

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Learning and School Effectiveness
Children and Families

DECISIONS made by the Lead Member for Learning and School Effectiveness – Councillor Nick Bennett, and the Lead Member for Children and Families – Councillor Sylvia Tidy on Monday 30 June 2014 at County Hall, Lewes

Councillors Field and St Pierre spoke on item 4 (minute 4)
Councillors Charlton, Field and St Pierre spoke on item 5 (minute 5)
Councillors Bentley, Charlton, Field, Keeley, St Pierre and Simmons spoke on item 7 (minute 7)

1. MINUTES

1.1 The Lead Member approved as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of 25 April 2014.

2. INTERESTS

2.1 Councillor Simmons declared a personal interest in Item 7 in that he is a Governor at Heathfield Community College, but did not consider this to be prejudicial.

3. REPORTS

3.1 A copy of each report referred to below is contained in the minute book.

4. REVISED HOME TO SCHOOL TRAVEL POLICY

4.1 The Lead Member considered a report by the Director of Children's Services which sought approval of changes to the Home to School Transport (HTST) policies, to set out more clearly the future approach to HTST.

DECISION

4.2 **RESOLVED** to approve the changes to the School Transport/SEND Travel Assistance policies.

Reasons

4.3 The revised policies are in line with our statutory requirements. Introducing the Personal Transport Budget and Independent Travel Training offer will support efforts to maximise efficiency and reduce HTST costs, as well as offering families more flexibility over how their children and young people with SEND travel to school or college.

5. POST-16 TRANSPORT 2014/15

5.1 The Lead Member considered a report by the Director of Children's Services which sought approval of the Post-16 Transport Policy for 2014/15.

DECISION

- 5.2 RESOLVED to (1) note the changes to the Post-16 Transport Policy;
(2) agree the Post-16 transport statement for 2014/15 for learners aged 16-18 in further education, continuing learners aged 19 and over and young people aged 19-24 with learning difficulties; and
(3) note the continuing support for Further Education students from low income families, and the continuation of subsidised rail fares open to all students regardless of family income as shown in Appendix 1.

Reasons

5.3 Although there is an expectation that young people will remain in some form of education or training until they reach the age of 18, the statutory school age has not changed and remains 16. Support with post-16 transport is therefore discretionary, and support for students with the greatest financial need will continue for 2014/15. However this provision will need to be reviewed again for 2015/16. The changes in the Policy reflect the change agreed by the Lead Member to reduce the annual travel grants in line with the required savings outlined in the Medium Term Financial Plan and the introduction of means-testing post-16 students with learning difficulties or disabilities.

6. REMOVAL OF COMMUNITY AREAS FOR HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT FROM SEPTEMBER 2015

6.1 The Lead Member considered a report by the Director of Children's Services which sought agreement not to take forward a proposal to remove community areas from the Home to School Transport Policy.

DECISION

- 6.2 RESOLVED to (1) note the information contained in the report and the comments received during the recent consultation exercise; and
(2) agree that the proposal is not taken forward.

Reasons

6.3 The financial risk associated with schools changing their community area is no longer relevant, as the existing HTST for children living in shared community areas is being implemented as written, in accordance with the decision taken by the Lead Member on 20 January 2014, so that pupils who meet the eligibility criteria are provided with transport to their nearest school.

6.4 Should the decision taken on 20 January 2014 be reversed, the case for removing community areas from the HTST policy would need to be re-examined.

7. RESPONSE TO PETITION REGARDING HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT PROVISION FOR CHILDREN LIVING IN SHARED COMMUNITY AREAS IN EAST SUSSEX

7.1 The Lead Member considered a report by the Director of Children's Services which set out a response to a petition received by the County Council on 13 May 2014.

7.2 Councillors Bentley, Keeley and Simmons, spoke as Local Members. Councillor Bentley raised the issues of capacity and capital spend at Hailsham Community College. Councillor Keeley raised the issue of future developments in the Hailsham area and the

impact on the College. Councillor Simmons raised the possibility of a commercial solution to the transport issues.

7.3 Mr Tom Culbert spoke on behalf of local parents, Mr Alan Powell spoke as the Headteacher of Heathfield Community College, and Councillor Bill Gower spoke as the Chair of Herstmonceux Parish Council.

DECISION

7.4 RESOLVED to (1) not reverse the policy in the case of the joint area of Herstmonceux and Windmill Hill;

(2) work with parents, the Colleges and other interested parties in future developments; and

(3) undertake a review of the impact of the implementation of the policy in January 2015.

Reasons

7.5 The policy doesn't affect the parental right to express a preference for a school place. There will be information available in January 2015, including preferences for the 2015/16 school year, which will be used to assess the impact of the policy.