

TRAFFORD COUNCIL

Report to: The Leader
Date: 30th May 2018
Report for: Decision
Report of: Jill Colbert, Corporate Director

Report Title

Children, Families and Wellbeing All Age Travel Assistance Policy 2018/19.

Summary

The purpose of this report is to set out the approach taken to the All Age Travel Assistance consultation undertaken with regards to the proposed policy for 2017/18 and to approve the revised policy.

Recommendation(s)

1. That the Leader notes the Report
 - 1.1 The methodology and approach used for the consultation process;
 - 1.2 The feedback received from the consultation process;
 - 1.3 The Equality Impact Assessment in relation to the travel arrangements policy for 2018/19.
2. That the Policy is approved for implementation with effect from 1st June 2018.
3. That this report be considered, and a formal request that it be considered urgent.

Contact person for access to background papers and further information:

Name: Jill Colbert
Extension: 1901

Background Papers: None

The following documents are attached as appendices:
Trafford Council All Age Travel Assistance Policy 2018-19.
EIA All Age Travel Policy Updated March 2018.
EIA Appendix A – School Census January 2018.

Implications:

Relationship to Policy Framework/Corporate Priorities	Services focussed on the most vulnerable people Re-shaping Trafford Council.
Financial	<p>The Council spends a minimum of £3.6 million per year on transport and travel assistance.</p> <p>The proposals in the report will reduce income by an estimated £3,285 per academic year. Estimated income for the 2017/18 academic year is £21,600.</p> <p>The current charge of £600 be decreased to £510 for the 2018/19 academic year.</p> <p>For those families regarded as being on a low income, the current charge of £300, be decreased to £255 per year for the 2018/19 academic year.</p>
Legal Implications:	To ensure the Council adheres to its legal obligations in relation to home to school transport, disabled children, adult learners and adults with care and support.
Equality/Diversity Implications	<p>Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)</p> <p>In line with the council's PSED under section 149 of the 2010 Equality Act an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been carried out and is provided as part of the background papers to this report. The development of the EIA has enabled the Council to give due regard to the impact of the proposed changes on those identified with protected characteristics under the 2010 Equality Act. Members must have regard to the EIA, the likely impact of the proposed policy on persons with protected characteristics and the mitigation proposed in relation to those impacts in reaching their decision on this matter.</p>
Sustainability Implications	The Council will have to continue to procure transport providers to transport children across the Borough, and that number is likely to increase. A range of travel options are highlighted in the Policy. The Policy links to the Sustainable Modes of Transport Strategy.
Resource Implications e.g. Staffing / ICT / Assets	The number of Passenger Assistants required is dependent upon a number of factors including needs of pupils on commissioned transport.
Risk Management Implications	These are addressed in the Policy and the EIA.
Health & Wellbeing Implications	Travel assistance enables eligible children and adults to access school, learning, training, respite care and activities which contribute to their employability, health and wellbeing. Independent Travel Training is one travel assistance solution and helps young people prepare for adulthood and independence.

Health and Safety Implications	These are addressed through the Service Standards described in the Policy.
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1.0 Background

- 1.1. Trafford Council has been on a journey to reshape and transform services since 2010, which has resulted in significant improvements in service standards and effectiveness, as well as the achievement of challenging savings. To meet that need the Council's All Age Travel Assistance Policy was revised for the 2016/17 financial year.
- 1.2. In 2017 the Policy was revised to clarify some wording which users found confusing.
- 1.3. The Council has now exercised, in the proposed 2018/19 Policy, its statutory duty to review travel arrangements for service users; the costs and charges, and eligibility to assistance. The revised Policy ensures that the Council's obligation to review is met and more clearly states eligibility, including for Foster Carers, and travel assistance options.
- 1.4. The public consultation was undertaken from 19th February to 16th March 2018 and details of the consultation approach and methods used are noted in section 3.
- 1.5. The revised Policy will apply to children of compulsory school age, pre-school children, children starting reception class, pupils attending grammar school or faith schools, young people of sixth form age, adult learners and adults with care and support needs. The Policy is therefore not solely addressed to children and adults with disabilities, but is a wider document pertinent to all relevant groups.

2.0 The Policy Changes Summarised

- 2.1 This section summarises the main changes of the revised Policy.
- 2.2 To make some changes to the wording of the All Age Travel Assistance Policy to make it clearer. Revisions were made to the following sections of the Policy.
 - Eligible Children.
 - Qualifying School.
 - Low Income Families.
 - Children attending a Grammar School.
 - Other Children.
 - Residence.
 - Alternative Address.
 - Additional section on Foster Carer Allowances.
 - Travel assistance solutions.
- 2.3 There were no further changes made to the Policy following consultation.
- 2.4 The changes to the Policy would take effect from 1st June 2018.
- 2.5 To decrease the annual charge for providing travel assistance to eligible nursery age children and those students of 6th form age, including those children and young people from low income families. (A low income family is regarded as one where the

child is eligible for 'free school meals' or where the parent that the child normally lives with is in receipt of the highest level of working tax credit.)

