy Statement allows for the best interests of all young people aged 16-19 to be properly taken into account when applying the published policy an equality impact assessment has been undertaken and is attached to this paper.

6. Recommendations

- 6.1. That the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services:
 - notes the process that has been followed (as set out in the report) and the responses to the public consultation that have been received (as summarised in the revised 2015 Post-16 Transport Policy Statement set out in Annex A).
 - Acknowledges the material changes from the 2014 Post-16 Transport Policy Statement, which are as follows:
 - (i) Revision of the annual contribution to £525 per academic year.
 - (ii) Revision of the criteria for exemption from payment of the annual contribution to match that of statutory free school meals.
 - (iii) Revision of the eligibility criteria for transport assistance to include those in receipt of an Education, Health, and Care Plan.
 - (iv) Revision of statement appendices providing up to date travel information for colleges and post-16 providers
 - Approves the 2015 Post-16 Transport Policy Statement set out in Annex A.

CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:

Links to the Corporate Strategy

Hampshire safer and more secure for all:	yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
Maximising well-being:	yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
Enhancing our quality of place:	yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	

Section 100 D – Local Government Act 1972 – background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

Document

Location

None

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

1. Equalities Impact Assessment:

- 1.1 No adverse impact in regard to race, culture, gender or disability arising from this report has been identified. However, to ensure that the 2015 Post-16 Transport Policy Statement allows for the best interests of all young people aged 16-19 to be properly taken into account when applying the published policy an equality impact assessment has been undertaken.

2. Impact on Crime and Disorder:

- 2.1. None identified.

3. Climate Change:

- a) How does what is being proposed impact on our carbon footprint / energy consumption?
- b) How does what is being proposed consider the need to adapt to climate change, and be resilient to its longer term impacts?
None identified