

Following a major review involving months of detailed work with schools, public consultation, analysis and financial modelling, Suffolk County Council's cabinet will be considering school and post-16 travel policies when they meet on Tuesday 19 June.

The cabinet will consider a package of carefully-considered proposals which, taken together, are designed to make school and post-16 travel service affordable to the public purse whilst at the same time reducing the impact of the changes on service users. The report is accompanied by over 600 pages of supporting information created during the review.

After considering all the evidence gathered during the review, the recommendations to cabinet include:

- Providing children aged 4-16 years old with transport to their nearest school with an available place, but phasing in the policy from September 2019. This would only apply to children starting a new school, or moving home, and would be based on the current minimum distance criteria (i.e.: over 2 miles for those under 8 years old and 3 miles or over for 8-16 year olds) (Option 2 from the consultation)
- **Giving priority to Suffolk schools**, allowing those whose nearest school is over the county boundary the option to choose transport to their nearest Suffolk school if they meet the criteria (an enhancement to Option 2 of the consultation)
- **Providing travel for 4 year olds**, known as 'rising 5s' (an enhancement to Option 2 of the consultation)
- **Requiring parents whose children qualify for funded travel to opt in each year**, reducing the number of seats paid for by the taxpayer but not used
- **Offering students who are nearest to a three-tier school the option of travel to the nearest two-tier school**, if they meet the criteria
- **Retain the current Post-16 Travel policy**, (in line with Option 3 from the consultation)
- **Offering unallocated seats on school buses for pre and post-16 students to buy on a first come, first served basis** at £750 in September 2019 with phased in increases of £30 per term (£90 per year) to reduce the public subsidy Suffolk County Council provides.
- **Continue with the current cost increase of £10 per term** (£30 per year) **for unallocated seats to pre and post-16 students with special educational needs** (in September 2019 this will be £690)
- **Implementing a revised individual exceptions policy for both school and post-16 travel**
- **Working with schools and communities at a local level to implement a range of local solutions**, e.g.: changing school start and finish time, putting in place hub collection points, ride and stride schemes and increasing the size of the vehicles used.
- **Agreeing the anticipated overspend in the 2018/19 budget will be funded from the council's reserves**
- **Providing an additional £3.025 million for the school travel budget from 2019/20 onwards**. This will help the service cope with increasing demand forecast in the next decade
- **Allocating £4.7 million from the council's reserves to fund the new policy being phased in over seven years and reduce impact on families**
- **Reviewing the inflation and demand pressures annually**
- **Continuing to implement a series of efficiency savings** to reduce the cost of transporting children with special education needs
- **Establishing a group of stakeholders to monitor the impact of the new policy**

Full details of the committee paper for the cabinet meeting on Tuesday 19 June is available on Suffolk County Council's [website](#) under the item 19-06-2018, The Cabinet.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact the School Travel team at schooltravel@suffok.gov.uk and one of the team will get back to you.

Cllr Gordon Jones

Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills