

### Forward Plan – Items

**To put an item on the Forward Plan please complete the below pro-forma and return to Peter Bell – Democratic Services.**

<p><u>Description of matter / decision required:</u></p> <p>Report title.</p>	<p>Post-16 Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Transport – Approval to Commence Statutory Consultation</p>
<p><u>Key Decision or not:</u></p> <p>A Key Decision is a decision which is deemed likely to:-</p> <p>a. to result in the Council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the Council’s budget for the service or function to which the decision relates with full year effect of (£500,000), or more, or</p> <p>b. to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the Borough; or</p> <p>c. in some circumstances where it is likely to have a significant impact on communities in one ward, unless it is considered impracticable to do so.</p>	<p>YES</p>
<p><u>Portfolio Leader:</u></p> <p>Identify the relevant ‘lead’ Cabinet Portfolio responsible for the subject matter.</p>	<p>Councillor Paul Rowling (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Resources and Transport)</p>
<p><u>Additional Portfolio Leader/s:</u></p> <p>Identify any additional portfolio leader(s) whose remit is directly affected by the matter.</p>	<p>Councillor Clare Besford (Cabinet Member for Children and Young People)</p>
<p><u>Date report signed off with Portfolio Leader(s)</u></p> <p>The report must be signed off by the portfolio leader(s) before the Leader Briefing meeting for the relevant Cabinet meeting. Please add date when final report is signed off by portfolio leader(s).</p>	
<p><u>Further Description Details:</u></p> <p>Short summary explaining the background to the matter and what the purpose of the decision is; i.e. why a decision is necessary.</p>	<p>Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council currently provides discretionary post-16 SEND transport to approximately 185 learners, including 29 learners aged 19+. This provision is not a statutory requirement.</p> <p>Demand and associated costs for community transport services continue to rise, with overall</p>

	<p>expenditure projected to exceed £11 million by 2028/29. Post-16 transport costs are increasing year-on-year and represent a significant and growing area of discretionary spend.</p> <p>The Council is therefore considering potential changes to its Post-16 SEND Transport Policy to ensure that provision remains sustainable, fair and aligned with statutory duties. A range of options are being considered, including changes to eligibility, the introduction of or amendments to charging arrangements, and the role of discretionary support.</p> <p>Department for Education guidance (January 2024) requires local authorities to undertake a formal consultation, typically over a minimum period of 28 working days during term time, where changes to transport policy are proposed.</p> <p>Under the Education Act 1996, the Council must publish an annual Post-16 Transport Policy Statement by 31 May each year, having regard to the needs of learners with SEND. Therefore, any decision to enter a consultation period would be reflected within this statement.</p> <p>The decision at this stage relates solely to approval to commence statutory consultation. Any proposed changes to policy will be subject to a further report to Cabinet following the consultation period.</p>
<p><u>Decision-Taker:</u></p> <p>Named the Committee or Officer or Joint Arrangement</p>	<p>Cabinet</p>
<p><u>Date of Decision:</u></p> <p>Month and Year</p>	<p>Thursday 23 April 2026</p>
<p><u>Responsible Officer:</u></p> <p>Identify the title of the relevant Director within the Council who has ultimate responsibility for the matter.</p>	<p>Reuben Kench</p>
<p><u>Council Date:</u></p> <p>For Council decisions only - month and year</p>	
<p><u>Principal Consultees:</u></p> <p>Identify any persons, body or group, internal or external of the Council, that are to be invited to submit their views on the matter during a</p>	<p>Parents and carers of post-16 learners with SEND; young people and learners; education providers; transport providers; Stockton Parent Carer Forum; and other relevant stakeholders.</p>

<p>consultation process prior to the decision being made.</p>	
<p><u>Method of Consultation:</u></p> <p>Indicate how consultation will be undertaken relating to the issue / decision i.e. meetings, questionnaire, statutory notice, distribution of consultation papers, general correspondence.</p>	<p>A statutory consultation will be undertaken for a minimum of 28 working days during term time. Consultation will include an online survey, targeted engagement with stakeholders, listening events, and collaboration with representative groups including the Stockton Parent Carer Forum. Consultation materials will be designed to be clear and accessible.</p>
<p><u>How interested persons may submit representations to decision-taker and end date for representations:</u></p> <p>Only include the email address of the relevant officer.</p> <p>The final date for comments should reflect any statutory / planned public consultation.</p>	<p>Representations may be submitted via the Council's online consultation platform and by email to the responsible service. Details of how to respond, including the closing date for representations, will be set out in the consultation materials.</p>
<p><u>Report and back-ground papers submitted to decision-taker for consideration:</u></p> <p>Background papers do not include any exempt or confidential information or any already published information.</p>	
<p><u>Any Notes / Comments:</u></p> <p>Is a Community Impact and Equality and Poverty Impact Assessment required – YES or NO – If clarification is needed contact FSOT &amp; Community Engagement Team</p> <p>Also insert any additional helpful information about the item; e.g. if there are two meetings of Cabinet in one calendar month identify a specific date.</p>	<p>YES – An Equality Impact and Poverty Impact Assessment has been completed and will remain a live document, to be updated in light of consultation responses and to inform any subsequent decision-making.</p>