

**Polisi Cludiant i Ddysgwyr Sir Ddinbych
Denbighshire's New Learner Transport Policy
Ymgynghoriad / Consultation**

1) Nodwch eich enw / Please state your name.

2) Rhowch gyfeiriad e-bost dilys yma i dderbyn cadarnhad ar ôl ichi gwblhau'r ymgynghoriad. Please provide a valid email address for confirmation to be sent after completion.

3) Nodwch fel pa un rydych yn ymateb:
Indicate whether you are responding as a:

- Rhiant / Parent
- Disgybl / Pupil
- Aelod o Staff Ysgol / School Staff Member
- Cyngorydd / Councillor
- Aelod o'r Gymuned / Community Member
- Arall (nodwch) / Other (please specify)

4) Rhowch eich sylwadau ynglŷn â newidiadau arfaethedig y Polisi newydd Cludiant i Ddysgwyr. Please provide your comments regarding the changes proposed in the new Learner Transport Policy.

5) A oes unrhyw beth yn y Polisi newydd Cludiant i Ddysgwyr y byddech yn ei newid? Is there anything in the new Learner Transport Policy that you would change?

6) A oes unrhyw beth arall yr hoffech ei godi mewn perthynas â'r Polisi newydd Cludiant i Ddysgwyr neu Gludiant i'r Ysgol yn gyffredinol? Is there anything else you wish to raise in connection with the new Learner Transport Policy or School Transport in general?

Os oes unrhyw gwestiynau penodol rydych yn dymuno eu gofyn ynglŷn â'r ymgynghoriad, yna cysylltwch â derbyniadau@sirddinbych.gov.uk neu ffoniwch 01824 706000

If there are any specific questions you wish to ask regarding this consultation then contact admissions@denbighshire.gov.uk or telephone 01824 706000

Appendix 3

Summary of Responses and Comments Provided	Number of Responses
Liked the changes regarding feeder relationships in support of child welfare	21
Liked the clarity of wording in the policy	17
Parents / carers should be able to choose category 1 Welsh language schools over category 2 as they are not the same.	14
Ysgol Bro Cinmeirch should be part of Ysgol Glan Clwyd cluster and/or they should get free transport to Glan Clwyd by discretion	10
Want changes to come in to effect Sept 2017 and/or doesn't want to pay in 2017/18	9
Responded to consultation but no comments provided and/or issues noted	8
Concessions should be cheaper and/or guaranteed	7
Concerns over Bro Cinmeirch losing pupils, losing its 'Welshness' and/or pupils going to Pant Pastynog by preference of Faith education.	7
Glad Denbighshire will provide free transport for all pupils attending Pant Pastynog to Ysgol Glan Clwyd	5
Don't agree with nearest suitable school and feel they should get transport to any school requested.	4
Doesn't agree with the 2 and 3 miles rule under legislation and that it should be changed	4
Out of County resident who wants free transport to Ysgol Dinas Bran or is complaining about existing arrangements	4
All routes in Denbighshire should be assessed for hazards and not just when applications are received	4
Concerns about having to walk to school during winter / autumn months and/or how parents get information re services not running in bad weather	4
Suggestions of extra content and/or to change layout of the policy	4
All parents / carers should pay for school transport and/or it should be means tested	3
Calculation of distance should not be by shortest route and / or don't agree with current method of calculation	3
Feels the policy is negatively biased against Welsh language	3
Continuity for siblings going to the same school when policies change	3
Post 16 transport should allow students to go where they want and/or it should go beyond 19 years of age.	2
Concerns regarding safety on Denbighshire transport services	2
Positively liked the changes made regarding hazardous routes assessment	2
Dyserth walking route to Prestatyn is still hazardous	2
Route from Rhuddlan to Ysgol Dewi Sant is still hazardous	2
Wants hazardous routes assessed by non-Denbighshire staff	1

All current hazardous routes should be available online or in policy	1
Wants Denbighshire to provide nursery transport	1
Routes change over time and need to be reassessed for hazards. Denbighshire should be aware	1
Wants regular SEN drivers to reduce the stress of change on pupils	1
Denbighshire should provide free transport for extra curricula activities	1
Denbighshire should pay allowances if parents / carers want to transport themselves	1
Wants an adult to accompany children in each taxi service	1
Not sure what the consultation is about and/or why it has been sent to them	1
Concerned about conduct of drivers on Council services	1
Are Denbighshire looking how the current policy has adversely affected families?	1
Pick-up points should be properly assessed for hazards	1
Could rail be an option for Corwen students to get to Ysgol Dinas Bran?	1
Denbighshire's consultation process for this policy is far improved from last time	1
Pupils should not be using public transport	1
Poor quality of the transport provided	1
Disagrees that Welsh language should receive free transport by preference	1
Policy should have more information re criteria for nearest suitable school	1
Post 16 travel information requires further clarification in policy	1
Make sure parents are aware of transport policy before admissions process	1
If parents are prepared to take pupils to the pick-up points even though they didn't attend their nearest suitable school, they should be allowed to do so.	1

