

## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD – 30 APRIL 2020 EXECUTIVE – 05 MAY 2020

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### POST 16 TRANSPORT POLICY STATEMENT 2020-21

#### COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Due to the Coronavirus pandemic, the meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee due to be held on 24 April 2020 was cancelled. However, members of the Committee were invited to consider and respond to this report by email.

Ten members of the Committee responded and supported the recommendations to the Executive. The following questions and comments were received:

#### Questions to be addressed at OSMB

1. What concession, if any, would the Council allow to parents who due to the Coronavirus had either lost employment or had reduced income, and were unable to help or pay for the £570 a year cost?
2. With the uncertainty of the pandemic and with education virtually in abeyance, would families that had already paid up front for travel be able to claim a refund and if so how would the families be made aware of this?
3. How much would it cost to remove the surcharge for paying by instalments? Although it was only £9 it was still a deterrent for people on a low income to be able to budget for. Additionally, if there was more than one post 16 learner in a home, this was a double hit on a very large portion of annual outgoings.
4. With regards to households receiving the subsidy, how many had more than one post 16 learner? This could be sizeable if twins and blended families were included. Was there any evidence from the consultation that this was an area of vulnerability for families? What assurance could be provided that families were not being deterred from applying due to the cost? Has any modelling been undertaken to explore a sibling discount?
5. Consideration of families facing hardship was important and the policy makes reference to concessions being available, in particular the 16-19 bursary fund. The policy sets out the criteria for the bursary, such as being in receipt of Universal Credit (UC) for which there had been a vast increase in the number of people claiming in recent weeks. If these families were still in receipt of UC in September, would they all qualify for the 16-19 bursary and would schools have the necessary funds to provide this support? How much have schools in Lincolnshire awarded through this bursary last year? Even though the Council was not directly accountable/responsible for these bursaries, there might be a large increase in the number of families struggling to find the £570, which they might not have had to find last year if it was the first year in post 16 education, on top of all other financial pressures on the horizon.
6. The introduction of T Levels in Lincolnshire, which was not planned for this academic year, could result in students incurring travel expenses. Could companies provide out of pocket travel expenses for students and could feedback be sought from other organisations before it was rolled out in

Lincolnshire, depending on whether colleges and industry in Lincolnshire could offer this option?

7. In relation to the modelling regarding the cost of travelling between Louth and Lincoln, it was a bit misleading as the Council did not fund students from Louth to go to Lincoln under the DTA. Were there any other examples of this within the chart and could future modelling exclude this?
8. The flat rate across the county was fully supported to support the rural provision, but there might be a barrier between first choice of course and DTA. Was this being reviewed to ensure that providers were giving an equitable choice of courses?
9. With regards to the Care to Learn Scheme, how was it promoted and what was the take up? Were there KPIs for take up and if so where were these recorded and reported to?

*The Executive Councillor for Adult Care, Health and Children's Services confirmed by email to the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee that parents would be reimbursed the fee they had paid for transport while schools were closed.*

### General Comments

- It was a legal requirement that the Policy Statement had to be reviewed annually and it was positive that the costs had not been increased for three years.
- It was likely that cost pressures due to increasing fuel prices would remain as this was the norm, despite fuel prices currently being on a downward spiral.
- It was pleasing to see that the charges would remain the same in 2020/21, especially in light of current circumstances.
- It was a plus point that the charges had been held.
- As the Covid 19 episode would have unforeseen consequences in all areas of our lives, it was suggested that the policy should be reviewed earlier than normally would be the case.