

Committee:	Lead Member for Education and Inclusion, Special Educational Needs and Disability
Date of meeting:	19 June 2017
Title of Report:	Post-16 Transport Statement 2017-2018
By:	Director of Children's Services
Purpose:	To approve the proposed Post-16 Transport Statement for the 2017-2018 academic year

RECOMMENDATION:

The Lead Member is recommended to approve the Post-16 Transport Statement for the 2017-18 academic year as shown in Appendix 3, following the required consultation.

1. Background information

1.1 Local authorities do not have a statutory duty to provide free transport to school or college students who are above compulsory school age; however East Sussex County Council (ESCC) remains committed to providing support for sixth form students who demonstrate exceptional circumstances regarding the journey to a suitable placement.

1.2 In addition to meeting the cost of transport for eligible children, the Home to School Transport budget covers the following discretionary areas for sixth form learners:

- specialist transport for students needing support due to their Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) and other difficulties;
- bespoke programmes for independent travel training;
- a hardship fund divided between the main Further Education (FE) colleges to support the most vulnerable young people; and
- subsidised rail tickets for all students regardless of family income.

2. Supporting information

2.1 Local authorities are obliged to consult on and publish the Post-16 transport policy statement each year. The statement must specify the arrangements for the provision of transport or otherwise that the authority considers necessary to facilitate the attendance of all persons of sixth form age receiving education or training.

2.2 The consultation document is shown in **Appendix 1**. The changes from the 2016-17 statement were minimal, with changes mainly to dates and names of panels dealing with applications. Ringmer Community College was removed from paragraph 5 as it will no longer cater for sixth form students from September 2017.

2.3 Consultation took place for four weeks between 25 April and 22 May 2017. There were seven comments made and these are set out in **Appendix 2**. The main concern related to additional stress for young people and their families at having to arrange transport. Respondents cited logistical difficulties and worries about the timing of cessation of support.

2.4 These responses are similar to those made when the current policy was set. This dates back to 12 November 2015, when the Lead Member for Learning and School Effectiveness

approved changes to reduce spend on the discretionary home to school transport budget in accordance with savings requirements set out in the County Council's agreed Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP).

2.5 At the time, two parallel consultations took place; the first, on reducing the level of support for students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), and the second on removing travel support for post-16 students from low income families and link transport for students living in rural areas where public transport is intermittent.

2.6 The proposals were adopted and came in to force from the start of the 2016/2017 academic year. The policy is the same as set out in the draft Post-16 Transport Statement (Appendix 1).

2.7 Since the consultation it is proposed the authority will in future consider applications for transport support for young people with SEND up to the age of 25 in line with Education, Health and Care Plans.

3. Conclusion and reason for recommendation

3.1 The County Council has carried out its legal duty to consult on the annual Post-16 Transport Statement. Since consultation there have been some small revisions to the wording but, in essence, the level of support the policy provides remains unchanged.

3.2 The Lead Member is therefore recommended to agree the Post-16 Transport Statement as outlined in **Appendix 3**.

STUART GALLIMORE

Director of Children's Services

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Local Members: All

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Draft Post-16 Transport Statement for consultation
Appendix 2 – Comments received and local authority response
Appendix 3 – Proposed Post-16 Transport Statement