- 2.6 For the annual charge to take effect from 1st June 2018 but be implemented from 1st September 2018.
- 2.7 The current charge of £600 would be decreased £510 for the 2018/19 academic year.
- 2.8 For those families regarded as being on a low income, the current charge of £300 would be increase to £255 per year for the 2018/19 academic year.

3.0 Communications and Publicity

- 3.1 The consultation was promoted through the following communications channels in order to promote the changes and encourage participation and feedback by all interested parties, individual users and groups.
- 3.2 The consultation was promoted on the front page of the Council's website to deliver maximum exposure to 'passing traffic', as well as providing an immediate landing spot and link to the consultation's dedicated webpage.
- 3.3 The dedicated webpage received a total of 423 page views and with 372 of these being unique visitors to the site.
- 3.4 Front page promotion was conducted for the period of 19th February to 16th March 2018.
- 3.5 A dedicated All Age Travel Assistance Policy Consultation page contained general information on the Policy and background, and details of the proposals. It also had links to the full policies which could be downloaded and reviewed. The proposed Policy was downloaded 21 times and the document detailing the proposed changes was downloaded 27 times. The current 2017 Policy was downloaded 59 times during this period.
- 3.6 The webpage also invited feedback by allowing respondents to either complete a Yes/No question and/or to leave additional feedback in an expandable text box. Respondents could also send comments to a dedicated email account for review and inclusion.
- 3.7 Notification letters regarding the changes and the methods of responding to the consultation were emailed to parents where their email addresses were known.
- 3.8 Notification letters were also posted to the parents of all school age children and the carers of adult transport users.
- 3.9 The consultation was also promoted widely by social media and other Council communication channels.
- 4.0 Trafford Parents forum also promoted the consultation and provided links directly to the Council's web page; they provided opportunities for feedback during drop in sessions already organised around other topics.

- 4.1 The Family Information Service promoted the consultation via social media, placed information on their dedicated website, and also 're-tweeted' the news and information to their followers. Young people, parents and carers were targeted; 979 Facebook users were reached and there were 7258 Twitter 'engagements'.
- 4.2 Information regarding the consultation was also promoted on the Trafford SEND Local Offer website along with an invitation to find out more and leave feedback. [A](#) link to the consultation was placed prominently on the 'carousel' on the Local Offer front page and the consultation was also promoted in the Spring edition of the LINK newsletter which was emailed directly to over 100 parents, carers and professionals on Friday 9 March 2018.
- 4.3 Letters were sent to three local FE colleges at Trafford, Salford and Manchester, neighbouring local authorities, existing transport contractors and Transport for Greater Manchester inviting feedback to the consultation.
- 4.4 A total of 573 letters were sent plus 73 emails to contractors, schools and others.
- 4.5 Adults and Children social care services were asked for feedback to the proposed changes.

5.0 Consultation Response

- 5.1 A total of 7 responses were received. This included 4 responses submitted via the web page. A further 3 responses were received by email including one from Trafford Parents Forum and one from Trafford's Labour Councillors in response to the consultation proposals.

6.0 Analysis of Responses

- 6.1 Two respondents stated that they did not agree with the proposed changes but one went on to say that the Motability element to the Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payment (PIP) should be used to help pay for transport costs. Their comments only related to charging for transport and they did not provide feedback on the other proposed changes to the Policy.
- 6.2 Three respondents supported the proposed decrease in the charges.
- 6.3 One respondent also agreed that the minor word changes gave greater clarity and welcomed the inclusion of travel assistance for eligible children being cared for by Foster Carers in the Policy.
- 6.4 Two respondents did not state whether they agreed with the proposed changes. One of the respondents said parents had not raised any issues or concerns. The other respondent provided information about the cost to contractors to provide transport but did not comment on the proposed changes to the Policy.

7.0 Recommendation

- 7.1 That the Executive Member for Children's Services notes the Report.
- 7.2 That the Policy is approved for implementation with effect from 1st June 2018.

8.0 Urgency of Decision

- 8.1 That due to the local elections a formal decision on this report was unable to be taken. There is a legal requirement for the Council's travel policy to be published by the 31 May. Consequently this should be considered an urgent decision and not subjected to call-in.

Key Decision Yes

If Key Decision, has 28-day notice been given? Yes

Finance Officer Clearance NB

Legal Officer Clearance JLF

CORPORATE DIRECTOR'S SIGNATURE *(electronic)*



To confirm that the Financial and Legal Implications have been considered and the Executive Member has cleared the report.