

# KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

**DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:**

David Brazier, Cabinet Member for Environment & Transport

**DECISION NO:**

13/00095/2

**For publication**

**Subject: New Young Person's Travel Pass including Post 16 Transport**

**Decision:**

As Cabinet Member for Environment & Transport, I agree to introduce a new Young Person's Travel Pass for 11-16 year olds for the academic year commencing September 2014. The new Pass will cost £200 per annum and will replace the current Freedom Pass Scheme which currently costs £100 per annum. Usage of the Pass will be limited to Monday to Friday 06:00 to 19:00 and from the start of the academic year to 31<sup>st</sup> July. An option of two six monthly payments will be offered.

I also agree to set the cost of the Young Person's Travel Pass for pupils entitled to free school meals at £100 per annum. Looked After Children and Young Carers will receive the new Pass free of charge.

I agree to reduce the cost of the Kent 16+ Travel Card from £520 to £400, this card will have unlimited travel use.

The Young Person's Travel Pass scheme will be reviewed 6 months after implementation.

**Reason(s) for decision:**

The County Council considered a petition signed by around 16,000 people last 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 was carried out. This decision recognises the distinction between the two schemes.

The Young Person's Travel Pass is for pupils aged 11 -16 to access the local bus network in order to travel to school. This matter was considered by members at the meeting of the EHW Cabinet Committee held on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2013 where an "e-purse" stored value scheme was supported for further investigation. During subsequent discussions and engagement with pass users, bus companies and Members the proposed scheme was revised to overcome a number of operational risks and to ensure that access to school was available to all.

An Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken together with wide ranging consultation particularly targeted at the parents of students using the current Freedom scheme. The Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment considered representations very carefully and has agreed the revised scheme as consulted upon.

The Kent 16+ Travel scheme is for the use of young people accessing further education or apprenticeships, for which they may receive some payment. Furthermore, at the age of 16, people travelling on public transport are classed as adults and consequently the County Council must reimburse bus operators for journeys made at a higher rate than for under-16 year olds. The government made no changes to transport legislation that would enable funding to be made

available for this group by the Local Authority when it raised the participation age. Those learners facing genuine hardship can seek bursary funding support from their learning providers to help with the cost of the card. This funding replaced the Education Maintenance Allowance and sits with schools and colleges to support their learners in a range of ways including, where appropriate, with transport costs.

**Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:**

This matter was debated by Members at full County Council in February 2014 as part of the overall budget setting discussions.

This current proposal builds on the discussions held at the Environment, Highways & Waste Cabinet Committee in December 2013.

A full public consultation has taken place, the results of which have been carefully considered by the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport.

The Environment & Transport Cabinet Committee will discuss this proposed decision on 24 April 2014.

**Any alternatives considered:**

A range of alternative schemes were considered as an alternative, however, all had practical or operational obstacles to the smooth operation of the scheme.

**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