

Implementing Recommendations of Post-16 Further Education Transport Scrutiny Investigation Report

Cabinet Member's Intentions (November 2015)

The Cabinet Member would like to thank the Scrutiny Investigation for its thorough and comprehensive work in the subject, and especially the investigation's readiness to consider how to reduce the costs as well as improving the Service. Apologies are offered for the delay in presenting this report. It was intended to implement a new wording of the policy for September 2015, but a PURDAH period cut across the work, and the opportunity to introduce the changes in time was lost.

The recommendations have been divided into three categories:

- implement immediately,
- cooperate in the medium term with other services/partners in order to investigate the practicability of implementing the recommendations,
- not to consider the recommendations for the time being

In referring to specific recommendations, the numbering used is that of the 'Summary of the recommendations' found on pages 7 and 8 of the report.

Implement immediately

Recommendation	What has happened and when	Effect of action
5 Consistency is needed in the provision and the arrangements across Gwynedd, in order to give everyone an equal and fair opportunity.	The wording of the Post-16 Transport Policy has been updated so as to charge one price only for the 16+ Travel Ticket, and in so doing removing any differentiation in price when travelling to a catchment school or college or to any establishment noted in the policy. A single price of £100 per term will be charged. It was intended to implement a new wording of the policy for September 2015, but a PURDAH period cut across the work, and the opportunity to introduce the changes in time was lost. The current policy states that any changes to the policy must be decided upon before the Easter Holidays preceding the start of the academic year in which the changes would come into effect on the 1 st of September. It is	Charging one price only and removing the concept of a catchment will ensure consistency in the provision and arrangements available to all, be they school pupils or college students, wherever they live.

		intended, therefore, to implement the change in policy from 1 st September 2016.	
6	The catchment areas should be reviewed to reduce the travelling times and distances for learners/students in accordance with the Learner Travel Statutory Guidance.	<p>The wording of the Post-16 Transport Policy has been updated so as to charge one price only for the 16+ Travel Ticket, and in so doing removing any differentiation in price when travelling to a catchment school or college or to any establishment noted in the policy. A single price of £100 per term will be charged.</p> <p>It was intended to implement a new wording of the policy for September 2015, but a PURDAH period cut across the work, and the opportunity to introduce the changes in time was lost. The current policy states that any changes to the policy must be decided upon before the Easter Holidays preceding the start of the academic year in which the changes would come into effect on the 1st of September. It is intended, therefore, to implement the change in policy from 1st September 2016.</p>	The new wording of the policy removes the concept of a catchment with regards to post-16 transport. This will enable a learner to attend the establishment best suited for them without a difference in the cost of a 16+ Travel Ticket needing to be a consideration.
12c	Based on the evidence found during the scrutiny investigation, the same price should be set for everyone.	<p>The wording of the Post-16 Transport Policy has been updated so as to charge one price only for the 16+ Travel Ticket, and in so doing removing any differentiation in price when travelling to a catchment school or college or to any establishment noted in the policy. A single price of £100 per term will be charged.</p> <p>It was intended to implement a new wording of the policy for September 2015, but a PURDAH period cut across the work, and the opportunity to introduce the changes in time was lost. The current policy states that any changes to the policy must be</p>	The new wording of the policy sets one price for everyone.

		decided upon before the Easter Holidays preceding the start of the academic year in which the changes would come into effect on the 1st of September. It is intended, therefore, to implement the change in policy from 1st September 2016.	
9	We must secure the joint understanding of the further education providers and Galw Gwynedd of Gwynedd Council's Post-16 Education Transport Policy.	<p>The wording of the Post-16 Transport Policy has been updated so as to charge one price only for the 16+ Travel Ticket, and in so doing removing any differentiation in price when travelling to a catchment school or college or to any establishment noted in the policy. A single price of £100 per term will be charged.</p> <p>It was intended to implement a new wording of the policy for September 2015, but a PURDAH period cut across the work, and the opportunity to introduce the changes in time was lost. The current policy states that any changes to the policy must be decided upon before the Easter Holidays preceding the start of the academic year in which the changes would come into effect on the 1st of September. It is intended, therefore, to implement the change in policy from 1st September 2016.</p>	The wording and conditions of the new policy are such simpler and will help in securing joint understanding of the further education providers and Galw Gwynedd of the policy.
10	In the spirit of the Gwynedd Way, it must be ensured that users' questions are answered on their first contact.	<p>The wording of the Post-16 Transport Policy has been updated so as to charge one price only for the 16+ Travel Ticket, and in so doing removing any differentiation in price when travelling to a catchment school or college or to any establishment noted in the policy. A single price of £100 per term will be charged.</p> <p>It was intended to implement a new wording of the policy for September 2015, but a PURDAH period cut across the work, and the opportunity to introduce</p>	The wording and conditions of the new policy are such simpler and will help in ensuring that users' questions are answered on their first contact.

