

**Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture
Select Committee
13 December 2019
Home to School/College Travel and Transport
Policy Public Consultation**



Purpose of report: To outline the Council's approach to reviewing and consulting on its Home to School/College Travel and Transport Policy. A presentation will be provided for the Committee on the detail of the policy proposals, seeking the Committee's views, as well as a summary of public feedback so far.

Introduction

1. Surrey County Council is reviewing and consulting on its home to school/college travel and transport policy. This is something all councils are required to do periodically, and in doing this, the Council is seeking opportunities to improve outcomes for children and young people in Surrey, particularly those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). The policy is intended to make sure the Council continues to be able to deliver its statutory responsibilities. However, our analysis and comparisons with other areas indicate that currently poor practice and culture are driving poor outcomes for children and young people in Surrey and high costs. The consultation document provides examples of this.
2. Engagement with young people with SEND in Surrey confirmed that young people value independence highly, and that they want their parents, schools and the services that support them to help them prepare for adulthood, including continued access to education, employment opportunities and access to essential services and activities in the community. The ability to travel independently is important to them now to attend school, participate in community life and socialise with friends; it is also fundamental to their future ambitions. Through the consultation, the Council is proposing that its policy more strongly supports independence.
3. The twelve-week public consultation opened on 23 September 2019 and closes on 15 December 2019. The full consultation document can be accessed from the following link. It outlines the reasons the Council is reviewing its policy, how it is consulting, its intention to provide greater focus on promoting independence for young people and three policy options regarding current discretionary provision of home to school/college transport.

https://www.surreysays.co.uk/csf/home-to-school-college-travel-and-transport-policy/supporting_documents/Home%20to%20School%20and%20College%20Travel%20and%20Transport%20Consultation.pdf

4. In addition to an on-line survey, the Council held eight public engagement events across the county in both daytime and evening attended by parents, young people, professionals and representatives of groups such as Family Voice Surrey and Healthwatch Surrey. Young people provided their views through focus groups sessions led by SEND Youth Advisers Surrey (SYAS), and school leaders through sessions with the phase council representatives (early years, primary, secondary and special). Family Voice Surrey were consulted on their views. The link to the on-line survey is below.

<https://www.surreysays.co.uk/csf/home-to-school-college-travel-and-transport-policy/>

5. On 31 January 2020, the Cabinet Member for All-Age Learning will be asked to approve the recommended three policy options for home to school/college travel and transport, which were the subject of the twelve week public consultation, and the Council's new policy in light of this decision, taking full consideration of the consultation responses and the equality impact assessment.

Policy principles and proposals

6. On 16 July 2019, Cabinet agreed a set of design principles to shape the new Home to School/College Travel and Transport Policy:
 - a) Social integration of children and young people whatever their needs
 - b) Independence for children and young people with SEND
 - c) Promotion of parental responsibility to make any necessary arrangements to ensure their children attend school
 - d) School responsibility to collaborate with the council on SEN transport and for the behaviour of children outside the school premises
 - e) Equity
 - f) Environmentally sustainable transport
 - g) Efficient use of public resources
7. Cabinet acknowledged that Surrey County Council currently provides significant discretionary home to school transport provision for children with SEND and some discretionary provision for mainstream children. As a consequence of this, the Council is a significant outlier in terms of spend on SEND travel assistance, which was confirmed by independent analysis and benchmarking. Looking at 2017/18 and comparing Surrey's spend on SEND transport per 0- 17 year old with that of Hertfordshire and Essex (counties of similar populations, demographics and geographies) Surrey spends 2.5 – 3 times more than these councils.
8. Expenditure on home to schools transport for children with SEND of £33.3 million per year is equivalent to approximately 5% of the yield from the Council Tax. To ensure the effective delivery of the Council's statutory responsibilities for home to school travel and transport for children and young people, changes have to be considered to secure effective public spending and the efficient use of public resources.
9. The approved design principles have shaped the focus of the consultation which features a strong focus on supporting independence and preparation for adulthood for young people with SEND, as well as flexible travel arrangements for parents and carers who have multiple commitments.

Supporting independence and preparation for adulthood

10. The SEND Code of Practice states: **'The vast majority of young people with SEN are capable of sustainable paid employment with the right preparation and support. All professionals working with them should share that presumption.'** (para 8.31)
Enabling a young person to fulfil their potential can be greatly enhanced by supporting them to travel independently, as employers very rarely provide home to work transport for their staff. Many councils have had significant success of this and have seen improved outcomes for their young people with SEND.
11. In Surrey, our review of the pathways that young people follow after their Education, Health and Care plan (EHCP) ceases indicates that approximately 4% of children and young people with an EHCP are likely to transition into continuing health care funded by the NHS due to significant health care needs, when they become adults. A further 11% of children

with an EHCP are likely to transition into Adult Social Care when their EHCP ceases. This means that for 85% of children and young people with an EHCP, the Council's support for them will cease by the age of 25 at the very latest. In Surrey, there are currently 9,786 children and young people with an EHCP, and the vast majority of them could be supported onto an employment pathway, with preparation to travel independently a key component.

