

MEETING	COUNCIL BOARD
DATE	25 JANUARY 2010
TITLE	Gwynedd Council Post 16 Transportation Policy and Fees
PURPOSE OF REPORT	To present the Children’s and Young People’s Scrutiny Committee’s recommendations following their scrutinising of the Head of Education’s report to them on the proposed new policy, fees and charges, including the result of consultation upon the proposals.
RECOMMENDATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To adopt the new Post 16 Transport Policy, fees and charges with effect from 1st September 2011 • To delete the existing Post 16 Transport Policy - which was approved on 20 July 2004, with effect from 31 August 2011.
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SENIOR PORTFOLIO LEADER	Councillor Dewi E Lewis

1. Decision making context

1.1 Following the Council’s adoption of its Savings Strategy on 10 December 2009 it was necessary that the Head of Education:

- Revised the existing Post 16 Education Transport Policy
- Proposed the necessary fees and charges for the implementation of the new Policy

1.2 As detailed in the Report to the Children’s and Young Peoples Scrutiny Committee on 30 November 2010 the original policy, fees and charges were subject to extensive consultation before the revised versions were submitted to the said Scrutiny Committee.

1.3 The Committee Resolved:

“To request that the Council Board repeals the existing Post 16 Transport Policy and adopt the new policy together with the proposed fees for 2011/12 as follows:

(i) that the proposed policy sets new guidelines for the right of learners to follow courses in specific educational institutions. In comparison with other counties – that usually charge between £250 and £350 per annum, the feeling was that a fee of £100 per term would be appropriate as the standard fee – specifically for the longer journeys and wider choices as referred to in paragraph 2.11 of the report. As a comparison, without the fee of £300 per annum for out of catchment area journeys, learners would purchase the Red Rover Ticket for public transport services at a cost of £972 per annum based on 180 school/college days in a year.

(ii) The proposed fee accepted by the Council, namely £5 per week / £60 per term, would allow learners to travel shorter distances to local learning centres or a centre offering less of a range in courses as referred to in paragraph 2.12 of the report.

(iii) *A charge would be made for a new ticket due to loss, tearing or other damage to the ticket. A standard fee of £10.00 is recommended.*

(iv) *For passes under the 'empty seats' scheme, the following fees are recommended:*

- *for those living within 3 miles of a local educational establishment - £60.00 per term*
 - *for those attending higher education courses - £100 per term*
 - *for those continuing into their third year - £100 per term*
- [subject to an empty seat being available and a refund being available should the seat be needed for a learner with a right under the core scheme].*

(v) *The appropriate fee for a learner not in possession of a pass for a journey on contracted transport will be £2.00 per journey."*

1.4 The Councils Board is thus recommended to:

1.4.1 adopt the new Policy (Appendix 1) with effect from 1 September 2011

1.4.2 adopt the fees and charges proposed for Academic Year 2011/12,

**(a) a standard fee of £100 a term
(paragraph 5.2 in the Report, paragraph 6.2 in the Policy)**

**(b) a reduced fee of £60 a term
(paragraph 5.3 in the Report, paragraph 6.3 in the Policy)**

**(c) a charge of £10 to replace a pass
(paragraph 5.4 in the Report, paragraph 7.6 in the Policy)**

**(ch) charges for "empty seats"
(paragraph 5.5 in the Report, paragraph 10.3 and 10.4 in the Policy)**

- *for those living within 3 miles of a local educational establishment - £60.00 per term*
- *for those attending higher education courses - £100 per term*
- *for those continuing into their third year - £100 per term*

(subject to an empty seat being available and a refund being available should the seat be needed for a learner with a right under the core scheme)

**(d) a charge of £2 for a single journey on contracted vehicles if a pass holder is not in possession of their pass
(paragraph 5.6 in the Report, paragraph 7.5 in the Policy)**

1.4.3 repeal the existing Post 16 age Transport Policy - adopted on 20 July 2004, on 31 August 2011.

1.4.4 authorise the Head of Education to insert the relevant contact details in Paragraph 7.8 and "Additional Information" sections of the Policy

1.4.5 ensure that before the end of the Spring Term 2011 that all the learners - and their parents, and the educational establishments involved with the new Policy and the fees and charges are informed of the new arrangements.

2. Background

2.1 On 10 December 2009, the Council decided to include an “income raising scheme from post 16 transportation” by charging everyone who lives further away than 3 miles from school/college a fee of £5 per week and also to place new guidelines on the right to follow courses at specific education establishments in Group A of the Savings Strategy 2010 - 2013. It had been estimated that the fees would raise an approximate income of £230,000. In addition it was agreed to save £100,000 through “placing new guidelines on the right to follow courses in specific educational establishments, etc”.

2.2 Due to the difference between the academic year and the Council’s financial year, the income raised through fees will not be fully achieved until the financial year 2013/14. However through implementing the new guidelines it has already been possible to recognise possible savings of £69,000. The table below summarises the situation.

	2011/12 £	2012/13 £	2013/14 £	Total £
A: Savings target	230,000	100,000	0	330,000
B: savings foreseen to be achieved	124,000	140,000 (264k – 124k)	39,000 (303k - 264k)	303,000
C: surplus / (Shortfall)	(106,000)	40,000	39,000	(27,000)

The Education Department is examining additional ways to close the 10% gap between the original estimates of possible savings and the expectations of the Council’s Savings Strategy.

2.3 From statistics supplied by the two colleges of further education, the numbers of learners from Gwynedd attending has increased, as has the numbers travelling by transport provided by the Council - by 104. Using the same assumptions used in autumn 2009 when the original income proposal was suggested, this should lead to increases revenue of £17,000 (assuming that all pay the reduced fee).

