

NORTH SOMERSET COUNCIL DECISION



DECISION OF: COUNCILLOR HANNAH YOUNG. THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT

WITH ADVICE FROM: COUNCILLOR CATHERINE GIBBONS, DEPUTY LEADER AND EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CHILDRENS SERVICES AND THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT, ASSETS AND HIGHWAYS SERVICES

DECISION NO: 24/25 DN 10

SUBJECT: APPROVAL TO CONSULT ON REVISIONS TO HOME TO SCHOOL POST-16 SEN POLICY

KEY DECISION: YES

REASON: North Somerset Council governance process informs that the proposals to formally consult on policy revisions are a key decision.

BACKGROUND:

Local Authorities are required to publish their Post-16 transport policy statements by 31 May each year. North Somerset Council Home to School Transport Services would like to consult on Post-16 SEN policy changes to update the policy with new transport offerings for Post-16 SEN students, following the successful introduction of revised Personal Travel Allowance policy and Independent Travel Trainers. The Integrated Transport Unit have prepared the necessary material to engage and consult with our local community on these revisions. The provision of Post-16 transport is a non-statutory service.

DECISION:

To approve the public consultation effective January 2025 for a period of seven weeks (accommodating school holiday periods) which seeks to inform us as part of our future decision making.

REASONS:

The consultation will allow the Post-16 SEN policy to be updated with new transport offerings for Post-16 SEN students and publish the transport policy statement by the deadline of 31 May.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED:

Option A – to consult with the residents of North Somerset so that this aids us in our consideration to updating the SEN Post-16 Policy

Option B – Do nothing, continue with current published policy, accepting that this does not allow for an improved offering of Post-16 travel options for students with SEN and does not allow for a saving to be made within the Post-16 budget area.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

Costs

The consultation will be undertaken using in-house resources so there are no external costs and no specific breakdown of internal resource allocation to this consultation..

It is understood that that the changes within the statutory guidance will largely offer positive outcomes for young people and support Local Authorities with its delegation of duty and the associated costs of service delivery.

Funding

North Somerset Council has a budget of £87k for the provision of Home to College Transport during the 2024/25 financial year. The current forecast is a spend of £581k during the 2024/25 financial year (with the forecast spend for the 2024/25 academic year £670k owing to academic year contracts covering 2 financial years).

LEGAL POWERS AND IMPLICATIONS

The latest Post-16 guidance is dated January 2019 and found online: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5c48534c40f0b616fba5cb6a/Post16_transport_guidance.pdf

CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

The new policy is leaning towards more sustainable transport, which is positive on climate change and environmental factors.

CONSULTATION

Consultation and draft policy material have been shared with executive members, internal stakeholders and Parent Carers Working Together forum (NSPCWT).

RISK MANAGEMENT

RISK to council in relation to consulting has been assessed as LOW

Governance processes in order to consult have been consulted and followed.

A communications strategy is in place such that it informs service users and wider community of our intentions and provides the opportunity to engage in this process.

The service would anticipate little service disruption with little impact of staff, minimal impact to a project, no safeguarding and duty of care impacts, not impacting any residents, not impacting any of the thematic areas in the Climate Emergency Strategy.

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

Have you undertaken an Equality Impact Assessment?

Yes.

There is a low impact to those groups that the consultation will focus on as the proposal currently is just to consult on options available for the Post-16 SEN provision of transport. The outcomes of the consultation will shape the future proposals for the Post-16 SEN provision and at this point a further EQIA will be done in greater detail when the options and their impacts are known.

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

None Known

APPENDICES


Not Applicable

BACKGROUND PAPERS

[Post-16 transport and travel support to education and training - statutory guidance for local authorities](#)


SIGNATORIES:

DECISION MAKER(S):

Signed:  Executive Member for Highways and Transport

Date: 24 January 2025

WITH ADVICE FROM:

Signed:  Director of Environment, Assets and Highways Services

Date: 24 January 2025