

DECISION REPORT TO CABINET MEMBER

From: Sarah Hammond, Corporate Director for Children, Young People and Education

To: Beverly Fordham, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

Subject: Post 16 Transport Policy Statement 2025/26

Decision no: 25/00044

Key Decision : Yes

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of report: CYPE Cabinet Committee – 15/07/2025

Future Pathway of report: Cabinet Member Decision

Electoral Division: *(list the electoral division/s, and local Member/s affected: Identify Members using this link: <https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/mgMemberIndex.aspx?bcr=1>)*

Is the decision eligible for call-in? Yes

Summary:

Each year KCC has a legal duty to consult on its policy for Post 16 Transport including Post 19 and publish a Post 16 Transport Policy Statement.

Recommendation(s):

That the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills:

AGREE the Post 16 Transport Policy Statement including Post 19 Transport 2025/26.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Introduce KCC has a duty to consult on and publish its Post 16 Transport Policy Statement every year. Whilst there is no statutory duty to provide transport for Post 16 Learners, there is a duty to consider applications for

assistance with transport and to enable access to education and training to age 18. The transport policy sets out how KCC will meet this duty and what learners can expect by way of support.

- 1.2 KCC consulted with current and future service users between 27 January and 23 March 2025 on a Post 16 Transport Policy Statement for 2025/26, stating that no changes were proposed for this year. The policy does clarify some wording relating to how contributions and refunds are made, to better explain these processes. It also included some limited new wording to explain KCC's current approach more clearly. However, it was necessary to consider the Post 16 Transport Policy Statement for 2025/26 fulfil our statutory responsibilities for annual review.

2. Key Considerations

- 2.1 A companion paper discusses proposed provision for 2026/27, which includes potential changes in how support will be delivered for that academic year. It was necessary to consult on both transport policies concurrently to fulfil Kent's legal duties, while providing parents and learners with sufficient early warning of potential changes for future academic years
- 2.2 No further considerations are required as this policy remains unchanged from Kent's previous 2024/25 policy.

3. Background

- 3.1 The policy statement makes it clear that in the first instance there is an expectation that all learners of sixth form age, including those with SEND (Special Educational Need and Disabilities) and/or an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) will make use of the Kent 16+ Travel Saver. This is a discretionary scheme which aids access to both education and employment with training. This provides up to a 50% reduction in travel costs for the average user. Learning providers, at their discretion, can further subsidise this using bursary funding and we would expect bursary to be provided for up to 50% of the cost for low-income families. Because schools and colleges use bursary funding at their discretion, some choose to subsidise other localised bus travel cards as opposed to the KCC scheme which offers a broader transport offer.
- 3.2 In addition to this provision, the Policy Statement outlines the following additional options available to learners of sixth form age:
 - 3.2.1 Direction to provider led 16 to 19 Bursary Fund
 - 3.2.2 Subsidised travel cards for Young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET)
 - 3.2.3 Active Travel Strategy
 - 3.2.4 Vacant Seat Payment Scheme
 - 3.2.5 Care to Learn
 - 3.2.6 Alternative Support for those learners requiring additional assistance
- 3.3 Local authorities also have a duty to encourage, enable and assist young people with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) to participate in

education and training, up to the age of 25. The following options are available for adult learners:

- 3.3.1 16 to 19 Bursary Fund – learners 19 and over could also get a bursary if they either:
- 3.3.2 are continuing a course they started aged 16 to 18 (known as being a '19+ continuer'), or
- 3.3.3 have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)
- 3.3.4 Active Travel Strategy
- 3.3.5 Care to Learn, for young parents under 20.
- 3.3.6 Alternative Support for those learners requiring additional assistance

3.4 KCC currently provides a Kent 16+ Travel Saver to 6,625 pupils. 1,334 Post 16 pupils receive support via a KCC provided vehicle. 148 Post 16 pupils are provided a Personal Transport Budget. The number of young people using KCC arranged transport to FE colleges has nearly doubled in the past 5 years, in line with the extension of duties for SEN up to 25, with the average cost of transport increasing by around 40% over the same period.

