



For: (x) <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Executive</td> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>CLMT</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table> Meeting Date: 29 April 2013 Report of: Corporate Director – Children & Learning Report author: Debbie Craig (Admissions & Planning Manager)	Executive	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	CLMT	<input type="checkbox"/>	Agenda Item Number: 10
Executive	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
CLMT	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Subject: Post 16 Transport Policy Lead Executive Member(s): Cllr Waheed Akbar Wards Affected: All	Consultations: Councillors Scrutiny Stakeholders Others	(x) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
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Recommendations
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> That Executive consider the results of the consultation and, from September 2013, agree to restrict eligibility for the Saver Card Scheme to students who meet all of the following criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students from low income families¹ and learners in local authority care or those that have recently left local authority care. Students must be resident in Luton throughout the duration of the course. Students enrolled on and attending a full time course engaged with learning or training at a further education institution (e.g. Luton Sixth Form College, Barnfield College, Central Bedfordshire College), a school or academy (e.g. Cardinal Newman Catholic School), an authority maintained or assisted institution providing higher or further education, an establishment funded directly by the Education Funding Agency or a learning provider that is funded by the local authority to deliver Foundation Learning or other accredited programmes of Learning. Students must be over the statutory school age but not aged 19, or over, on 31 August in the year in which their course of study began. Students must live further than three miles (walking route) from the nearest institution to offer their chosen course. Eligible students would also be considered for a comparable contribution towards transport costs if 50% or more of their chosen course is not available within Luton or Dunstable.

¹¹ Low income is defined as students whose parents meet the criteria used for assessing eligibility for free school meals, or where the parents receive maximum working tax credit.

3. That a one-off subsidy of £86k be split between the Post 16 Providers affected by the changes to the SaverCard Scheme. The subsidy will be apportioned on a pro-rata basis according to the number of pupils, in receipt of a SaverCards, attending each institution. The intention of the one-off subsidy is to support students moving into their second or third year at college who have, thus far, benefited from the SaverCard Scheme.

Background

4. Legislation gives local authorities the discretion to determine what transport and financial assistance is necessary to facilitate the attendance of all young people of sixth form age receiving education or training. Local authorities are required to exercise this discretion reasonably, taking into account all relevant matters, including:
- (a) The needs of those who could not access education or training provision if no transport arrangements were made.
 - (b) The need to ensure that learners have reasonable opportunities to choose between different establishments at which education and training is provided.
 - (c) The distances and journey times.
 - (d) The cost of transport to post 16 establishments.
 - (e) Alternative means of facilitating attendance at establishments e.g. cycle scheme, independent travel training.
 - (f) Non-transport solutions to facilitate learner access e.g. e-learning options
 - (g) Preferences based on religion e.g. LAs must have regard to any preference the individual may have for a particular institution based on their religion or belief.

The current position

5. The Council's current Saver Card Scheme offers Luton resident full time students aged 16-19 discounted travel within the Luton and Dunstable conurbation. Under the current policy these students are also eligible for assistance with transport to an out of Borough college, not covered by the Saver Card Scheme if 50% or more of the chosen course is not available locally.

Goals and Objectives

6. To consider reducing expenditure in this area to contribute to the Council's savings targets (the current Saver Card scheme costs the Council £171k).

Proposal

7. Stakeholders were consulted on the following two options.

Option 1

8. Further restrict eligibility for the Saver Card Scheme to low income families living further than three miles (safe walking route) from the nearest institution to offer their chosen course. This option would cost circa £51.7k and, subject to consultation, could be implemented for September 2013.

Option 2

9. Cycle only scheme. Under this option Colleges could be supplied with bikes to hire to Post 16 low income students and free cycle training would be offered to all Post 16 pupils. This option would cost circa £60k in the first year and would require a small maintenance and replacement fund in subsequent years. Subject to consultation this option could be implemented for September 2013.

