

Report of: Head of Service, Commissioning & Market Management
Report to: Chief Officer, Partnerships & Health

Date: 11 June 2018

Subject: Pause to the phasing in of Post-16 transport changes



Are specific electoral wards affected? If yes, name(s) of ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-in?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, access to information procedure rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

1. The Executive Board of July 2017 took a decision to introduce changes to the transport offer for post-16 learners who have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).
2. The new offer included a phased introduction for new entrants to post-16 education from September 2018.
3. Although the changes were subject to rigorous consultation and an extensive communications exercise during 2016 and 2017, since early March 2018 a small number of families have provided strong feedback about the implications the new offer would have for them. It is the practice of Children & Families to continually take the views of children and their families into account, and a decision has been taken pause the phased introduction of the changes for new entrants scheduled for September 2018. This is pending further review of how recent feedback from families can be taken into account in taking the proposals forward with effect from September 2019.

Recommendations

4. The Chief Officer, Partnerships and Health, approves a pause to the phased introduction of the changes for new entrants scheduled for September 2018. This pends further review of how recent feedback from families can be taken into account in taking the proposals forward with effect from September 2019. Any

changes to be introduced will be communicated to families in advance of making post-16 choices so that transport arrangements can be given consideration during the decision-making process.

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To advise the Chief Officer, Partnerships & Health, of recent feedback regarding the new transport offer for post-16 learners who have SEND, and to recommend a significant operational decision to pause the implementation of the phasing in of the new offer.

2. Background information

- 2.1 The Executive Board of July 2017 took a decision to introduce changes to the transport offer for post-16 learners who have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).
- 2.2 The new offer was designed to meet the strategic aims of Children & Families Services to work restoratively with families doing things with them rather than for them and to better prepare for adulthood with more independence for themselves and from the council. This was to be achieved by offering Personal Travel Allowances to enable young people and families to make their own transport arrangements instead of continuing to provide taxis and minibuses upon entry to post-16 education.
- 2.3 The new offer included a phased introduction for new entrants to post-16 education from September 2018
- 2.4 Although the changes were subject to rigorous consultation and an extensive communications exercise during 2016 and 2017, since early March 2018 a small number of families have provided strong feedback about the implications the new offer would have for them.
- 2.5 Phasing arrangements were included in the change process, which meant that the changes would apply only to new entrants to post-16 education from September 2018, with students already in post-16 education continuing to receive transport assistance under the provisions of the November 2015 policy.
- 2.6 In addition to delivering on strategic outcomes, financial modelling indicated a long term opportunity to achieve efficiencies valued at approximately £830,000 once the changes were fully phased in. During the first year of phasing (2018/19 academic year) it was anticipated there could be implementation costs, which would have an impact on the 2018/19 and 2019/20 financial year budgets. A partial year saving would be delivered in the 2020/21 financial year and full year savings realised in 2021/22 FY.

3. Main issues

- 3.1 Additional feedback has been provided since March 2018, some time after the completion of an extensive communications exercise and the ending of the 2-stage appeals process.
- 3.2 Some parents reported that the new arrangements would cause disruption to their work arrangements and that they were also unable to identify ways to make their own transport arrangements.
 - 3.2.1 It is the practice of Children & Families to continually take the views of children and their families into account, and in light of the new feedback received a decision has been taken to pause the phased introduction of the changes for new entrants

scheduled for September 2018. This is pending further review of how recent feedback from families can be taken into account in taking the proposals forward with effect from September 2019.

4. Corporate considerations

4.1 Consultation and engagement

4.1.1 Although the changes were subject to a rigorous consultation exercise and an extensive communications plan prior to the July 2017 Executive Board decision, Children & Families has taken time to listen to further feedback from families since March 2018. In light of the new feedback received a decision has been taken on the advice of the Executive member for Learning and Skills to pause the phased introduction of the changes for new entrants scheduled for September 2018. This is pending further review of how recent feedback from families can be taken into account in taking the proposals forward with effect from September 2019.

4.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration

4.2.1 A full EDCI assessment was carried out to support the July 2017 Executive Board decisions. There are no EDCI considerations at this time as the decision involves a pause to the phasing-in of the arrangements.

4.3 Council policies and best council plan

4.3.1 Pausing the phasing in of the changes whilst exploring ways in which new feedback can be given consideration demonstrates the commitment of Children & Families to listen to children, young and families.

4.4 Resources and value for money

4.4.1 A pause to the phasing in of the changes will have an impact on the medium term financial plan (MTFP), where the savings indicated in the original financial modelling would begin to be realised in subsequent years. Anticipated savings will therefore need to be moved on one year in the MTFP

4.5 Legal implications, access to information, and call-in

4.5.1 The decision is a significant operational decision that may be delegated to the Chief Officer, Partnerships & Health and is not subject to call-in.

4.6 Risk management

4.6.1 As the pause represents a temporary 'no-change' arrangement, there are no risks above those described in respect of the MTFP.

5. Conclusions

5.1.1 Changes to the post-16 transport offer for young people with SEND were subject to rigorous consultation and an extensive communications exercise during 2016 and 2017. However, since early March 2018 a small number of families have provided

strong feedback about the implications the new offer would have for them. It is the practice of Children & Families to continually take the views of children and their families into account, and in light of the new feedback received a decision has been taken to pause the phased introduction of the changes for new entrants scheduled for September 2018. This is pending further review of how recent feedback from families can be taken into account in taking the proposals forward with effect from September 2019.

6. Recommendations

- 6.1 That the Chief Officer, Partnerships and Health, approves a pause to the phased introduction of the changes for new entrants scheduled for September 2018. This pends further review of how recent feedback from families can be taken into account in taking the proposals forward with effect from September 2019. Any changes to be introduced will be communicated to families in advance of making post-16 choices so that transport arrangements can be given consideration during the decision-making process.

7. Background documents¹

- 7.1 None

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.