

The Vale of Glamorgan Council

Cabinet Meeting: 26 March, 2018

Joint Report of the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services and Transport and Cabinet Member for Learning and Culture

School Transport Arrangements for new Barry Secondary Schools from September 2018

Purpose of the Report

1. To advise Cabinet of the proposed transitional school transport arrangements which are to be put in place from September 2018.

Recommendation

1. That those pupils currently in Years 7 to 9 in Barry and Bryn Hafren Comprehensive Schools who receive free school transport will continue to be provided with free school transport, regardless of the distance they live from school, provided that they opt to attend their nearest appropriate secondary school (in accordance with the newly allocated catchment areas) from September 2018.

Reason for the Recommendation

1. To ensure the Vale of Glamorgan School Transport Policy is consistent with the strategic aims and objectives of the Transforming Secondary Education in Barry Project, which are to open two new mixed-sex secondary schools in Barry from September 2018.

Background

2. In 2016 the Council consulted on a proposal to establish two new mixed sex comprehensive schools for pupils aged 11 - 18 in Barry. Following that consultation, on 6th March 2017 the Council's Cabinet determined the proposal to transform secondary education in Barry by closing the two existing single sex English medium schools (namely Barry Comprehensive School and Bryn Hafren Comprehensive School) and establishing two new mixed-sex, English medium comprehensive schools for pupils aged 11 to 18 on the current sites of Barry Comprehensive School (Whitmore High School) and Bryn Hafren Comprehensive School (Pendcoedre High School) from September 2018.
3. New independent catchment areas have been devised for the new schools. Pupils currently in years 7-9 in Bryn Hafren Comprehensive School and Barry

Comprehensive School have been asked to apply for a place at one of the new schools for the 2018/19 academic year. Pupils currently in years 10-12 will remain at their current base to limit disruption to GCSE and A Level study.

4. The Council has a statutory duty to provide free school transport for students of statutory school age who reside beyond walking distance (i.e. more than 3 miles) to the nearest appropriate school.
5. A review of pupils' eligibility for free school transport has been undertaken due to the creation of the new catchment areas.

Relevant Issues and Options

6. At present there are 27 pupils attending Bryn Hafren Comprehensive School who are entitled to free school transport. These predominantly live in the west of Barry and Rhose.
7. Under the Approved Vale of Glamorgan School Transport Policy, these pupils would no longer be entitled to free school transport if they remain on the Merthyr Dyfan Road site (Pencoedtre High) as this will no longer be their nearest appropriate secondary school.
8. If these pupils apply to attend Whitmore High School Site (i.e. their catchment school), they would be attending their nearest appropriate secondary school and may be eligible for free school transport, providing they live beyond 3 miles walking distance from the new school.
9. Of the 27 pupils currently eligible for free transport, only 3 would live more than 3 miles walking distance from the new school. Therefore, as a result of the introduction of the new catchment areas, 24 pupils would no longer be entitled to free transport.
10. The creation of two mixed sex schools within Barry is a unique project and differs from previous changes in catchment where new schools have been created to meet demand for school places.
11. It is considered appropriate that a transitional arrangement is introduced to limit the impact upon current pupils who would otherwise lose their entitlement to free school transport. In order to ensure this transitional arrangement is consistent with the aims and objectives of the Transforming Secondary Education in Barry Project, it is proposed that this transitional arrangement ensures that pupils currently entitled to free school transport continue to receive this entitlement, providing they apply to attend their nearest appropriate secondary school, regardless of their walking distance to that school.
12. The transitional arrangements will only be available to current Year 7 to 9 pupils who currently receive free school transport and who opt to attend their allocated catchment school from September 2018. The proposed transitional arrangement would be phased out by July 2024.
13. All pupils who begin school in Year 7 in September 2018 will be subject to the Council's current Admissions policy and School Transport policy and will only be provided with free school transport if they attend their catchment school and live more than 3 miles away from that school.
14. Those pupils currently in years 10 to 12 will not be affected by the change in catchment and will continue to receive free school transport if they already do so.

Resource Implications (Financial and Employment)

15. The introduction of this transitional arrangement is cost neutral and can be met within the existing mainstream secondary school transport budget.

Sustainability and Climate Change Implications

16. The provision of school transport services reduces car traffic congestion in and around schools and thus reduces carbon emissions.

Legal Implications (to Include Human Rights Implications)

17. There are no legal implications associated with this Report.

Crime and Disorder Implications

18. There are no Crime and Disorder implications associated with this report

Equal Opportunities Implications (to include Welsh Language issues)

19. There are not equal opportunities implications as a result of this report.

Corporate/Service Objectives

20. School transport can be linked to Well-being Outcome 2: An environmentally responsible and prosperous Wales, objective 4: promoting sustainable development and protecting our environment, by providing accessible and sustainable transport solutions.

Policy Framework and Budget

21. This is a matter for Executive decision by Cabinet.

Consultation (including Ward Member Consultation)

22. No specific Ward Member consultation has been carried out.

Relevant Scrutiny Committee

23. Environment and Regeneration

Background Papers

None.

Contact Officer

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Officers Consulted

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Committee Reports
Accountant - Visible Services and Building

Responsible Officer:

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