

CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET Date 10th April 2018

REPORT AUTHOR: County Councillor Myfanwy Alexander
Portfolio Holder for Learning and Welsh Language

SUBJECT: Consultation on the Revised Home to School/College
Transport Policy

REPORT FOR: Decision

1. Summary

- 1.1 The Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 clearly states that the Authority has a duty to transport learners to their nearest suitable school if they meet the qualifying distance criteria.
- 1.2 The Authority's Home to School/College Transport Policy (**Appendix A**) has been amended to simplify the criteria and to include the approved catchment areas in respect of transport for each school. The revised policy also confirms the requirement for the Authority to ensure that all qualifying pupils who live in Powys have access to transport to their nearest suitable maintained school. This, together with proposed changes in respect to transport provision for children with Special Educational and Additional Learning Needs, has been incorporated into the revised policy. The policy also assumes that learners living in Powys will be entitled to transport to their nearest suitable maintained school in Wales if they meet the qualifying distance criteria.
- 1.3 The current policy, in terms of entitlement, is based on the standard qualification distances of 2 miles for primary aged pupils and 3 miles for secondary aged pupils with all pupils attending special schools receiving free school transport. The proposal is to standardise this for pupils attending special schools and to use the Statementing process to identify if any child living within the standard qualification distance is provided with transport according to their ALN/SEN needs.
- 1.4 The provision of home to school transport for post-16 learners is a non-statutory provision and it is proposed that as part of the consultation process the public is asked for their views regarding the potential introduction of a charge for post-16 transport provision together with the level of that charge if implemented. Alongside the consultation process it is proposed that officers undertake discussions with NPTC Group of Colleges in respect of the college funding part or all of the costs of transporting learners to their campuses in Powys. Consultation will also include the current payments that are made to some

learners accessing courses outside the Authority where these courses are not available within County.

- 1.5 The revised policy, when implemented, will provide parents and carers with clarity regarding school catchment areas for the provision of transport, including language of provision in individual schools.

2. Proposal

- 2.1 That the revised home to school/college transport policy in **Appendix A** is approved for consultation;
- 2.2 That a consultation plan is drawn up, in discussion with the Portfolio Holder for Learning and Welsh Language, which will look at suitable methods of engagement;
- 2.3 That the Portfolio Holder for Learning and Welsh Language is given delegated powers to agree the consultation documentation and questionnaire;
- 2.4 That the outcome of the consultation exercise and any proposed amendments are brought to Cabinet in early September for decision;
- 2.5 That the financial impact of the revised policy will be included in the final report following consultation and re-tendering of school contract routes.

3. Options Considered/Available

- 3.1 The alternative option considered was to retain the existing policy although it does not fully meet the requirements of the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 and does not provide clarity to individual learners/parents/carers in respect of school catchment areas. The revised policy is considered to be the fairest and most equitable way for the Council to meet its statutory obligations.

4. Preferred Choice and Reasons

- 4.1 The preferred choice is to undertake consultation on the revised Home to School/College Transport Policy as identified above to provide clarity to parents/carers and young people regarding the Authority's school transport arrangements.

5. Impact Assessment

- 5.1 Is an impact assessment required? Yes/Not at this stage. An impact assessment will be undertaken as part of the final proposals

6. Corporate Improvement Plan

- 6.1 The revised policy will not impact on the Authority's obligations under the Education Act 1996 to comply with parental preference regarding choice of school but may impact on the provision of funded home to school/college transport to a parent/carer's chosen school. The revised policy meets statutory minimum requirements.

7. Local Member(s)

7.1 All learners across the Council are affected by the policy, therefore all local members have an interest.

8. Other Front Line Services

Does the recommendation impact on other services run by the Council or on behalf of the Council? YES / NO

If so, please provide their comments

8.1 Transport – The Senior Manager: Integrated Transport Unit has been fully involved in discussions around the revised policy

8.2 Children’s Social Care Service – No comment

9. Communications

Have Communications seen a copy of this report? YES / NO

Have they made a comment? If YES insert here

Communications Comment: The report is of public interest and requires use of proactive news release and appropriate social media to publicise the decision

10. Support Services (Legal, Finance, Corporate Property, HR, ICT, Business Services)

a. Legal: The recommendation can be supported from a legal point of view

b. The Finance Business Partner notes the contents of the report and will work closely with the service to ensure that the financial impact of the revised policy is costed for inclusion in the final report.

c. Corporate Property (if appropriate)

d. HR (if appropriate)

e. ICT (if appropriate)

11. Scrutiny

Has this report been scrutinised? YES / NO

If YES what version or date of report has been scrutinised Version 4.0

Please insert comments Comments attached

What changes have been made since the date of Scrutiny and explain why Scrutiny recommendations have been accepted or rejected?

11.1 Not applicable

12. Statutory Officers

12.1 The Solicitor to the Council (Monitoring Officer) has commented as follows: “I note the legal comment and have nothing to add to the report”.

12.2 The Head of Financial Services (Acting Section 151 Officer) notes the comments of the Finance Business Partner.

Members’ Interests

The Monitoring Officer is not aware of any specific interests that may arise in relation to this report. If Members have an interest they should declare it at the start of the meeting and complete the relevant notification form.

Recommendation:	Reason for recommendation
<p>1 That the revised home to school/college transport policy in Appendix A is approved for consultation;</p> <p>2 That a consultation plan is drawn up, in discussion with the Portfolio Holder for Learning and Welsh Language, which will look at suitable methods of engagement;</p> <p>3 That the Portfolio Holder for Learning and Welsh Language is given delegated powers to agree the consultation documentation and questionnaire;</p> <p>4 That the outcome of the consultation exercise and any proposed amendments are brought to Cabinet in early September for decision</p> <p>5 That the financial impact of the revised policy will be included in the final report following consultation and re-tendering of school contract routes.</p>	<p>To ensure that the Authority’s home to school/college travel arrangements meet the requirements of the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 and to provide clarity to parents/carers and young people regarding the Authority’s school transport arrangements.</p>

Relevant Policy (ies):	Current Home to School/College Transport Policy (as amended)
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Within Policy:	Y	Within Budget:	Y
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Relevant Local Member(s):	All
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Person(s) To Implement Decision:	Gareth Jones
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Date By When Decision To Be Implemented:	30 th April 2018
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Contact Officer Name:	Tel:	E-mail:
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Background Papers used to prepare Report:

The Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008
The Learner Travel Information (Wales) Regulations 2009
The Safety on Learner Transport (Wales) Measure 2011
The Learner Travel: Statutory Provision and Operational Guidance 2014 and related provision for school/learner transport in Wales
The Travel Behaviour Code Statutory Guidance (June 2014)