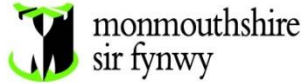


Public Document Pack



Neuadd y Sir
Y Rhadyr
Brynbuga
NP15 1GA

County Hall
Rhadyr
Usk
NP15 1GA

Tuesday, 30 August 2022

Dear Councillor

CABINET

You are requested to attend a **Cabinet** meeting to be held at on **Wednesday, 7th September, 2022**, at **5.00 pm**.

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Declarations of Interest
3. WORKFORCE COST OF LIVING IMPACT 1 - 16

Division/Wards Affected: All

Purpose: Approval is sought from Cabinet to release reserve funding to mitigate the workforce impact of the current cost of living (or more applicably cost of working) situation.

Author: Matt Phillips - Chief Officer People and Governance

Contact Details: matthewphillips@monmouthshire.gov.uk

4. UPDATE ON PROPOSED HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT POLICY 17 - 46
2023/24

Division/Wards Affected: All

Purpose: The Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 sets out the legal responsibilities for the provision of school transport. Within the legislation they place a duty on local authorities to review their transport policy on an annual basis. The policy needs to be confirmed by the 1st October for application in the following academic year.

Members will recall that it was agreed at their July meeting that consultation would commence on the proposed policy. It was also agreed that a further report would be provided in September to provide feedback on the consultation responses received.

Author: Debra Hill-Howells - Head of Decarbonisation, Transport & Support Services

Contact Details: Debrahill-howells@monmouthshire.gov.uk

Yours sincerely,

Paul Matthews
Chief Executive

CABINET PORTFOLIOS

County Councillor	Area of Responsibility	Ward
Mary Ann Brocklesby	<p>Leader Lead Officer – Paul Matthews, Matthew Gatehouse</p> <p>Whole Authority Strategy and Direction Whole authority performance review and evaluation Cardiff City Region Joint Cabinet Regional working Government relations WLGA, LGA and Public Service Board</p>	Llanelly
Paul Griffiths	<p>Cabinet Member for a Sustainable Economy and Deputy Leader Lead Officer – Frances O’Brien</p> <p>Economic resilience and Sustainability focus towards foundational economy Local Development Plan and Strategic Development Plan Town Centre and neighbourhood investment and Stewardship Development Management and Building Control Skills and Employment including green jobs and apprenticeships Broadband connectivity Trading Standards, Environmental Health, Public Health, Licensing</p>	Chepstow Castle & Larkfield
Rachel Garrick	<p>Cabinet Member for Resources Lead Officers – Peter Davies, Frances O’Brien, Matthew Phillips, Jane Rodgers</p> <p>Finance Developing and proposing the budget to Council Digital and Information technology Human Resources, Payroll, Health and Safety Strategic Procurement – promoting localism Land and Buildings Property Maintenance and management Fleet Management Emergency Planning</p>	Caldicot Castle

Martyn Groucutt	<p>Cabinet Member for Education Lead Officers – Will McLean, Ian Saunders</p> <p>Early Years Education All age statutory education Additional learning needs / Inclusion Post 16 and adult education School Standards & Improvement Community learning 21st Century Schools Programme Youth service</p>	Lansdown
Sara Burch	<p>Cabinet Member for Inclusive and Active Communities Lead Officers – Frances O'Brien, Ian Saunders, Jane Rodgers, Matthew Gatehouse</p> <p>Affordable Housing Strategy Homelessness Community Safety Active Travel Leisure Centres Play and Sport Tourist Information, Museums, Theatres, Attractions Public Rights of Way</p>	Cantref
Tudor Thomas	<p>Cabinet Member for Social Care, Safeguarding and Accessible Health Services Lead Officer – Jane Rodgers</p> <p>Children's services Fostering & adoption Youth Offending Service Adult Services Whole authority safeguarding (children and adults) Disabilities Mental Health and wellbeing Relationships with health providers and access to health provision</p>	Park
Catrin Maby	<p>Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Environment Lead Officer – Frances O'Brien, Matthew Gatehouse</p> <p>Decarbonisation Transport Planning Local Food production, consumption and procurement including agroforestry and local horticulture Traffic network planning Public Transport Highways Pavements and back lanes Flood alleviation, management and recovery, river</p>	Drybridge

	<p>quality Waste management Street care, litter and public spaces Countryside and Biodiversity Public conveniences</p>	
Catherine Fookes	<p>Cabinet Member for Equalities and Engagement</p> <p>Lead Officers – Frances O'Brien, Matt Phillips, Matthew Gatehouse</p> <p>Community inequality (health, income, nutrition, disadvantage, discrimination, isolation) Benefits Welsh language Democracy promotion and citizen engagement Community Hubs and Contact Centre Customer service and citizen experience Communications, public relations, marketing Working with voluntary organisations Registrars Service Electoral Services Constitution Review Ethics and Standards</p>	Town

Aims and Values of Monmouthshire County Council

Our purpose

Building Sustainable and Resilient Communities

Objectives we are working towards

- Giving people the best possible start in life
- A thriving and connected county
- Maximise the Potential of the natural and built environment
- Lifelong well-being
- A future focused council

Our Values

Openness. We are open and honest. People have the chance to get involved in decisions that affect them, tell us what matters and do things for themselves/their communities. If we cannot do something to help, we'll say so; if it will take a while to get the answer we'll explain why; if we can't answer immediately we'll try to connect you to the people who can help – building trust and engagement is a key foundation.

Fairness. We provide fair chances, to help people and communities thrive. If something does not seem fair, we will listen and help explain why. We will always try to treat everyone fairly and consistently. We cannot always make everyone happy, but will commit to listening and explaining why we did what we did.

Flexibility. We will continue to change and be flexible to enable delivery of the most effective and efficient services. This means a genuine commitment to working with everyone to embrace new ways of working.

Teamwork. We will work with you and our partners to support and inspire everyone to get involved so we can achieve great things together. We don't see ourselves as the 'fixers' or problem-solvers, but we will make the best of the ideas, assets and resources available to make sure we do the things that most positively impact our people and places.

Kindness: We will show kindness to all those we work with putting the importance of relationships and the connections we have with one another at the heart of all interactions.

This page is intentionally left blank

SUBJECT:	WORKFORCE COST OF LIVING IMPACT
MEETING:	CABINET
DATE:	7 SEPTEMBER 2022
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:	ALL

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 Approval is sought from Cabinet to release reserve funding to mitigate the workforce impact of the current cost of living (or more applicably cost of working) situation.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

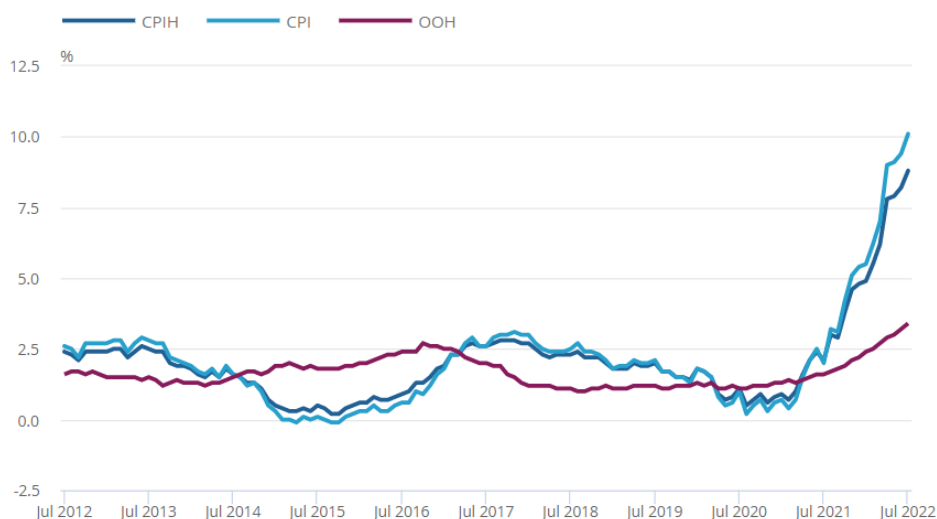
- 2.1 Approve the release of £219,824 from reserves.
- 2.2 Request that the Cabinet Member for Resources, in consultation with the Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer People and Governance, allocate money within that funding envelope to a suitable strategy of cost of living mitigation for MCC employees.

3. KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 The Consumer Prices Index (CPI) rose by 10.1% in the 12 months to July 2022¹ (light blue line below):

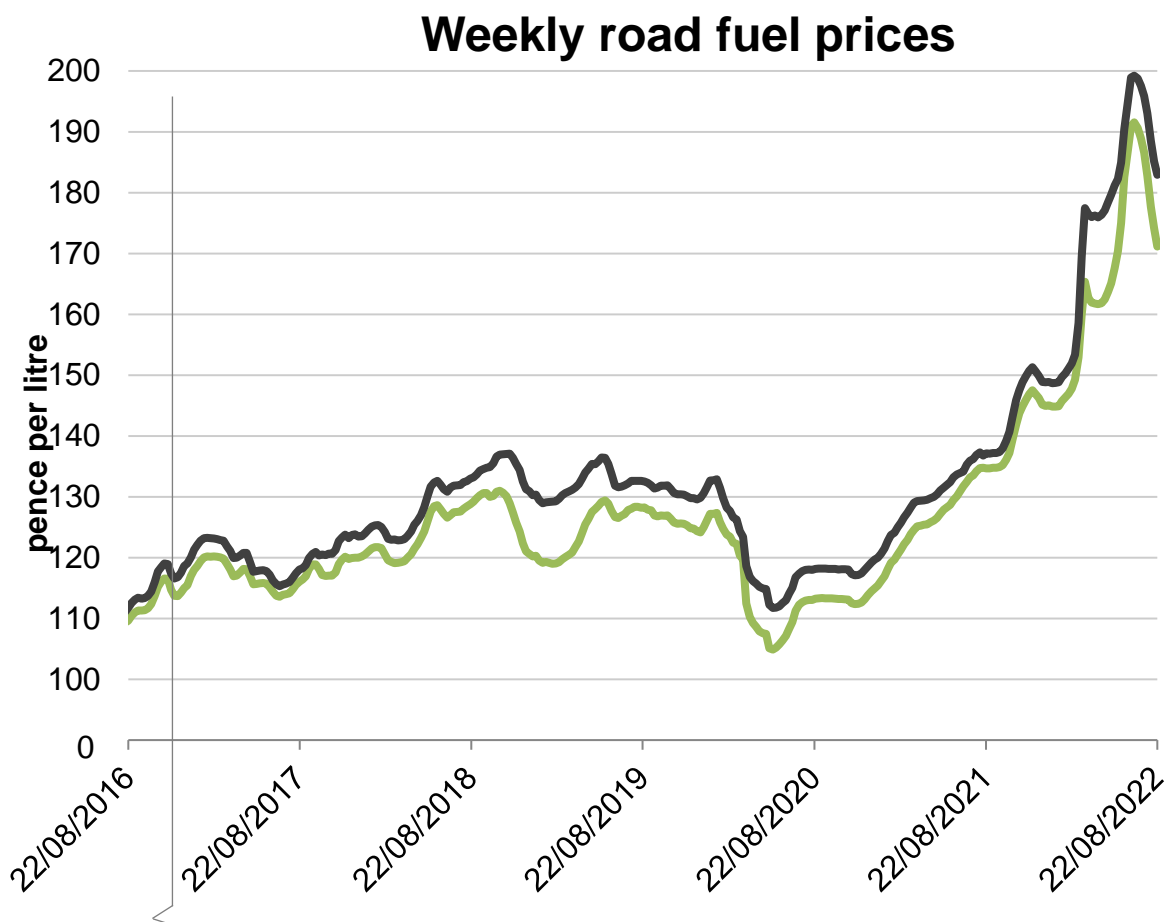
Figure 1: Annual CPIH inflation rate highest since December 1990

CPIH, OOH component and CPI annual inflation rates for the last 10 years, UK, July 2012 to July 2022



¹ [Consumer price inflation, UK - Office for National Statistics](https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandcosts/articles/consumerpriceinflationintheuk/202207)

3.2 The headline impacts have been on energy bills and fuel prices. The 22 August reported prices were diesel 182.92p and petrol 171.14² (the chart shows 2016-2022):



3.3 Monmouthshire County Council (MCC) reimburses work-related travel costs at the [HMRC](#) rates of 45p per mile for the first 10,000 business miles then 25p thereafter. There are also other options for business travel that make use of pool cars with a growing focus on electric vehicles and sustainable, lower cost options; the climate emergency remains a key focus. However, the challenges of a rural county and dispersed workforce and customer base (domiciliary care being an obvious example of this) means that personal car use is a necessary option for some employees.

3.4 On the face of it, the HMRC rates cover the cost of vehicle use. However, the cost of living manifestation being so focused on fuel prices means that there is a disproportionate impact on employees who are required to make use of a car in the course of their duties which in turn has a broader impact on their finances than is being felt elsewhere.

3.5 The global skills shortage is a strategic risk for MCC. Recruitment and retention in some parts of the organisation is challenging. There is an evident overlap between where these pressures are being felt and where the cost of living impact is being felt. The primary example is in social care and health³, where there is a national⁴ shortage in workforce.

² [Weekly road fuel prices - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

³ [Senedd research paper - Fuel Prices Jul 22](#)

⁴ [Adult social care vacancies up 52% over past year](#)

- 3.6 The strategic leadership team (SLT) considered this issue in July and resolved to explore options to be presented to Cabinet. NHS Wales amended its mileage rates to 50p per mile commencing Apr 22 and there is work being done through the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) to explore options for a national approach to be taken by Local Authorities (LA). Neighbouring Local Authorities are also considering options.
- 3.7 The conclusion at SLT was that any action should target the impact of inflationary pressure on employees required to use their vehicles for work purposes. Discounted options included a flat, one-off assistance payment for employees on targeted pay grades, loan or advance payment options for employees and other minor options. Do nothing remains an option as any action is not cost neutral; however, it was felt that this would exacerbate employees' difficulties and therefore the recruitment and retention risk.
- 3.8 It should be noted that there is already considerable work being done to assist employees to access help and advice regarding financial wellbeing hosted on the MCC intranet and website and available via links, posters, pages and QR codes to all employees regardless of digital capability⁵.
- 3.9 As part of the package of measures being considered, work will be undertaken to update the pay system and upskill our colleagues in order to deliver a swifter expenses payment structure than the monthly one currently in operation, thus mitigating some of the immediate pressures being felt by some colleagues.
- 3.10 Any action taken to address the issues being felt by MCC employees raises the requirement to consider the unintended consequences on the wider market in social care. Externally commissioned provision is a fact of the market and the recruitment and retention risks within social care extend across both public and private sector. To inadvertently distort this market would create risk.
- 3.11 Accordingly, the recommendation includes a step being taken by each of the Gwent LAs to increase payments for commissioned care by £1 per hour for a 6 month period.
- 3.12 Additional work has been done to estimate the cost of aligning the mileage rate payment for commissioned care staff with the likely proposed 50p rate for MCC staff.

4. EQUALITY AND FUTURE GENERATIONS EVALUATION (INCLUDES SOCIAL JUSTICE, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING)

- 4.1 The proposal is an internal budget approval and as such will require internal management to ensure there is no adverse impact on any protected characteristics.

5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

- 5.1 There is no statutory duty, contractual obligation or collective bargaining requirement at play and so this is a discretionary issue. As such, to do nothing is a viable option. The benefit of taking no action is that it removes the need to draw on reserve funding which

⁵ [Colleague Financial & Wellbeing Support Available \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

comes with an opportunity cost to other potential funding allocations. The disadvantage is that the manifestation of individual inflationary pressures will likely exacerbate the already present recruitment and retention issues in some departments.

- 5.2 There is work being done by WLGA to examine potential options to address this issue on a national basis. It would be possible to wait until that work is completed and then bring a report forward to Cabinet. In the circumstances, the recommendations for initial approval and delegated authority is deemed more appropriate as it permits swifter action given the impact is being felt now.
- 5.3 As per the recommendations, the preferred option is for budget allocation now to enable some elements to proceed immediately (eg change to the expenses payment process), and permit the identified Cabinet Member and Chief Officers to react swiftly to the work being undertaken by WLGA.
- 5.4 This option is preferred to allow an envelope in which to operate that balances a freedom of manoeuvre and speed of reaction, with a prudent and clear allocation of reserves that is not open ended and considers sustainability of what is a tight budget framework. Additionally, MCC will support and inform the the work being done by neighbouring LAs, the NHS and the WLGA without becoming beholden to those timescales and decisions.

