
Briefing to Council

Date: 12th July 2017

Subject:

Home to School Transport Policy Review Update

For Information

Report of:

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Portfolio holder: Cllr Amanda Chadderton

Summary of the issue:

Following a review of the Home to School transport Policy in 2016, a request was made to review the impact one particular criterion in the new policy in relation to the inclusion of mobility benefit within the decision making process.

1. Report details

- 1.1 Following a review of the Home to School policy framework for the delivery of travel assistance in partnership with Rochdale and Bury local authorities, a new framework was introduced in September 2016. This included a wider range of provision and ensured the framework was aligned to changes in legislation and the impact of the SEND Reform 2014.
- 1.2 The Contracts and Commissioning team, provide the provision for Home to School Transport. The service currently transports approximately 550 pupils with special educational needs who are eligible for transport between home and school.
- 1.3 A full consultation was undertaken with all stakeholders to gain their views on the existing provision, including, drop in sessions, and a further consultation on the proposed draft policy framework.
- 1.5 A report was provided to council in July 2016, the final policy was published on 1st September 2016.
- 1.6 A request was made to review the impact of one specific criteria within the new policy around mobility benefits, specifically around the impact on appeals for Home to School Transport.

2. Update

- 2.1 Since the implementation of the new policy there have been 31 appeals to the Home to School Transport Appeal panel. This is within the normal expectation for the number of appeals for Home to School Transport.
- 2.2 Although no appeals have been made specifically on the use of mobility benefit within the assessment of eligibility, there are 9 cases where this formed part of the discussion at the appeal hearing and was included as a reason not to provide support within the LAs case to the panel.
- 2.3 Of the 9 cases, 6 were dismissed on the basis of the case put forward by the appellant and the local authority. Three cases are yet to be heard.
- 2.4 Further to recent guidance issued by the Local Government Ombudsman, the SEND team continues to work with colleagues in Legal and with POINT to develop and improve the application process, the administration of applications and the communication of decisions with the applicants.