Report Title:	School Council Responses – Learner Transport Policy
Detail of Consultation:	Learner Transport Policy Consultation
Lead Officer:	Ian Land
Report Author:	Elin Kerry
Date:	18/05/2017

1. Outline

The purpose of this consultation was to provide learners within Denbighshire secondary schools an opportunity to respond to the Local Authority's Draft Learner Transport Policy which has recently been reviewed

2. Method

The consultation with learners was conducted in a way which was accessible and clear for learners to understand. A young people's version of the consultation document was produced, which detailed the reason for the consultation, as well as highlighting the main content of the policy. At the end of this document, the 3 consultation questions were situated where learners were able to provide their individual response.

As well as individual responses, the consultation was held within a focus group setting, where learners were able to discuss the policy within a group setting, and a series of questions were asked to gain an understanding of the level of the learners' knowledge.

A total of 73 responses have been received to date following visits to 6 Secondary Schools Councils within the Local Authority.

3. Focus Groups

In order to gain qualitative responses, and gain an understanding of what knowledge the learners had in relation to the existence of the policy, a series of questions were agreed and these were asked during the consultation sessions. The main points to consider are as follows:

- i) The majority of learners who took part in the consultation were not aware of the policy
- ii) Some learners were aware of the '3 mile radius' eligibility criteria
- iii) Learners had an understanding of 'hazardous routes'
- iv) Learners thought it was fair that some schools work in partnership with transition
- v) A proportion of the learners were not aware of the Travel Behaviour Code, and suggested that consequences were needed if these rules were broken

4. Consultation Document

As the reviewed policy and consultation were lengthy, it was agreed that a version for young people would be produced in order to make it clearer to understand, and to highlight main points. The document detailed why the consultation was happening, the main points within the policy, and concluded with the 3 consultation questions. It was made clear at the beginning of the session by the facilitator that it is important that young people have an opportunity to respond to the consultation, though not all comments and suggestions would be implemented or changed. If that would be the case, a response would be provided to the learners to explain why the changes / comments have not been considered. Additional comments in relation to learner transport were welcome, again, learners were encouraged to leave a name and school detail in order for officer to provide them with a timely response if required.

5. Responses

A total of 73 responses were received following sessions with 6 Secondary School Councils. As there were 3 main questions, responses were pooled into themes or common responses. Details below.

Question 1:

What do you think about the changes to the Learner Transport Policy?

Summary of Comments	No.
The changes are fair	13
They are good ideas and policies	12
They are positive and will benefit a lot	12
The changes have made it easier to understand	13
They are very helpful	6
The policy is improved	4
Helps GCSE students	2

Other comments include:

Some elements of the Travel Behaviour Code are unrealistic e.g. not eating / drinking
Need to make people more aware of the Travel Behaviour Code

Question 2:

Is there anything in the policy you would change?

Summary of Comments	No.
Reduce the mile radius from 3 as its far to walk	12
People shouldn't have to pay for transport	4
Not fair to exclude some from house move transport provision	4
Have a policy for paying for the bus	2
Families on low income or receive benefits get it free or cheaper	2

Other comments include:

Make people more aware of the Travel Behaviour Code
Allow people to eat or drink on the bus

Question 3:**Is there anything else you'd like to tell us about School Transport?**

Summary of Comments	No.
What happens if someone needs temporary transport e.g. after injury?	6
Buses need cleaning	3
How would bullying affect transport if moved to a new school?	2
Bus drivers need to know about Travel Behaviour Code	2
Make the policy more accessible for all to know about it	2

Other comments include:

Need consequences if disobey Travel Behaviour Code

Need more security on buses

Service buses are full

6. Conclusion

At the end of each session, the facilitator made the participants aware that any questions or issues raised which required a response would receive so; and that all responses would form part of a wider response to the consultation.

If any changes were as a result of anything that would be said, the facilitator would ensure that participants are aware of these changes.

Denbighshire's Draft Learner Transport Policy

Wellbeing Impact Assessment Report

This report summarises the likely impact of a proposal on the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Denbighshire, Wales and the world.

