

Meeting of:	SOCIAL SERVICES, HEALTH AND WELLBEING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Date of Meeting:	12 MARCH 2026
Report Title:	ASSISTED TRANSPORT POLICY
Report Owner: Responsible Chief Officer / Cabinet Member	CORPORATE DIRECTOR - SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELLBEING
Responsible Officer:	JANE LEWIS GROUP MANAGER DIRECT CARE PROVIDER SERVICES
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	There is no effect upon the Policy Framework and Procedure Rules.
Executive Summary:	This report provides an update on the implementation and impact of the Assisted Transport Policy introduced in May 2025. It was agreed to be included in the Committee's Forward Work Plan for further monitoring and reflection.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the implementation and impact of the Assisted Transport Policy introduced in May 2025. It was agreed to be included in the Committee's Forward Work Plan for further monitoring and reflection.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Assisted Transport Policy (attached as **Appendix 1**) was developed following a 12-week consultation which started on 6 August 2024. This included input and support from People First Bridgend, the statutory Adults Services Advocacy provider for individuals with learning disabilities.
- 2.2 Following the consultation, Cabinet approved the Assisted Transport Policy in April 2025 to be implemented from May 2025 with the aim of providing a strategic approach to delivering transport that is consistent, transparent, and clearly outlines the framework through which the Council provides transport services.

- 2.3 The policy applies to all adults aged 18 years and above who access community services away from their home which is provided by the Council as part of a Care and Support Plan.
- 2.4 The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 is the legislative framework that sets out the Council's duty to assess an individual's need for care and support services. The Council will have a duty to meet that need if the need cannot be met by the person's own resources or community resources.
- 2.5 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 outlines principles and ways of working which include the responsibility for ensuring sustainable developments for individuals to connect with their local communities and the needs of the present being met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. This links directly to the well-being principles underpinning this policy.
- 2.6 The aim of this policy is to reflect local and national priorities and complement the Council's approach to delivering Adult Social Care. The policy is underpinned by the Council's 3 year Strategic Plan for Adult Social Care, and adheres to key principles of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 of:
- Voice and Control – putting the individual and their needs, at the centre of their care, and giving them a voice in (and control over) reaching the outcomes that help them achieve wellbeing
 - Prevention and early intervention – increasing effective preventative services within the community to reduce the number of adults who need intensive or substitute care
 - Wellbeing – supporting people to achieve their own wellbeing and measuring the success of care and support
 - Co-production – encouraging people to become more involved in the design and delivery of services
- 2.7 The policy also adheres to and supports the delivery of the key objectives for Adults Social Care of the Sustainable Services Plan.
- 2.8 The policy outlines how the Council will ensure a consistent and equitable way of supporting individuals who may require the provision of assisted transport in order to access an identified service that meets a Care and Support need or Wellbeing Outcome.
- 2.9 This policy sets the criteria used to assess how individuals may access transport provision to services identified in their Care and Support Plan.
- 2.10 The overriding principle of this policy is that the decision to provide transport is based on needs, risks and outcomes and on promoting independence. The Council is committed to promoting independence across all areas of service provision and seeks to ensure that people live as independently as possible within their own communities and continue to access services and support in ways which meet their needs.
- 2.11 The need for transport is not an eligible need for social services and wellbeing support in its own right, but a means of accessing the relevant care and support service required to meet the assessed need. Sometimes, the Council needs to provide

transport to attend a service to meet the assessed needs of the individual, but this will be a separate consideration compared to the assessment for the need for the service itself. This policy rests upon a general assumption and expectation that people's own strengths and abilities will enable them to travel to access services and/or support, with the benefit of relevant training and support where applicable. Use of the resources available to them both as individuals and from the wider community will be fully assessed and taken into account when determining whether or not there is a need for the provision of transport.

- 2.12 Funded transport will only be provided if, in the opinion of the Council, and once consideration of all relevant factors has taken place, it is the only reasonable way to enable the person to safely access the relevant service. All appropriate means of transport available (for example personal vehicles, taxi funded via Mobility Allowance, vehicles obtained under the Motability Scheme, or public transport, including voluntary community transport schemes), will be considered and it will be presumed that the individual can and will use these as a first option, unless the individual assessment demonstrates otherwise.
- 2.13 Individuals who have the physical and cognitive ability to travel to a community activity, either independently or with assistance from available family, friends, or support providers will generally be expected to do so, rather than via Council funded transport. Social Services and Wellbeing staff will signpost individuals to appropriate transport options in order to promote the independence of that person.
- 2.14 People will normally not be eligible for transport if:
- They have the physical and/or cognitive ability to travel to a community activity, either independently or with assistance from available family, friends or support providers
 - They have the physical and/or cognitive ability to travel to a community activity, either independently or with assistance from available family, friends or support providers
 - They have their own vehicle, access to a family vehicle or a Motability vehicle which they drive themselves
 - They have a Motability vehicle of which they are themselves not normally the driver but a driver is available
 - Where the individual has access to a family/household vehicle, consideration may be given toward whether it is reasonable to expect the person's family and friends network to help them travel to the location of the service/activity
 - They are in receipt of the Mobility component of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) / Personal Independence Payment (PIP), the purpose of which is to assist those who have mobility problems, and from which it is reasonable to expect that this be used to facilitate transport to the service/activity. They will only generally be eligible for funded transport if they are assessed as incapable of independent travel or if the mobility element of the benefit is already fully and reasonably utilised to fund their other mobility needs, due to distance from services, the nature of the disability, wheelchair type, carer support requirements, etc. As part of the full financial assessment, the Council will also help maximize their access to any benefits they may be entitled to