2.4 An examination of research into the possible effects of introducing a fee for use of previously free transport to post 16 educational establishments suggests that the effect is minimal, but may have a slightly greater effect in rural areas, including the choice and location of courses followed. (Research carried out on behalf of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, the Department for Children, Schools and Families [in England], House of Commons Select Committee and by Sian Thornthwaite – an advisor to the Welsh Local Government Association.)

2.5 In relation to transporting post 16 year olds, the Learner Travel (Wales) 2008 Measure states that local education authorities are expected to provide them with appropriate daily journeys between their homes and places of education and training. They do not have a duty to provide transportation to a school or college for those learners older than the compulsory school age (16 years of age). Should the Council provide transportation for learners above the compulsory school age then learners attending secondary school must be treated in the same way as learners attending college.

2.6 Since being established in 1996, Gwynedd Council has provided free transportation for post 16 learners who live further than three miles away from secondary schools and further education colleges. By now, the Council's post 16 transportation budget exceeds £1,250,000 per annum.

2.7 The present policy needed to be reviewed (adopted on 20th July 2004) for the following reasons:-

- changes in course provision patterns for post 16 learners
- availability of the Education Maintenance Allowance for learners from less well-off households
- enormous financial pressure on the Council's budget

and to introduce a new policy and a fixed charge for the transportation service. It is anticipated that the charges will recover 20% of the Council's subsidy for post 16 transportation.

2.8 The Council intends to provide transport for post 16 learners that live further than three miles away from an eligible school or college. A fee will be charged for this transportation service.

2.9 The new Policy will come into force on 1 September 2011 and will affect every learner starting an eligible course from this date. The policy will not affect learners that have started a course prior to 1 September 2011.

2.10 The Minister, Leighton Andrews, announced on 15 July 2010 that there will be changes from September 2011 in the Education Maintenance Allowance (which is for transport, books and equipment) for new learners (not learners 2009/10). As a result of research in Wales and the UK it was noted that the £10 and £20 weekly grants – or the bonuses, were not having much effect upon the decisions of young people to continue in education after 16 years of age. Therefore from September 2011 onwards there will be a threshold for receiving the £30 weekly allowance equivalent to a family income of £20,817 or lower for families claiming child benefit for one learner, and equivalent to a family income of £23,077 or lower for families claiming benefits for two or more learners.

2.11 It must be emphasised that the Policy will place the learners in the same position as other young people of the same age who have left school in order to join the workforce and have to travel to their workplace - often on public transport.

3. Core Matters of the new Policy

(a) Post 16 Transportation Network

3.1 The new policy is based on a 'network' of transportation services – be it a service bus, school / college bus, train, mini bus or taxi, that will enable learners to reach relevant post 16 educational sites.

3.2 By September 2011, every secondary school that provides for years 12 and 13 will be able to offer a full Local Curriculum which will meet teaching requirements. In some cases the provision available will be offered at other educational establishments. In addition to the transportation to the specific school at the start and end of each day, transport will also be available to/from any home on the network to/from related education establishments at the start and end of each school day.

The same applies for the choices available at the Coleg Menai and Coleg Llandrillo Cymru (Meirion - Dwyfor) sites.

3.3 When Year 11 learners in Gwynedd are exploring the choices for the next academic year, information about travelling opportunities (times and costs) to the district centre(s) will be available, including details of the courses available at every school and college throughout Gwynedd. Individual learners can then weigh up the availability of courses and transport.

(b) Transport due to disability

3.4 The proposed new policy challenges the usual way of providing for learners with disabilities – learning disabilities and/or physical disabilities. After any further period in college or school, the individual learner will look for a job or access to higher education. Sooner or later, special transport service e.g. taxi, will not be available from the home to school/college or then the workplace. The Policy is therefore based upon information from an expert regarding:

- difficulties that hinder individuals
- assessment of the ability of the individual to travel under some circumstances .

3.5 The Policy attempts to develop inclusion, along with the independence of every learner. Encouraging their educational and social development will be of great benefit to all learners and it includes working towards travelling independently. Learners will receive encouragement to achieve this as soon as possible and this of course will be in consultation with parents / guardians.

3.6 The Council will endeavour to ensure that learners with disabilities will be able to use vehicles that provide the core Network. In order to make it easier for them, the Council will consider the use of easy access vehicles, adapting the pick-up / drop-off points, providing an assistant, a 'buddy' scheme, transitional relief, etc. The aim is to develop confidence and independence when travelling that will be of additional assistance to the learner at the end of the educational period.

3.7 When making a decision, the following will be considered by the Council before allocating special transport for learners:

- the nature of the special needs of the learner
- whether the usual journey is accessible or not to the learner ?
- does the learner have either short-term or long-term severe specific medical problems ?
- does the learner have mobility problems ?

3.8 Under certain circumstances, it will not be possible to use the Transport Network – or the usual vehicle. Evidence from an expert, e.g. a Paediatric Consultant, must be submitted in writing with the application form, detailing the personal difficulties that prevent a learner from using the usual transportation method and an assessment of the learner's ability to travel under certain circumstances. The Council will consider the best way of providing transport for the individual learner, namely by using the core Network or a special arrangement under some exceptional circumstances.

3.9 The needs of learners with transport needs due to medical reasons will be reviewed annually.

(c) Transport Catchment Areas and Fees

3.10 There will be two prices for travelling on the Network – a full fee and a reduced fee.

3.11 By paying the full fee, the learners will be able to travel to any place on the Network from their homes in Gwynedd to any establishment that has been named at the end of the Policy.