6. EVALUATION CRITERIA

- 6.1 There are myriad qualitative feedback structures in place within MCC that will permit an accurate tracking of employee issues and sentiment, as well as quantitative measures such as turnover rates.

7. REASONS

- 7.1 Cabinet is required to make this decision because it is a change to the budgetary framework for 22/23 approved in Council in March 2022; this is required by the financial procedure rules in the Constitution (sections 23.4 and 33.4).

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Breakdown of costs:

	Per Month	6 months	Annual
All MCC Staff 50p per mile	£5,188	£31,128	£62,256
Commissioned Staff 50p per mile	£4,336	£26,016	£52,032
£1/hr increase for commissioned carers	£20,592	£123,552	£247,104
Improvement to expense module/training	Single £8,000 cost		
Total	£38,116	£188,696	£369,392

8.2 Total estimated cost of 12 month (Apr 22-Mar 23) implementation of increased mileage rate for MCC staff (£62,256), 6 month regional approach to commissioned care (£123,552), 6 months of aligned mileage rate for commissioned care workers (£26,016) and payroll upgrade (£8,000) is £219,824. Note – the decision on detail is yet to be made, these figures are considered an appropriate envelope within which to operate.

9. CONSULTEES

9.1 SLT

10. AUTHOR

Matt Phillips
Chief Officer People and Governance
matthewphillips@monmouthshire.gov.uk

This page is intentionally left blank



Integrated Impact Assessment document

(incorporating Equalities, Future Generations, Welsh Language and Socio Economic Duty)

Name of the Officer Matt Phillips Phone no: E-mail: matthewphillips@monmouthshire.gov.uk	Cabinet decision to approve a proportionate funding envelope within which to address the cost of working impact of inflationary pressures
Name of Service area People	Date 7 Sep 22

1. Are your proposals going to affect any people or groups of people with protected characteristics? Please explain the impact, the evidence you have used and any action you are taking below.

Page 7

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Age	<p>No specific community impact.</p> <p>The budget allocation will enable a targeted focus on dealing with inflationary pressure for staff where they result owing to working practices (car use etc). How it will be used is TBC.</p>	<p>No specific community impact.</p> <p>The budget allocation will enable a targeted focus on dealing with inflationary pressure for staff where they result owing to working practices (car use etc). How it will be used is TBC.</p>	
Disability	As above		

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Gender reassignment	As above		
Marriage or civil partnership	As above		
Pregnancy or maternity	As above		
Race	As above		
Religion or Belief	As above		
Sex	As above		
Sexual Orientation	As above		

2. The Socio-economic Duty and Social Justice

The Socio-economic Duty requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to reduce inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage when taking key decisions This duty aligns with our commitment as an authority to Social Justice.

	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has in respect of people suffering socio economic disadvantage	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has in respect of people suffering socio economic disadvantage.	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Socio-economic Duty and Social Justice	<p>The budget decision is sought to enable a targeted way of assisting employees who have been adversely affected by the cost of living impacts because of how they are required to work. This is most clearly identified as those who have to use a car as part of their role.</p> <p>Once the decision is made on how to use the money it will be easier to define this impact but it is designed to have a positive impact in this category.</p>		





3. Policy making and the Welsh language.


How does your proposal impact on the following aspects of the Council's Welsh Language Standards:	Describe the positive impacts of this proposal	Describe the negative impacts of this proposal	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts
<p>Policy Making</p> <p>Effects on the use of the Welsh language,</p> <p>Promoting Welsh language</p> <p>Treating the Welsh language no less favourably</p>	<p><i>N/a</i></p>		
<p>Operational</p> <p>Recruitment & Training of workforce</p>	<p><i>No recruitment or training intended</i></p>		
<p>Service delivery</p> <p>Use of Welsh language in service delivery</p> <p>Promoting use of the language</p>	<p>No change to services</p>		

4. Does your proposal deliver any of the well-being goals below? Please explain the impact (positive and negative) you expect, together with suggestions of how to mitigate negative impacts or better contribute to the goal. There's no need to put something in every box if it is not relevant!

Well Being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
A prosperous Wales Efficient use of resources, skilled, educated people, generates wealth, provides jobs	The decision is a budgetary one but with an intent to assist those within the workforce for whom the cost of living has become a cost of working impact.	
A resilient Wales Maintain and enhance biodiversity and ecosystems that support resilience and can adapt to change (e.g. climate change)		
A healthier Wales People's physical and mental wellbeing is maximized and health impacts are understood		
A Wales of cohesive communities Communities are attractive, viable, safe and well connected		
A globally responsible Wales Taking account of impact on global well-being when considering local social, economic and environmental wellbeing		
A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language Culture, heritage and Welsh language are promoted and protected. People are encouraged to do sport, art and recreation		
A more equal Wales People can fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances	<i>This includes the protected characteristics listed in Section 1 above, and you can add more detail there. Don't forget to think about the impacts on poverty</i>	

5. How has your proposal embedded and prioritised the sustainable governance principles in its development?

Sustainable Development Principle	Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.	Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
 <p>Long Term</p> <p>Balancing short term need with long term and planning for the future</p>	<p>The short term release of reserve funding is designed to stabilize some of the more turbulent recruitment areas – domiciliary care being the primary one. It also contains a provision to ensure it does not inadvertently impact the commissioned sector.</p>	
 <p>Collaboration</p> <p>Working together with other partners to deliver objectives</p>	<p>MCC will participate with any work being done by WLGA in parallel.</p>	
 <p>Involvement</p> <p>Involving those with an interest and seeking their views</p>	<p>This work was commenced in response to the information provided by the key workers impacted by inflationary pressures.</p>	
 <p>Prevention</p> <p>Putting resources into preventing problems occurring or getting worse</p>	<p>See the long term section</p>	

Sustainable Development Principle	Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.	Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
 <p data-bbox="349 256 521 520">Considering impact on all wellbeing goals together and on other bodies</p>		

6. Council has agreed the need to consider the impact its decisions has on the following important responsibilities: Corporate Parenting and Safeguarding. Are your proposals going to affect any of these responsibilities?

	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has	What will you do/ have you done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Safeguarding	May assist depending on spending decisions that result		
Corporate Parenting	<i>This relates to those children who are 'looked after' by the local authority either through a voluntary arrangement with their parents or through a court order. The council has a corporate duty to consider looked after children especially and promote their welfare (in a way, as though those children were their own).</i>		

7. What evidence and data has informed the development of your proposal?

See the report and linked ONS and other data sources
 - Equalities dashboard link. [Equality data dashboard for EQIA's 2020.xlsx](#)

8. SUMMARY: As a result of completing this form, what are the main positive and negative impacts of your proposal, how have they informed/changed the development of the proposal so far and what will you be doing in future?

See the report

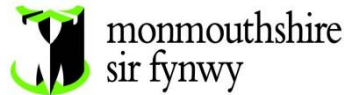
9. ACTIONS: As a result of completing this form are there any further actions you will be undertaking? Please detail them below, if applicable.

What are you going to do	When are you going to do it?	Who is responsible
Decide on the allocation of limited monies to workforce most affected	Sep/Oct 22	Chief Officer People and Governance

10. VERSION CONTROL: The Equality and Future Generations Evaluation should be used at the earliest stage, such as informally within your service, and then further developed throughout the decision making process. It is important to keep a record of this process to demonstrate how you have considered and built in equality and future generations considerations wherever possible.

Version No.	Decision making stage	Date considered	Brief description of any amendments made following consideration
15	<i>e.g. budget mandate, DMT, SLT, Scrutiny, Cabinetetc</i>		

This page is intentionally left blank



SUBJECT:	Update on Proposed Home to School Transport Policy 2023/24
MEETING:	Cabinet
DATE:	7th September 2022
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:	All

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND PURPOSE:

- 1.1 The Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 sets out the legal responsibilities for the provision of school transport. Within the legislation they place a duty on local authorities to review their transport policy on an annual basis. The policy needs to be confirmed by the 1st October for application in the following academic year.
- 1.2 Members will recall that it was agreed at their July meeting that consultation would commence on the proposed policy. It was also agreed that a further report would be provided in September to provide feedback on the consultation responses received.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That Cabinet notes the extended consultation period and delegates decision making on the proposed Transport Policy to the Cabinet Member for Education by way of an Individual Cabinet Member decision process on the 28th September.