- They live in a registered care home or other setting where their care needs are funded by the Council, e.g. residential care, supported living schemes (such as those for people with a learning disability or younger adults with mental health disorders), or shared lives placements, as the cost of the placement should cover the full range of support needs, including transport, to attend activities. If the individual is assessed as having the ability to travel independently, or with minimal intervention, the service /other setting will make provision to support independent travel if they are responsible for transport arrangements

2.15 The policy also sets out guidance in applying the policy for staff which includes:

- Practical guidance
- Single Occupancy
- Assessing Risk
- Review and Termination of Service
- Complaints / Appeals procedure
- Principles for charging

3. Current situation/proposal

3.1 The policy has been implemented since May 2025 and applied to all new referrals into our direct services. Panel agreement is now required for anyone who requires transport provision.

3.2 The policy helps the Service remain viable and improves financial sustainability through reduced operating costs. Transport is delivering more value without expansion, and there are environmental benefits from fewer, unnecessary journeys and better route optimisation.

3.3 The policy has given day opportunities a stronger foundation to organise transport by:

- Standardised decision-making reducing ambiguity and speeding up approvals
- Simplified scheduling, as eligibility and journey types are more consistent
- Improved co-ordination as expectations are clearer for everyone involved
- More self-directed travel and lower peak time pressures as demand is spread more evenly through pre-scheduled routes
- Improved fairness by ensuring transport is prioritised for those with the highest need.
- Higher vehicle occupancy rates with journeys grouped by area
- Easier and More Predictable Transport Planning

3.4 As an outcome, planning has become less reactive and more strategic improving reliability, and the Service is more resilient and better positioned for future demands.

3.5 In addition, the Service has undertaken a series of measures in relation to transport to apply the principles of the policy and Adult Social Care 3 year Strategic Plan:

- A transport review has been undertaken for every individual using the service

- Three vehicles have been obtained through grant funding – these replaced vehicles we were incurring hire charges for
- Increased the use of internal transport vehicles reducing the need for contract transport
- Cessation of ‘spot hire’ vehicles which were far more expensive than lease hire vehicles
- Renegotiation of contracts with approved transport providers
- Review of transport routes

3.6 The impact on the expenditure on these measures and the introduction of the policy has been significant. Overall, we have seen a projected reduction in transport costs when comparing costs in 2023-24 with 2025-26 of £254,673.

3.7 There have been no formal complaints received or representations from advocacy providers in relation to the change implemented.

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 was therefore not necessary to carry out a full EIA on this policy or proposal.

4.2 This Policy is applied universally to identify all appropriate methods of transport for an individual and does not remove the option of providing funded transport to an individual to meet their assessed need so therefore will have no impact to any group possessing a protected characteristic because of them having that protected characteristic.

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	In the formation of this report, relevant officers from the Directorate have been involved.
Long term	This report sets out the positive impact of the Assisted Transport Policy since implementation. The continued implementation will provide long term benefits.
Prevention	The aim of this policy is to prevent incorrect and unsuitable use of financial resources to ensure that those that need them most have access to them, and that transport is provided to those that need it the most in the most suitable way possible.
Integration	The policy has been utilised and integrated across Social Services and Wellbeing teams, ensuring that transport is provided to those that require it and do not have access to an appropriate alternative provision.

Collaboration	Relevant members of the Social Services and Wellbeing Directorate (SSWB) Directorate will be involved in future discussions regarding the provision of transport to a service to meet an assessed need or wellbeing outcome.
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6. Climate Change and Nature Implications

- 6.1 Through the implementation of this Policy, there is hoped to be a continued impact upon Climate Change as it may reduce the number of commissioned vehicles that are provided for transport in addition to methods already available to an individual to access the service assessed to meet their care and support needs or wellbeing outcomes. This is in line with the Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) focus on and understanding of the importance of decarbonisation to help protect and sustain the environment over the long term and in line with our climate change ambitions.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

- 7.1 When undertaking an evaluation around an individual's needs toward transport to a service which will meet an assessed need or wellbeing outcome, consideration will be given towards ensuring and promoting the safety of individuals at risk. This policy does not replace or place limitations upon what services an individual may access to meet their care and support needs, it is solely focused upon ensuring the most appropriate method of transport to and from the service is utilised.

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1 It is important the policy and other measures are applied to avoid any unnecessary costs in this area. There continues to be a projected over spend against the budget for transport in this area, however it is reducing as set out in the table below. The budget will need to be closely monitored going forward.

In 2024-25 the transport budget was reduced by £50k as part of the SSW4 Budget Reduction proposal – Remodelling Day Opportunities approved by Council as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

	Budget	Spend	Over spend
2023-24	£304,800	£592,367	£287,567
2024-25	£254,800	£451,598	£196,798
2025-26	£254,800	£337,694 (projected)	£82,894 (projected)

The table above shows an overall reduction in spend of £254,673 when comparing the projected spend in 2025-26 with the actual spend in 2023-24.

9. Recommendation

9.1 It is recommended that the Committee consider the report and provide any comments as necessary.

Background Documents

None