

## CABINET ITEM COVERING SHEET PROFORMA

**AGENDA ITEM:**

**REPORT TO CABINET**

**10<sup>th</sup> November 2016**

**REPORT OF SENIOR  
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

### **CABINET DECISION**

**Adult Services and Health Lead Cabinet Member – Councillor Jim Beall**

#### **TRAVEL SUPPORT FOR ADULT SERVICE USERS AND CARERS**

1. Summary

This report details the approach and outcomes of the 12 week public consultation on the proposed policy on Travel Support for Adult Service Users and Carers.

2. Recommendation

To approve the Policy for Travel Support for Adult Service Users and Carers at Appendix 1, with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> December 2016.

3. Reasons for the Recommendation(s)/Decision(s)

The Policy reflects current legislation and ensures that the Council will continue to support Adults and Carers who are eligible for funded transport, following an assessment, to ensure assessed service user and carer needs are met. It also provides the framework for a cultural shift from the Council being the first default provider or service provider promoting alternative options to maximise a person's level of independence.

4. Members' Interests

Members (including co-opted Members) should consider whether they have a personal interest in any item, as defined in **paragraphs 9 and 11** of the Council's code of conduct and, if so, declare the existence and nature of that interest in accordance with and/or taking account of **paragraphs 12 - 17** of the code.

Where a Member regards him/herself as having a personal interest, as described in **paragraph 16** of the code, in any business of the Council he/she must then, **in accordance with paragraph 18** of the code, consider whether that interest is one which a member of the public, with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice the Member's judgement of the public interest and the business:-

- affects the members financial position or the financial position of a person or body described in **paragraph 17** of the code, or
- relates to the determining of any approval, consent, licence, permission or registration in relation to the member or any person or body described in **paragraph 17** of the code.

A Member with a personal interest, as described in **paragraph 18** of the code, may attend the meeting but must not take part in the consideration and voting upon the relevant item of business. However, a member with such an interest may make representations, answer questions or give evidence relating to that business before the business is considered or voted on, provided the public are also allowed to attend the meeting for the same purpose whether under a statutory right or otherwise (**paragraph 19** of the code).

Members may participate in any discussion and vote on a matter in which they have an interest, as described in **paragraph 18** of the code, where that interest relates to functions of the Council detailed in **paragraph 20** of the code.

### **Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**

It is a criminal offence for a member to participate in any discussion or vote on a matter in which he/she has a disclosable pecuniary interest (and where an appropriate dispensation has not been granted) **paragraph 21** of the code.

Members are required to comply with any procedural rule adopted by the Council which requires a member to leave the meeting room whilst the meeting is discussing a matter in which that member has a disclosable pecuniary interest (**paragraph 22** of the code).

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**CABINET DECISION**

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**SUMMARY**

This report details the approach and outcomes of the 12 week public consultation on the proposed policy on Travel Support for Adult Service Users and Carers.

**RECOMMENDATION**

To approve the Policy for Travel Support for Adult Service Users and Carers at Appendix 1, with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> December 2016.

**DETAIL**

**How the consultation was undertaken**

1. The public consultation period was between 11th July and 2nd October 2016.
2. A range of consultation techniques were used in order to gain feedback from service users, carers, interested groups, including service providers, employees of the Council, and the general public.
3. The approach included :-
  - a. Sending a consultation document to:
    - i. all service users and named carers/nominated representatives attending the Halcyon Centre and Learning Disabilities Day Services, both Council and external providers. An Easy Read version of the questionnaire was provided to all service users; and
    - ii. interested parties, including service providers and interested groups;
  - b. Staff member briefings to ensure they were aware of the proposals and in a position to address any concerns from existing service users and carers;
  - c. Provider briefings, as staff meetings, but also to gain their support for the service user group sessions to be held at their venues;
  - d. 7 public meetings organised across the Borough over a 7 week period;
  - e. Adult Service User group sessions: 22 were held across the borough in day centres facilitated by Stockton Helps All ( Independent Advocacy Service);
  - f. 4 group sessions for young people making the transition to Adult Services held at Abbey Hill School and Stockton Riverside College;
  - g. Utilising the Council's Customer Services Centres for the public to access the policy, questionnaire and as a "post box" for returning questionnaires where they did not wish to use the pre-paid envelope included in the consultation pack; and

h. Promoting the consultation:

- i. on the Council website as well as enabling access to the policy, consultation documents, questionnaires and the portal for online completion of the questionnaire;
  - ii. in Stockton News and media press release;
  - iii. through the Voluntary and Community Sector including religious groups via the Community Engagement Team
  - iv. at the Regulated Provider Forum meeting
  - v. with all Elected Members.
4. It was recognised that the key stakeholders' for this consultation were unlikely to feel comfortable accessing information and completing a questionnaire online, which is why paper copies were sent to them, including an Easy Read version of the questionnaire for service users, in order to engage and encourage participation in the consultation process.
5. Equally it was considered that qualitative information was needed as well as quantitative responses to specific questions. Service user group sessions were organised in day centres as well as at Abbey Hill School and Stockton Riverside College for this purpose.

