



Cabinet decision notice

The following decision(s) were taken by Cabinet at its meeting held on **30 March 2021**. Decisions will (unless called-in) become effective at 5pm on 8 April 2021.

Agenda item no. 7

Home to School Transport Policy including the associated Post-16 Transport Policy Statement Review and Consultation - Outcome

(a) Decisions

Cabinet received a report that sought approval for the updated Home to School Transport Policy and associated Post-16 Transport Policy Statement, which incorporated a recommended option for payment and arrangement of transport for students aged 16-19 with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

RESOLVED –

1. That the content of the Consultation Evaluation Report, draft Home to School Transport Policy and associated draft Post-16 Transport Policy Statement be agreed.

Note: In particular, this includes the recommendation for Option 2 – Choice of a Personal Transport Budget or Council organised transport as the proposed option for how transport for 16-19 year olds with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) is arranged and paid for.

2. That the recommended annual fee for the Council organised transport element of Option 2 for post-16 SEND students be set at £900 for the 2021-22 academic year, and the reduced fee for demonstrated financial hardship be set at £600 for the 2021-22 academic year; both to be applied on a pro-rata basis according to the number of days travelled.

(b) Reasons for decisions

The Home to School Transport Policy and associated Post-16 Transport Policy Statement public consultation have been completed. The Home to School Transport Policy and Post-16 Transport Policy Statement have been updated in line with the public consultation feedback and approval was now being sought.

(c) Alternative options considered



The alternative options considered in relation to arrangement and payment of transport for eligible 16-19 year old students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) were:

Adopt Option 1 – Distance banded charging model (the current model): The Council could continue with the current charging model and this would mean minimal change for families in terms of how transport was arranged and paid for. However, this option was not the preferred option from the consultation respondents. Additionally, feedback received from families over the last year has highlighted that the distance banded charging model was not popular with many families. This was largely because parents/carers of children with SEND were more likely to need to attend a school that was further than their home in order for the needs of their child to be met. The distance banded model was also perceived to be unfair because it was not taken into account whether the child attended their setting full-time or part-time.

Adopt Option 3 - Personal Transport Budgets only (Council organised transport by exception): The Council could opt to implement the model whereby Personal Transport Budgets are the default option, with Council organised transport only available on application by exception. However, this option was the least preferred option overall from the consultation.

The two other options above were therefore not recommended.

(d) Conflicts of interest/ dispensations

None.

Agenda item no. 8

Vale Retail Park – Capital Works and New Lease

(a) Decisions

Cabinet received a report regarding proposed capital works and a new lease at Vale Retail Park in Aylesbury.

RESOLVED –

1. That the Service Director for Property and Assets be authorised, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Property and Assets and S151 Officer, to finalise and agree the emerging Heads of Terms with the retailer set out in the confidential appendices of this report and subsequently to finalise, agree, exchange and complete the lease documentation;
2. That the Service Director for Property and Assets be authorised, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Property and Assets and S151 Officer, to arrange a loan from Public Works Loan Board to deliver the enabling works in accordance with the

report considered in the confidential appendices and the Heads of Terms set out there; and

3. That the longer term strategic option to bring the site forward for residential development as part of the emerging plans for Aylesbury Town Centre be noted

(Note: More housing would improve the housing mix with more affordable and bring residents into the town centre to support local businesses. Consideration will be given to include the site in the new Local Buckinghamshire Plan. The site could also be considered for other uses for example leisure or offices to potentially release other sites for residential development in the town centre.)

(b) Reasons for decisions

With the onset of the recession in retail, work has been ongoing on potential lettings to replace the retailers lost on the retail park as well as considering other options for the site. A suitable long term tenant has been identified but the terms of the deal requires enabling works to achieve a full market rent with the level of return set out in the report considered in the confidential appendices. The proposed works and letting deliver a high-quality covenant, reduces existing budget pressure by creating a secure income stream and raises the profile of the Retail Park, improving the prospects of further lettings of the remaining units to high-quality covenants at a full market rent.

At the same time, consideration has been given to the opportunity to bring forward the site for residential development. Such a development could create approximately 148 market flat units and 49 affordable flat units. However, the purchase price paid for the site in 2015 means converting the site at this time is not viable without substantial gap funding. However, in the future as the residual value of the site with an appropriate Planning consent for residential is likely to increase, the site is likely to be viable for residential development. The longer-term aspiration for the site is to bring forward for residential development as part of the evolution of the Aylesbury Town Centre to support the provision of affordable housing and the support of businesses within the town centre. Alternatively, other uses could be considered for the site such as offices or leisure which might release other sites in the town centre for market and affordable housing.

Work had been done on the residential development viability and comparisons were set out in the appraisals considered in the confidential appendices of this report.

(c) Alternative options considered

Other options considered were as follows:

1. The Council could do nothing - However, this would result in the property remaining vacant with the Council incurring all holding costs. The property would become a drain on financial resources.
2. To continue to market the property - However, it was highly unlikely that the Council would secure a better-quality covenant and/or a higher rent in the current

market. Rental values for the property were very unlikely to rise in the short to medium term. The property would remain vacant with the Council incurring holding costs and a revenue budget shortfall. Whilst short-term lettings to charitable and temporary occupiers would not incur significant capital costs, works to remove previous tenant's fixtures and fitting would be needed. Lettings to temporary occupiers would only generate very low levels of income (if not just covering the Council's holding costs) and lead to further deterioration of the asset, both physically and in relation to its standing in the local market. The figures were considered in the confidential appendices of this agenda.

3. Require the Tenant to undertake the works - In principle this would result in either granting a longer rent-free period or making a capital payment. An extended rent-free period to cover the works would defer rental income on the site for over 6 years. An obligation for the tenant to undertake the works was not appropriate as the property was not a 'stand-alone' unit and the works extend beyond the immediate area to be tenanted (i.e. the creation of the new, smaller, Unit 3).
4. Redevelop the property – With the large number of voids the option of fully vacating the retail park and redeveloping would be a possibility. However, some tenants have security of tenure (giving rights to a new lease) and have triggered their lease renewal. The Council would be required to demonstrate clear plans to redevelop and pay compensation to them to deliver vacant possession. Residential development had been assessed and the viability was considered in the confidential appendices. This opportunity would be reviewed in future when the land value to outstanding loan position is more favourable. The estimated value of the property as a development site is below that of improved value following the letting.

(d) Conflicts of interest/ dispensations

None.

Agenda item no. 9

Support to provider market as a result of Covid 19

(a) Decisions

Cabinet received a report which sought approval for a package of support for a transition period to stabilise the provider market during the Covid-19 pandemic. The implementation of this transition period would allow for some stabilisation within the care market and minimise the risk of provider failure. It would also provide the Local Authority with time to analyse the longer-term impact of Covid 19 on demand for care and support services and would enable the Council to prepare for a comprehensive commissioning exercise. The request was considered in confidential session as it contained information relating to financial or business affairs.

RESOLVED –

1. That a package of support for a transition period, as outlined within the confidential

appendix, be agreed to stabilise the provider market during the Covid-19 pandemic;
and

2. That authority be delegated to the Corporate Director for Adults & Health and the s151 Officer to finalise the details of the support package.

(b) Reasons for decisions

To ensure the council provides continuity of care in line with its statutory obligations under the Care Act 2014 and to enable the future re-commissioning of services.

(c) Alternative options considered

The options considered were set out in the confidential report. The recommended proposal was determined to be the best way to ensure continuity of care and support; management of risk; and provides value for money.

(d) Conflicts of interest/ dispensations

None.

For further information please contact: Craig Saunders on 01296 585043, email democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk.

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