3.0 KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 The provision of home to school transport is prescribed by the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure, 2008. The legislation imposes statutory duties on local authorities in the provision of home to school transport and the circumstances when transport must be provided. It also places a duty on all local authorities to undertake an annual review of the transport policy which sets out how the statutory responsibilities and any discretionary policies that are being applied. The transport policy should be agreed prior to the 1st October for application in the proceeding academic year.

- 3.2 Consultation is currently ongoing and is due to conclude on 16th September. At the time of writing this report we have received 72 responses, of those 53 are parents of a learner using home to school transport and 4 responses are from the learners themselves. The responses have provided useful feedback and commentary; however, it is fair to say that the majority of comments have focussed on how the policy will impact their personal circumstances.
- 3.3 There are some clear themes emerging from the consultation which are summarised below:
- 4-year olds – There is no statutory duty to provide transport for 4 year olds, however our draft policy is proposing that we do provide transport for eligible for 4 year olds if they are able to put on their own seatbelt. We have received responses questioning this requirement and suggesting that this should be the responsibility of the driver or passenger assistant.
 - Dual Residency – Our existing policy is silent on the provision of transport from dual addresses if the learner normally resides at two different addresses. Our proposal suggests that we will provide transport from two addresses if there is a Child Arrangement Order (CAO) in place which evidences that parents have a shared care. This has been challenged by consultees on the basis that not all parents have sought the intervention of the court and therefore they would be disadvantaged by the current proposal.
 - Travel times for Welsh learners – Respondents would like the travel times for Welsh learners to be the same as those recommended for learners attending mainstream education (45 minutes for primary and 60 minutes for secondary). Currently journey times for Welsh learners can exceed these times due to the distances that need to be travelled by learners to attend their nearest school, particularly those attending a secondary school. In addition, some learners will need to travel on feeder transport prior to meeting their coaches due to the suitability of the roads for the larger vehicles.
 - Post 16 transport – Statutory home to school transport applies to the age group 5 – 16 and transport either side of these ages is at the discretion of the local authority. We operate a concessionary policy for post 16's whereby if there are vacant seats on any routes these will be made available for post 16 pupils at a cost of £440 for the school year. Some respondents have expressed their dissatisfaction with this approach and have suggested that all post 16 pupils should be offered transport and that

confirmation should be provided earlier than our proposed 10 working days following the start of the new academic year.

- Pick up points and available walking routes – There has been some concern over the proposal that learners should access transport at designated pick up points as parents are concerned that the walking route to the pick up point will not be safe or that they will be unable to accompany their children due to other commitments. The proposal is that learners will be collected at registered bus stops on the basis that these will have been risk assessed for scheduled bus routes. It remains parents' responsibility to ensure that their children get to and from the pickup points safely, however it is proposed each case will be considered on its merits and if appropriate learners will continue to be collected from their home.
- There are comments about the designation of school catchments which are outside the scope of this consultation as are references to feeder schools. The Learner Travel Measure is clear that the responsibility of home to school transport is to

“make transport arrangements for learners of compulsory school age in specified circumstance and subject to specified conditions.” (1.21 of the Learner Travel Measure)

3.4 The consultation responses will be considered in further detail in the report to be presented to the Cabinet Member for Education on 28th September.

4.0 EQUALITY AND FUTURE GENERATIONS EVALUATION (INCLUDES SOCIAL JUSTICE, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING):

4.1 The Integrated Impact Assessment is attached.

5.0 OPTIONS APPRAISAL

5.1 The requirement to review the Transport Policy and consult on any changes is a statutory requirement, hence, there is no option but to undertake this process.

6.0 REASONS:

- 6.1 The Learner Travel (Wales) Measure places a requirement on Local Authorities to review their Transport Policy. The proposed policy has been developed through learning on current feedback and issues and a review of neighbouring authorities approaches.
- 6.2 The proposed policy exceeds the statutory duties placed on Local Authorities but is in line with current policy and practice. Given the current hardship being encountered by many families due to the cost of living crisis, it was not considered appropriate to revert practices to the statutory criteria at this time.
- 6.3 Welsh Government undertook consultation on home to school transport in 2020 and have subsequently published the result of the consultation which can be viewed by following the link [Learner Travel \(Wales\) Measure \(2008\) review 2021 \[HTML\] | GOV.WALES](#).. They have indicated that they are considering reducing the statutory distance criteria and considering altering the eligibility criteria to provide free transport for post 16 pupils, nursery age pupils, welsh medium and faith schools. They have acknowledged that there are resource implications in implementing these proposals in both cost and availability of transport providers and that the costs for rural authorities are higher than their urban counterparts.
- 6.4 In order to ensure that schools and the wider community have sufficient time to fully consider the proposed policy it is appropriate to extend the consultation timeframe. Drop-in sessions at the Council's six hubs are taking place during the consultation period to give people the opportunity to speak to Council representatives and access hard copies of the consultation document.

7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 7.1 The cost of school transport for the financial year 22/23 is estimated to be circa £5,463,449. This includes the cost of external provision and our in-house transport provider. The proposed policy is in line with existing practice; therefore, it is not anticipated that it will result in a significant uplift in costs.
- 7.2 Due the nature of the transport market, the costs can change as contracts are handed back and re-tendered, new routes are added to accommodate new learners and contract uplifts to reflect the increasing cost of transport provision.

8 CONSULTEES:

Cabinet

Communities and Place DMT
Monitoring Officer
S151 Officer

9 BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Learner Travel Statutory Provision and Operational Guidance 2014

10 AUTHOR:

Debra Hill-Howells Head of Decarbonisation, Transport & Support
Services

Debrahill-howells@monmouthshire.gov.uk

Tel: 07775 851405

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 A summary of the consultation responses received by the 22nd

Appendix 1 – Summary of Consultation Responses received by 22nd August

1. Do you agree with the Transport Policy Proposals:

Comments received:

Yes, or mostly agree

- Most of it seems fair
- I agree with all but one
- They seem sensible and inclusive
- I think some changes have been made for the better
- I agree, however I do think young children should be strapped into their seatbelt by their driver.
- Yes, to a point
- Yes, I feel it is a fair policy
- Yes, at it means that children are not penalised if their closest school is not their catchment school.
- I agree in principle but I believe that there remains a gap for faith and Welsh-medium schools which has not been plugged.

No

- Absolutely disagree, non-guaranteed concessionary travel for Post 16 is a massive barrier to education for rural communities
- Not in its entirety
- If parents drop children off to drop off points, they may have to leave their children if dropping siblings to another school, this is not safe.
- There does not appear to be any special treatment for children looked after
- If parents take their children out of catchment, they should be able to claim part of the cost of transport (the cost it would cost to transport to catchment school)
- These policies have been drawn up as a measure to cut your transport to transport Gilwern pupils to Crickhowell school. You have used the arguments we used last year to gain transport for our children to shape this policy.
- There are some aspects of the policy which I believe unfairly discriminate against students and families who live in rural communities.
- What are the additional costs of this provision v's just providing the statutory provision?
- No, it suggests that the free transport we have may no longer be eligible and may not be eligible for our child's younger sibling. This would have a significant impact on our family either in terms of cost or disruption as we may need to consider sending our younger child to a different school in a different county causing much disruption to our family life.

