



<p>Name of the Officer completing the evaluation</p> <p>Debra Hill-Howells</p> <p>Phone no: 0775 851405 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 14th April 2023 – 2nd revision (11th July 2022, revision 2: Sept 2022)</p>

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.

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	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.	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 or faith education as they need to travel out of county.	We provide concessionary travel to Post 16 pupils, however this is dependent on spare seats within existing contracts. We are reviewing the opportunities to amend public bus service timetables and increase provision to allow more learners to travel on public buses. This will also increase travel opportunities for the wider community.

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?
Disability	<p>The existing 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. No changes are proposed to this provision</p>	.No changes to existing policy provision	<p>The discretionary application process has not been changed to ensure that learners with a medically assed condition which impacts their ability to walk to school can access free transport.</p> <p>The distance criteria applied by MCC is lower than the statutory guidelines which results in more learners being eligible for free transport.</p>
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 harassments are alleged to occur, the Commissioning Team works 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

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?
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.
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 amended policy proposals introduces a requirement for learners attending faith schools to evidence, if requested, that they or their parents practice their chosen denominational faith.	The provision of free school transport to faith schools already exceeds the requirements of the LTM.

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?
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 Unit 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
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 Unit 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.

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.

	<p>Describe any positive impacts your proposal has in respect of people suffering socio economic disadvantage</p>	<p>Describe any negative impacts your proposal has in respect of people suffering socio economic disadvantage.</p>	<p>What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?</p>
<p>Socio-economic Duty and Social Justice</p>	<p>The provision of free home to school transport ensures 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. The authority is currently reviewing the opportunities to increase public bus provision to enable more learners and members of the public to have accessible to sustainable transport. More passengers on public buses will assist the financial viability of the services, thereby safeguarding the services.</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>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>The Council is working with bus operators and Transport for Wales to maximise the opportunities for maintaining or enhancing public bus service provision which will have broader benefits beyond learners.</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 learners wishing to attend Welsh medium education will have access to free transport to their nearest suitable Welsh medium school if they meet the distance 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>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 courses where they do not impact on school transport duties.</p>	<p>All colleagues have access to Welsh language training courses that are provided centrally.</p>
<p>Service delivery</p>	<p>Parents can apply for school transport through the medium of Welsh. All</p>	<p>Drivers and passenger assistants may not be able to converse in Welsh on the vehicles.</p>	<p>All colleagues have access to Welsh language training courses that are provided centrally.</p>

Use of Welsh language in service delivery	communications can be undertaken through the Welsh Language.		
Promoting use of the language			



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?
<p>A prosperous Wales Efficient use of resources, skilled, educated people, generates wealth, provides jobs</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>The adoption of Welsh Government's Transport hierarchy and the promotion of public bus services will ensure that resources are maximized for the benefit of all community members.</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>We will continue to evaluate the opportunity to change existing bus timetables or increase public bus provision to allow more learners to travel on public bus services.</p>
<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>Additional available walking routes are being created to reduce the requirement to transport learners who</p>	<p>The Council has started its fleet transition and currently has four electric buses.</p> <p>Routes are continually assessed to identify opportunities to combine routes and reduce the number of vehicle travelling. Available walking</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?
	<p>do not meet the distance eligibility criteria. This will improve the active travel network for all community members.</p> <p>The Commissioning Unit is working with the Transport team to maximise the opportunities to use public bus services, thereby reducing vehicle movements and the resulting carbon emissions.</p>	<p>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. Capital funding has been made available to increase the number of available walking routes to reduce the requirement for transport.</p> <p>We are actively seeking to reduce the number of home to school transport vehicles by increasing the opportunities to award bus passes for public bus services.</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. Additional walking routes are being created to reduce the number of pupils being transported as a walking route is not currently available.</p> <p>The policy proposes the adoption of Welsh Governments transport hierarchy which prioritises active travel.</p>	<p>We are working with Highways colleagues on the creation of additional walking routes and capital funding has been made available to deliver new infrastructure.</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>Maintaining and where possible improving the existing public bus infrastructure is a key priority given the forthcoming changes to the current funding model. Transferring secondary aged learners to public buses will generate additional fare income and potentially reduce the costs of home to school transport</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?
<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 in house transport provision to respond to market failure so that resources can be provided locally.</p>	<p>We are undertaking improvements to the active travel infrastructure and exploring opportunities to maintain or enhance the public bus network within Monmouthshire</p>
<p>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</p>	<p>Free home to school transport is provided for statutory aged learners who wish to attend their nearest suitable or catchment Welsh medium school.</p> <p>Post 16 transport is only available where there are vacant seats on contracts.</p>	
<p>A more equal Wales People can fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Improvements to public bus timetables and networks will enable learners who do not meet the eligibility criteria to access public transport.</p>

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 and have contacted all parents of new school starters to advise if they are eligible for free transport.</p> <p>As the service requirements change annually, long term planning is difficult however we are seeking to mitigate this through the adoption of WG's transport hierarchy and the improvements to the walking infrastructure and public networks</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 Councils Schools & Community transport service 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 Transport team is currently working with the Commissioning Unit and operators to identify opportunities to improve the public bus network for learners.</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>

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>Involving those with an interest and seeking their views</p> <p>Involvement</p>	<p>The consultation will be undertaken during the summer term to maximise the opportunities for schools, learners and their families to take part in the consultation.</p> <p>The consultation will be digitally and there will also be the opportunity to submit hard copy surveys.</p>	
 <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 had to step in to cover contract hand backs or operator failures.</p> <p>Increased use of the public bus network to transport learners will improve the viability of publically accessible services.</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. The alignment of the policy to WG;s transport hierarchy will benefit the wider community by increasing the viability of public service provision.</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.		

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

<p>The Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008</p> <p>Learner Travel Statutory Provision and Operational Guidance 2008</p> <p>Existing Transport Policy and Lessons Learnt</p> <p>Existing transport contracts and engagement with individual learners and their parents</p> <p>School transport appeals and requests for discretionary transport</p> <p>A review of other LA Transport policies</p> <p>The removal of BES grant funding for Bus Operators</p> <p>Llwybr Newydd: the Wales transport strategy 2021</p>
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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 24.

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	3 rd May 2023	Head of Service
Undertake consultation on the draft policy	May – June 2023	Commissioning Team
Peopl Scrutiny Committee	July 23	Head of Service

Review feedback, finalize draft and seek Member approval	September 23	Head of Service & Commissioning Manager
Publish Transport Policy 24-25	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 2022	
2.	Cabinet Update	7 th September 2022	