

**From:** Patrick Leeson, Corporate Director for Education,  
Learning and Skills

**To:** Roger Gough, Cabinet Member for Education and Health  
Reform

**Subject:** Post 16 Transport Policy Statement

**Classification:** Unrestricted

**Future Pathway of Paper:** Cabinet Member Decision

**Electoral Division:** All electoral divisions

**Summary:** Each year KCC has a legal duty to consult on its Policy for Post 16 Transport and publishes a Post 16 Transport Policy Statement by the 1 June. This report provides the Cabinet Member with the outcome of this consultation and take the decision outlined in the recommendations below.

**Recommendation(s):** The Cabinet Member for Education and Health reform is asked to take the decision to agree the proposed Kent Post 16 Transport Policy (appendix 1).

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 KCC has a duty to consult on and publish its Post 16 Transport Policy Statement each 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. The transport policy sets out how KCC will meet this duty and what learners in special circumstances can expect by way of support. This report sets out the proposed Post 16 Transport Policy to enable the LA to meet its statutory duty in relation to transport for Post 16 learners.
- 1.2 The attached policy makes it clear that in the first instance there is an expectation that learners will make use of the discretionary Kent 16+ Travel Card, seeking bursary funding support where necessary to access this as a preferred means of accessing their education or training provider but also sets out the duties on the LA to consider requests for transport from students in special circumstances. It remains broadly similar to the existing policy.
- 1.3 The policy has been extended to enable the LA to assist (where appropriate) young people who are not in employment, education or training (NEETs) to access time limited support with transport to enable NEETs to attend interviews with prospective employers and learning providers. Transport has been identified as a barrier to this group who cannot currently access a 16+ Travel Card.

## **2. Financial Implications**

- 2.1 At this time we do not know what the final costs will be as the discretionary scheme is uncapped and reimbursement of operators is based on travel patterns of users. The reduction in cost to the discretionary scheme will have an impact on the costs of the statutory policy on transport for young people in special circumstances.

## **3. Bold Steps for Kent and Policy Framework**

- 3.1 The Post 16 Transport Policy aligns with 'helping the economy grow' and 'tackling disadvantage' themes in Bold Steps for Kent.

## **4. The Report**

- 4.1 KCC has a duty to consider applications for transport and is required to enable access to education. In most circumstances it meets this duty through the 16+ Travel Card. This is a very generous discretionary scheme which will aid access to both education and employment. The card has historically been available at a cost to the learner of £520 however at the County Councils' budget setting meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2014 it was agreed that the Kent 16+ Travel Card would be reduced to £400 with no limit on the use.
- 4.2 On 22 April The Education and Young Peoples Services Cabinet Committee considered the proposed decision and discussed the concerns raised. The majority of the Committee voted in favour of the proposal and resolved to recommend to the Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform he agree to decision to approve the Post 16 Transport Policy Statement to be published by June.
- 4.3 There are no equalities implications that have not been considered during previous consultations on the Post 16 Transport Policy. The reduction in cost of the 16+ Travel Card to the learner will further reduce barriers to transport which had previously been identified.
- 4.4 Schools, colleges and learning providers have been consulted as have their students. The consultation on the proposed policy will run until the 12 May 2014.

## **5. Outcomes of the Public Consultation**

- 5.1 KCC held a public consultation on the proposed post 16 transport policy which ran from 2 April to 14 May 2014.
- 5.2 There were a total of 72 written responses to the consultation. Responders were asked to categorise the aspects of the Transport Policy Statement on which they wished to comment into 4 themed areas. Some respondents commented on more than one theme which explains discrepancy in total comments.
  - Eligibility criteria for applying for support (*5 comments*)
  - 16+ Travel Card (*66 comments*)

- Types of Travel Available (*19 comments*)
- Any other aspects of the policy (*7 comments*)

5.3 The majority of responses felt the cost of the card was too expensive (26 comments); the next single biggest issue raised was the requirement for children to now to remain in education by law and the disparity between pre 16 and post 16 learners (20 comments). The inclusion of rail travel on the card was also a common theme (9 comments). The introduction of some form of support for children Not in Education Employment or Training (NEET) was welcomed. (2 comments) and finally there was theme of general support for the Travel Card and Policy Statement (11 comments).

## **6. Education and Young People's Cabinet Committee**

6.1 On 22 April the Education and Young Peoples Services Cabinet Committee considered the proposed decision and discussed the concerns raised. The majority of the Committee voted in favour of the proposal and resolved to recommend to the Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform he agree to decision to approve the Post 16 Transport Policy Statement to be published by June.

## **7. Conclusions**

7.1 The consultation is a formality set out in our legal duties. Despite there being no material changes to the Policy other than to reduce the cost to the learner and enable improved access to support young people who are NEET an annual consultation is required. There will be no detrimental effect on learners by the proposed changes to the scheme and it is expected that the Policy will continue to fully support Kent's Post 16 learners through this phase of their education.

## **8. Recommendation(s)**

**Recommendation(s):** The Cabinet Member for Education and Health reform is asked to take the decision to agree the proposed Kent Post 16 Transport Policy (appendix 1).

## **9. Background Documents**

Consultation on Post 16 Transport Policy 2014-15

<http://consultations.kent.gov.uk/consult.ti/Post16Transport/consultationHome>

Report to Education and Young Peoples Services Cabinet Committee – 22 April - Post 16 Transport Policy Statement

<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/documents/s46121/Item%20C1%20-%20Post%2016%20Transport%20Policy.pdf>

## 8. Contact details

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