4. Options considered and dismissed, and associated risk

No alternatives considered as policy remains unchanged from previous year.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 The Home to School Transport net budget is £97.7m for 2025-26. There are no specific grants for home to school transport and the Council are expected to fund their responsibilities through the General Fund (Council Tax and other wider council funding) or where applicable, parental contributions. This budget covers mainstream, post 16 and SEN transport for eligible children aged up to 25.
- 5.2 The costs will vary depending on take up levels and journeys undertaken by cardholders. The Council currently spends approximately £10m per annum on Post 16 transport to schools and further education providers. There are no substantive changes proposed to the 2025-26 policy and savings resulting from changes made to this policy in 2024-25, including the introduction of charging, ceasing lunchtime pick-ups and changes in eligibility for Post 19 learners have been achieved and are expected to continue, as detailed in the previous key decision (decision number [23/00069](#)).

6. Legal implications

- 6.1 The requirements placed on a local authority are defined in the Education Act 1996 (as amended), Education and Skills Act 2008, Education and Inspections Act 2006, Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 and the Equality Act 2010.
- 6.2 Local authorities do not have a general obligation to provide council tax funded or subsidised post 16 travel support but do have a duty to prepare and publish

an annual transport policy statement specifying the arrangements for the provision of transport or other support that the authority considers it necessary to make to facilitate the attendance of all persons of sixth form age receiving education or training.

- 6.3 The policy statement also sets out the duties on the LA to consider requests for transport support. KCC is required to enable access to education and will consider applications for support where a Kent 16+ Travel Saver pass is not suitable. Where support is agreed, the policy makes clear that learners will initially be assessed for Travel Training and alternative transport arrangements will only be provided where this training is not appropriate. Where additional support is refused, learners can appeal to the Transport Regulation Committee Appeal Panel.
- 6.4 Local authorities also have a duty to encourage, enable and assist young people with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) to participate in education and training, up to the age of 25.

7. Equalities implications

- 7.1 As the policy remains unchanged from the previous annual iteration, the EqIA did not identify any new or unmitigated risks that required further consideration.
- 7.2 Similarly, respondents did not provide any new suggestions to those that were already considered. This suggests that Kent's EqIA sufficiently identified how the proposed policy impacts local residents

8. Data Protection Implications

- 8.1 No DP implications as process and policy remain unchanged.

9. Other corporate implications

- 9.1 A companion paper discusses proposed provision for 2026/27, which includes potential changes in how support will be delivered for that academic year. It was necessary to consult on both transport policies concurrently to fulfil Kent's legal duties, while providing parents and learners with sufficient early warning of potential changes for future academic years

10. Governance

- 10.1 Policy will be deployed by Fair Access Service in CYPE

11. Conclusions

- 11.1 Given the unchanging nature of school transport for the 2025/26 academic year and the statutory requirement to determine a new policy in spite of no changes, this policy statement can be determined for the forthcoming academic year
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Recommendation(s):

That the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills:

AGREE the Post 16 Transport Policy Statement including Post 19 Transport 2025/26.

10. Background Documents

Cabinet report

11. Appendices

- *Post 16 Transport Policy – Appendix A*
- *Independent Consultation Analysis – Appendix B*
- *Consultation documents including EqIA - [Post 16 School Transport for Mainstream and SEND Students | Let's talk Kent](#)*

12. Contact details (please insert details below)

Report Author: Craig Chapman	Director: Christine McInnes
Job title: Assistant Director - Fair Access and SEN Processes	Job title: Director of Education and SEN
Telephone number 03000 415934	Telephone number: 03000 418913
Email address: Craig.Chapman@kent.gov.uk	Email address: Christine.McInnes@kent.gov.uk