Q2 Do you disagree with some or all the proposed Transport Policy

Comments received are as follows:

- Non-guaranteed concessionary travel for post 16 is a massive barrier to education for rural communities
- Learners with dual residences – quite often the non-resident parent has no input where their children go to school. If they live within a certain radius then it would make sense to make some form of provision, rather than dismiss it out of hand.
- I'm concerned about the pickup and drop off points, at the moment my children get picked up from the door, very concerned if they start to do this as our road is not safe.
- Dual residency policy is totally unfair. Our son lives in two residences by mutual agreement. We do not need a lawyer and a court order to implement this. We co-parent 50-50 and are being penalized for being mature and having an amicable arrangement. Please do not implement a policy that actively discourages parents from setting up mutual agreements or costs them money to get an unnecessary court order.
- 4-year-old children being responsible to checking the safe usage of their own belts. Who is them liable in the event of an accident if a child has in fact failed to secure the belt properly?
- Designating how existing unsafe walking routes could now be designated as safe and therefore no feeder transport provided - what criteria are you basing this on? Children currently being picked up at 7.10am could possibly lose their transport to the nearest bus route and would therefore have to have at least a 20 -25 min walk to meet main bus. This would make the journey to school (one way) 1 3/4 hr - a total in a day of 3.5hrs travelling time - how is this conducive to learning? Will you treat all families equally?
- 4-year olds not able to do own seat belts - some 5,6- and 7-year olds can't do their own seat belts! Ridiculous. What is the reason for this proposal? Is it because the helper is being removed??
- I feel the requirement to be able to fasten seatbelts is totally unnecessary. Both the chaperone and bus drivers are db's checked so if some assistance if required I feel it is completely reasonable to be able to provide this assistance. 4-5yr olds are often distracted when they first get on the bus to be seated in a timely manner some assistance may help.
This year my son has been picked up from his home. I feel this has been very important, we live a mile outside the nearest village so I feel this must be maintained over the years mainly for safety reasons as the road is narrow and there is not a safe walking route.
- Young children and seat belts. The driver should be checking this.
- I disagree with the policy that concessionary places are offered to children who live the further distance from school. This makes no sense at all, never has. School places are awarded to pupils based on being closest to the school so why are concessionary bus places given to those furthest away? We are just outside the catchment area for the primary school my children attend. Yet on occasions children who live a long distance from the school, who have maybe 2 or 3 closer schools, get precedence for the school over my children who live closer.
- I disagree with all as it is unnecessary. The current system is fit for purpose so why even waste money on the consultation? The existing system is fine and, in a time where the council is continually complaining about squeezed budgets and lack of funding and is annually increasing council tax, where will the money come from to pay for this?

- Yes. Transport should be provided to the closest suitable school. This should take into account the latest Estyn reports as a school in special measures cannot be deemed as a suitable choice for any parent. Even if that school is over the county border. You have not made it clear when these policies will come into effect. You should not be able to change the policy for any child who already attends or has been given a place at a school already, as this was taken into account by the parents when they made their application.
- Introduction, para 3 – the last sentence is extremely negative in tone and does not include reference to the appeals process.
- Nearest Suitable or Catchment School – determining factors of school suitability. The list of factors only contains a small number of factors relating to suitability. The legal requirement is that "education or training provided is suitable," the factors identified as "having regard to" are not a limiting list and all factors affecting suitability should be considered.
- The list of factors under "Ability appropriateness" considers Welsh medium or faith schools. These are not measures of ability appropriateness under the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure (2008) they are purely a discretionary decision by the council. The policy states that the council will not consider "the outcome of Estyn inspections" when determining suitability... A school in special measures is defined as "failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education" – if this is not a factor in determining whether a school is suitable I would like a full explanation as to why not. The suitability assessment of a school is also missing a range of other factors that should in my opinion be considered (regards The Wednesday principle on judicial review). One specific area that should be considered is whether a child going from primary to secondary school is going from a primary feeder school (as defined in Requirement for the production of Transition Plans and guidance 2006 (2006 No. 12)) to a high school that is not their catchment school.
- The discretionary travel to faith and Welsh medium schools, which is a parental preference, is being provided at the expense of more rural areas of the county where the school provision options are sparse, complex and fragmented.
- The nearest suitable school in an area where there is a complex mix of catchment areas, LEA borders, feeder school status and historical closure of local schools cannot be determined with a simple assessment of distance on a map. There are cases where the catchment school is the furthest school of multiple schools from a household and this policy would provide free transport to the nearest and furthest schools but not those at intervening distances. This has no logical basis, either legally or financially.
- The policy states that "If your nearest suitable school is full, eligibility will be assessed on the basis of the next nearest". This ignores the fact that Monmouthshire CC high school provision is based on the historical expectation that a proportion of children go to a school outside the LEA area. This policy may drive a reactionary response where parents decide to choose their catchment school even though they know it does not have the places available in the hope that this will allow them to get free transport to their second choice school. This could lead to the farcical children closer to the catchment school being given transport to a further away school that wasn't their first choice, whereas children from further away are transported into the catchment school!
- Right to withdraw transport – the policy identifies a number of reasons under which the council can withdraw free transport. One aspect that it does not address is if there is a policy change during a child's educational period (e.g. yr7 to yr11) after they have been awarded free transport under the previous policy. As the policy is a factor in school choice – and may be a driving factor on cost for some families – the council should explicitly state that, once a child has been awarded free transport, then unless their personal circumstances (home address/school) changes

significantly they will continue to receive free school transport until they leave the school system at yr11 (or later if legal requirements change).

- The policy also states that where younger sibling applies to attend the same school, they may not get free transport as the prevailing policy may not be met. Firstly, this infers that if the policy changes then the elder child will continue to keep the transport provision – this is not explicit as noted above. As noted below this does not align well with a range of other council policies and Section 11 as it would mean one child being taken on free transport and the other child being taken by the parents, on the same journey at the same time!
- The policy does not align well with other policies within the council – specifically the Climate and Decarbonisation Strategy v2.0 which includes objectives such as “encourage people to use public transport rather than cars” and “reduce the impact of vehicles”. The school transport policy should consider where there are pockets of children all attending the same school without access to public transport that provision of free/concessionary/discretionary school transport would benefit the child and the local environment. It is surely better to provide a single minibus for two single journeys a day than having 12+ cars making the same journey four times (two return journeys) a day. This would also align with the requirement in the Learner Travel (Wales) measure 2008 Section 11 which requires the Local Authority to promote the use of sustainable modes of travel.
- There is limited information about how/when to apply for transport and how/when individuals will be informed of the decision. Historically the parents of children given transport have been informed late in August which gives very little time to prepare.
- I think parents should have some say about why their child needs to attend a specific school such as the one which is closer is in special measures.
- I believe the following exemptions should be included in the free transport for non-catchment schools.
 - Where the school is closer than the catchment school. (Seems crazy that just because someone drew a line on a map we don't get free transport to a school closer to our home that is more linked to our community).
 - Where a child or their sibling is already receiving free transport (surely you wouldn't expect us to send our 2 children to different schools, or treat our 2 children differently which is probably not in keeping with equal rights legislation)
- Whilst I appreciate that you cannot pay for students to commute from 20 miles away to attend the same school, expanding the transport into neighbouring counties would make it significantly easier for families to adapt to post-covid life as employment locations become more dynamic and less predictable.
- Welsh Language Education - Individuals must have older siblings who have attended high school and there should be no anxiety and stress caused to families.

Q3 – Do you think the proposals will have a positive or negative impact on the welsh language?

We have received the following comments:

- Negative. It will force more children into the Abergavenny high school where welsh language education is already minimal.
- It can only be positive by making transport available to those wishing to attend Welsh medium schools.

- Makes no difference but seems to discriminate against families not sending their children to a Welsh medium school that wish to choose a school closer to where they live.
- Access to Welsh medium education is still available and it seems to take into account that there are no Welsh secondary schools available. Provision of transport to 4 years olds is crucial to ensure reception intake in Welsh medium considering there are only two available in the county. However, there will need to be clear communication with the primary schools and parents/ carers regarding the need to fasten seatbelts and it should be made clear that this policy applies to all children not just 4 years olds!
- Traveling to WLM in the county is difficult as it is. Anything that makes transport seem even more difficult will have a negative impact.
- I believe it will have a negative impact, if children's nearest suitable school, as defined by your policy, is a school on special measures. The school would not have the highest standards in Welsh language either in the teaching or the incidental Welsh that high achieving school would .
- makes Welsh medium school more accessible and also helps a lot with parking at the site, which is non-existent, if more pupils can use the bus.
- There does not appear to be any special consideration for Welsh Medium Schools
- I don't think it will have any impact. If people want their children to attend Welsh schools, then they will sort something.
- I can't see a correlation here, as long as transport to a Welsh Medium schools continue in my area then I see this as a positive.
- Negative 100%. Children already leave the Welsh language school because of the horrendous travelling time whereby the bus travels from Chepstow to Caldicot to Newport, picking up along the route as well. However, the children who go to the faith school in Newport (St Joseph's) have a much smoother transfer. Why
- If you can keep travel times down to 45 mins in the county for primary age children that would be a good start. But ultimately, we were promised a Welsh primary in the Monmouth area for Sep 21 and we still don't have one. That is a major deterrent to more parents choosing a Welsh education for their children
- The proposals will have no impact. They are not changing in effect for families who choose Welsh medium education. The biggest barrier to Welsh medium education is the lack of any provision for Secondary education within a reasonable travelling distance for any family in the East of the county. The transport arrangements for the Welsh medium routes are also inadequate with my child frequently on the bus for an hour in the morning and an hour in the afternoon. This does not set them up well for a day of learning and would be an unacceptable commute for most adults. Address the problems you have now, invest in making the current system acceptable and work for the current demand before you stretch your resources even more thinly.
- The proposed Welsh language education proposal may adversely affect the growth of Welsh language education in the region. In addition this may jeopardize the authority's WESP strategy.
- The authority should prioritise ensuring that transport is available to all ages in terms of Welsh medium education and work with primary and secondary school leaders to map out the need so that all learners have the right to their education through the medium of Welsh.