12. The consultation seeks feedback and views on how young people might benefit from this support.

Review of discretionary provision

13. Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure that their statutory school-aged children (5-16) regularly attend school and to make any necessary arrangements to ensure that they attend school. Local authorities have a statutory duty to provide free home to school travel assistance or transport for children and young people of compulsory school age (5-16) who meet the eligibility requirements set by the Department for Education. Support with travel to access education for children or young people who do not meet these criteria is a discretionary service decided locally by each council.
14. The consultation asks for views on three areas of existing discretionary provision that are in excess of the Council's statutory responsibilities. These are:
 - a) Travel and transport for children below the age of 5 (below compulsory school age)
 - b) Travel and transport for children turning 8 living between 2 and 3 miles from their nearest available school (statutory mileage distance change)
 - c) Travel and transport for young people over age of 16 (over compulsory school age of 16)
15. Each proposal has two options being considered. The Council has indicated its preferred choice at the time of publishing the consultation to provide transparency, however no decision has been made. Responses to the consultation and the equality impact assessment will be taken into consideration when a final decision is made by the Cabinet Member for All-Age Learning.

Consultation events and decision-making

16. The table below sets out the extensive consultation and engagement that has taken place. Events have been publicised via the Council's website, the Council's public consultation page (Surrey Says), the Council's social media channels, the Local Offer, by schools directly to their parent and carer communities and by direct email to current service users.
17. The engagement sessions have been enhanced with a video explaining the consultation and hearing the voices of young people with SEND and their Headteacher explain the difference independent travel makes to young people's lives. The video is available at the following link: <https://youtu.be/xLijELp4NIM>
18. Engagement with settings has been co-ordinated through Phase Council meetings during the Autumn term. A focus group specifically for special school Headteachers was held on 11 November.
19. The Select Committee will be provided with a summary of the key feedback through the consultation at its meeting on 13 December. No analysis will be provided in advance of the meeting so as not to influence a live consultation.

Date	Event Description
25 June	Pre-Consultation Engagement with Young People (SYAS)
05-Sep	Pre-Consultation Engagement with Young People (SYAS)
18-Sep	Pre-Consultation Engagement with Young People (SYAS)
23-Sep	Consultation opened
01-Oct	Public Engagement Event - 11 am – 1pm (Surrey History Centre - Woking) 1 of 8
04-Oct	Special Phase Council - 8.15am– 3pm at The Hilton Hotel, Cobham
11-Oct	Public Engagement Event – 11 am – 1pm (Guildford Borough Council) 2 of 8
23-Oct	Public Engagement Event – 11am – 1pm (Molesey Youth & Community Centre) 3 of 8
06-Nov	Public Engagement Event – 11am – 1pm (Wray Park Road) 4 of 8
07-Nov	SYAS Engagement Event - Woking 7th November 17:30-19:30
11-Nov	Special Phase Council Engagement Event (SEN Headteachers)
14-Nov	Public Engagement Event – 6pm – 8pm (Therfield School) 5 of 8
19-Nov	SYAS Engagement Event - Epsom 19th November 17:30-19:30
19-Nov	Primary Phase Council - 8.30am – 1pm at Milestone House
22-Nov	Public Engagement Event – 6pm – 8pm (Guildford Borough Council) 6 of 8
26-Nov	Secondary Phase Council - 2.15pm at Therfield School
27-Nov	Public Engagement Event – 6pm – 8pm (Carwenden House School) 7 of 8
03-Dec	Public Engagement Event – 6pm – 8pm (Walton Leigh School) 8 of 8
13-Dec	Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture (CFLC) Select Committee Meeting
15-Dec	Consultation Closed
15-Jan	CFLC Leadership Team Meeting (Consultation Analysis & Cabinet Member Decision Paper Review)
23-Jan	Cabinet Member Decision Papers Published
31-Jan	Cabinet Member for All-Age Learning Decision on Policy
07-Feb	Call-In Period Ends re Cabinet Member Decision
10-Feb	Publish Policy

Conclusions

20. Delivery of the outcomes sought through the design principles of the policy will promote independence and preparation for adulthood for children and young people, more efficient use of public resources and enable the Council to continue to deliver its statutory responsibilities for home to school transport.

Recommendation

21. For Select Committee Members to provide their feedback and views on the policy proposals subject to consultation to inform the decision-making process.

Next steps:

22. The public consultation closes on 15 December 2019.
23. Analysis of the feedback and responses will inform a final set of proposals to be reflected in a refreshed Surrey County Council Home to School/College Travel and Transport Policy for consideration and decision making by the Cabinet Member for All-Age Learning on 31 January 2020.
24. Subject to decision making, the Home to School/College Travel and Transport Policy will be published on 10 February 2020 and communicated widely to children and young people and their families through the Surrey Local Offer, through schools and settings and directly with families.

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Sources/background papers:

Cabinet Report 16th July 2019 – Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Travel Assistance

Consultation Information & Papers – <https://www.surreysays.co.uk/csf/home-to-school-college-travel-and-transport-policy/>

Consultation Introductory Video – <https://youtu.be/xLljELp4NIM>

Relevant Home to School/College Travel & Transport Legislation:

Education Act 1996 section 508A (duty to promote sustainable modes of travel)

Education Act 1996 section 508B (travel arrangements for eligible children)

Education Act 1996 section 508C (travel arrangements for other children)

Education Act 1996 section 508E and Schedule 35C (school travel schemes)

Education Act 1996 section 508F (local authorities in England: provision of transport for adult learners)

Education Act 1996 section 508G (local authorities in England: transport policy statements for young adults subject to learning difficulty assessment)

Education Act 1996 section 509AA (transport etc for persons of sixth form age)

Department for Education - Home to School Travel and Transport Statutory Guidance - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/home-to-school-travel-and-transport-guidance>

Department for Education - Transport to education and training for people aged 16 and over - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/post-16-transport-to-education-and-training>

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