3.12 For the reduced price, the learner will be able to use the Network to:

- travel to the local secondary school for the home address of the learner (including journeys at the start and end of the day to establishments providing courses on behalf of the local secondary school)
- travel to the Coleg Llandrillo Cymru (Meirion - Dwyfor) sites in Pwllheli and Dolgellau from addresses in Dwyfor and Meirionnydd, travel to Coleg Menai sites in Caernarfon, Bangor and Llangefni from addresses in Arfon, or travel to Coleg Llandrillo Cymru (Meirion – Dwyfor) site at Glynllifon from anywhere in Gwynedd
- travel to any special school or appropriate course for those with learning difficulties in a further education college

3.13 Subject to the existence of an empty seat in a vehicle, learners in other categories can pay the fee for an empty seat in a vehicle.

4. The New Policy

4.1 The proposed new policy is set out in Appendix 1.

4.2 This proposed policy deals with the following core matters:

- who is eligible? (paragraph 2.1 in the new Policy – see Appendix 1)
- eligible courses (2.2)
- age of learners (2.3)
- extended period for those with additional educational needs (2.4)
- travelling distances (3.1 & 3.2)
- relevant educational sites (4.1)
- details of the 'network' (5.1 – 5.5)
- travelling for full price (6.2)
- travelling for reduced price (6.3)
- accepting the Code of Conduct (7.1)
- paying period (7.2)
- start of first term journeys (7.3)
- details of travelling tickets (7.4)
- implications of not carrying a pass (7.5)
- paying for new pass (7.6)
- implications of borrowing a pass (7.7)
- finding an application form (7.8)
- changing course (7.9)
- travelling times (8.1, 8.2, 8.3)
- transport method (9.1, 9.2)
- expectations of the vehicles and drivers (9.3)
- compliance with the Code of Conduct (11.1, 11.2)

- implications of non-compliance with Code of Conduct (11.3, 11.2)
- transport due to disability reasons (12.1 – 12.6)
- availability of financial support for learners (13.1 – 13.4)
- changes to Policy (14.1)
- changes to fees (14.2)
- complaints procedure (15.1)

4.3 Also, the new proposed policy offers additional opportunities under some circumstances:

- principles of the 'empty seats' scheme (10.1)
- 'empty seats' scheme for those living within 3 miles to a local educational establishment (para. 10.2, 10.3)
- 'empty seats' scheme for those attending higher education (4.3, 10.2, 10.4)
- 'empty seats' scheme for those continuing into their third year (10.2, 10.4)
- empty seats fees (10.3, 10.4)
- applications for an empty seat pass (10.5)
- conditions of the 'empty seats' scheme (10.6)

4.4 The gaps in paragraph 7.8 and in the Additional Information will be completed after agreeing on the details.

5. Fees

5.1 The decision of the Council on 10 December 2009 refers to a fee of £5 per week. This fee was proposed for travelling to the local secondary school or college – which is the reduced price referred to above.

5.2 The proposed Policy sets out new guidelines for the right of learners to attend courses in specified educational establishments. Following comparison with other counties – that usually charge between £250 and £350 per annum, it is felt that a fee of £100 per term would be appropriate as the standard fee – specifically for the longer journeys and wider choices as referred to in paragraph 3.11 above. In comparison without an annual fee of £300 a year for out of catchment travel, a learner would have to buy a Red Rover Ticket for public bus services. This would cost £972 a year based upon 180 school / college days in a year.

5.3 The proposed fee accepted by the Council, namely £5 per week / £60 per term, would allow learners to travel shorter distances to local learning centres or a centre referred to in paragraph 3.12 above.

5.4 Also, the Policy refers to charging a fee for a new pass in the event of losing, breaking or otherwise damaging a pass. A standard fee of £10 is recommended.

5.5 For passes under the 'empty seats' scheme, the following fees are recommended:

- for those living within 3 miles of a local educational establishment - £60.00 per term
- for those attending higher education courses - £100 per term
- for those continuing into their third year - £100 per term

(subject to an empty seat being available and a refund being available should the seat be needed for a learner with a right under the core scheme)

5.6 The appropriate fee for a learner not in possession of a pass that has been paid for and issued to them for a journey on contracted transport will be £2.00 per journey.

6. Consultation on the draft Policy

6.1 In order to receive feedback on the contents of the policy (but not the principle of charging a fee since this has already been decided by the Council), meetings were organised with:

- education and training providers
- learners

6.2 In order to obtain the opinion of education and training providers, meetings were organised with the Heads of Gwynedd Secondary Schools Forum, Coleg Menai, Coleg Llandrillo Cymru (Meirion-Dwyfor) and the Heads of Pendalar and Hafod Lon Schools. The main matters arising were:

- the need to ensure that every learner is aware of the possible financial sources
- definitions of relevant courses and their length
- include students on all of the higher education courses in Coleg Menai and Bangor University
- temporary arrangements at the start of the first term
- add to the number of sites
- extend the time before having to start the journey home
- learners from Gwynedd who are in care outside Gwynedd
- the situation of individuals who only attend an institution further than three miles from their home on one day a week.

