

**REPORT TO:** Executive Board

**DATE:** 20 April 2017

**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), and Home to School Travel & Transport Policy (Statutory School Age).

**WARDS:** Borough-wide

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 This report seeks the Executive Board's approval for two policies: the Home to School and College Travel and Transport Policy for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), and the general Home to School Travel & Transport Policy (Statutory School Age).

**2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the Board approves the revised Home to School and College Travel and Transport Policy for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, and the Home to School Travel & Transport Policy (Statutory School Age).**

## **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

3.1 The Local Authority has a statutory duty to ensure that suitable travel arrangements are made, where necessary, to facilitate a child's attendance at school, and to ensure that post-16 learners are able to access education and training and ensure that, if support for access is required, this will be assessed and provided where necessary.

3.2 At the Executive Board meeting held on 19th January 2017 the Board approved revised criteria and an application process for inclusion in a Home to School and College Travel and Transport Policy for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. The criteria and application process were agreed after extensive consultation.

3.3 Following the Executive Board's agreement of the criteria and assessment process, a policy for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities has now been developed to

allow the Council to better assess and support the needs of those children and young people. This also then led to a requirement to remove the special educational needs and disability element from the current Home to School Travel and Transport Policy, and the two separate policy documents have now been finalised and are presented for the Board's approval.

- 3.4 As detailed in the Executive Board report dated 19<sup>th</sup> January 2017, the aim of the revised Special Educational Needs and Disabilities policy is that all children and young people with significant special educational needs or disability should lead lives that are as independent and as free from restriction as possible. As agreed by the Board, all applications for assistance will need to be submitted to assess eligibility against the statutory duty to provide assistance i.e. 2 miles (nearest qualifying primary school), 3 miles (nearest qualifying secondary school) criteria, and where those criteria do not apply, to assess eligibility for low income families or to assess those children and young people who cannot travel independently due to a medical condition.
- 3.5 For the general Home to School Travel and Transport Policy, there are no criteria changes proposed and applicants will need to apply and be assessed against the agreed criteria as set out in the policy i.e. (1) on distance grounds (where the nearest qualifying school is over 2 miles for children aged under 8 and over 3 miles for children aged 8 and over), (2) if low income applies, (3) on reasons of religion and belief where low income applies, (4) if a child lives under the statutory distance but in the Council's view, following a risk assessment, it is identified there is no safe walking route, or (5) reasons of religion or belief.
- 3.6 The nature and mode of travel support for those who are eligible will, as previously, be determined by the Council and will be one that is consistent with the Council's duty to secure value for money and the needs of the child/young person. Travel solutions include:
- a) Bicycle – a one off payment made by the Council to purchase a bicycle;
  - b) Walking bus – a Passenger Assistant will guide and support children and young people on their route;
  - c) Travel pass – a free bus pass for use on public transport;
  - d) Personal Travel Budget – access to funds for parents/carers, paying a family member mileage, and use of befriending service;
  - e) Supported Public Transport – use of public transport with a Passenger Assistant;
  - f) Independent Travel Training – Training provided by the Council to children and young people to travel independently,
  - g) Provision of vehicles – this includes multiple pick up vehicles, and under very exceptional circumstances taxis and private hire vehicles

3.7 Whilst there is specific reference to post 16 provision within the Special Educational Needs and Disability Transport Policy as it is possible those children and young people will require assistance with post 16 transport, there is also a Department for Education requirement to have a separate general Post 16 Statement on the Council's website which signposts parents/carers and students to the assistance available for general applications for assistance with post 16 transport. Transport Coordination colleagues work with schools, colleges and post 16 providers to draw this information together into a Post 16 statement, which is then uploaded to the Council's website and published. The two policy documents will also be made available on the Council's website.

#### **4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 The Education Act 1996 sets out the Local Authority's duties with regard to Home to School travel and Transport and Post 16 transport to education and training, and the two policy documents placed before the Executive Board for approval meet those duties.

#### **5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 None.

#### **6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

##### **6.1 Children and Young People in Halton**

The proposed policies comply with statutory requirements in ensuring that assistance with travel and travel solutions are available for those children and young people who meet the criteria. The proposals will ensure that the educational provision for children & young people 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 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. An Equality Impact Assessment has also been undertaken.

## **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 The two policies would be implemented for the September 2017 academic intake.

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

<b>Document</b>	<b>Place of Inspection</b>	<b>Contact Officer</b>
<b>Home-to-school travel and transport statutory guidance 2014</b>	<b>People Directorate</b>	<b>Martin West</b>
<b>Post-16 transport to education and training statutory guidance for local authorities 2014</b>	<b>People Directorate</b>	<b>Martin West</b>
<b>Education Act 1996</b>	<b>People Directorate</b>	<b>Martin West</b>
<b>Education &amp; Skills Act 2008</b>	<b>People Directorate</b>	<b>Martin West</b>
<b>Children &amp; Families Act 2014</b>	<b>People Directorate</b>	<b>Martin West</b>