Assessment Number:	183
Brief description:	The Policy relates to how Denbighshire meets the School Transport requirements outlined in the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008. It is an update to the current Policy which came into effect from September 2015. The assessment was undertaken in a facilitated session with staff from Education, Passenger Transport, Finance, Sustainable Transport & Planning, the Chair of Denbighshire's School Governors Association, representatives from Ysgol Brynhyfryd and Ysgol Glan Clwyd, and a Councillor. Feedback was also sought from Denbighshire's Quality Assurance Group, which considers Impact Assessments from across the Authority.
Date Completed:	02/03/2017 20:47:30 Version: 2
Completed by:	Education Resources and Support Manager
Responsible Service:	Education & Children Services
Localities affected by the proposal:	Whole County,

IMPACT ASSESSMENT SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Before we look in detail at the contribution and impact of the proposal, it is important to consider how the proposal is applying the sustainable development principle. This means that we must act in a manner which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Score for the sustainability of the approach

Could you do more to make your approach more sustainable?

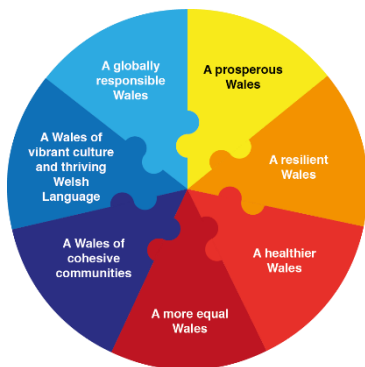


(2 out of 4 stars)

Actual score: 15 / 24.

Summary of impact

Wellbeing Goals



A prosperous Denbighshire	Positive
A resilient Denbighshire	Neutral
A healthier Denbighshire	Positive
A more equal Denbighshire	Positive
A Denbighshire of cohesive communities	Positive
A Denbighshire of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language	Positive
A globally responsible Denbighshire	Neutral

Main conclusions

In respect of the sustainable development score, the intention of the policy is to be a long-term solution to learner transport in Denbighshire. The policy is not budget-driven, and aims to meet the demands to ensure learners can get to school or Further Education College safely. During the process of the impact assessment, it was concluded that a more joined up approach to developing schools and transport, between Education and Sustainable Transport & Planning teams. This would ensure that new schools/footpaths/cycle paths and so on, are developed in a way that is mutually beneficial and meets the needs of communities. The Local Development Plan (LDP) is also important to this policy, e.g. new housing developments could have implications for home to school transport. The new amendments made to the policy are seeking to address issues with the current policy and which have previously been raised by parents, carers and Councillors. The initial review of the draft policy by Denbighshire's Communities Scrutiny Committee was welcomed and Members acknowledged that the latest draft of the policy was a far better, clearer and more flexible policy than the original. It has previously been recognised that some parents / carers may disagree with the 2 or 3 mile rule for providing transport, particularly in rural areas, although these distances are stipulated in legislation. Routes are assessed and if there are

hazards these will always be taken into account. On the whole the policy has many positive impacts and has a neutral impact in respect of a resilient and a globally responsible Denbighshire. Parents / Carers can make a preference for Welsh or English medium provision and the policy promotes access to Welsh medium education by providing discretionary transport, where this is a parental / carer preference and the criteria is met. Some parents / carers may still have concerns around the categorisation of schools and we have acknowledged this within this impact assessment. Whether mobile network not-spots could affect the safety of children waiting at isolated pick up points is not certain and should be understood (parents / carers are encouraged to ensure there are 'back up' plans). Overall though, the impact on Welsh language and culture and people with protected characteristics is positive. The policy also supports Faith based education, if this is a parental / carer preference and the eligibility criteria is met. The impact assessment has identified the potential to maximise information about active travel and opportunities to enable schools/ parents / carers to develop walking buses in their communities.

THE LIKELY IMPACT ON DENBIGHSHIRE, WALES AND THE WORLD

A prosperous Denbighshire

Overall Impact	Positive
Justification for impact	Positive Impact on local economy for service providers. Enabling children to access Education. Fewer individual journeys to school by parents / carers.

Positive consequences identified:

Routes are profiled to ensure they are most efficient and therefore impact is reduced. Having learners on one bus together is better than individual families travelling in cars and decreases car journeys. However, it is noted that there is an eligibility criteria and parents / carers can express a school preference, for which they may then be required to provide transport.

In terms of economic development, this policy is important demand for local transport suppliers. Many could not exist on excursions and tours alone, and this ensures their businesses are sustainable.

Can help parents / carers get to work and manage their work/life balance. Creates jobs for individual drivers.

There are skills involved in the provision of transport, e.g. maintaining Driver Certificate of Professional Competence.

