



Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol  
**MERTHYR TUDFUL**  
**MERTHYR TYDFIL**  
County Borough Council

# **CONSULTATION DOCUMENT**

## **ON PROPOSED CHANGES TO POST 16 TRANSPORT.**

## Introduction

This is a consultation document on a proposal to make changes to Post 16 Transport. It will be used to gather stakeholder evidence that the Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council (MTCBC) will be able to use to help it decide what is the best way forward. A Public Consultation will take place from Monday 20<sup>th</sup> May 2024 to 09<sup>th</sup> August 2024.

## Why is the Council consulting on possible changes?

As a result of ongoing austerity measures, Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council has seen a reduction in its core budget for 2024/25, with further cuts expected in the coming years. Post 16 Transport is a discretionary service meaning that the Council is not required to provide the service by law.

This consultation is intended to gather opinion from anyone who may be affected by any possible changes to Post 16 Transport as well as others who may not be directly affected but who have an opinion. The consultation will help inform decisions about possible changes to Post 16 Transport which will be taken by Full Council.

The council has completed an Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) which will provide essential background information on this proposal (**Appendix 'A'**). The IIA includes an impact assessment on the Council's Well-being plan, Protected Characteristics, the Welsh Language, Socio-economic Disadvantage, Decarbonisation, Sustainability and Biodiversity. The IIA will be reviewed and updated during, and following, the consultation to reflect feedback and will be finalised after the consultation outcomes have been considered as part of the process of making a recommendation to Council.

In order to meet the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards, the Consultation includes questions asking for views on the potential impacts of proposals on the Welsh Language.

## The Current Policy

All students aged 16, 17 or 18 years on September 1st, who are attending a first course of full-time study at a college/school, may be entitled to free travel if they are required to travel at least **three** miles in each direction. Transport will be provided free to The College, Merthyr Tydfil. Where a course is not provided by The College Merthyr Tydfil, transport will be provided to the nearest suitable course provider to the following colleges: Coleg Y Cymoedd (Ystrad Mynach, Aberdare campuses only) and Bridgend College (Pencoed Campus only).

Transport for Post 16 transport will continue to Ysgol Gyfun Rhydywaun (Welsh Medium) & St John Baptist Church in Wales High School, Aberdare providing the pupils attended the faith or Welsh school for their compulsory mainstream education.

The student should contact the general office at the college, when starting the course, to complete the required transport application form. It is advised that students clarify their entitlement to transport prior to enrolment.

Transport may be provided by dedicated learner transport such as a coach or minibus or by provision of travel passes on public transport. The student will be required to access public transport at the nearest available stop/station providing it is within 3 miles of the student's home address.

The Council's current Home to School Transport Policy is available to view on our website:-

<https://www.merthyr.gov.uk/resident/learning-in-merthyr-tydfil/school-transport/home-to-school-transport-overview/>

Currently 175 Post 16 pupils receive free transport under the policy. Of the 175 pupils, the breakdown is as follows:-

- 14 pupils attend St John Baptist CiW High School
- 55 pupils attend Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Rhydywaun
- 84 attend The College, Merthyr Tydfil
- 2 attend Aberdare Campus
- 16 attend Ystrad Mynach Campus
- 3 attend Pendoed Campus
- 1 attends Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni

The Council is consulting on the proposal to change the Post 16 transport element within the current Transport policy. Should any changes be made, they would not be implemented until September 2025 at the earliest.

The consultation is intended to gather opinion from everyone who may be affected by any changes to Post 16 transport. The consultation will help inform decisions about possible changes to Post 16 transport which will be considered by Full Council.

## What are the possible changes?

### OPTION 1

Cost recovering service with full saving, costs passed to pupils (will produce 100% saving)