Q4 – Have you identified any negative impacts on the Welsh language and if you have how can these be mitigated?

- Provide a school as promised.
- You need to sort out the travel time. One bus from Chepstow, one from Caldicot. The children from Chepstow are picked up at 7am/7.10am and don't arrive in school until 8.30am - shocking and completely unnecessary. How can children learn with such long commute times? Children who started the Welsh school have dropped out because of the unnecessary travel time. Others don't even start secondary in the Welsh school because they foresee the long travel times
- Welsh drivers to support the language where possible of children who attend Welsh speaking schools.
- I think such a focus on Welsh Medium school and not that those who were in a Welsh Medium School can actually continue their Welsh in other schools.
- The transport policies need to include clear statements that concessionary applications for transport WILL be provided to Welsh medium. Parents need to know when choosing a school that they are not going to be penalised by choosing Welsh medium at any point in their child's schooling. Parents reading the proposed policy to limit access if journeys extended >60mins, living at the far end of a catchment from a Welsh medium school for A Levels would be concerned that they might be refused transport. The policies need to encourage access to Welsh medium.

Q5 – Do you have any comments about the proposed Transport Policy or any suggestions how it can be improved?

- The clarification around 4-year access is welcome - this has caused huge upset and distress when you have previously denied transport to 4-year olds. You need to make clear the guidance about transport times for all ages and actively invest and seek to comply with this guidance. Be open to discussing changes to routes and pickups where your provision falls outside of this guidance.
- Do not discriminate against dual resident learners. We don't all need legal agreements to co-parent our children.
- The proposed plan appears to me as if it has been drawn up behind closed doors with no one actually carrying out or participating in any of the routes from Chepstow and surrounding areas to the Welsh school in Newport. How do you propose to consider an existing unsafe walking route, to potentially be safe? What is the criteria? What is the council doing to encourage and meet the national strategy of 1m Welsh speakers if they make it as difficult as possible for children to carry on with the Welsh language? How many Welsh language speakers (fluent) have you got who devised the proposed Transport Policy?
- Please reconsider post 16 travel - the children have to be in full time education till 18 so why stop the transport
- Parent perspectives and child perspectives should be taken into account. Children in rural communities are entitled to transport when they live a certain distance away from schools. This shouldn't mean they have limited choice or no choice due to transport dictating where they are able to go. All families including families in rural communities should be able to send their children to a school of their choice within reasonable guidelines. To enforce guidelines that will mean children are given transport to a catchment primary but then have to move to a

different secondary to their peers is unjust and will have a negative impact on mental health and well-being.

- Post 16 transportation and designated pick up points need to be communicated as early as possible as working parents need to plan around this
- Make sure behaviour policies are stuck to, unfair on children who do behave to have to see and listen to bad behaviour daily.
- My daughter has had a different driver every year. I would like to propose they have the same driver where possible for the duration of school. Our kids need to be able to trust someone and having new drivers can cause lots of anxiety for them.
- Keep the policy as it is.
- Concentrate on the core task of getting children to and from school safely.
- For 7 years I have had my eldest child at a primary school for which we are outside catchment. My youngest has attended the same school for 4 years, with 3 more to go. The policy with regards to concessionary places causes problems for parents every year, in particular the policy that we are not awarded a place for up to 6 weeks after the start of the term, and also when we are awarded a place we are charged in full for the whole year despite not having accessed the service for several weeks. I would like to know how you justify taking payment from us for a service you have not provided. The bus drives past us half empty for the first 4-6 weeks of term depending on how quickly you allocate spaces.
- Shockingly expensive at £440 a year
- MCC should be focusing on pressuring the Government to build a railway station in Monmouth and improve bus connections for the county town.
- I am surprised this is being done now so close to the new academic year. Parents find it stressful enough if their child is starting school or perhaps even new school. Not knowing the transport arrangements this close to the start of term adds to this stress
- Stop wasting my money on "initiatives" like this and start spending it where it matters, such as the actual education provision, highways, and pavements, and improving waste/recycling collection services.
- Your policies need to be made more clear and applications for school transport should be answered before the end of the summer term. It is ridiculous having to wait till September to find out if your child has a place on the bus when parents need to plan for this.
- I would say the additional needs parts if we are looking at a statement having to mention a specific school. We did go through all the discussions with **** and CAMHS when looking at the options that best suited **** but never thought we'd have to write that in her statement for the transport.
- Some joined-up thinking of catchment areas and transport proposals would not go amiss. Fiddling with Nationally agreed parameters drawn up to meet affordable guidelines of City dwellers is not necessarily conducive to the correct local outcome.
- Local topography should be taken into account when considering practical help to get children to their local school. Not everywhere is flat and featureless.
- Scrap bus passes for all seniors with cars (inc their partners) and give all pupils and kids up to "1st job level" a bus pass.
- School drop off and pick ups by parents has a very negative impact. Illegal parking, idling engines, congested roads around schools make for an unpleasant environment and experience. I would like a transport policy that did more to help reduce travel miles of parents. Introduction of walking buses from designated

drop off points that avoided the school car run chaos. In the future electric school buses to reduce emissions and provide more transport for children.

- I think that it could be improved by using less links my child will have to catch x2 buses and set out an hour before school starts. The journey direct is no more than 20 minutes.
- It doesn't make sense from a climate change perspective as the end result will be several cars driving children to school when one bus could have taken them all. I would understand if children and parents were making demands to have free transport to a school further away than their catchment school but in our case the school we have chosen is closer than the catchment school and also the school where most of the children from the local primary school have gone on to.

This page is intentionally left blank



Integrated Impact Assessment document

(incorporating Equalities, Future Generations, Welsh Language and Socio Economic Duty)

<p>Name of the Officer completing the evaluation</p> <p>Debra Hill-Howells</p> <p>Phone no: 0775 851405</p> <p>E-mail: debrahill-howells@monmouthshire.gov.uk</p>	<p>Please give a brief description of the aims of the proposal</p> <p>The report seeks consent to consult on the Draft Transport Policy for 23-24. The Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 requires that policies are reviewed annually and the agreed policy is published by the 1st October for application in the following academic year. The report provides a draft Transport Policy for 23-24 and seeks approval to undertake consultation before a final version is presented to Members in September.</p>
<p>Name of Service area</p> <p>Decarbonisation, Transport & Support Services</p>	<p>Date</p> <p>11th July 2022, revised Sept 2022</p>

Page 31

Are your proposals going to affect any people or groups of people with protected characteristics? Please explain the impact, the evidence you have used and any action you are taking below.