6.3. From the learner's viewpoint, meetings were requested with their representatives in Coleg Menai and Coleg Meirion-Dwyfor. Meetings were held with learners from Coleg Meirion-Dwyfor's Dolgellau and Pwllheli campuses and Coleg Menai (learners on Llangefni and Bangor sites). The main matters arising were:

- a)** Matters connected with the decision of the Council on 10th December 2009 to charge a fee of £60 per term:
 - observations regarding the lack of any consultation before December 2009 with young people and their parents regarding the idea of charging a fee
 - the great danger that a number of learners would not continue with post 16 education and long-term effects on skills in the local workforce
 - changes in the Education Maintenance Allowance from September 2010 onwards which will abolish the weekly sums of £10 and £20 and the quarterly bonus, with minor changes to the household income threshold (dependent upon one, or two or more, children in the household).
 - road safety hazards, parking problems by the colleges' sites, green matters that would arise with more learners buying vehicles
 - impact on poorer households e.g. dependency on the E M A as an 'income', numerous children, equipment costs for some courses
 - more often than not, the first payment of any E M A is not paid until at least 4 weeks, maybe 6 weeks or more

- that the cost of equipment for a vocational course reach £485 in one year

A petition from learners in Coleg Menai against the decision to raise a fee of £180 a year was received.

b) Matters in the consultative Policy:

- dissatisfaction with the standard of the current transport service provided by the Council (and paying for it) e.g. running late, inconvenient connections, dirty buses (learners had already complained 'to the Council')
- vehicles unsuitable for long journeys
- need assurance that learners with additional transport requirements will be able to travel (but agree with the principle)
- distance between some drop-off/pick-up points and the Network

6.4 In relation to learners with disabilities, a meeting was held with the Council's Equality and Language Unit, the Equality Core Group and Clebran Group. The main matters arising were:

- changes to the font used in the draft
- advice regarding the design of some companies' vehicles that excelled the vehicles of other companies with regards to those with physical disabilities
- date for paying for a pass for the spring term
- acknowledge that some are unable to read the Code of Practice but can understand its contents

6.5 In the Appendix 3 which was presented to the Scrutiny Committee there was a summary the comments of each establishment and the changes that were then incorporated in the Policy as was then shown as Appendix 1.

6.6 At the discretion of the Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee the President of the Coleg Llandrillo Students' Union - a learner at Coleg Meirion – Dwyfor Dolgellau site, was invited to attend the meeting and give a short address to the members. Unfortunately she, together with learners who were to listen from the Public Gallery, missed the bus from Dolgellau and failed to arrive at the meeting.

7. Processing applications for passes

7.1 In order to ensure consistency when selling the passes, they will have to be sold through one centre.

7.2 At the moment, discussions are taking place between the Education Department (the client department) and the Council's Contact Centre in Penrhyndeudraeth.

8. Raising awareness of the new Policy

8.1 After the Council's Board adopts the new Policy and fees for 2011/12 awareness will have to be raised regarding the new arrangements by:

- placing them on the Council's website
- requesting that schools and colleges include them in their prospectuses or provide appropriate information for the learners
- taking clear steps to reach groups such as learners with disabilities and ethnic minorities
- using information networks such as the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)

Clive James
5 Ionawr 2011.

APPENDIX 1

GWYNEDD COUNCIL
EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
POST 16 TRANSPORT POLICY

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Learners' Transport Measure (Wales) 2008 notes that a Local Education Authority is expected to arrange suitable journeys every day between learners' homes and the places that receive education and training. But there is duty on Gwynedd Council to provide transport to a school or a college for learners [namely pupils or students] over the compulsory school age, namely 16 years old. Should the Council provide transport for those above compulsory school age then learners attending secondary schools must be treated in the same way as learners attending colleges.
- 1.2 Since its establishment in 1996 Gwynedd Council has provided free transport for learners over 16 years old living over three miles away from secondary schools and further education colleges. By now the Council's post 16 transport budget is over £1,250,000 per annum.
- 1.3 Gwynedd Council has decided to review the existing policy for the following reasons:
- changes in the pattern of course provision for post 16 learners
 - availability of the Education Maintenance Allowance for learners from less well-off households
 - enormous financial pressure on the Council's budget
- and to introduce a new policy and a fixed charges for the transport. It is anticipated that the charges will recover 20% of the Council's subsidy for post 16 transport.
- 1.4 It is the Council's intention to provide transport for learners aged 16 who live three miles or more from an eligible school or college. A fee will be charged for this transport.
- 1.5 The new policy will come into force on 1 September 2011 and will affect every learner starting an eligible course from this date. The policy will not affect learners that have started a course prior to 1 September 2011.

2. Who is eligible?

- 2.1 This Policy is for learners residing in the County of Gwynedd.
- 2.2 Learners must be following a course / courses that are included in the Database of Approved Qualifications in Wales (DAQW). [See www.daqw.org.uk for details.]
- 2.3 Learners must be, with minor exceptions noted below, under 19 years old on 31 August in the year in which the course commences, in order to take advantage of this Policy. Learners who are eligible for transport and who reach the age of 19 during the second year of their course will continue to receive transport until the end of the academic year in which they reach their nineteenth birthday. The Council will not provide transport for

learners that are over 19 on 31 August at the beginning of the academic year excepting the minor exceptions below.

- 2.4 Learners with additional educational needs will be able to take advantage of the Council's post 16 transport scheme by paying the appropriate fee for a period of up to four years from the beginning of their first term, or until the end of the academic year after their 21st birthday.

3. Distances

- 3.1 The Council will not provide transport for learners that live less than three miles from an eligible school or college.
- 3.2 The Council will use the distances from the home to the educational establishment measured by means of the Council's Geographic Information System (G I S) to ascertain the true distances.

