

Title of report: **Changes to the operation of the Transport and Student Support Panel**

Purpose of report: **To update members on the progress regarding amendments to the Transport and Student Support Panel.**

1 Background

1.1 On 21 March 2017, members considered a paper to change the terms of reference and the name of this Panel. The amendments were needed to reflect the Panel's current purpose and to make it clearer to parents that the Transport and Student Support Panel is actually an 'appeal' panel for assistance with home to school travel costs.

1.2 The document prepared for consideration is shown in **Appendix 1**.

1.3 Members RESOLVED to recommend to Governance Committee to agree the proposals to change the name of the Transport and Student Support Panel to Discretionary Transport Appeal Panel and to adopt the amended terms of reference.

1.4 Governance Committee agreed on 27 June to recommend the proposed changes to the County Council and this will be considered at the Full Council meeting on 11 July. Members will be given a verbal update on the outcome.

Title of report: **Changes to the operation of the Transport and Student Support Panel**

Purpose of report: **To amend the Terms of Reference for the Transport and Student Support Panel and agree a name to reflect its modified purpose.**

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) Agree to the amended Terms of Reference as set out in Annex 1.**
 - 2) Agree that the Panel formally changes its name to Discretionary Transport Appeal Panel**
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1 Background

1.1 The current panel was created many years ago when the school transport panel merged with the awards panel. Its purpose is to determine travel arrangements (under discretionary powers) for children who are not otherwise eligible and to award financial payments to further and higher education students to assist them with their studies.

1.2 The further education and higher education landscape has changed significantly in recent years. Higher education loans and grants are now administered by Student Finance England (formerly Student Loan Company) and financial support to further education students is dealt with by the education provider through Bursary Schemes. These superseded Education Maintenance Allowances (EMA) which were phased out in 2012.

1.3 The 'student support' function of the panel is therefore obsolete and there is the need to amend the terms of reference.

1.4 There remains the need to have in place a review/appeals procedure for parents to follow should they have a disagreement about the eligibility of their child for travel support.

1.5 The Transport and Student Support Panel is constituted for this purpose. However, its name is ambiguous. Members have also recently expressed a wish to rename this Panel to make it clearer for parents.

1.6 It is therefore proposed to change the name to the Discretionary Transport Appeal Panel.

2. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

2.1 It is recommended to adopt the amended terms of reference to reflect the current and ongoing role of the Panel.

2.2 It is recommended to rename the Transport and Student Support Panel to Discretionary Transport Appeal Panel. This will better reflect the Panel's purpose and make clearer to parents that they are in an appeals process.

2.3 If approved, a report will be submitted to the Governance Committee.

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Current

Transport and Student Support Panel

Terms of Reference

- (i) To exercise the powers and duties of the County Council in relation to (i) the provision or payment of boarding and tuition allowances for individual pupils and (ii) awards to individual students for further and higher education, in both instances where the Director of Children's Services refers the case to the Panel for resolution rather than dealing with it under their delegated powers.
- (ii) To consider individual cases and make arrangements on behalf of the County Council to pay for or provide transport to and from school for pupils whom the Director of Children's Services does not consider to qualify either statutorily or under the normal policy of the County Council for such transport.

Membership

Three members of the Regulatory Committee.

Proposed

Discretionary Transport Appeal Panel

Terms of Reference

- (i) To consider individual cases and make arrangements on behalf of the County Council to pay for or provide transport to and from an education provider for pupils and students whom the Director of Children's Services does not consider to qualify either statutorily or under the normal policy of the County Council for such transport.

Membership

Three members of the Regulatory Committee.