### The questionnaire

6. There were three questions asked :-

1. Should people who have a Motability vehicle or can receive a mobility benefit or travel concession, e.g. bus pass, use it to travel to activities and/or services?
2. Should family members or carers help people travel to activities and or services if they are willing to?
3. Should Council transport only be provided if a person is assessed, by Adult Social Care as having a need for it?

People were asked if they agreed, disagreed or did not have a view.

For each question it was asked if the person thought they would be affected by the proposal and there was also an opportunity for them to tell us more through free text. Finally, there was a section for any other comments about any of the proposals.

### Outcomes from the consultation period

7. The outcomes are detailed both statistically and qualitatively for the responses to the questionnaire, service user group sessions and the public meetings.

### Questionnaire

8. We received 134 responses of which 15 (11%) were directly completed online by the respondent and 119 (89%) were returned by post. The statistical analysis is at Appendix 2.
9. As can be seen, 134 of the respondents are fairly evenly split on questions 1 and 2. Question 1 Yes: 44%, No: 49%. Question 2 Yes: 44% , No: 51% respectively but there is a more conclusive view in respect of question 3 with 65% agreeing that Council transport should only be provided if a person is assessed, by Adult Social Care, as having a need for it. **Having reviewed the comments made by respondents on question 1 and 2 it is considered that those disagreeing with the proposal seem to be concerned that it will have a detrimental impact on them or the person they care for. In particular the possibility of a person not being able to attend their day centre if they could not access the Council's Community Transport service.**

10. 74% of respondents made comments about the impact of the proposal on them on one or more of the questions. Some of the key themes of the comments are :-

- Some service users are incapable of travelling on public transport alone. Some examples are because they :
  - have no safety awareness;
  - are not able to manage money;
  - are physically unable to travel on a bus (walking and balance);
  - are unable to make sense of their surroundings;
  - have dementia;
  - have no confidence and would feel vulnerable;
  - can display behaviour that challenges.
  
- Public transport is not accessible either because :
  - there is no service available;
  - there is no direct service e.g. more than one bus would need to be used;
  - the bus stop is too far away;
  - longer journeys can be stressful.
  
- Service users may get a free bus pass but a carer may not, therefore there could be cost implications, which may not be affordable.
  
- Service users value the transport as they meet people and enjoy the journey as it is part of the day's experience and feel safe.
  
- Carers
  - get much needed respite as the journey time is part of the day
  - are able to continue to work
  - are able to spend time with other dependents who need them
  - already take the service user to centres where they are able to
  - to take the service user to activities in the evenings and at weekends, outside their work commitments
  - get peace of mind that the service user is transported safely
  - do not drive themselves

A recurring theme was that it was felt that the lack of transport would mean the person would no longer be able to attend the day centre (a copy of the detailed comments is attached as Appendix 3).

### **Service User Group Sessions**

11. 132 service users participated in the 22 group sessions, which included four sessions for young people who will make the transition into Adult Services in the next year or two. The service users enjoyed the group sessions and were pleased that they had been able to participate and give their views and asked if we were going back.

12. The key themes were :-

- A mixed view on who should decide who can access Council Community Transport:
  - Some thought it should be the individual person's choice
  - Others thought that the Social Worker should decide if they can use the bus and then the individual should decide if they want to use it;
- Attending the day service, including the transport journey, provided respite for carers;
- Some carers work and cannot therefore take service users to their day service;
- Bus route is not always direct to the centre;
- Feeling of being safe on the Council bus;
- Interest in travel training from some people;

- Praise for the drivers and escorts;
- Seasonal variation if they did not have access to Council community transport during winter could be very difficult.

## **Public Meetings**

13. We held 7 public meetings and although there was not a significant attendance at these sessions it was important that such sessions were made available for the public to have the opportunity to ask questions and voice their opinions.
14. Those who did attend were, in the main, carers who wanted to understand the impact on the person they care for and to explain how important the service is for them and service users attending services.