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Age	<p>The proposal details the Transport Policy for statutory learners attending state funded education settings between the age of 4 and 16. It details the eligibility criteria for access to free transport which provides greater opportunity than that prescribed in the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure (LTM) e.g. transport is provided for those learners attending their nearest suitable or catchment school who live 1.5 miles from a primary school or 2 miles from a secondary.</p>	<p>The policy proposes that free transport will only be available to under 5's in the school term that they turn 5. All other 4 year olds attending primary school will need to be transported by their parents.</p> <p>Free home to school transport for post 16's is not provided in accordance with the LTM. This can create particular problems for secondary learners attending Welsh Medium education as they need to travel out of county.</p>	<p>Transport for U5's is not a statutory requirement in the LTM, however we are proposing to make it available from the school term that they turn 5.</p> <p>We provide concessionary travel to Post 16 pupils, however this is dependent on spare seats within existing contracts. We review this policy when WG have published their preferred strategy following their review of the LTM.</p>
Disability	<p>The draft policy provides criteria for the provision of transport for learners with SEN and accessible transport is provided based on their assessed needs.</p> <p>All learners attending primary and secondary settings are able to apply for discretionary transport if they have a medical condition or disability.</p> <p>If a primary aged learners parents have a medical condition which prevents them from supporting their child walking to school, they can apply for discretionary transport if they live less than 1.5 miles from their nearest suitable school.</p>	<p>Secondary aged learners can not apply for discretionary transport if their parent has a disability as it is assumed that they will be able to walk to school unaccompanied if they live less than 2 miles to their nearest suitable school.</p> <p>If they reside more than 2 miles from their nearest suitable school they will be able to apply for free transport in the normal way.</p>	<p>The discretionary proposal has been introduced to ensure that learners with a medically assessed condition where appropriate can access free transport. This will enable learners with non-mobility issues to access free transport if they can provide current supporting medical information.</p> <p>The distance criteria applied by MCC is lower than the statutory guidelines which results in more learners being able to apply for free transport.</p>

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Gender reassignment	The provision of free school transport is available to all eligible pupils regardless of their gender.	Passenger assistants are not routinely provided on vehicles and therefore if there were issues of bullying or harassment action might be delayed until such time we receive a complaint from a learner or their parent if they are travelling by coach. If they are on a smaller vehicle the driver may be more aware of any issues arising on the vehicle and be able to intervene	Where incidents of bullying or harassment are alleged to occur, the Commissioning Team will work with the school to undertake an investigation. If the allegations are proven we will work with the school to put any reasonable recommended solutions in place including the provision of a PA. Sanctions will be imposed against the perpetrator of proven acts of violence, bullying or harassment.
Marriage or civil partnership	N/A	N/A	N/A
Pregnancy or maternity	We will provide discretionary transport to any learner with a proven medical condition that meets the eligibility criteria or due to their condition are unable to walk to school or access public transport. We will work with the learner, their parents and the school to ensure that anyone who is pregnant and meets the criteria is able to safely travel on school transport.	N/A	We will work with individual learners, parents and schools to ensure that school transport is safe for pregnant learners.

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Race	. The provision of free school transport is available to any learner that meets the eligibility criteria.	Passenger assistants are not routinely provided on vehicles and therefore if there were issues of bullying or racial harassment action might be delayed until such time we receive a complaint from a learner or their parent if they are travelling by coach. If they are on a smaller vehicle the driver may be more aware of any issues arising on the vehicle and be able to intervene	Where incidents of bullying or racial harassments are alleged to occur, the Commissioning Team will work with the school to undertake an investigation. If the allegations are proven we will work with the school to put any reasonable recommended solutions in place including the provision of a PA. Sanctions will be imposed against the perpetrator of proven acts of violence, bullying or harassment due to a learners ethnicity.
Religion or Belief	.Free home to school transport is provided for learners attending their nearest faith school.	Parents may wish to exercise parental preference and place their children in a faith school that is not their nearest, which will result in the loss of free school transport.	The provision of free school transport to faith schools already exceeds the requirements of the LTM.
Sex	The provision of free school transport is available to any learner that meets the eligibility criteria.	Passenger assistants are not routinely provided on vehicles and therefore if there were issues of bullying or harassment action might be delayed until such time we receive a complaint from a learner or their parent if they are travelling by coach. If they are on a smaller vehicle the driver may be more aware of any issues arising on the vehicle and be able to intervene	Where incidents of bullying or harassments are alleged to occur, the Commissioning Team will work with the school to undertake an investigation. If the allegations are proven we will work with the school to put any reasonable recommended solutions in place including the provision of a PA. Sanctions will be imposed against the perpetrator of proven acts of violence, bullying or harassment

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Sexual Orientation	. The provision of free school transport is available to any learner that meets the eligibility criteria.	Passenger assistants are not routinely provided on vehicles and therefore if there were issues of bullying or harassment action might be delayed until such time we receive a complaint from a learner or their parent if they are travelling by coach. If they are on a smaller vehicle the driver may be more aware of any issues arising on the vehicle and be able to intervene	Where incidents of bullying or harassments are alleged to occur, the Commissioning Team will work with the school to undertake an investigation. If the allegations are proven we will work with the school to put any reasonable recommended solutions in place including the provision of a PA. Sanctions will be imposed against the perpetrator of proven acts of violence, bullying or harassment EQIA training will be provided as soon as it is available from the corporate training service and bespoke advice will be sought for individual cases.

9. The Socio-economic Duty and Social Justice

The Socio-economic Duty requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to reduce inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage when taking key decisions This duty aligns with our commitment as an authority to Social Justice.

	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has in respect of people suffering socio economic disadvantage	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has in respect of people suffering socio economic disadvantage.	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?

<p>Socio-economic Duty and Social Justice</p>	<p>The provision of free home to school transport will ensure that all learners have equal access to education. The distance criteria is more favourable than that included within the LTM which results in more learners being able to access free transport. Where parents are able to provide current medical information that confirms they are unable to walk or driver their primary aged children to school, discretionary transport is provided. Subsidized concessionary seats are made available where vacant seats exist.</p>	<p>Post 16 pupils are not entitled to free school transport and are therefore reliant on vacant seats being available and their parents being able to support the £440 annual cost.</p> <p>Parents of under 5's are not able to access free school transport until the school term that the learner turns 5. This may create pressures for working parents who will be responsible arranging travel for their children.</p>	<p>Where parents can demonstrate that their primary aged pupils have medical conditions that prevent them from walking to school, discretionary transport may be awarded.</p> <p>Concessionary transport is subsidized by the Council, however if a parent can evidence that they are in receipt of benefits then the fee may be reduced dependent on the individual circumstances.</p>
--	--	---	---

3. Policy making and the Welsh language.

How does your proposal impact on the following aspects of the Council's Welsh Language Standards:	Describe the positive impacts of this proposal	Describe the negative impacts of this proposal	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts
<p>Policy Making</p> <p>Effects on the use of the Welsh language,</p> <p>Promoting Welsh language</p> <p>Treating the Welsh language no less favourably</p>	<p>The LTM measure provides LA's with the ability to provide discretionary transport to welsh medium schools. This policy proposes that all those learners wishing to attend welsh medium education will have access to free transport to their nearest welsh medium school if they meet the eligibility criteria.</p>	<p>If parents choose to exercise parental preference and choose a school setting that is not their nearest suitable welsh medium school, transport will not be provided. This is in alignment with the LTM and mainstream education.</p> <p>The parents of pupils attending school before they turn 5 will need to provide their own transport arrangements until the term that their child turns 5.</p> <p>Post 16 learners will not have access to free school transport which creates transport issues for secondary learners who have to travel out of county.</p>	<p>Post 16 learners will be offered concessionary travel where vacant seats are available. Where possible vehicle sizes will be increased to accommodate additional learners, but this will be dependent on the road network and the ability for a larger vehicle to safely travel along the required roads. It will also be limited by journey times, albeit that it is acknowledged that travel to welsh medium schools may take longer than the recommended travel times due to the distances involved.</p>
<p>Operational</p> <p>Recruitment & Training of workforce</p>		<p>Recruiting drivers is extremely challenging in the current climate and their driving qualifications take priority over their welsh language skills.</p> <p>Staff can only access welsh language training course where</p>	<p>All colleagues have access to welsh language training courses that are provided centrally.</p>

		they do not impact in school transport duties.	
Service delivery Use of Welsh language in service delivery Promoting use of the language	Parents can apply for school transport through the medium of welsh. All communications can be undertaken through the Welsh Language.	Drivers and passenger assistants may not be able to converse in welsh on the vehicles.	All colleagues have access to welsh language training courses that are provided centrally.




4. Does your proposal deliver any of the well-being goals below? Please explain the impact (positive and negative) you expect, together with suggestions of how to mitigate negative impacts or better contribute to the goal. There's no need to put something in every box if it is not relevant!



