

CABINET

20th September 2016

HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT POLICY CONSULTATION

Report of the Director for Places (Environment, Planning and Transport)

Strategic Aim:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Meeting the health and wellbeing needs of the community.Creating a brighter future for all.	
Key Decision: Yes	Forward Plan - FP/190216/01	
Exempt Information	No	
Cabinet Member(s) Responsible:	Councillor Tony Mathias, Portfolio Holder for Places (Highways, Environment, Transport and Community Safety) and Market Towns.	
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Ward Councillors	All	

DECISION RECOMMENDATIONS

That Cabinet:

1. Approves the home to school transport policy contained in Appendix 1 of this report (157/2016) for implementation from September 2017.
2. Approves the special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) transport policy contained in Appendix 2 of this report (157/2016) for implementation from September 2017.

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To inform the panel of the responses received during the public consultation exercise on home to school and SEND transport policies and seek approval for implementation of the revised policies from September 2017.

2. HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT POLICY PROPOSED AMENDMENTS

- 2.1 The existing policy was split down to into the following 3 elements:
 - a) Home to school travel and transport (general policy for mainstream pupils);

- b) Travel Assistance for children with special educational needs or disabilities (additional policy for parents/carers of SEN students to be used in conjunction with the general policy); and
- c) Post 16 transport (which will be considered separately at a later date and is not part of this report).

2.2 A summary of the proposed changes to the policies is contained in Appendix 4.

2.3 The policies were put out to public consultation between 6th June and 4th July 2016. The consultation was publicised via the following methods:

- Corporate press release circulated to the local media
- RCC website – main page and transport page
- RCC Twitter page
- Email to all Rutland schools to request publication via “Parentmail” and/or school websites. All Rutland schools had the opportunity to respond.
- Hard copies sent to any school requesting copies for parents not registered with “Parentmail”.
- Consultation packs sent via post to all parents/carers of SEN children currently receiving free transport via RCC.
- Email to RCC ward members.
- Email to all town & parish councils within Rutland.

2.4 Local bus and taxi operators were not directly consulted as they are not affected by the transport policy other than clauses relating to how RCC deals with behavioural issues. These clauses remain unchanged.

3. CONSULTATION

3.1 The total responses received during the consultation period amount to:

- 2 Telephone calls
- 3 Emails

3.2 Both telephone calls received were from parents of students due to move into the post-16 phase of their education in September 2016. Although the calls were initiated by the publicised consultation process, both sets of parents were simply seeking confirmation that the draft policies would not affect the current post-16 eligibility criteria.

3.3 The 3 emails received contained a variety of comments and suggestions relating to the policy documents but also contained personal opinions relating to issues such as seatbelt law, school admission ages and SEND case assessments which are issues that can be referred to within the home to school policy documents but cannot be amended/addressed/resolved. The points raised within the email responses are contained within appendix 3. They were submitted by:

- 1 Rutland County Council Ward Member
- 1 Parent of mainstream primary student/s
- 1 Parent of SEND year 11 student

- 3.4 Amendments have been made to the draft policies to address any valid points raised during the consultation process and also include amended text to cover issues raised at previous meetings. Revised policies are attached as appendices 1 & 2 with amended text highlighted in yellow.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1 The home to school transport policy is a statutory requirement and regular reviews of the policy are advisable to ensure that it remains current. However, the Council could choose to only update terminology and not revise the policy content.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The proposed modifications are unlikely to have a significant financial impact. There may be some minor savings.

6. LEGAL AND GOVERNANCE CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 Rutland County Council has a statutory duty under section 508B Education Act 1996 to make provision of travel arrangements for eligible children. Section 508C Education Act 1996 provides that a local authority has discretionary powers to go beyond their statutory duties and provide transport for children who are not entitled to free transport.

7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 Equality impact assessment screening has been completed. No adverse or other significant issues were found and a full equality impact assessment is not required.

8. COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 None

9. HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The draft policy requires that any transport provided will take into account the individual assessed needs of the pupil, including any medical protocols that may be necessary.

10. CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 The draft policies have now been through the required consultation process and proposed policies revised to address any valid issues raised.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1 None.

12. APPENDICES

- 12.1 Appendix 1 – Revised Home to School Travel and Transport Policy.
- 12.2 Appendix 2 – Revised Travel Assistance for Children With Special Educational Needs.

12.3 Appendix 3 – Consultation responses and summary of action taken in respect of points raised.

12.4 Appendix 4 – Summary of policy changes

A Large Print or Braille Version of this Report is available upon request – Contact 01572 722577.