

## **Making Sure SEND Transport Actually Gets Children to School.**

**Proposer:** Mr Richard Streatfeild, MBE

**Seconded:** Mr Antony Hook

### **Motion**

The County Council resolves to call on the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills to:

1. Review the implementation of the council's post-16 SEND transport policy to ensure it supports every post-16 young person with SEND who needs help to get to school safely receives the support that they need.
2. Collate and report on information to better assess and explain the true impact of KCC's post-16 transport policy, including:
  - a. Among young people who applied for more than a PTB but were refused, how many of them are safely attending education.
  - b. Whether any shortfall between the PTB and the actual cost of transport to families is affordable is for the affected families.
3. Review the appeal and right of review arrangements for families who can show that the fixed Personal Transport budget does not meet the reasonable cost of safe transport to make it as clear and simple as possible.
4. Review all post-16 SEND transport decisions already made under the current model, in relation to the application and impact of the existing policy and report the findings to the relevant Cabinet Committee.
5. Report back to the Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee, no later than 17 November 2026, on the action taken on points above.

### **Background information provided by the Liberal Democrat Group:**

Kent County Council's new post-16 transport policy, which comes into effect from the 2026/27 academic year, reduces transport support is provided to young people with SEND. Most post-16 learners, including many with SEND and EHCPs, will be expected to use a Kent 16+ Travel Saver pass and public transport where possible. Young people who are unable to travel safely or reasonably in this way must apply for additional support and provide evidence of their needs. Where support is agreed, from September 2026 a Personal Transport Budget (PTB) will become the standard offer for eligible post-16 SEND learners, rather than dedicated transport. As a result, some young people will receive less support than under previous arrangements. The change has already prompted a significant number of appeals, with some families

reporting that the PTB offered falls far short of the actual cost of providing safe transport, including one reported shortfall of around £14,000 per year.

Kent County Council calculates its PTBs using a rigid fixed-band system based solely on the straight-line distance between home and school, known as “as the crow flies”: £2,000 for journeys under five miles, £3,000 for journeys between five and ten miles, and £5,000 for journeys over ten miles. These payments are not linked to the actual cost of securing appropriate transport for an individual young person, nor do they directly reflect factors such as route complexity, travel time or the level of support required.

In June 2025, the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman ruled against Derby City Council in a case concerning their post-16 SEND transport policy. The Ombudsman found fault where the council had provided fixed PTB payments, instead of arranging transport for over-16s with SEND. The Ombudsman found that Derby had accepted these young people needed help, but then handed over a flat payment without checking two simple things: would the money actually get the child to school, and could the family afford the difference if it did not? The Ombudsman was clear that every family must be offered a solution that is practical, safe and affordable for their own situation. A one-size-fits-all payment is not good enough. Derby was ordered to pay the families and to rewrite its policy.