## **The Policy**

15. The intention of the policy is to promote a culture of :
  - a. Enabling service users to travel independently;
  - b. Families and carers taking more responsibility for providing for themselves;
  - c. People using benefits and concessions they are entitled to in order to travel to activities/services; and
  - d. Social Workers enabling people who can and want to travel independently to do so, where this is appropriate, ensuring training and support is provided to achieve this.

The policy is based on the general assumption and expectation that service users will meet their own needs for transport, where there is appropriate transport available (either personal or public transport) as a first option. Funded transport, for which a financial assessment will be required, will only be provided if, in the opinion of the assessor, it is the only reasonable means of ensuring that the service user can be safely transported as part of their assessed and eligible care and support.

16. As identified in the outcomes of the consultation period, the main concerns relate to the impact on existing services users and carers should the Council's community transport not be available to transport service users to day centres.
17. The policy reflects legislative requirements and people who have assessed needs for accessing services and transport will be assessed for eligibility for funded transport. The policy will have minimal, if any impact on existing services users, and is particularly aimed at supporting people who can travel independently to services and activities.
18. The policy provides the framework for a cultural shift from the Council being the first or default transport provider, promoting alternative options to maximise a person's level of independence. There should be a rigorous justification for new referrals for council funded transport. Care Managers will challenge and encourage service users and family/carers to engage them in considering alternative options for travel.

## **Next Steps**

19. Following the analysis of both the qualitative information and quantitative responses to the specific questions, it is proposed that the policy, at Appendix 1, be approved and implemented as of 1<sup>st</sup> December 2016. The Charging Policy and Eligibility Criteria are available in the members' library
20. A programme of workforce development to embed the cultural change and understanding of the policy will be implemented.

21. In conjunction with community transport, to continue to progress the review of the utilisation of Council transport and associated costs related to both in-house and commissioned services for service users within Adult Services.

### **COMMUNITY IMPACT IMPLICATIONS**

22. Implementation of this policy may have an impact on service users who currently access this service, their carers' and new clients. An audit of 10% of current service users who receive community transport from the Council indicates that it is unlikely that any current users would not be eligible if the policy is approved.

23. In addition, the community impact assessment on the policy has demonstrated that we can also mitigate some of the impacts through our recommendations.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

24. The overall budget for Adult Services travel support is £845,000. On implementation of the policy, it is cost neutral, however there is the potential to minimise future escalation of cost.

### **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

25. The Care Act 2014 replaces key previous adult social care legislation. The National Minimum Eligibility Threshold identifies those who are eligible for care and support or support. In certain circumstances transport may be included in a care and support or support plan. The Care Act 2014 promotes the wellbeing and daily living needs of adults. The Council must be satisfied that eligible care and support or support needs are met.

26. Carers can be eligible for support in their own right. The threshold is based on the impact their caring role has on their wellbeing. When determining carer eligibility, Local Authorities must consider the following three conditions:

- a) The carer's needs for support arise because they are providing necessary care to an adult
- b) As a result of their caring responsibilities the carer's physical or mental health is either deteriorating or is at risk of doing so or the carer is unable to achieve any of the outcomes that the carer has identified as part of the carer's assessment.
- c) As a consequence of being unable to achieve these outcomes, there is, or there is likely to be, a significant impact on the carer's wellbeing.

### **RISK ASSESSMENT**

27. This Policy and associated consultation is categorised as low to medium risk. Existing management systems and daily routine activities are sufficient to control and reduce risk.

### **COUNCIL PLAN POLICY PRINCIPLES AND PRIORITIES**

28. Any impact upon Council Plan, policy, principles and priorities are likely to relate to:

- Protecting the vulnerable through targeted intervention
- Promoting equality of opportunity through targeted intervention

### **CORPORATE PARENTING IMPLICATIONS**

29. Not Applicable

## CONSULTATION INCLUDING WARD/COUNCILLORS

30. A 12 week public consultation period took place between 11th July and 2nd October 2016 as detailed in this report.

**Name of Contact Officer:** Liz Hanley/Sean McEneany  
**Post Title:** Assistant Director (Social Care)/Transformation Team  
**Telephone No.** 01642 527045  
**Email Address:** liz.hanley@stockton.gov.uk  
sean.mceneany@stockton.gov.uk

Education related? No

Background Papers Cabinet report of 27th June 2016

Ward(s) and Ward Councillors Not ward specific

Property There are no implications in relation to the Council's property. This report does not impact upon the Capital Programme and Asset Management Plan.