



Consultation Evaluation Report

Post-16 Transport Policy Statement 2022-23

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1. Purpose of this report

This report will:

- a. Provide an overview of the consultation process for the Post-16 Transport Policy Statement 2022-23
- b. Outline response number and key themes
- c. Be appended to a Report to the Leader about the review to aid the decision-making process regarding the proposed changes to the Post-16 Transport Policy Statement 2022-23.

2. Consultation objectives

The Council has a statutory duty to prepare, consult and publish an annual Post-16 Transport Policy Statement. The Council carries out the annual review of its Post-16 Transport Policy Statement to ensure it is continually improved and to seek the views of all key stakeholders about the proposed changes.

The consultation opened on 18 October 2021, ran for 6 weeks, and closed at midnight on 29 November 2021.

3. Consultation process

A project team led by the Transport Policy & Project Manager coordinated the consultation process. The project team included officers from the Council's Business Intelligence and Communications Teams and sought input from internal stakeholders in various services including Transport Services, Education, Adults & Health, Legal Services and Communities Finance.

The project had five stages:

1. Planning and objective setting
2. Discussion with key stakeholders to inform the draft Statement
3. Preparation and research to inform the consultation approach
4. Public consultation period
5. Consultation close, evaluation of responses and development of outcome report

The Council's corporate consultation process was followed.

4. Stakeholders

A range of key stakeholders were identified as part of the consultation preparation phase. These were:

- Parents and carers of students aged 15+ using mainstream and SEND home to school transport services;
- Parent/carer representatives: FACT Bucks and SENDIAS;
- Schools and special schools;
- Internal service areas and senior leaders;

- Further education providers and other educational settings;
- General public;
- Buckinghamshire Council Members.

5. Methodology

The project team developed the consultation survey and a range of accompanying documents. The draft Statement and consultation materials were shared with FACT Bucks prior to the consultation launch.

The online survey was published on the Council's consultation portal, Your Voice Bucks. The following supporting information was also provided:

- A dedicated email address for the public to contact with questions, or to request a paper survey by post;
- A consultation document to explain the background and context for the consultation;
- An easy read document to explain the consultation to people with additional needs; and
- The draft Post-16 Transport Policy Statement effective from the academic year 2022-23, highlighting the proposed changes.

The survey collected user and demographic data to allow analysis of the results and possible impacts on different groups of residents. The survey asked respondents to give their postcodes, the age ranges of their children (between 15 to 25 years), whether any of their children have an Education, Health and Care Plan and to say whether their children currently use Council organised school transport.

The consultation opened on 18 October 2021, ran for 6 weeks, and closed at midnight on 29 November 2021. The online survey was available throughout the consultation period.

6. Communications

We communicated with internal & external stakeholders, Members and other partners via different methods to make them aware of the Post-16 Transport Policy Statement consultation. This included:

- Direct communications to all Buckinghamshire secondary schools, as well as to in and out-of-county colleges and further education (FE) settings which our Post-16 students attend, inviting student, parent/carers and school/FE setting views;
- An online SEND Transport Parent Feedback event on 10 November 2021;
- Additional promotion by Buckinghamshire SENDIAS and FACT Bucks; and

- Notification to all Members via Member News, as well as in the Cabinet Member for Transport's report to full Council in November 2021.

7. Summary of consultation responses

There were 11 respondents to the survey:

- 10 were parents or carers of young people aged 15+ in education.
- 1 was an education professional in Bucks, a special school head or teacher.

The age group breakdown of the young people referenced in the responses is set out below:

Age groups of children in my care	Numbers
School Year 11 (age 15-16)	3
School Years 12-13 (age 16-18)	6
School Year 14 (age 19)	2
Age group - age 20-25	0
Total	11

Locations

By postcode the locations of respondents were spread across the county, including Milton Keynes and South Bucks.

Free text comments:

9 of the 11 respondents provided free text comments to the question:

Do you have any comments about the changes included in the Post-16 Transport Policy Statement?

Those who commented expressed concern at the contribution charges/increases to charges for Post-16 students with SEND to travel to school/college.

- It was remarked that the charges made the decision, to continue in education Post-16 or not, more difficult.
- It was considered unfair to charge for Council organised transport as young people with SEND may have less options for how they travelled to school/college.
- That some families of children with SEND struggled to pay the fees for Council organised transport and that increases made this harder.

4 out of 11 respondents provided free text comments to the question:

Do you have any other feedback that you would like to share with us about the Council's Post-16 Transport Policy Statement

- 3 commented that they disagreed with charges/increases to charges for Post-16 students with SEND to travel to school/college
- 1 commented on the need to change timings on a specific bus route

8. Conclusions

While this consultation was communicated by various means, in the context of no substantial changes being proposed, the response rate is understandable. Although the consultation response rate was lower than in Autumn 2020 (when significant changes were proposed) it was higher than in the previous consultation undertaken in July 2020, when there were 8 responses.

- No respondents commented that wording changes to the Statement were unclear or difficult to understand.
- Those who commented expressed concerns at charges/increases to charges for Council organised transport for post 16 students with SEND to travel to their educational setting.

The Council will review the consultation responses received. The Council will review the proposed Post-16 Transport Policy Statement in light of the feedback received.

The proposed Statement will then be subject to the relevant Council approval process and will be published in April 2022.

9. Appendices

- Appendix A: Copy of the consultation questionnaire
- Appendix B: Consultation free text comments