		the changes in time was lost. The current policy states that any changes to the policy must be decided upon before the Easter Holidays preceding the start of the academic year in which the changes would come into effect on the 1st of September. It is intended, therefore, to implement the change in policy from 1st September 2016.	
11	Gwynedd Council and the post-16 education providers must collaborate closely to provide consistent, relevant and purposeful information for learners and their families using various and suitable methods that ensure an equal opportunity for everyone	All the communication material used in conjunction with the Post-16 Transport Policy will need to be reviewed in order to bring it line with the wording of the new policy and any other new arrangements (this would include the website, correspondence with school pupils and college students, scripts for Galw Gwynedd staff, etc.)	This has not been done yet.
12ch	It should be ensured that the service offers an equal opportunity for college students and learners in secondary schools.	It is considered that recommendation 12ch is very similar to recommendation 5 (above), and that removing the concept of a catchment will contribute to the implementation of this recommendation.	Charging one price only and removing the concept of a catchment will ensure consistency in the provision and arrangements available to all, be they school pupils or college students, wherever they live.
3	The foundation of working in partnership with various organisations to arrange a bespoke service should be built on.	It is considered that recommendation 3 is being implemented permanently.	All partners contribute to improving the provision which is in operation.

Short/medium term cooperation with other services/partners in order to investigate the practicalities of implementing the recommendations

Some difficulty was experienced in recognising the correct representative from Coleg Llandrillo-Menai with whom we should discuss some of the recommendations. Preliminary discussions have been held with Coleg Llandrillo-Menai in relation to recommendations 1, 12b, 5, 7 and 12dd. The official response from Coleg Llandrillo-Menai will determine the development of these recommendations.

Recommendation	What has happened and when	Effect of action
<p>1 In order to improve the benefits for learners/students and their families, reduce the processes and in the spirit of the Gwynedd Way, there should be closer collaboration and negotiation with the Llandrillo Menai Colleges Group to be an agent for Gwynedd Council</p>	<p>Preliminary discussions have been held with representatives from Coleg Llandrillo-Menai regarding the idea that they act as an agent. The college is willing to consider being an agent, but they require more detailed information regarding the numbers and cost involved in producing the travel tickets before they can present any firm offer.</p> <p>The last meeting was held on 30 September, 2015.</p>	<p>The numbers and costs of producing the travel tickets are being provided to the college.</p>
<p>12b Based on the evidence found during the scrutiny investigation, it is recommended that a combination of options should be considered. Options 3, 6 and 7 – changing to a ticketed system, transferring the service and the administration of college transport tickets to Llandrillo Menai Colleges Group.</p>	<p>Preliminary discussions have been held with representatives from Coleg Llandrillo-Menai regarding the idea that the transport service is transferred to the college. The college had no interest in organising the transport.</p> <p>With regards to transferring the administration of college travel tickets to Coleg Llandrillo-Menai, see 1 above.</p>	<p>None with regards to transferring the transport system to the college.</p> <p>See 1 above with regards to transferring the administration of college travel tickets to the college.</p>
<p>5 Consistency is needed in the provision and the arrangements across Gwynedd, in order to give everyone an equal and fair opportunity</p>	<p>The proposed change in wording of the transport policy was discussed with representatives from Coleg Llandrillo-Menai. There was no opposition to the principle of removing the concept of a catchment and to charge a single price for everyone. However the representatives needed time to consider fully the implications of the change in policy.</p>	<p>We are awaiting the official response from the college with respect to the proposed change in policy.</p>

7	<p>Post-16 education providers need to collaborate to put systems in place to collect data to find out whether travelling costs lead to students dropping out of further education</p>	<p>This was discussed with representatives from Coleg Llandrillo-Menai.</p> <p>It is intended to ask the Gwynedd and Ynys Môn Post-16 Education Consortium to look at this aspect.</p> <p>It has not been discussed with them yet.</p>	<p>We are awaiting the official response from the college with respect to this recommendation.</p>
12dd	<p>We should continue with the good practice of the provision of peripatetic teachers/lecturers and build on the foundation of working in partnership, and review regularly.</p>	<p>This recommendation was discussed with representatives from Coleg Llandrillo-Menai.</p>	<p>We are awaiting the official response from the college with respect to this recommendation.</p>
4	<p>We should have a purposeful Post-16 Transport Policy that considers the students/leaners and their families' means to pay for transport costs</p>	<p>It is considered that the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) already contributes to the implementation of recommendation 4. However, the issue was raised with representatives of Coleg Llandrillo-Menai with a view to shorten the time it takes to ensure the first payment of the EMA.</p> <p>In addition, the Cabinet Member has asked the Education Department to look into the possibility of establishing a system which would allow part-payments (rather than having to pay one whole amount at the beginning of term). Discussions have been held with Galw Gwynedd and the Finance (Income) Department with regards to enabling the £100 ticket to be paid for using Direct Debit (and therefore splitting the cost into monthly payments).</p>	<p>We are awaiting the official response from the college with respect to this recommendation.</p> <p>The Direct Debit system will be available for trialling payment of the £100 ticket for the Summer Term 2016.</p>

Discussions have also been held with the Integrated Transport Unit with regards to recommendations 2 and 12b.

Recommendation	What has happened and when	Effect of action
<p>2 The Post-16 Transport Policy should be reviewed to secure a suitable and purposeful policy to address the requirements of the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 and the Learner Travel – Statutory Provision and Operation Guidance, June 2014</p> <p>12b Based on the evidence found during the scrutiny investigation, it is recommended that a combination of options should be considered. Options 3, 6 and 7 – changing to a ticketed system, transferring the service and the administration of college transport tickets to Llandrillo Menai Colleges Group.</p>	<p>One aspect of recommendation 2 was to have more flexibility in the travel times for learners/students. Learners/students who use routes which are public transport routes under tender to the Council on their 16+ Travel Ticket can already travel at any time on those routes.</p> <p>However, providers of commercial public transport are unwilling to allow learners/students to travel at any time on their routes because that could reduce the number of seats they have available to them to sell to the public. Therefore, the use of the 16+ Travel Ticket on commercial public transport routes is restricted to a specific journey at the beginning of the day and a specific journey at the end of the day.</p>	<p>Learners/students who use routes which are public transport routes under tender to the Council on their 16+ Travel Ticket can continue to travel at any time on those routes, but because of the standpoint of the commercial transport providers the use of the 16+ Travel Ticket on commercial public transport routes is restricted to a specific journey at the beginning of the day and a specific journey at the end of the day.</p>

Clarity on the possible effect of the Youth Concessionary Fares Scheme has also been requested.

Recommendation	What has happened and when	Effect of action
	<p>The new scheme has come into effect since September 2015 and offers a one third discount to all young persons aged 16, 17 and 18 years old in Wales</p>	<p>This scheme can reduce costs for learners/students who use commercial public transport because they want to travel at times which are not included in</p>

	<p>who travel on public transport under tender to the Council or on local commercial public transport buses. This scheme does not reduce the costs to the Education Department with regards to the seats which are purchased for learners/students on public or commercial transport.</p>	<p>their 16+ Travel Ticket (see above).</p> <p>Learners/students should also consider whether it would be cheaper to travel on public transport (be that under tender to the Council or commercial) whilst receiving a one third discount than it would be to buy a 16+ Travel Ticket.</p>
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Recommendations not to be considered at this current time

Recommendation	What has happened and when	Effect of action
8 Appropriate customer care indicators should be set for the service	Resources are not available at this current time to act upon this recommendation.	
12d Financial loans should also be provided to purchase a vehicle / motorbike in order to facilitate access to further education and training.	There is currently no money available to provide financial loans.	