

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 14 July 2016

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director – People

PORTFOLIO: Children, Young People and Families

SUBJECT: Home to School and College Travel and Transport Policy for Children & Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

WARDS: Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 This report seeks the Executive Board's approval to commence a consultation with stakeholders and partners with a view to determining a new policy on sustainable travel and transport for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the Board approves the commencement of a consultation with stakeholders and partners with regard to implementing a new Home to School and College Travel and Transport Policy for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities from September 2017.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 The Local Authority has recently been reviewing the way in which travel and transport support is determined and provided to children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities to educational establishments both in-Borough and out-Borough. Currently 385 pupils with special educational needs and disabilities receive support from the Local Authority to access educational provision either within Halton, or, where that specific need cannot be met in-borough, assistance is provided to out-Borough provision.

3.2 The cost for providing transport for pupils with SEND for the 2015/16 academic year was £1,273,776. £879,092 for in-borough transport and £394,684 for out-borough transport.

3.3 It is proposed that the Local Authority consults with parents/carers, educational establishments and other interested parties on revised travel solutions.

3.4 These travel solutions have a key focus on securing effective travel to school and college which helps promote independence, and these family based travel solutions include:

- Bicycle
- Walking bus
- Travel Pass
- Independent Travel Training
- Provision of vehicle (e.g. mini-bus or taxi)
- Supported public travel (this would include pass for child and their parent/carer/passenger assistant)
- Mileage payment to parent/carer
- For post 16 students, it is intended that a financial contribution would be sought from the parent/carer towards the cost of a travel solution and if over 18 years, the individual themselves. Charges will not exceed the cost of a bus pass for students age 17 to 25. Low income for families/young person and the likely duration of the learning will also be taken into account when determining the level of contribution, and a reduced contribution will be applied.

3.5 It is proposed that the consultation period commences in September 2016, running from Monday 4th September 2016, closing on Friday 3rd November 2016 (a period of 8 school weeks excluding the October half-term). Following the completion of the consultation a further report with the findings of the consultation, and a set of recommendations, will be brought to a future Executive Board for determination, and implementation of a revised Home to School & College Travel and Transport Policy for Children & Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) for September 2017.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Under section 509AB of the Education Act 1996, a Local Authority has a duty to ensure that a suitable travel solution is made for an eligible child/young person. The Authority should set out the extent to which the arrangements can facilitate the attendance at a relevant qualifying school/college for a child/young person with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The Act applies to all children and young people who permanently live in Halton and attend a qualifying school named in their Statement of Educational Needs or Education Health and Care Plan.
- 4.2 The 16-18 transport duty relates to young people of sixth form age with learning difficulties and/or disabilities aged up to 19. Local Authorities also have a duty under the Education and Skills Act 2008 to encourage, enable and assist the participation of young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities up to the age of 25 in education and training.
- 4.3 The Children and Families Act 2014 replaces the Statement of Special Educational Needs and Learning Difficulty Assessments (LDAs) for those over the age of 16 with Education, Health and Care Plans. Under the Act, a local authority may continue to maintain an Education Health

and Care Plan for a young person over 19 if a young person requires additional time, in comparison to the majority of others of the same age who do not have special educational needs, to complete his or her education or training. Local authorities may continue to provide special educational provision until the end of the academic year in which the young person turns 25. The age limit for compulsory education/training has increased from 16 to 18. This applies to young people if they were born on or after 1st September 1997.

- 4.4 All of these additional duties are likely to result in a significant growth in demand for transport. It is therefore proposed that the Local Authority consults with parents/carers, educational establishments and any other interested party on the way in which travel solutions are offered and funded to those children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 A review of transport provision is essential, in particular those elements which are discretionary, as the transport budget overspent by £205,000. Many local authorities are in a similar position to Halton and have also commenced exploring the funding contributions for post-16 pupils and more efficient models for providing transport.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

The proposed travel solutions comply with statutory requirements in ensuring that travel solutions are available for children and young people within the borough of Halton. The proposals will ensure that the educational provision for children & young people in the borough is inclusive and accessible.

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

Educational achievement is critical to the life chances of all children in the borough and the proposed transport solutions help underpin the requirement to promote fair access to educational opportunity.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

The proposed travel solutions promote and support measures that encourage local communities to use environmentally sustainable forms of travel, especially walking, cycling, and public transport.

6.4 A Safer Halton

The proposed travel solutions promote the safe travel and transfer of children and young people to school and college.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

N/A

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 The Sustainable School Travel Policy is in place to meet statutory requirements. There are no major risks associated with the publication of the Policy

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 The proposed arrangements reflect any requirements of the Equality Act 2010. Any finally determined policy will reflect the diverse needs of children and young people in Halton in accessing appropriate educational provision. Any determined policy will ensure that suitable travel solutions are in place for those children with Special Educational Needs, and/or a disability who may, by reason of their disability, be unable to walk even relatively short distance to school, and those children with a mobility problem caused by a temporary medical condition who may be unable to walk to school.

9.0 REASON(S) FOR DECISION

9.1 The decision is required to fulfil the Council's statutory duty to promote the use of sustainable travel and transport.

10.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

10.1 None.

11.0 IMPLEMENTATION DATE

11.1 It is intended that any revised policy would be implemented for the September 2017 academic intake.

12.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

12.1 None under the meaning of the Act.

13.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Home-to-school travel and transport statutory guidance 2014	People & Economy Directorate	Martin West
Education Act 1996	People & Economy Directorate	Martin West
Education & Skills Act 2008	People & Economy Directorate	Martin West
Children & Families Act 2014	People & Economy Directorate	Martin West