

<b>Report to:</b>	<b>Lead Member for Education and Inclusion, Special Educational Needs and Disability</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>9 April 2026</b>
<b>By:</b>	<b>Director of Children’s Services</b>
<b>Title of Report:</b>	<b>Post-16 Transport Policy Statement 2026-2027</b>
<b>Purpose of Report:</b>	<b>To approve the proposed Post-16 Transport Policy Statement for the 2026-2027 academic year</b>

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## **RECOMMENDATION:**

**The Lead Member is recommended to approve the Post-16 Transport Policy Statement (“the Statement”) for the 2026-27 academic year as set out in Appendix 3 of this report.**

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### **1. Background**

1.1 Once young people reach the end of the compulsory school leaving age, the assistance local authorities are required to provide with transport to school or college changes. There is no duty to provide the free home to school transport that some younger children are entitled to (because of, for example, age and distance to the nearest school or because the walking route is not available). There is a duty, however, on the local authority to provide travel assistance to learners of sixth form age and adult learners if it is considered necessary on a case-by-case basis.

1.2 The County Council exercises its discretion to determine what transport or financial support is necessary to facilitate young people’s attendance at educational settings. To inform young people and their parents’ what arrangements are available locally, the Statement must be published each year. The Statement aims to be a single point of reference that outlines the help that might be available through the County Council, schools, colleges and transport operators to help all young people of sixth form age and adult learners aged 19+ (up to 25) who have an Education, Health and Care plan (“EHC plan”) to get to school and college. The Statement includes information about:

- fares and concessions.
- sources of financial help; and
- the Council’s travel assistance policies for learners with an EHC plan.

1.3 The County Council is required to consult on the Statement annually before it is published, on or before 31 May.

### **2. Supporting information**

2.1 A consultation took place between 27 February 2026 and 30 March 2026 and sought views on the draft Statement which is set out in Appendix 1 of the report. At the time of publication of this report, the consultation was still live and therefore Appendix 2 and Appendix 3 of this report are to be published separately following the closure of the consultation.

2.2 The consultation asked for comments from secondary schools, colleges and special schools on the proposals. Additionally, they were asked to bring it to the attention of current Year 11 students as well as current sixth formers (and their parents or carers).

2.3 Changes in the draft Statement were minimal and related to dates and contact details.

2.4 Travel costs were correct at the time of consultation and reflected the increased cost of a Freedom weekly ticket which went from £15 to £20 per week on 16 February 2026. This increase signifies the end of the Bus Service Improvement Plan funding from central government that previously supported bus fare reductions in the county.

2.5 Where assistance is agreed for a learner aged 16-19 with an EHC plan, a parental contribution towards the cost of travel is required. As the contribution mirrors the cost of a Freedom weekly ticket, the charge in 2026/27 will rise to £760 per student from £570. Eligible low-income families will pay half this amount (£380).

2.6 As the rise represents a 33% increase, consultees were asked to comment specifically on this aspect of the draft statement alongside any other comments.

2.7 After publication, the County Council may amend the Statement to update prices or other information as considered necessary.

### Consultation responses

2.8 Following the closure of the consultation on 30 March 2026, a summary of consultation responses will be published in Appendix 2 to this report.

2.9 The Statement proposed for approval incorporating feedback from the consultation will be published as Appendix 3 to this report.

### **3. Conclusion and reason for recommendation**

3.1 The County Council has carried out its legal duty to consult on the Statement. The Statement must be published by 31 May each year and must be clearly dated showing the academic year to which it applies.

3.2 The Lead Member is therefore recommended to approve the Statement as outlined in Appendix 3 of this report for it to be published by 31 May as required under current legislation.

### **CAROLYN FAIR**

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### LOCAL MEMBERS

All

### BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None