



## CONSULTATION ON PROPOSED OPTIONS TO AMEND THE DISCRETIONARY TRANSPORT POLICY

### POST 16 SCHOOL AND COLLEGE TRANSPORT AND BENEFITS ENTITLEMENTS.

**18 February – 5 April 2019**

#### Introduction

This is a consultation document on proposed options to amend the Council's School and College Transport Policy. ([www.flintshire.gov.uk/schooltransport](http://www.flintshire.gov.uk/schooltransport)).

The document focusses on two areas of potential policy change - post 16 transport provision and the "benefits" entitlement criteria.

The document provides the Council's rationale for consultation and provides options for stakeholders to consider.

The consultation will commence on **18 February 2019** and will close on **5 April 2019**. The Council is interested in obtaining the views of anyone likely to be affected either directly or indirectly by the proposed options.

Responses received within the consultation period will form part of a report to the Council's Cabinet.

As the Council's decision making body, Cabinet will carefully consider the report before making a decision on whether to implement a policy change in the areas identified.

#### Why is the Council consulting?

Like all Councils, Flintshire County Council continues to face significant, well documented budgetary challenges. Therefore, the Council has to consider different ways in which services are provided or whether to continue with some services.

School and college transport provision is guided by the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008. The Measure prescribes some school and college transport provision as statutory,

which the Council has a legal obligation to provide, and some elements as discretionary, which the Council does not have a legal obligation to provide.

Statutory transport provision will remain unaffected and does not form part of this consultation. However, the Council has discretionary elements of transport provision contained within its current policy. This consultation will focus on post 16 transport and on “benefits” entitlement.

This situation is not unique within Wales, with other Local Authorities either reviewing or having already reviewed the discretionary elements of their transport policies.

Flintshire remain the only local authority in Wales to retain the discretionary “benefits” entitlement under the policy.

Following the consultation, should Cabinet approve changes to the policy, the earliest they could be implemented would be September 2020.

### The Current Policy

The Council is required by law to assess the travel needs of learners in their authority area and to provide assistance for those learners who are eligible.

In Flintshire, free home to school transport is provided for Learners of statutory school age (i.e 5 -16 years) as follows:

- Where a child receiving primary education lives over 2 miles from the nearest appropriate school and
- Where a child receiving secondary education lives over 3 miles from the nearest appropriate school.

These are the “statutory transport requirements” because this is what the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 requires a Council to provide.

**In addition to this**, the Council exercises its discretion to provide free transport for:

- post 16 students living in Flintshire attending a first course of full time study at a school or college, subject to meeting the 3 mile distance criterion and providing the student is attending the nearest educational establishment offering the courses they wish to study. Free transport is provided to specified sites only. These sites are:
  - All Secondary School sites within Flintshire offering post-16 courses
  - Coleg Cambria sites at Connah’s Quay, Northop, Wrexham and Llysfasi (for land based courses only),
  - Chester Catholic High School, Prestatyn High School, Rhyl 6, St Brigid’s School and Ysgol Glan Clwyd, St. Asaph.

Free transport is also provided under discretionary powers for pupils of statutory school age where parents are in receipt of Income Support or Working Tax Credit and reside between 2.5 and 3 miles from the nearest appropriate school.

## What are the Options?

### **1. Post 16 Transport to College and Schools**

#### Option 1

Maintain status quo. The Council will retain the current level of post 16 transport provision to all the educational establishments referred to in the current Transport Policy.

#### Option 2

Introduce a charge for all post 16 transport provision to all the educational establishments referred to in the current Transport Policy.

#### Examples of Charges

Charge per term (£)	Charge per annum (£)	Gross income (£)
50.00	150.00	293,000
80.00	240.00	468,000
100.00	300.00	585,000
150.00*	450.00	877,500**

\*£150.00 will be the cost of a concessionary seat on learner transport from September 2019. A concessionary seat is one that can be bought by a learner who does not have a statutory entitlement to free transport.

\*\* Represents full cost recovery of post 16 transport

#### Option 3

Introduce a charge for all post 16 transport to all educational establishments referred to in the current Transport Policy as in Option 2 but the charge be waived for learners who are eligible for free school meals.

#### Examples of Charges

Charge per term (£)	Charge per annum (£)	Gross income (£)
50.00	150.00	249,000
80.00	240.00	398,000
100.00	300.00	498,000
150.00*	450.00	728,375
173.00	519.00	860,500**

\*£150.00 will be the cost of a concessionary seat on learner transport from September 2019. A concessionary seat is one that can be bought by a learner who does not have a statutory entitlement to free transport.

\*\* Represents full cost recovery of post 16 transport

#### Option 4

Discontinue learner transport for all post 16 students and all learners to make their own arrangements.

#### Option 5

Exclude **Welsh Medium** schools from Options 2 and 3.

#### Option 6

Exclude **Welsh Medium and denominational** schools from Options 2 and 3.

## **2. Benefits entitlement**

#### Option 7

Maintain status quo and continue the current “benefits” policy.

#### Option 8

Remove the “benefits” provision completely for all learners with effect from September 2020.

#### Option 9

Phase out the “benefits” provision i.e. no new students to receive free transport under this criterion with effect from September 2020.

Please let us know what you think by completing an electronic copy of this response form via <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/SchoolTransportPolicy>

If you need help completing the questionnaire, please call in one of the Flintshire Connects Offices in Buckley, Connah’s Quay, Flint, Holywell or Mold.

Large print, Braille and alternative language versions of this document are available on request by:

- Writing to School Transport Consultation, Education & Youth, Flintshire County Council, County Hall, Mold, CH7 6NB.
- Emailing [schooltransportpolicy@flintshire.gov.uk](mailto:schooltransportpolicy@flintshire.gov.uk)
- Telephoning 01352 704187