

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TAKEN BY:

Richard Long,
Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

DECISION NO:

20/00018

For publication**Subject: Proposed 16 - 19 Transport Policy Statement 2020-21****Decision:**

As Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, I agree to Kent Post-16 Transport Policy Statement

Reason(s) for decision:

- 1.1 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 KCC 16+ Travel Saver pass. This is a generous discretionary scheme which aids access to both education and employment with training. The card is currently available at the agreed cost of £400 a year with no limit on the level of use. Learning providers, at their discretion, can subsidise this using bursary funding and we would expect bursary to be provided for up to 50% of the cost for low income families.
- 1.2 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 and training to age 18 years. The transport policy sets out how KCC will meet this duty and what learners can expect by way of support.
- 1.3 Schools, colleges and learning providers have been consulted, as have their students. Neighbouring local authorities and Public Transport have also been included in the consultation, as have parents. The consultation on the proposed policy ran until the 29 March 2020.
- 1.4 The policy is attached as Appendix A, a summary of consultation responses is attached as Appendix B and an updated equalities impact assessment is attached as Appendix C. A copy of the consultation document can be found at www.kent.gov.uk/post16transport

Financial Implications

- 2.1 The scheme is uncapped and costs will vary depending on take up levels and journeys undertaken by cardholders. Last year saw an overall reduction in uptake of about 1000 learners. This has had a financial implication which has meant that income levels are reduced and those using the passes were doing so extensively which increased the unit cost of the scheme. The scheme requires the cards to be purchased on-line and some learning providers had difficulty developing a purchasing mechanism for their bursary learners which resulted in them buying saver cards direct from operators for some of their learners. These issues have been resolved this year, so it is expected that costs will return to levels similar to previous years. However, it is difficult to predict overall costs for 2020/21. The LA commits in excess of £5 million on Post 16 Transport and draws an income of less than £2 million. Numbers fluctuate

from year to year, but the total subsidy remains in excess of £3 million per annum. On average, KCC subsidises just under 70% of the overall cost of Post 16 Transport to ensure learners can access their schools and colleges.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

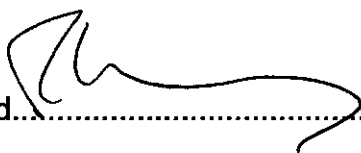
The report was shared with Members of the CYPE Cabinet Committee for comment, prior to a decision being taken.

Any alternatives considered:

All alternatives were considered following the consultation period and examined in the Cabinet Member report.

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

None

Signed.....

Date..... 20 May 2020