



RHONDDA CYNON TAF

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL

RECORD OF DECISIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE

DECISION MADE BY: Cabinet DATE DECISION MADE: 20 March, 2024

Cabinet Members Present:

Councillor A Morgan (Chair), Councillor M Webber (Deputy Chair),
Councillor G Caple, Councillor A Crimmings, Councillor R Lewis,
Councillor C Leyshon, Councillor M Norris and Councillor B Harris

Other Councillor(s) in Attendance:-

Councillor S Emanuel
Councillor K Johnson
Councillor C Lises
Councillor L Tomkinson
Councillor K Morgan
Councillor C Preedy
Councillor G Stacey

Agenda Item : 6

SUBJECT: Review of the Council's Home to School Transport Policy

1. DECISION MADE:

Agreed –

1. To consider the content of the report and outcome of the public consultation, together with the associated Equality and Welsh Language Impact Assessments appended to the report;
2. To consider, in light of the feedback from the public consultation and analysis of the Equality and Welsh Language Impact Assessments, whether it wishes to amend the proposal as consulted upon, including consideration of alternative options presented within section 14 of the report;
3. To proceed with implementation of a revised Home to School Transport Policy as follows:
 - To maintain the Council's current discretionary distance criteria of providing Home to School transport for all primary schools (English, Welsh and Faith);
 - To change Home to School transport provision to all secondary schools and colleges (English, Welsh and Faith) in line with the relevant statutory distance criteria as set out in the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008;
 - To continue to allow a learner to select their nearest suitable school in accordance with choice of English or Welsh Medium language or preferred religious denomination;
 - To continue to provide discretionary pre-compulsory school age transport (in line with current discretionary distance criteria) and to provide discretionary post-16 transport (in line with the relevant statutory distance criteria); and
 - To continue to provide discretionary Additional Learning Needs transport.
4. To publish the revised Home to School Transport Policy by 1st October 2024, in accordance with statutory requirements, and for the policy to be implemented for the commencement of the 2025/26 academic year; and
5. To delegate authority to the Director of Highways, Streetcare and Transportation Services to develop, introduce or amend any operational policies/guidance incidental to the implementation of the revised Home to School Transport Policy.

N.B With the agreement of the Leader, the following County Borough Councillors were granted permission to address the Cabinet in respect of the item:

- County Borough Councillor K Morgan;
- County Borough Councillor L Tomkinson;
- County Borough Councillor C Preddy;

- County Borough Councillor K Johnson;
- County Borough Councillor G Stacey;
- County Borough Councillor C Lises: and
- County Borough Councillor S Emanuel.

2. REASON FOR THE DECISION BEING MADE:

The need to report the results of the public consultation exercise initiated by Cabinet, together with updated Equality and Welsh Language impact assessments in relation to a proposed new Home to School Transport Policy; and assist Cabinet in its determination of whether or not it wishes to progress with implementation of a new Home to School Transport Policy.

3. LINKS TO CORPORATE PRIORITIES/FUTURE GENERATIONS - SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT:

The delivery of Home to School transport services support and promote the Council's Corporate Plan priorities for People – are independent, healthy, and successful; Places – where people are proud to live, work and play; and Prosperity – creating the opportunity for people and businesses to be entrepreneurial and fulfil their potential and prosper.

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 requires the Council to think about the long-term impact of their decisions, to work better with people, communities and each other and to prevent persistent problems such as poverty, health inequalities and climate change. To make sure we are all working towards the same purpose, the Act puts in place seven well-being goals on the Council:

- A prosperous Wales.
- A resilient Wales.
- A healthier Wales.
- A more equal Wales.
- A Wales of cohesive communities.
- A Wales of vibrant culture and Welsh Language.
- A globally responsible Wales.

The Act imposes a duty on all public bodies in Wales to carry out “sustainable development”, defined as being “the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the wellbeing goals.”

The Act sets out five ways of working needed for the Council to achieve the seven well-being goals, these being:

- The importance of balancing short term needs with the needs to safeguard the ability to also meet long-term needs.
- Considering how the Council's objectives impact upon each of the well-

being goals listed above.

- The importance of involving people with an interest in achieving the well-being goals and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the area which the Council services.
- Acting in collaboration with other persons and organisations that could help the Council meet its well-being objectives; and
- Acting to prevent problems occurring or getting worse.

4. CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN PRIOR TO DECISION BEING MADE:

Cabinet determined to initiate a consultation in respect of a preferred option relating to a proposed new Home to School Transport Policy as detailed in section 8 of the report in consideration of the current budget pressures. The Council is not alone in facing these challenges, nor in having to consider such reviews of discretionary areas of current provision.

