

Committee:	Lead Member for Education and Inclusion, Special Educational Needs and Disability
Date:	26 June 2018
Title of Report:	Post-16 Transport Statement 2018-2019
By:	Director of Children's Services
Purpose of Report:	To approve the proposed Post-16 Transport Statement for the 2018-2019 academic year

Recommendation:

The Lead Member is recommended to approve the Post-16 Transport Statement for the 2018-19 academic year as shown in Appendix 3.

1. Financial appraisal

- 1.1 Local authorities do not have a statutory duty to provide free transport to school or college for 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 To meet this commitment, 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 Disabilities (SEND) and other difficulties;
 - Bespoke programmes of independent travel training;
 - a hardship fund divided between the main Further Education 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 document that went out for consultation is shown in Appendix 1. The changes from the 2017-18 statement were minimal with changes to dates and prices of travel costs. Rye Studio School was removed from section 5 due to its closure.
- 2.3 Consultation took place between 30 April and 31 May 2018. There were two comments made and these are set out in Appendix 2.
- 2.4 Since consultation, the rail concession scheme has successfully been negotiated for a further academic year. There are minor changes to the way students will need to purchase tickets. The Southern railway web address has been amended in the proposed Post 16 Transport Statement and full instructions will appear online.
- 2.5 The cost of a Freedom Ticket is due to rise from £16 to £17 per week. This is the first rise since April 2015. As the parental contribution towards transport for young people with SEND (in agreed cases) is directly linked to the cost of a Freedom Ticket, the proposal is to increase the parental contribution so the costs are aligned. However, this increase is above the 2% limit officers can agree. The increased cost of a Freedom Ticket was not known until April 2018. This was prior to the consultation on the Post 16 transport statement but after the deadline for seeking approval for increases in fees/ charges which fell in February as part of the Council's 2018/19 budget setting process. Approval for the increased charge for the parental contribution will be sought from Members as part of performance reporting for Quarter 1.

- 2.6 The proposed increase is £38 per annum unless the low income threshold is met in which case the increase will be £19 pa. This is based on the following calculation:
- Current contribution – Freedom ticket £16 x 38 weeks = £608/£304 for low income.
 - Proposed contribution – Freedom ticket £17 x 38 weeks = £646/£323 for low income.

This represents an increase of 6.25%.

- 2.7 Should the increase be approved, parents will be advised that the new tariff will be effective from September 2018. If the increase is declined, the policy and statement will revert to the current charge as shown in paragraph 2.6.

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 the Transport Statement – Appendix 3 to fulfil its statutory duty.

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Local Members: All

Background Documents:

- Post-16 transport to education and training

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Draft Post-16 Transport Statement for consultation

Appendix 2 – Comments received

Appendix 3 – Proposed Post-16 Transport Statement