

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

David Brazier, Cabinet Member for Transport & Environment

DECISION NO:

13/00095

For publication

Subject: Kent Freedom Pass including Post 16 Transport

Decision:

As Cabinet Member for Transport & Environment, I agree to introduce a revised Freedom Pass scheme from the academic year commencing September 2014/15. This will entail a stored value smartcard providing a defined, pre-paid travel benefit per pupil. 16-19 year olds in education or training will be included in this scheme at a lesser stored value.

The stored value smartcard will provide £350 value for 11-16 year olds and £250 for 16-19 year olds, both at a cost of £100.

Reason(s) for decision:

The County Council considered a petition signed by around 16,000 people earlier in the year seeking a similar travel benefit for post 16 students to that provided through the Freedom scheme for 11-16 year olds. Simply to extend the current Freedom Pass arrangement is not sustainable financially as it would add an estimated £6m to the budget. Therefore, to provide an equitable way forward, a review of concessionary travel for all academic year groups has been considered which proposes to reduce the overall benefit value provided for 11-16 year olds and to extend the proposed stored value scheme to 16-19 year olds.

It is recognised that the County Council does not have a statutory requirement to fund post 16 transport; currently, post 16 students receive a travel pass costing £520 that provides a small overall subsidy for those travelling on a regular basis. However, it is reasonable that with a generous provision for 11-16 year olds, the County Council could spread the resource in a more equitable way to include 16-19 year olds albeit at a lesser level of funding.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

To be entered after the meeting and considered by the Cabinet Member when taking the decision.

Any alternatives considered:

Alternatives could include a half fare scheme or charging the recipient significantly more than £100 for a Freedom Pass giving free bus travel. It is considered that the proposal is the most equitable way of providing travel concessions within the constraints of the budget.

Any interest declared when the decision was taken and any dispensation granted by the Proper Officer:

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signed

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date