Well Being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
A prosperous Wales Efficient use of resources, skilled, educated people, generates wealth, provides jobs	The provision of free school transport ensures that learners can access mainstream, welsh medium or faith schools if they are more than 1.5 or 2 miles away from their homes. SEN transport is provided based on their individual assessments and needs.	The reduced distance eligibility requirements have increased access to school transport and the inclusion of medical reasons in the policy will prevent learners being disadvantaged due to their or their parents medical circumstances. School transport requires a local supply chain to operate home to school contracts. An in house passenger transport service has been created to respond to market failure that provides roles for drivers, passenger assistants and supervisory staff.

Well Being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
<p>A resilient Wales Maintain and enhance biodiversity and ecosystems that support resilience and can adapt to change (e.g. climate change)</p>	<p>Free school transport reduces the number of motor cars that need to undertake the school run thereby helping to reduce the county's carbon footprint.</p> <p>Where public transport is available, learners are provided with season tickets to reduce the number of dedicated school transport vehicles and increase the viability of the public transport infrastructure</p>	<p>The Council is developing its fleet transition plan that will transition our passenger transport vehicles from internal combustion engines to zero emission vehicles.</p> <p>Routes are continually assessed to identify opportunities to combine routes and reduce the number of vehicle travelling. Available walking routes are also continually reviewed where transport has been provided as a route has been deemed unavailable and the walking distance is below the eligible thresholds. Where circumstances have changed and the route is deemed available learners are advised of the available route and the free transport is removed.</p>
<p>A healthier Wales People's physical and mental wellbeing is maximized and health impacts are understood</p>	<p>Where primary aged learners live within 1.5 miles of their school and secondary 2 miles of the school they are encouraged to use active travel to get to school.</p>	<p>We are working with Highways colleagues to identify how safe walking routes can be provided to reduce the numbers of learners who access free transport because a safe walking route is not available.</p>
<p>A Wales of cohesive communities Communities are attractive, viable, safe and well connected</p>	<p>School transport provides access to learners to attend their nearest suitable or catchment schools thereby developing friendships and support networks.</p>	
<p>A globally responsible Wales Taking account of impact on global well-being when considering local social, economic and environmental wellbeing</p>	<p>The procurement of external operators is undertaken through a collaborative procurement system with neighboring authorities and contractual terms and conditions are aligned. We have developed or own</p>	

Well Being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
	in house transport provision to respond to market failure so that resources can be provided locally.	
A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language Culture, heritage and Welsh language are promoted and protected. People are encouraged to do sport, art and recreation	Free home to school transport is provided for statutory aged learners who wish to attend their nearest suitable or catchment welsh medium school. Post 16 transport is only available where there are vacant seats on contracts.	
A more equal Wales People can fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances	Free home to school transport is accessible to all learners who meet the eligibility criteria. In addition discretionary travel is proposed for specific sets of learners to ensure that they can safely access their nearest suitable or catchment schools.	

5. How has your proposal embedded and prioritized the sustainable governance principles in its development?

Sustainable Development Principle	Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.	Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
 <p>Balancing short term need with long term and planning for the future</p> <p>Long Term</p>	<p>School transport changes on an annual basis as new learners start their education journey or move into the area and others leave the education setting. We work with the Access Unit to identify those learners that are eligible for transport, however we still need parents to apply. It is therefore extremely difficult to undertake long term planning.</p>	<p>Routes are assessed when new learners apply for transport to determine if routes can be aggregated or vehicle size is increased.</p> <p>The in house team continually review their operational needs in order to respond to contractor hand backs, lack of tenders etc. The transition of the fleet will help offset our carbon footprint and plan for future legislative requirements for accessible and net zero school transport vehicles</p> <p>The provision of annual Transport Policy provides a framework for how decisions will be made.</p>
 <p>Working together with other partners to deliver objectives</p> <p>Collaboration</p>	<p>For school transport to be successful it needs to be delivered in partnership with operators, parents, schools and learners as well as other Council service areas. We also work with neighbouring authorities to procure operators on a standard contract, agree annual price uplifts and share learning.</p>	<p>The proposed consultation will enable us to understand the views of the local community and reflect on and review the proposed policy appropriate</p>
 <p>Involving those with an interest and seeking their views</p> <p>Involvement</p>	<p>The consultation will be open to Monmouthshire's residents and we will use a combination of digital platforms and face to face drop in sessions to maximize engagement opportunities.</p>	

Sustainable Development Principle	Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.	Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
 <p>Putting resources into preventing problems occurring or getting worse</p> <p>Prevention</p>	<p>Due to ongoing issues around lack of external bids or bids being excessive our internal provision has expanded to fill any potential service gaps. Whilst the majority of contracts are still undertaken through external operators the internal resource has increasingly has to step in to cover contract hand backs or operator failures.</p>	<p>When a new contract is taken on by the internal service, if this exceeds existing capacity we review existing routes to try and release one back to the market. This ensures that contracts are available for the external operators and mitigates the impact of additional contracts on the existing workforce. If no bids are received or they are higher than the internal cost of provision the contract is transferred to the internal team and capacity is adjusted accordingly.</p>
 <p>Considering impact on all wellbeing goals together and on other bodies</p> <p>Integration</p>	<p>The provision of home to school transport is an essential service underpinning learners education journeys. The service is however resource intensive and reactive to the needs of the learners. The proposed policy provides a framework which ensures consistency in evaluating applications for transport, provides certainty for parents and learners and guidance on how discretionary transport will be awarded.</p>	<p>The proposed consultation will enable officers to reflect on the proposed policy and identify opportunities for improvement.</p>

6. Council has agreed the need to consider the impact its decisions has on the following important responsibilities: Corporate Parenting and Safeguarding. Are your proposals going to affect any of these responsibilities?

	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has	What will you do/ have you done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Safeguarding	<p>All drivers, passenger assistants and operators are required to undertake safeguarding training.</p> <p>The policy sets out how school transport will be assessed and provided for looked after children, learners with special educational needs and mainstream learners.</p> <p>All learners, parents and operators are required to adhere to our Rule Book to ensure the safety for all those involved.</p>	.	
Corporate Parenting	The policy sets out the eligibility criteria for looked after children. The service works closely with Children's Services to provision specific transport needs as required.		

Page 43

7. What evidence and data has informed the development of your proposal?

The Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008

Learner Travel Statutory Provision and Operational Guidance 2008

Existing Transport Policy and Lessons Learnt

Existing transport contracts and engagement with individual learners and their parents

School transport appeals and requests for discretionary transport

A review of other LA Transport policies

-

8. SUMMARY: As a result of completing this form, what are the main positive and negative impacts of your proposal, how have they informed/changed the development of the proposal so far and what will you be doing in future?

The form has highlighted the complexities of the provision of home to school transport including its substantial impact on resources, its impact on climate change and the need to continually evaluate the provision to respond to a changing social, economic and environmental back drop. The proposed consultation will enable us to consider the feedback against the legislative framework, resources constraints and the wants and wishes of service users. We will be able to articulate where we have been able to make changes to the policy as the result of the feedback and where we have been unable to change the policy the reason why.

It will also enable parents and learners the opportunity to plan for any changes from September 23.

9. ACTIONS: As a result of completing this form are there any further actions you will be undertaking? Please detail them below, if applicable.

What are you going to do	When are you going to do it?	Who is responsible
Report to be presented to Cabinet seeking approval to consult on the draft policy	27 th July 22	Head of Service and Commissioning Manager
Undertake consultation on the draft policy	August & September 22	Commissioning Team
Review feedback, finalize draft and seek Member approval	September 22	Head of Service & Commissioning Manager
Publish Transport Policy 23-24	1 st October 22	Commissioning Manager

10. VERSION CONTROL: The Equality and Future Generations Evaluation should be used at the earliest stage, such as informally within your service, and then further developed throughout the decision making process. It is important to keep a record of this process to demonstrate how you have considered and built in equality and future generations considerations wherever possible.

Version No.	Decision making stage	Date considered	Brief description of any amendments made following consideration

1	Cabinet approval to consult on proposed Transport Policy 23-24	27th July	
2.	Cabinet Update	7 th September	

This page is intentionally left blank