A comprehensive public consultation exercise was conducted with all key stakeholders such as pupils, parents, carers, transport providers and Elected Members. The consultation originally ran from Monday 27th November 2023 until 5pm Monday 8th January 2024. Recognising the significance of the proposal for pupils who use and will use home to school transport now or in the future, the consultation was extended for a further three-week period, from Thursday 18th January until 5pm Thursday 8th February 2024. This period provided a further opportunity for those potentially impacted to take part in the consultation. In total the consultation therefore ran for a period of nine weeks.

The consultation had a dedicated page on the Council's consultation section of its website which provided details of the proposal and a link to the consultation survey. Consultees were also referred to the initial Equality and Welsh Language impact assessments considered by Cabinet prior to initiating the consultation exercise.

A 'frequently asked questions' sheet was developed to provide further information to consultees.

An email was sent to all schools who could be potentially impacted by the proposal to Headteachers and Chair of Governors to be forwarded on to all parents and carers. Further emails were sent to key stakeholders to promote the consultation and encourage participation in the online survey, including public transport operators. School Councils, headteachers and school and college governors were also invited to submit their views on any proposed new policy.

Respondents were also given the option to write in using a dedicated email address HTSConsultation@rctcbc.gov.uk, and a telephone option was also in place through the Council's contact centre.

The Council held 8 public engagement events at venues throughout the County Borough, where officers were on hand to answer any questions on the proposal and encourage or assist people to take part in the survey.

The consultation was widely promoted in the Press and via social media including the Council's Facebook and X (formerly known as Twitter) accounts.

Consultees were therefore able to respond to the consultation through various channels including an online survey/questionnaire, a dedicated consultation email address, a freepost postal address, a telephone option and providing feedback at the local engagement sessions.

The Council's YEPs team developed a young person's version of the proposal and shared with youth forum members. The consultation was undertaken by sharing relevant information with young people through a social media group for youth forum members and they were asked to complete a survey following this.

The proposals were presented and discussed at the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on the 13th December 2023. The report and minutes of that meeting can be accessed [here](#) and a letter summarising the Committee's feedback is attached at Appendix 6 to the report.

The Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee further pre-scrutinised the proposal at its meeting on the 18th March 2024. A Letter addressed to the Cabinet providing the Committee's feedback can be found [here](#). In addition a link to the recording of the meeting can be accessed [here](#).

The full results of the extensive consultation exercise including feedback received is attached at Appendix 3 to the report.

5. PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION BY A COMMITTEE OF THE COUNCIL:

[Cabinet - 20th November 2023](#)

[Overview and Scrutiny Committee - 13th December 2023](#)

[Overview and Scrutiny Committee - 18th March 2024](#)

6. PERSONAL INTERESTS DECLARED:

County Borough Councillor K Johnson declared the following personal and non prejudicial interests

- "I am on the Governing Body of Maesybryn Primary School ; I am a parent of 2 children who will travel to a comprehensive school ; I am an employee of Transport for Wales and I reference public transport in my address.

County Borough Councillor C Lises declared the following personal interest - " I am a Governor of Hawthorn Primary and Secondary School"

7. DISPENSATION TO SPEAK (AS GRANTED BY STANDARDS COMMITTEE):

N/A

8. (a) IS THE DECISION SUBJECT TO CALL-IN BY THE OVERVIEW AND

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:

Yes

Note: This decision will not come into force and may not be implemented until the expiry of 3 clear working days after its publication to enable it to be the subject to the Call-In Procedure in Rule 17.1 of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules.

The closing date for Call-In is 5pm on the 25 March 2024

8.(b) IF NO, REASONS WHY IN THE OPINION OF THE DECISION-MAKER THE DECISION IS EXEMPT OR NON APPLICABLE:

- I. COUNCIL / SCRUTINY FUNCTION (CALL IN IS THEREFORE NON APPLICABLE):-
Reason: N/A

- II. URGENT DECISION:-
Reason N/A

8.(c) IF DEEMED URGENT - SIGNATURE OF PRESIDING OFFICER OR DEPUTY PRESIDING OFFICER OR HEAD OF PAID SERVICE CONFIRMING AGREEMENT THAT THE PROPOSED DECISION IS REASONABLE IN ALL THE CIRCUMSTANCES FOR IT BEING TREATED AS A MATTER OF URGENCY, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PROCEDURE RULE 17.2:

.....
(PRESIDING OFFICER)

.....
(Dated)

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PUBLICATION

Publication on the Councils Website:- **Wednesday, 20 March 2024**

APPROVED FOR PUBLICATION: ✓