4. Relevant schools and college sites

- 4.1 The Policy is relevant for travelling to the following educational establishments:
- secondary schools maintained by Gwynedd Council with a provision for Years 12 and 13.
 - special schools maintained by Gwynedd Council with a provision for Years 12 and 13.
 - sites in Dolgellau, Pwllheli, Glynllifon of Coleg Llandrillo Cymru (Meirion-Dwyfor) for learners under 19 years old
 - sites in Bangor, Parc Menai, Llangefni and Caernarfon of Coleg Menai for learners under 19 years old.
- 4.2 The courses available in each of these establishments can be seen in their prospectuses, that are available directly from the establishments. An initial application form for taking advantage of the post 16 transport network will be available at the same time learners consider their choices from the Local Curriculum.
- 4.3 Also, under the 'empty seats' scheme, higher education students at Bangor University and Coleg Menai be able to travel on routes serving the Bangor site of Coleg Menai on the days of term of Coleg Menai only.

5. Post 16 Transport Network

- 5.1 As a result of the geographic nature of Gwynedd, it is not always possible to arrange transport routes that go past the homes of every learner wishing to travel. Learners will have to make their own way to the nearest picking-up point. Every effort will be made to keep this distance as short as possible.

- 5.2 Transport will be available on specific routes leading to the relevant establishment(s). Learners will be informed on the Council's Website the exact routes that are anticipated will be available the following September at the time of completing the application for a place at the relevant school or college.
- 5.3 It is the responsibility of individual learners to reach the nearest picking-up point on any of the routes. The Council will not provide additional transport to reach any picking-up / dropping off points on any of the routes.
- 5.4 It is the transport provider's responsibility to assess the safety of any picking-up / dropping-off point. Learners will have to use the safest picking-up point that is nearest to their home.
- 5.5 The Council will review the network of routes on an annual basis to improve efficiency. Any changes will be known prior to the Easter Holidays and will only be introduced at the beginning of the following academic year.

6. Charges

- 6.1 There will be two prices for travelling on the Transport Network – a full charge and a reduced one.
- 6.2 By paying the full price the learner will be able to travel anywhere on the Transport Network from their homes to any establishment which is named at the end of the Policy.
- 6.3 For the reduced price the learner will be able to use the Transport Network in order to:
- travel to the local secondary school for the learner's home address (including journeys at the beginning and end of the school day to establishments which provide courses on behalf of the local secondary school)
 - travel to the Coleg Meirion-Dwyfor sites in Dolgellau and Pwllheli from addresses in Dwyfor and Meirionnydd, travel to Coleg Menai sites in Caernarfon, Bangor and Llangefni from addresses in Arfon, or travel to the Glynllifon site, Coleg Meirion-Dwyfor, from anywhere in Gwynedd
 - travel to any special school or a course suitable for those with a learning disability in a college of further education in Gwynedd.

7. Applying for and paying for transport

- 7.1 A ticket will be sold to a learner that is eligible for transport on condition that he / she accepts the Travel Behaviour Code and pays the current fee.
- 7.2 A permanent ticket will only be issued during the first term at the college or school after receipt of the current fee. At the beginning of the first term of post 16 aged learners there will a period of up to three weeks when they may travel without a ticket at the beginning / end of journey subject to then carrying an appropriate letter from the school / college which confirms that they registered in the school / college.

- 7.3 For subsequent terms payment for the ticket will be required prior to the start of term, namely prior to 1 September (Autumn Term), 15 December (Spring Term), 1 April (Summer Term).
- 7.4 A photograph of the learner entitled to use the ticket will be on each ticket with the number(s) of the valid travel routes.
- 7.5 The tickets must be carried every day and must be available for inspection by those authorized to do so, e.g. bus driver, bus inspector, Council officer. Learners without a ticket in their possession at the time can be refused the right to travel, unless payment is made of the appropriate amount that would be due on public transport or the current amount fixed by the Council for every journey on contracted transport.
- 7.6 There will be a charge for issuing a new ticket if lost, disfigured or otherwise destroyed. This will in accordance in accordance with the current rate.
- 7.7 Each ticket is for the use of the individual only. Allowing another individual to use a ticket that another learner has paid for, or using a ticket paid for by another learner, is contrary to the Policy. This type of misuse will lead to the individual(s) losing the privilege of using transport subsidised by the Council and those individuals' ticket(s) will be withdrawn.
- 7.8 The application form for a ticket can be found on the Council's Website - www.gwynedd.gov.uk/.. or by applying to....
- 7.9 Should learners change course, or the location of their course changes, a new application must be made. These applications will receive urgent priority.

8. Travel Times

- 8.1 Transport will be available between Monday and Friday during the relevant school / college terms only.
- 8.2 A journey to a school or college must be completed before 12:00.
- 8.3 A journey home from college or school cannot be made before 13:00. A journey to home must commence before 18:00, excepting if the learner has an official letter from the school / college which confirms that the time of the last lesson / lecture on specified day(s) prevents travel commencing before 18:00.

9. Type of transport provision

- 9.1 The Council will provide transport in the most effective and appropriate way. The Council will mainly arrange the use of public bus and train services.
- 8.2 The Council will also provide transport on buses, mini-buses or taxis under contract to the Council.

8.3 The Council expects operators to ensure the punctuality of their services, that the vehicles are clean and of quality with drivers trained specifically for the type of work and type of passengers.

10. **“Empty Seats” Scheme**

10.1 Under certain circumstances not every seat in a vehicle that provides learners transport to a school or college utilised under the provisions of this Policy. Under certain circumstances other post 16 year old learners may pay for the use of any empty seats.

10.2 The categories of learners in question are as follows:

- those living less than three miles from the educational establishment
- learners that have had their 19th birthday during the previous academic year
- students in higher education at Bangor University or Coleg Menai.

