

Public Document Pack



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Civic Offices
Shute End
Wokingham
RG40 1BN

E-mail: democratic.services@wokingham.gov.uk

To:- All Executive Members

EXECUTIVE - THURSDAY, 24TH AUGUST, 2023

The following items which relate to the agenda item below (attached), were tabled at the Executive meeting on 24th August:

1. Recommendations that the Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee (CSO&S) would like the Executive to consider following the Extraordinary meeting of CSO&S on 12 August 2023.
2. Revised Recommendations for the Executive
3. Actions that the CSO&S would like the Executive to consider following the Extraordinary meeting of CSO&S on 15 August 2023.

Agenda No Item

39. **Home to School Transport - Revised Policy (Pages 3 - 8)**

Yours sincerely

Susan Parsonage
Chief Executive

This page is intentionally left blank

Recommendations that the Children's Services O&S Committee would like the Executive to consider following the Extraordinary meeting of CSO&S 15 August 2023

	Children's Services O&S Committee Recommendations	Recommendation status in revised policy post Children's Services O&S	Detail
1	Notes and endorses the fact that children who have been awarded travel assistance under the current policy will not have their support withdrawn upon the implementation of the new policy. Changes will continue to occur only when there is a change in circumstances or when a milestone is reached and a re-assessment takes place;	Improvement in revised policy wording	This point has been clarified in the revised policy (See Section 10 of policy)
2	Notes that the robust mechanisms in place involving Children's Services, CTU and Adult Social Care Services will continue to ensure that vulnerable parents are adequately supported, including in navigating this complex home to school transport system;	Agreed	Existing robust mechanisms already in place
3 3	Notes that SEND Voices advised that in order to promote independence and preparedness for adulthood, it is important to offer the option of a personal travel budget and not limit the offer to the most cost-effective option	Reviewed	The standard offer of transport assistance for students aged 16-19 remains a Personal Transport Budget (PTB). Following their application acceptance and approval of eligibility, if families feel that the only way they can get their child to school is by using traditional transport (e.g. taxi or minibus), they will be able to appeal the offer of a PTB in order that the Council can consider any individual and/or any exceptional circumstances.
4	Is in favour of the development of a programme of travel training for young people, and noted that this programme will be co-produced;	Agreed	ITT will be co-produced with all relevant stakeholders
5	Notes that there have been technical difficulties with the consultation and that lessons have been learnt for future consultations;	Reviewed	We have looked into how this consultation was promoted and the technical issue raised over accessibility of the survey on the final day. We are making sure we look at this corporately.
6 (a)	To continue the provision of travel assistance for children under the statutory school age;	Reviewed	Policy continues to state that there is no statutory duty to provide Travel Assistance for those under the age of 5. It remains the case that the Council may consider a request to exercise its discretion in a particular case to provide travel assistance.

6 (b)	To continue the provision of discretionary arrangements and that the wording about it be made clearer in the policy;	Improvement in revised policy wording	Discretionary arrangements are clear throughout the policy
6 (c)	That an effort be made to improve communication with parents about any changes to their entitlement to home to school transport assistance	Improvement in revised policy wording	If a child ceases to be eligible any change to provision made by the Council will be considered in the context of the potential impact on the child, in order to avoid disruption as far as possible.
6 (d)	That Officers review the calculation of the personal travel budget for post 16s, with the objective of covering all related costs, and explain how the figures were calculated.	Reviewed	The personal travel budgets were calculated based on benchmarking with other Local Authorities that have implemented similar schemes.

**TITLE: Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) Home to School Travel Assistance Policies (H2S TA)
Refresh**

FOR CONSIDERATION BY: Executive

WARD: All Wards

LEAD OFFICER: Director of Children's Services – Helen Watson

REVISED RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

1. Note the impacts and mitigations set out in the Equality Impact Assessment ([Annex 1](#))
2. Note the outcomes of the 28 working day public consultation ([Annex 2](#))
3. Approve changes to the Home to School/College Travel Assistance policies having considered the above documents and the recommendations and actions arising from the Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny meeting of 15th August 2023.
4. Approve the revised Home to School/College Travel Assistance policies, taking into account the response to the recommendations and actions arising from the Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny meeting of 15th August 2023, delegating final sign off to the Director of Children's Services in consultation with the lead member for Children's Services
 - I. Home to School Travel Assistance Policy for children and young people **16 years old and under**, including young people with Special Educational Need and Disabilities (SEND) ([Annex 3](#))
 - II. Transport Assistance Policy for young people resident in Wokingham **post-16**, including young people with SEND ([Annex 4](#))
5. Approve the implementation of the new Travel Assistance Policies from the academic year commencing September 2024
6. Agree that the Director of Children's Services in consultation with the Executive Member for Children's Services has delegated authority to approve the statement every year where there are no substantial changes.

This page is intentionally left blank

Actions that the Children's Services O&S Committee would like the Executive to consider following the Extraordinary meeting of CSO&S 15 August 2023

1. To provide data relating to numbers/ ages and costs of travel transport (in particular for under 5's and post-16)
2. To review and make it clearer in the wording within the policy that discretionary arrangements will still be allowed.
3. More clarity is needed around the definition of 'nearest most suitable school', including in post-16 provision a clear reference to course(s) rather than 'level'.
4. To include links in the policy to the Parents Guide To School Admissions.
5. To clarify the difference between 'qualifying' and 'suitable' school.
6. To avoid ambiguity in the document.
7. To make it more explicit in the document that children attending schools out of the borough can be entitled to travel assistance, provided they met the eligibility criteria.
8. To explain what is the most suitable school for a child subject to a managed move.
9. To make it clearer that, following an assessment, SEND children can be given more time to prepare for new travel assessments (to be determined on a case-by-case basis).
10. In relation to Change of circumstances (page 116 of the Agenda) – to make it clear that any changes which may occur in withdrawal of travel support will be based on evidence.
11. To explain how the figures for post-16 travel assistance were calculated and to consider using mileage; and to make clear that these will continue to be considered on a case-by-case basis.
12. To review SEND Voices reference to the Post-16 transport and travel support to education and training – Statutory guidance for local authorities (January 2019) paragraph 29b – to ensure the wording in the policy is compliant with the legislation. To ensure that is clear that young people are able to attend the most suitable educational setting providing their chosen course.
13. To co-produce the travel training offer with SEND Voices and to involve young people in the development of the training programme.
14. To make the wording clearer in the policy with regards to parents' right of appeal.
15. To review and clarify who will be considering and determining the outcome of parents' appeals – clarification of what is meant by a 'senior officer'.
16. To make communication very clear about what other sources of help for home to school transport may be available for families with low disposable income.
17. To endeavour to ease public participation in future consultations.

This page is intentionally left blank