We need to ensure links with local bus services to ensure the viability/sustainability of local bus services. Our passenger transport team monitors this to see where public transport can be optimised.

In terms of care for children whilst using home to school transport, some buses will have passenger escorts. However, it is a parent's / carer's responsibility to ensure child care arrangements are in place.

Unintended negative consequences identified:

We are not proposing to use hybrid/electric vehicles at the moment. Denbighshire has explored battery-operated buses (this is constantly kept under review), but we don't have any emissions 'hot spots'. School transport in Denbighshire would predominantly be provided using diesel vehicles.

Some families may find that the timing of school transport might not meet their work needs, although it is their responsibility to make necessary care arrangements (especially in secondary schools).

If the policy were not in place, it could impact on transport provision more broadly, e.g. we rely on local bus services to take children to school.

Using transport could result in families missing out on wraparound care.

Mitigating actions:

Low carbon consideration for contracts will continue to be kept under review. Parents / carers are encouraged to have back up plans as they are responsible for making necessary care arrangements.

A resilient Denbighshire

Overall Impact	Neutral
Justification for impact	Reduced journeys to school. Lower carbon footprint. DCC Biodiversity Plan is accommodated within the requirements of route assessment by Highways.

Positive consequences identified:

A reduction in the number of vehicles on the road is positive.

When assessing potential hazards, all aspects of the environment are considered, which can include things such as hedgerows. This may result in designating routes as hazardous if, for example, it impacted on visibility.

Unintended negative consequences identified:

If safer walking routes are ever needed, these could result in loss of habitats, e.g. hedgerows.

In terms of energy/fuel consumption, we keep cleaner vehicles under review. Hybrids are costly to suppliers. We don't use double-deckers and refer to use 70 seat single decks. Double decks can cause a problem because of the inability to fit seat belts to older vehicles. They use more fuel but seat for seat they are not that inefficient, though 70 seat saloons are more fuel efficient than double decks.

Currently this policy does not aim to raise people's awareness of environment/biodiversity issues, but information could be inserted into the policy.

Some lanes (walking routes) are at risk of flooding, and do flood occasionally. Closure of a lane can reinstate the duty to provide free school transport where distances are extended. Where roads are flooded, you cannot prevent walkers from passing through the flooded lane. The Authority risk assesses such locations and the services provided.

Mitigating actions:

Lower carbon technology will continue to be a consideration on transport contracts (the market needs to mature however). The Policy could signpost to relevant information and websites regarding safer walking / cycling routes to school. This will be incorporated. The flooding issue has been explored and the safest solution has been to reinstate a transport service (in the case of Caer Drewyn) between November - April. We will be doing another assessment in April 2017. This does form part of the consideration given to any new school development sites - as part of the planning process.

A healthier Denbighshire

Overall Impact	Positive
Justification for impact	The legislation encourages walking to school if under the stipulated distances from school, and there are no hazards which would prevent this. Introducing feeder schools is in the welfare and well-being interests of learners. They can stay with their friends as they transition to secondary school - if they so wish.

Positive consequences identified:

Where safe and below the statutory distances, children/families are encouraged to walk/cycle to school.

This policy enables children to access education and remain with their friendship group. This draft new policy approach is in the interests of the learner. Revised appeals process with a panel considering discretionary provision and supportive information presented by parents / carers. Process designed to be easier. Discretionary provision is documented to ensure consistency.

Unintended negative consequences identified:

Potential to maximise info/links to active travel.

Mitigating actions:

The Policy could signpost to relevant information and websites regarding safer walking / cycling routes to school. This will be incorporated. Signpost to relevant departments to ensure schools and parents / carers can access information on setting up walking buses and safe routes to school. Road Safety and Sustainable Transport can offer officer support to establish walking buses.

A more equal Denbighshire

Overall Impact	Positive
Justification for impact	We are not aware of any positive/negative impacts on gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; sexual orientation. The team will always review provision in cases where individual's circumstances change. The team takes into consideration aspects of financial hardship if we are presented with such information and are asked to consider family circumstances.

Positive consequences identified:

This policy positively affects the 'age' protected characteristic because it is about facilitating children's education. We do recognise sibling relationships as part of the Admissions process to schools. Where families move during GCSEs, the policy still includes provision for meeting the transport needs of learners (where reasonable). For disabled children and young people, on a closed school contract the buses are inaccessible but when we are aware of a need and the provision will always be delivered via accessible vehicles. Signage on the bus is clear. The authority will ensure appropriate solutions in place (e.g. home pick up where that is necessary). We also consider the ability of the parent / carer to get the child to school (e.g. in short term situations). The document provides support for divorced / separated couples (dual residency). The policy supports faith-based education, where eligible.

