

Cabinet

Dorset County Council



Date of Meeting	6 March 2019
<p><u>Cabinet Member(s)</u> Andrew Parry – Cabinet Member for Economy, Education, Learning and Skills Daryl Turner – Cabinet Member for the Natural and Built Environment</p> <p><u>Lead Director(s)</u> Nick Jarman – Director for Children’s Services Andrew Reid – Assistant Director Schools and Learning Matthew Piles – Service Director Economy, Natural and Built Environment</p>	
Subject of Report	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Transport Policy Update
Executive Summary	<p>In December 2018, the Cabinet received a paper which proposed amendments to the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) transport policy.</p> <p>At the meeting we recognised that more detail, evidence and engagement with families should have taken place before coming to Cabinet with proposals. The chairman withdrew the report so that further work could be carried out.</p> <p>The purpose of this report is to update the Cabinet, outline a new approach and offer some clarity and reassurance for both families and councillors.</p>
Impact Assessment:	Equalities Impact Assessment: This is an update report. As work develops, an Equality Impact Assessment will be carried when considering any future proposals.
	Use of Evidence: The evidence gathered as part of the wider Strategic Transport Review programme will inform any future proposals.
	Budget: There are no direct budget implications in this report.
	Risk Assessment:

Update paper on the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Transport policy

	<p>As this is an update paper, a Risk Assessment has not been completed. This will be undertaken as any proposals are developed.</p>
	<p>Outcomes:</p> <p>The council is committed to offering families more choice, personalised travel options while helping children and young people to prepare for adulthood and move towards greater independence where possible.</p>
	<p>Other Implications:</p> <p>None at this stage.</p>
Recommendations	<p>Members are asked to support a revised approach which will include evidence gathering and engagement with stakeholders. This will take place within the context of the Strategic Transport Review Implementation programme.</p>
Appendices	<p>N/A</p>
Background Papers	<p>None</p>
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Background

- 1.1 In December 2018, Cabinet received a paper which proposed amendments to Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) transport policy.
- 1.2 The council would like to offer families greater choice and, where appropriate, help young people move towards independence as they approach adulthood.
- 1.3 The paper had proposed introducing designated pick-up points, as opposed to a bespoke door-to-door service for children whose needs could be met in this way.
- 1.4 At the Cabinet meeting in December, it was recognised that more detail, evidence and engagement with families should have taken place before proposals were put forward. The chairman asked for the report to be withdrawn and for more work to be carried out.
- 1.5 After the December Cabinet, our SEND Partnerships and Co-production Manager met with some parents who spoke at the meeting to reassure them that the original proposal had been shelved and that families will be involved in shaping travel options and will be properly consulted.
- 1.6 The purpose of this report is to update members and set out the principles for this work going forward.

Moving Towards Independence

- 2.1 We want to give families of children with SEND more choice, flexibility and control about how their child gets to and from school. Where possible, we also want to help young people with SEND prepare for adulthood and move towards greater independence.
- 2.2 It is important that families have options when they are considering how to get their child to and from school. One way many families currently do this is through a Personal Travel Budget (PTB). A PTB is a sum of money paid directly into a parent's bank account for them to use to get their child to and from school. The amount they get is based on the distance between their home and child's school (remembering that it is a parent's responsibility to ensure their child attends school).
- 2.4 PTBs come with an offer of independent travel training – a scheme which helps give young people the skills to learn how to travel safely on their own.
- 2.5 Currently 15% of families eligible for SEND transport choose to have a PTB. For those families who do not wish to have a PTB, we would like to offer more choice when considering their child's travel. We would like to be able to provide more personalised travel options that are designed to meet the specific needs of children and young people. We would then consider each child's individual needs and offer the most appropriate solutions.
- 2.6 It is important to note that we acknowledge that Personal Travel Budgets are not appropriate for every family and that children with the highest level of need will continue to be offered the highest levels of support.

Strategic Transport Review

- 3.1 The council has a Strategic Transport Review Implementation (STRI) programme that aims to improve how we support transport and travel services for all residents – including adults, children and young people.

The STRI aims to:
 - improve independence, choice and social inclusion;
 - ensure people can access information and services that are easy to use;
 - make sure services are personalised, so they are based on individual needs and the needs of local communities;
 - provide value for money, ensuring that local tax-payers money is used effectively and targeted to support the needs of the most vulnerable people in our communities.
- 3.2 After the December Cabinet meeting, and following discussions with the Service Director for Environment, Infrastructure and Economy, it was agreed that SEND travel provision and policy should be included as part of this wider project, as our aims and desired outcomes are aligned.

Next Steps

- 4.1 Officers across the council from Children's Services and Environment & Economy are working together to gather detailed evidence about the different levels of needs of children and young people with SEND. They are looking at the options that are available to meet those needs together with our commissioning arrangements with travel providers. The work will seek to increase choice and support greater independence when appropriate to do so. Those children and young people with high and/or complex needs are in not included in the scope of this work.
- 4.2 Once we have gathered evidence about how people currently use SEND travel, we will come back to the Cabinet with an engagement plan, which will include parents and carers, the parent/carer forum (known as Dorset Parent Carer Council), children and young people and other stakeholders. Their feedback will help inform future proposals.
- 4.3 Members are asked to support this approach.

Nick Jarman
Director for Children's Services
March 2019