

Meeting of:	CABINET
Date of Meeting:	23 JULY 2024
Report Title:	ASSISTED TRANSPORT POLICY
Report Owner / Corporate Director:	CORPORATE DIRECTOR SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELLBEING
Responsible Officer:	JOE BOYLE POLICY OFFICER – SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELLBEING
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	There is no effect upon the Policy Framework or Procedure Rules.
Executive Summary:	This report outlines the process undertaken to develop the draft Assisted Transport Policy and seeks Cabinet approval to commence a public consultation.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet approval to begin a public consultation process on the draft Assisted Transport Policy (**Appendix 1**) in order to support service provision across services in the Social Services and Wellbeing Directorate.

2. Background

- 2.1 Given the current financial position that the Council finds itself in, work has been undertaken across each Directorate in order to identify areas of potential financial savings.
- 2.2 The provision of funded transport to access an assessed and eligible need is something that has been occurring within Adults Services for an extended period of time. As set out in legislation, only where an assessed and eligible need requires specific transport should funded transport be provided. The aim of the policy is to enable the Directorate to appropriately meet the transport needs of individuals to access a service to meet their assessed need, by ensuring that all transport options are assessed before providing Assisted Transport as a last resort.

3. Current situation / proposal

- 3.1 Relevant members of the Social Services and Wellbeing Directorate were engaged and provided support in the drafting of the policy content for each aspect of Adults and Children's Services where relevant.
- 3.2 Although the policy has been designed and written with Adults services primarily in mind, the principles of the policy may be applied to situations within Children's Services where required such as supporting work undertaken within the Child Disability and Transition (CDT) and 16+ teams. As such the policy may be applicable to certain Children's Services Social Work Teams.
- 3.3 The Assisted Transport Policy has been developed in order to provide a policy standpoint behind the assessment of transport needs of individuals who are accessing a Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) provided service away from their home. This policy does not remove the ability to provide assisted and funded transport in order to access a service within the community, but it does place the requirement on services to ensure that an assessment takes place in order to identify the most suitable method of transport to ensure that the individual can access the service to support their assessed need.
- 3.4 The policy will not cover assistance to travel to and from education establishments, which are found in the BCBC Home to School Transport Policy.
- 3.5 It is proposed that a consultation process take place for 12 weeks on the draft Assisted Transport Policy which will consist of both online feedback, and physical feedback received from target audiences at both public consultation meetings, and through the option of written responses. The target audience for this consultation will be the individuals that access services provided by BCBC in order to meet an assessed need, along with their family members and/or individuals with responsibility for them. Following the consultation period, the finalised policy will be reported back to Cabinet for approval and implementation.

4. Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)

- 4.1 An initial Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) screening has identified that there would be no negative impact on those with one or more of the protected characteristics, on socio-economic disadvantage or the use of the Welsh Language. It is therefore not necessary to carry out a full EIA on this policy.
- 4.2 However, a full EIA will accompany any recommendations to Cabinet following the conclusion of the consultation.

5. Well-being of Future Generations implications and connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives

- 5.1 The Act provides the basis for driving a different kind of public service in Wales, with 5 ways of working to guide how public services should work to deliver for people. The following is a summary to show how the 5 ways of working to achieve the well-being goals have been used to formulate the recommendations within this report.

Involvement	This policy has been informed by the review of relevant legislation and guidance, along with meetings and discussions with relevant members of the Directorate.
Long term	This policy provides services with a framework to ensuring that all possible methods for individuals transport to access services are identified prior to the additional provision of funded transport.
Prevention	The policy sets out to prevent the misallocation of funding for transport where appropriate alternatives are available for individuals.
Integration	The policy once approved will be integrated into the Social Service and Wellbeing Directorate and its service provisions.
Collaboration	The policy has been developed collaboratively by working groups involving staff from across the Social Services and Wellbeing Directorate.

6. Climate Change Implications

- 6.1 There is no direct impact on Climate Change through the implementation of this policy.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

- 7.1 There are no Safeguarding or Corporate Parenting implications related to the implementation of this policy. As a part of the assessment process, suitability and appropriateness of transport options will be assessed in order to ensure the safety and safeguarding of the individual concerned. As previously stated, the policy is not removing the option of Assisted Transport, but ensuring all other options are assessed prior to the implementation of Assisted Transport.

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1 It is anticipated that through the implementation of the Assisted Travel policy that this will have some positive impact upon directorate finances, through reduced spend, however the amount cannot currently be estimated. As this report is seeking approval to commence the consultation process for the Assisted Travel policy, there will be costs associated with the consultation process such as Welsh Language translation and venue hire, which will be met through existing Social Services and Wellbeing budgets.

9. Recommendation

- 9.1 It is recommended that Cabinet approve the commencement of a public consultation on the Assisted Transport Policy noting that the finalised policy will be reported back to Cabinet for approval and implementation.

Background documents

None