Results of the Consultation

10. There were 147 responses to the questions regarding the Post 16 Saver Card proposals. As is a relatively small sample size the results must be interpreted as indicative only as it may not be representative of the population as a whole.
11. Of those responding 32% indicated that restricting the eligibility criteria of the Saver Card would have very little or no impact on them. 46% confirmed that this would have a very big impact. further 13% indicated that it would have a fairly big impact. Two thirds of the respondents were aged 16-24 (the age group most likely to be affected).
12. 28% of those responding to the Cycle Scheme proposals considered it would have very little or no impact. 72% considered that this would have a very big or fairly big impact. In addition, the Colleges do not support this option and have indicated an unwillingness to administer such a scheme.
13. A large number of respondents stated that having to pay the full bus fares would be unaffordable (especially if a family had more than one child in Post 16 provision) and would represent a real barrier to accessing further education. Others considered it unfair to only support low income families. Some respondents stated that the proposals would reduce choice for students.
14. There was concern over the safety of pupils cycling to school and the security of bikes. Many considered that the proposals would increase traffic congestion and pollution.
15. The savings proposals should be considered in the context of bursary funding which may be available to some to students. Colleges are allocated the following funding to support students who need financial support to stay on in further education or training:
16. Vulnerable Bursary (up to £1,200 per year) for:
 - learners in local authority care or those who have recently left local authority care
 - learners who receive Income Support in their own name
 - learners who are disabled and receive both Employment Support Allowance and Disability Living Allowance in their own name.
17. In addition, students can apply to their college for a Discretionary Bursary if they aren't eligible for a Vulnerable Bursary but need financial help to stay on in a school, college or training provider. The amount of funding and eligibility criteria is set by providers.

Key Risks

Key Risk	Mitigation
Public transport is seen as too expensive and becomes a barrier to accessing further education.	Provide assistance for students from low income families.

Consultations

18. The following stakeholders were consulted:

- Young people of sixth form age and their parents.
- Parents of secondary aged pupils.
- Headteachers and Chairs of Governors of all Luton schools.
- Headteachers and Chairs of Governors of any out of Borough schools affected by the proposed changes.
- Principals and Governing Bodies of colleges within the Luton and Dunstable conurbation and any other colleges/learning providers affected by the changes proposed.
- Luton's Post 16 Transport Partnership
- Roman Catholic Diocese of Northampton
- Church of England Diocese of St Albans.
- MPs and Councillors
- Central Bedfordshire Council and Hertfordshire County Council.

Appendices attached:

Appendix A – IIA Report

Background Papers:

Results of the consultation.

IMPLICATIONS

For Executive reports

For

CLMT Reports

- grey boxes must be completed
Clearance is not
- all statements must be cleared by an appropriate officer
required

		Clearance – agreed by
Legal	The legal implications are contained within the body of this report. It is a legal requirement to consult relevant stakeholders prior to making a decision that will affect the Council's Post 16 Transport Policy.	Graham Cole – Solicitor Legal Services – on 16.4.13
Finance	The financial implications are contained within the body of this report. The offer of a one-off payment will require the use of reserves (available from the 2012/13 projected underspend) and the proposal will ensure that the budgeted saving from this item for 2013/14 and future years will be achieved.	Steve Dickman, Interim Finance Manager, Children and Learning seen and agreed the financial implications Monday 15 th April 2013
Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) – Key Points		
Equalities/ Cohesion/Inclusion (Social Justice)	The IIA shows a neutral impact. The Assessment is set out at Appendix A.	Maureen Drummond, Social Justice Adviser, April 2013
Environment	Any reduction in bus travel would have an adverse impact on the environment if students were driven	Strategy and Sustainab Officer, 15 April 2013

	to school/college.	
Health	There is a beneficial health impact for children/young people who walk or cycle to school.	Chimeme Egbutah, Advanced Health Improvement Specialist 16 April 2013

FOR EXECUTIVE ONLY - Options:

- a) To approve the recommendations
- b) Not to approve the recommendations