10.3 Learners who live within the three mile radius may take advantage of any empty seats on an appropriate bus through paying the reduced fee.

10.4 The full fee will be the cost for learners who have passed 19 years of age during the previous academic year and students in higher education in Bangor University or Coleg Menai.

10.5 Applications for an empty seat ticket will be in the same way as a normal ticket. However applications will not be decided upon until after the first day of the Autumn Term.

10.6 During any academic term, as a consequence of an increase in the number of learners entitled to transport, there may be no empty seats remaining. Under such circumstances, it will not be possible for learners in any of the additional categories above to continue to travel in the vehicle. Under such circumstances the Council will refund the full fee to the learner for the term. Then it will be the individual learner's responsibility to reach the school or college.

11. **Travel Behaviour Code**

11.1 The Council supports the Travel Behaviour Code prepared by the Welsh Assembly Government. The Code establishes the expectations of individual learners, fellow passengers and transport providers. The Code can be seen on the Council's Website.

11.2 When learners submit an application for post 16 transport, they must state on the application form that they understand and are committed to keeping the Travel Behavior Code and are aware of the possible results of breaching the Code.

11.3 An unacceptable action by a learner that is contrary to the Code could lead to:

- recovering the cost of deliberate damage from learners and / or their parents / guardians

- cancelling the travel arrangements agreed for learners for a specific period or an unspecified period. [It will be the learners' responsibility to make their own transport plans under these circumstances .]
- disciplinary action by the relevant school or college
- passing the report of the incident to the Police.

12. Transport on medical grounds

- 12.1 As a consequence of physical disability and / or other special needs, some students may face problems when using the Council's post 16 Transport Network.
- 12.2 The Policy attempts to develop inclusion along with the independence of every learner. Encouraging their educational and social development will be of great benefit to all learners and it includes working towards travelling independently. Learners will receive encouragement to achieve this as soon as possible and this of course will be in consultation with parents / guardians.
- 12.3 The Council will endeavour to ensure that it will be possible for learners with travelling difficulties to be able to use vehicles that provide the core network. In order to make it easier for them the Council will consider the use of easy access vehicles, adapting the picking-up / dropping-off points, providing an assistant, a 'buddy' scheme, transitional relief, etc. The aim is to develop confidence and independence when travelling that will be of additional assistance after the end of the educational period.
- 12.4 When making a decision, the following will be considered before allocating special transport for learners:
- the nature of the special needs of the learner
 - whether the usual journey is accessible or not to the learner ?
 - does the learner have either short-term or long-term specific medical problems ?
 - does the learner have mobility problems ?
- 12.5 Under certain circumstances, it will not be possible to use the Transport Network – or the usual vehicle. Evidence from a specialist, e.g. a Paediatric Consultant, must be submitted in writing with the application form, detailing the personal difficulties that prevents a learner from using the usual transport and an assessment of the learner's ability to travel under certain circumstances. The Council will consider the best way of providing transport for the individual learner, namely by using the core Network or a special arrangement under some exceptional circumstances.
- 12.6 The needs of learners with transport needs for medical reasons will be reviewed annually.

13. Financial support for learners

- 13.1 Since 2004/05, the Welsh Assembly Government has offered the Education Maintenance Allowance for learners over 16 years old that attend a local school or college. The main element is a weekly allowance that is associated with attending the educational establishment and a sufficient studying effort is made.
- 13.2 The Allowance level is dependent on the income of the household. The allowance is paid in order to assist those who are post 16 with the cost of travelling, books and equipment when following a course in a school or college.
- 13.3 It is expected that learners with special transport needs will claim the Mobility Allowance after two years of post 16 education.
- 13.4 Learners can find out more about these sources on the Website www.cyllidmyfyrwycymru.co.uk

14. Changes to the Policy and Fees

- 14.1 From time to time, the Council will change its Post 16 Transport Policy. Any changes will be decided prior to the academic Easter holidays before the start of the following academic year. The changes will come into force on the following 1st of September.
- 14.2 The Council will review its fees for post 16 transport on an annual basis. Any changes will be decided prior to the Easter holidays before the start of the following academic year. The changes will come into force on the following 1st of September.

15. Complaints and Observations

- 15.1 Any complaints or observations regarding this Policy must be submitted in accordance with the Council's Complaints and Observations Procedure.

Clive James

5 Ionawr 2011

GWYNEDD COUNCIL
EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
POST 16 TRANSPORT POLICY

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Learners' Transport Measure (Wales) 2008 notes that a Local Education Authority is expected to arrange suitable journeys every day between learners' homes and the places that receive education and training. But there is duty on Gwynedd Council to provide transport to a school or a college for learners [namely pupils or students] over the compulsory school age, namely 16 years old. Should the Council provide transport for those above compulsory school age then learners attending secondary schools must be treated in the same way as learners attending colleges.
- 1.2 Since its establishment in 1996 Gwynedd Council has provided free transport for learners over 16 years old living over three miles away from secondary schools and further education colleges. By now the Council's post 16 transport budget is over £1,250,000 per annum.
- 1.3 Gwynedd Council has decided to review the existing policy for the following reasons:
- changes in the pattern of course provision for post 16 learners
 - availability of the Education Maintenance Allowance for learners from less well-off households
 - enormous financial pressure on the Council's budget
- and to introduce a new policy and a fixed charges for the transport. It is anticipated that the charges will recover 20% of the Council's subsidy for post 16 transport.
- 1.4 It is the Council's intention to provide transport for learners aged 16 who live three miles or more from an eligible school or college. A fee will be charged for this transport.
- 1.5 The new policy will come into force on 1 September 2011 and will affect every learner starting an eligible course from this date. The policy will not affect learners that have started a course prior to 1 September 2011.

2. Who is eligible?

- 2.1 This Policy is for learners residing in the County of Gwynedd.
- 2.2 Learners must be following a course / courses that are included in the Database of Approved Qualifications in Wales (DAQW). [See www.daqw.org.uk for details.]
- 2.3 Learners must be, with minor exceptions noted below, under 19 years old on 31 August in the year in which the course commences, in order to take advantage of this Policy. Learners who are eligible for transport and who reach the age of 19 during the second year of their course will continue to receive transport until the end of the academic year in which they reach their

nineteenth birthday. The Council will not provide transport for learners that are over 19 on 31 August at the beginning of the academic year excepting the minor exceptions below.

- 2.4 Learners with additional educational needs will be able to take advantage of the Council's post 16 transport scheme by paying the appropriate fee for a period of up to four years from the beginning of their first term, or until the end of the academic year after their 21st birthday.

3. Distances

- 3.1 The Council will not provide transport for learners that live less than three miles from an eligible school or college.
- 3.2 The Council will use the distances from the home to the educational establishment measured by means of the Council's Geographic Information System (G I S) to ascertain the true distances.

4. Relevant schools and college sites

- 4.1 The Policy is relevant for travelling to the following educational establishments:

- secondary schools maintained by Gwynedd Council with a provision for Years 12 and 13.
- special schools maintained by Gwynedd Council with a provision for Years 12 and 13.
- sites in Dolgellau, Pwllheli, Glynllifon of Coleg Llandrillo Cymru (Meirion-Dwyfor) for learners under 19 years old
- sites in Bangor, Parc Menai, Llangefni and Caernarfon of Coleg Menai for learners under 19 years old.

- 4.2 The courses available in each of these establishments can be seen in their prospectuses, that are available directly from the establishments. An initial application form for taking advantage of the post 16 transport network will be available at the same time learners consider their choices from the Local Curriculum.

- 4.3 Also, under the 'empty seats' scheme, higher education students at Bangor University and Coleg Menai be able to travel on routes serving the Bangor site of Coleg Menai on the days of term of Coleg Menai only.

5. Post 16 Transport Network

- 5.1 As a result of the geographic nature of Gwynedd, it is not always possible to arrange transport routes that go past the homes of every learner wishing to travel. Learners will have to make their own way to the nearest picking-up point. Every effort will be made to keep this distance as short as possible.
- 5.2 Transport will be available on specific routes leading to the relevant establishment(s). Learners will be informed on the Council's Website the exact routes that are anticipated will be available the following September at the time of completing the application for a place at the relevant school or college.

- 5.3 It is the responsibility of individual learners to reach the nearest picking-up point on any of the routes. The Council will not provide additional transport to reach any picking-up / dropping off points on any of the routes.
- 5.4 It is the transport provider's responsibility to assess the safety of any picking-up / dropping-off point. Learners will have to use the safest picking-up point that is nearest to their home.
- 5.5 The Council will review the network of routes on an annual basis to improve efficiency. Any changes will be known prior to the Easter Holidays and will only be introduced at the beginning of the following academic year.

6. Charges

- 6.1 There will be two prices for travelling on the Transport Network – a full charge and a reduced one.
- 6.2 By paying the full price the learner will be able to travel anywhere on the Transport Network from their homes to any establishment which is named at the end of the Policy.
- 6.3 For the reduced price the learner will be able to use the Transport Network in order to:
 - travel to the local secondary school for the learner's home address (including journeys at the beginning and end of the school day to establishments which provide courses on behalf of the local secondary school)
 - travel to the Coleg Meirion-Dwyfor sites in Dolgellau and Pwllheli from addresses in Dwyfor and Meirionnydd, travel to Coleg Menai sites in Caernarfon, Bangor and Llangefni from addresses in Arfon, or travel to the Glynllifon site, Coleg Meirion-Dwyfor, from anywhere in Gwynedd
 - travel to any special school or a course suitable for those with a learning disability in a college of further education in Gwynedd.

7. Applying for and paying for transport

- 7.1 A ticket will be sold to a learner that is eligible for transport on condition that he / she accepts the Travel Behaviour Code and pays the current fee.
- 7.2 A permanent ticket will only be issued during the first term at the college or school after receipt of the current fee. At the beginning of the first term of post 16 aged learners there will a period of up to three weeks when they may travel without a ticket at the beginning / end of journey subject to then carrying an appropriate letter from the school / college which confirms that they registered in the school / college.
- 7.3 For subsequent terms payment for the ticket will be required prior to the start of term, namely prior to 1 September (Autumn Term), 15 December (Spring Term), 1 April (Summer Term).
- 7.4 A photograph of the learner entitled to use the ticket will be on each ticket with the number(s) of the valid travel routes.
- 7.5 The tickets must be carried every day and must be available for inspection by those authorized to do so, e.g. bus driver, bus inspector, Council officer. Learners without a ticket in their possession at the time can be refused the right to travel, unless payment is made of the appropriate amount that would be due on public transport or the current amount fixed by the Council for every journey on contracted transport.

- 7.6 There will be a charge for issuing a new ticket if lost, disfigured or otherwise destroyed. This will be in accordance with the current rate.
- 7.7 Each ticket is for the use of the individual only. Allowing another individual to use a ticket that another learner has paid for, or using a ticket paid for by another learner, is contrary to the Policy. This type of misuse will lead to the individual(s) losing the privilege of using transport subsidised by the Council and those individuals' ticket(s) will be withdrawn.
- 7.8 The application form for a ticket can be found on the Council's Website - www.gwynedd.gov.uk/.. or by applying to....
- 7.9 Should learners change course, or the location of their course changes, a new application must be made. These applications will receive urgent priority.

