

Committee:	Lead Member for Education and Inclusion, Special Educational Needs and Disability
Date:	3 June 2019
Title of Report:	Post-16 Transport Policy Statement 2019-2020
By:	Director of Children's Services
Purpose of Report:	To approve the proposed Post-16 Transport Policy Statement for the 2019-2020 academic year

Recommendation:

The Lead Member is recommended to approve the Post-16 Transport Policy Statement for the 2019-20 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.
- 1.2 This policy uses the term post 16 to include both learners of sixth form age and those with learning disabilities up to the age of 25 years

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 attached at Appendix 1.
- 2.3 The Department for Education (DfE) issued updated guidance on Post-16 transport and travel support to education and training in January 2019. They had helpfully issued a suggested template model and we have decided to use this as it gives additional information regarding potential sources of support for students.
- 2.4 In terms of direct support from ESCC, the proposed policy remains unchanged from 2018/19. There are, however, increased costs for students. The Freedom Ticket will rise from £17 to £17.50. This cost is set by the local authority in consultation with the bus operators. In turn, the contribution from families in cases where support is given will rise by the same amount as the contribution is based on the cost of a Freedom Ticket. There is also an increase to the charge to buy a vacant seat on a contracted coach. The charge is representative of the average cost of a seat across all school coaches.
- 2.5 Consultation took place between 22 March and 3 May 2019. Secondary schools, colleges and special schools were asked to comment on the proposed policy statement. Additionally, they were asked to bring it to the attention of current Year 11 students as well as current sixth

formers (and their parents/carers). There were six comments received and these are set out in Appendix 2. The County Council's legal services team were also consulted to ensure compliance with legal requirements.

3. Conclusion and reason for recommendation

- 3.1 ESCC has carried out its legal duty to consult on the annual Post-16 Transport Policy statement.
- 3.2 The Lead Member is therefore recommended to agree the Post-16 Transport Policy statement as outlined in Appendix 3 to fulfil its statutory duty.
- 3.3 After publication, ESCC may revise a statement to change the arrangements specified should it be considered necessary.
- 3.4 The DfE has indicated that it plans to carry out an audit of Local Authorities' Post-16 Transport Policy during the coming year.

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Local Members: All

Background Documents:

- Post-16 transport and travel support to education and training

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Draft Post-16 Transport Policy Statement for consultation

Appendix 2 – Comments received

Appendix 3 – Proposed Post-16 Transport Policy Statement for 2019-20