It benefits parents / carers in that if the eligibility criteria is met the Authority will pay for transport. Financial hardship may be an element under discretionary considerations if this is raised and evidenced.

Unintended negative consequences identified:

There have previously been incidents of bullying on buses but not in relation to children and young people with protected characteristics, as far as we are aware. Some parents / carers might find it harder to understand the information about the policy.

Some parents / carers may make a choice about the secondary school based on financial considerations of transport. Feeder school arrangements should positively improve this.

Mitigating actions:

The new draft policy now includes details of the Behaviour Code on Authority services, and the processes followed for reported incidents. It has also strengthened the aspects of parental / carer responsibility and working with the Authority to resolve issues. A frequently asked questions (FAQ) section will be developed and this will be informed by the consultation process. Parents / Carers will be able to provide views regarding the Authority's process for dealing with behaviour on services as part of the formal consultation.

A Denbighshire of cohesive communities

Overall Impact	Positive
Justification for impact	Application of the policy ensures safe access to education for learners. Parents / Carers are responsible for ensuring learners get to and from the pickup points safely, and that they are met by a responsible adult if their age or needs calls for this. Process in place if learners are not met at the pickup point. Passenger transport advises on where pick up points should be. They are all risk assessed. Information about adverse weather and service cancellations or school closures is published online.

Positive consequences identified:

The policy is about ensuring safe routes to school (either in a bus, or walking/cycling). Safeguarding is a concern while children at bus stops, especially if they are in a group. Safe/hazardous routes are assessed.

Policy can positively support rural communities in that transport is provided free of charge if the eligibility criteria is met.

Reduces the impact on private motoring. The policy is a considered approach to Denbighshire's specific circumstances and is more flexible than approaches of other Local Authorities.

Unintended negative consequences identified:

There are perceptions that cars are safer than buses but this is not the case. Safeguarding of pupils where they are picked up on their own, but the pick-up points are assessed by professionals to ensure they are appropriate. Not spots could be an issue if there were to be problems with the service on a particular day/or the child needed to contact someone (999 calls can always be made). Circa 160 routes are currently assessed as hazardous (there might be more than one section of hazards on one stretch of road).

There are opportunities to maximise the participation of families to increase resilience in the respect of transport to school. Information for schools/families about walking buses is being considered. Some schools in Denbighshire have taken this forward.

Mitigating actions:

The pick-up points are assessed by professionals following relevant guidance to ensure they are appropriate. We know where the main hazards are in Denbighshire; these are documented and are considered as part of the application process. There may be other routes not currently assessed but we will assess those as required. All known hazardous routes are reassessed every 5 years.

A Denbighshire of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language

Overall Impact	Positive
Justification for impact	If the policy didn't exist then access to Welsh medium education would be affected. The policy promotes access to Welsh medium education by providing discretionary transport, where this is a preference and the eligibility criteria is met. The legislation ensures Local Authorities promote access to Welsh medium education.

Positive consequences identified:

Parents / Carers can make a preference for Welsh or English medium provision. Promotes access to Welsh medium education by providing discretionary transport, where this is a preference and the eligibility criteria is met.

The policy does promote Welsh language and access to Welsh medium education. Signage on services is bilingual, Welsh first.

The policy supports access to Welsh-medium education and the language is important to culture and heritage.

Unintended negative consequences identified:

The schools categorisation can be sometimes be difficult for parents / carers to understand. However, we have to work within this Welsh Government categorisation scheme. Some parents / carers may express a preference for a category 1 school but this is not distinguished from category 2 provision by Welsh Government. Extra detail regarding the categorisation has been added to the new policy.

Some primary-aged children may be travelling alone and be Welsh-speaking only. No example of this ever being a problem however. Statutory signage is in English only

Mitigating actions:

The policy is likely to attract further discussion regarding categorisation. The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) group will be considering the draft policy. Some parents / carers would like to see category 1 schools in their own right, separate to category 2 - however this is an issue for Welsh Government consideration. Extra detail has been provided in the new policy regarding categorisation.

A globally responsible Denbighshire

Overall Impact	Neutral
Justification for impact	Contracts held with local transport providers which benefits the local economy.

Positive consequences identified:

Procurement through tender tends to favour larger firms. Local contractors do benefit as they are more cost effective.

Conditions of contract include human rights. This policy ensures access to education.

The policy ensures children could access nearest Welsh language school or Faith School, even if out of county.

Unintended negative consequences identified:

No negative impacts have been identified.

Mitigating actions:

No negative impacts have been identified by the impact assessment.