

# 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