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**To: Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2)**

**Date: 8<sup>th</sup> December 2016**

**Subject: Education Travel Assistance Policy Changes – Public Consultation**

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**1 Purpose of the Note**

- 1.1 To inform the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board of changes to the education travel assistance policy.

**2 Recommendations**

- 2.1 The Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board are recommended to:
- 1) Consider the proposed changes to the travel assistance policy in Appendix A
  - 2) Promote and encourage participation in the consultation to those who may be affected by any of the proposed changes.
  - 3) Identify any further comments or recommendations for the appropriate Cabinet Member.

**3 Information/Background**

- 3.1 Coventry City Council has statutory responsibilities for travel assistance for eligible children and young people. However, it currently over-provides traditional forms of transport for children and young people compared to statutory duties and the provision made by other local authorities.
- 3.2 There are two key consequences of this. Firstly, some children and young people are missing out on the opportunity to develop independent travel skills. Independent travel skills gained in adolescence can be taken forward into adult life. Secondly, there is significant forecast overspend on the Council's Home to School Transport budget (2016/17 quarter 1 forecast £3.5m spend against a £3.1m budget). Current policies and practice are not aligned with national statutory duties.
- 3.3 The Cabinet Member report at Appendix A recommends a public consultation on a revised travel assistance policy (for school aged children and young people aged 5-16 years old) and an amendment to the existing post 16 travel assistance policy that includes the levying of a travel assistance charge for post-16 travel with exemption for low-income families.
- 3.4 At his meeting on the 10<sup>th</sup> November, the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills approved a public consultation from 21<sup>st</sup> November 2016 to 13<sup>th</sup> January 2017, leading to a report back to the Cabinet on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2017, on the following:
- a) A revised Travel Assistance Policy (Statutory School Age Children) which aligns the statutory walking distance eligibility criteria to national levels and has a stronger focus

on the Council's travel assistance on public transport and innovative travel options aimed at reducing dependence on minibus and taxi options as appropriate.

- b) A new Travel Assistance Policy for post 16 and post 19 students that fully reflects current statutory requirements. This policy includes a contributory charge towards the cost of travel assistance for all post-16 students whose families do not meet the criteria for low income household concessions.

3.5 Members of the Board are recommended to consider the proposals and feedback in response to the consultation. More information and the consultation questionnaire can be found here:

<http://www.coventry.gov.uk/travelconsult>

Appendix A – Cabinet Member Report – Education Travel Assistance Policy Changes – Public Consultation

Appendix B – Consultation Information Sheet

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