8. Travel Times

- 8.1 Transport will be available between Monday and Friday during the relevant school / college terms only.
- 6.2 A journey to a school or college must be completed before 12:00.
- 6.3 A journey home from college or school cannot be made before 13:00. A journey to home must commence before 18:00, excepting if the learner has an official letter from the school / college which confirms that the time of the last lesson / lecture on specified day(s) prevents travel commencing before 18:00.

9. Type of transport provision

- 9.1 The Council will provide transport in the most effective and appropriate way. The Council will mainly arrange the use of public bus and train services.
- 8.2 The Council will also provide transport on buses, mini-buses or taxis under contract to the Council.
- 8.3 The Council expects operators to ensure the punctuality of their services, that the vehicles are clean and of quality with drivers trained specifically for the type of work and type of passengers.

10. "Empty Seats" Scheme

- 10.1 Under certain circumstances not every seat in a vehicle that provides learners transport to a school or college utilised under the provisions of this Policy. Under certain circumstances other post 16 year old learners may pay for the use of any empty seats.
- 10.2 The categories of learners in question are as follows:
- those living less than three miles from the educational establishment
 - learners that have had their 19th birthday during the previous academic year
 - students in higher education at Bangor University or Coleg Menai.
- 10.3 Learners who live within the three mile radius may take advantage of any empty seats on an appropriate bus through paying the reduced fee.

- 10.4 The full fee will be the cost for learners who have passed 19 years of age during the previous academic year and students in higher education in Bangor University or Coleg Menai.
- 10.5 Applications for an empty seat ticket will be in the same way as a normal ticket. However applications will not be decided upon until after the first day of the Autumn Term.
- 10.6 During any academic term, as a consequence of an increase in the number of learners entitled to transport, there may be no empty seats remaining. Under such circumstances, it will not be possible for learners in any of the additional categories above to continue to travel in the vehicle. Under such circumstances the Council will refund the full fee to the learner for the term. Then it will be the individual learner's responsibility to reach the school or college.

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15. Complaints and Observations

15.1 Any complaints or observations regarding this Policy must be submitted in accordance with the Council's Complaints and Observations Procedure.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The following are available on the Council Website: www.gwynedd.gov.uk/

- A. Timetables and maps of the Transport Network to the relevant establishments
- B. Travel Behaviour Code
- C. Application Form
- Ch Complaints and Observations

or by request by phoningon 01286 679qqq or by writing to:-

.....

The details and the application form for the Education Maintenance Allowance and Assembly Learning Grant are available on the following Website: www.cyllidmyfywrycymru.co.uk or from individual schools and colleges.

The relevant schools and colleges can be contacted as follows:

Ysgol y Berwyn : 01678 520259

Ysgol Dyffryn Nantlle : 01286 880345

Ysgol Syr Hugh Owen : 01286 673076

Ysgol Brynrefail : 01286 672381

Ysgol Tryfan : 01248 352633

Ysgol Friars : 01248 364905

Ysgol Dyffryn Ogwen :01248 600291

Ysgol Pendalar : 01286 672141

Ysgol Hafod Lon : 01766 810626

Uned Tŷ Meirion, Ysgol y Gader : 01341 422578

Coleg Llandrillo Cymru (Meirion-Dwyfor)

Dolgellau : 01341 422827

Pwllheli : 01758 701385

Glynllifon : 01286 830261

Coleg Menai

Bangor : 01248 370125

Llangefni : 01248 370125

Parc Menai : 01248 370125

Caernarfon : 01248 370125

Views of the Local Member(s):-

Not a local matter.

Views of the Statutory Officers:-

1. Chief Executive

What we have under consideration here is the implementation of a decision that has already been made by the full Council to discover savings in this field. It is apparent that the detailed work of revising the policy on fees is taking us close to the sum that was estimated and I note the undertaking of the Education Department to find the residue.

It is also pleasing to see that an assessment has been made of the possible impact of the new arrangements and the result of that assessment is that the impact will be minimal.

2. Monitoring Officer

This draft Policy has been the subject of consultation with relative stakeholders including student groups and users with special needs and the result of these consultations is reported upon. I have no other observations from an appropriateness aspect.

3. Chief Financial Officer

I confirm that the financial figures appearing in the report are estimates prepared on a reasonable fair-assumption basis, but numerous factors could influence the true level of income from pupils/students (up or down). Accordingly, it will be necessary for the Education Department to monitor the scheme regularly and in detail during the initial years, and respond appropriately to any movement. As noted in section 2.2 of the report, the Education Department will have to cope with any deficiency under the proposed scheme as compared to the original savings targets. Perhaps it will be possible for the author to update some of the figures at the Board meeting, including identifying the administration cost of processing applications for tickets through one centre (in accordance with the proposal referred to in section 7 of the report).

C. Background Papers

Datganiad ysgrifenedig gan Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru : newidiadau i gynllun lwfans cynhaliath addysg Cymru, 15 Gorffennaf 2010.

14-19 Curriculum Offer : Transport – Related Issues and Solutions. Dept for Children, Schools and Families.

House of Commons Transport Committee : School Transport, 2008-09.

Socio-economic disadvantages and access to higher education. Rowntree Foundation (2000).

CH. Policy Implications

Deleting the present policy and presenting a new policy.

Implementing the Council's savings Strategy, 10 December 2010.
