

**REPORT FOR: EDUCATION
CONSULTATIVE FORUM**

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| Date of Meeting: | 7 March 2012 |
| Subject: | Post-16 Transport Statement |
| Key Decision: | No |
| Responsible Officer: | Catherine Doran Corporate Director of Children's Services |
| Portfolio Holder: | Brian Gate Portfolio Holder for Schools and Colleges |
| Exempt: | No |
| Decision subject to Call-in: | No |
| Enclosures: | Copy of Draft Consultation Paper |

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report sets out proposals to change the criteria for funding for transport for students without a special educational need who travel to a post-16 educational setting to study.

Recommendations:

Forum members are asked to:

- 1) consider and comment on the proposed criteria, and;
- 2) encourage their constituencies to respond to the consultation by 2 April 2012.

Reason:

The Council is encouraged by government to carry out an annual consultation on a Post-16 Transport Statement.

Section 2 – Report

1. Introductory paragraph

- 1.1 Guidance requires local authorities to prepare and publish a Transport Policy Statement for young people aged 19-24 with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (SEND). There are no plans to change the current eligibility criteria for these students. This consultation relates only to other Post-16 students.

2. Background

- 2.1 The grant from central government that provided transport costs for students without a special educational need or disability through a locally determined scheme ceased on 31 March 2011. Harrow Council, like other local authorities, has not received any grant funding since that date. However, Harrow Council continued to fund the Post-16 Transport Statement and the policy was renewed for 2011-2012. In fact, most students in Harrow are well supported in the travel arrangements through arrangements offered by London Transport.

3. Current situation

- 3.1 The criteria for receiving support for transport in the current statement are as follows:
- Students aged between 16 and 19 years old currently living within the London Borough of Harrow.
 - Students taking courses, which are not available at one of Harrow's three Colleges.
 - Students who are from low income families.*

*Low income families refers to families in receipt of Income Support (IS), Income Related Jobseekers Allowance (JSAIR), Income Related Employment Support Allowance (ESAIR), Pension Credit (PC), Child Tax Credit (CTC) without working tax credit with an annual income of no more than £16,190.00 or are supported under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.

4. Why a change is needed

- 4.1 The Council wishes to consult on proposed changes to the way funds are allocated, and the consultation is planned to be held from 5 March 2012 to 2 April 2012. The Council intends to target its funds more effectively and, in particular, to bring it into line with the typical funding mechanisms of educational institutions. The government now permits schools, Academies and colleges to use discretionary allowances to support transport costs for students and Harrow Council wishes to target its support to those most in need.
- 4.2 The overall intention of the Local Authority's 16-19 transport statement is to continue to ensure that learners of sixth form age who most need additional support are able to access the education and training of their choice.
- 4.3 Harrow is proposing a change to the criteria found in the current [Post 16 Transport Policy Statement](#) as a basis for future funding. To be eligible for a grant from September 2012 the Council is proposing the following criteria.
- The course you are studying is not available in a school, Academy or College within the Harrow boundary AND
 - You must have been in receipt of, or have been eligible for, free schools meals (FSM) while a Year 11 student in a secondary school or Academy AND
 - You must be a resident of Harrow at the time you seek funding; AND
 - The place of study must be a minimum of three miles from the student's home and within 1 hour and 15 minutes travel time from home by public transport.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 There are limited financial implications. There may be an overall reduction in the total amount of grant offered to students but this may not be significant. The new criteria enable the Council to target this limited funding towards those most in need and bring our criteria into line with those of many education providers.

6. Risk Management Implications

- 6.1 There may be complaints against the operation of the new criteria, which we would consider through the Council's complaints procedure.

7. Equalities Implications

- 7.1 The limited fund now available will continue to target the most disadvantaged young people Post-16 but will use receipt or eligibility for Free School Meals in Year 11 as a proxy for this.

7.2 The consultation will be sent to interested parties including existing and potentially eligible recipients and schools, and respondents will be asked to complete monitoring information that will help assess any equality implications. The equalities implications of any changes will be assessed prior to a decision being made.

8. Corporate Priorities

8.1 These considerations will support the Council's Corporate Priorities for 2011-2012:

- United and involved communities: a Council that listens and leads.
- Supporting and protecting people who are most in need.

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

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| Name: | Emma Stabler | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer |
| Date: | 22 February 2012 | | |
| Name: | Sarah Wilson | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | on behalf of the Monitoring Officer |
| Date: | 22 February 2012 | | |

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact:

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Background Papers:

The Post-16 Transport Statement 2011-2012
(linked through consultation paper attached)