**Does this mean that the level of service is reduced?** No

**Is this option directly relating to a reduction in a statutory service?** No

**Can further reductions take place without the Council failing to meet its statutory duty(ies)?** Yes

#### Benefits of this option

##### Benefits (advantages) of this option

- This option will achieve significant long term savings.
- The savings will be realised earlier than if transport was no longer provided due to the impact of phasing out transport
- Students can continue to be educated in the schools/colleges currently included in the policy i.e., The College (Merthyr), Coleg Y Cymoedd (Aberdare & Ystrad Mynach), Bridgend College (Pencoed), St John Baptist Church in Wales High School (Aberdare) and Ysgol Gyfun Rhydywaun (Penywaun).
- Students can continue to access a wider choice of courses than through The College, Merthyr.
- The Council will continue to provide transport to support access to post 16 education, and although not free, this will be a cost effective option for parents/pupils to access the course of their choice
- High numbers of Merthyr pupils can continue into Post 16 education reducing the risk of becoming NEET
- The service will be more sustainable in the future.
- All students in receipt of contracted transport would be charged the same regardless of which Post 16 education provider is attended.
- Students will continue to receive transport to attend a Welsh Medium school for Post 16 education albeit this will no longer be free of charge

### Consequences of this option

- Some students are put at a disadvantage if they cannot afford the fees.
- Would require an intensive administrative function to coordinate, manage the payments and recover any arrears. However, an additional 0.5 fte member of staff could be appointed to support this with the post cost absorbed within the overall cost recovery.
- Previous attempt at cost recovery led to non-payments, debt recovery and write off, however there was no dedicated administration resource to support with cost recovery.
- Could negatively impact the number of students continuing in post-16 education.
- Disproportionately affects Welsh language students as all have to travel over 3 miles out of county unlike the majority of English language students who are able to attend their preferred post 16 provider within 3 miles of their home.
- May result in some WM learners instead choosing an EM post-16 education because of cost
- May result in a bigger fall in learners accessing WM post 16 education than EM post 16 education.
- May result in a reduction in the number of Welsh speakers in the County Borough
- May reduce the opportunities for learners to use the Welsh Language (at school, socially, and/or in the community)
- May result in a reduction in the number of parents choosing Welsh education for their children at Nursery, Primary and Secondary if there are barriers to completing the education pathway fully through the medium of Welsh
- May impact on the viability of Welsh Medium schools if pupil numbers are adversely affected
- May require a different approach for WM learners to balance the impacts of a charging policy on those choosing WM compared to EM for post 16 education e.g., a discounted charge for WM learners
- Potential negative impact on people not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET's).
- Likely negative feedback from parents and schools as provision is currently free of charge.
- The cost of running the service in the future is likely to increase due to operators/travel fare increases and fees would need to be increased in line with this.
- If student numbers decrease, the cost each student would be required to pay could increase accordingly to ensure the service stays cost neutral.
- Potential non-payment of fees resulting in a loss of income

### Potential total saving

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
<b>Costs (Uplifts etc.)</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£15,875</b>	<b>£15,875</b>	<b>£15,875</b>
<b>Savings</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£44,101</b>	<b>£92,488</b>	<b>£112,645</b>
<b>Other</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>
<b>Net savings</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£28,226</b>	<b>£76,613</b>	<b>£96,774</b>

## **Option 2**

Option 2 Description - (Streamline service) Provide free post-16 transport only to The College Merthyr Tydfil, and Ysgol Gyfun Rhydywaun for pupils choosing Welsh-medium education post-16.

**Does this mean that the level of service is reduced?** Yes

**Is this option directly relating to a reduction in a statutory service?** No

**Can further reductions take place without the Council failing to meet its statutory duty(ies)?** Yes

### Benefits of this option

#### Benefits (advantages) of this option

- Achieves moderate revenue savings (circa £45k per annum).

- Post 16 transport will be more sustainable in the future.
- Consistent policy to no longer provide post-16 education to any English-Medium school or College outside the county borough.
- Fair and equitable policy with respect to faith-based education as currently pupils attending St John Baptist's CiW High School can receive transport to continue faith-based education into Post 16, but pupils attending Blessed Carlo Acutis Catholic School are unable to receive transport to continue faith-based education in a Catholic school out of county.
- Keeps more Merthyr Tydfil residents studying within the County Borough. Currently we are paying for students to study in other County Boroughs.
- Free transport will continue to the Welsh provider (Ysgol Gyfun Rhydywaun) which positively promotes Welsh-medium education (Learner Travel (Wales) Measure, 2008) and is in accordance with the Education Act.

#### Consequences of this option

- Will only achieve 46% of the potential long term revenue savings circa £45k compared to the maximum savings of £97k.
- There is also likely to be an additional cost incurred providing transport to The College, Merthyr instead of to Coleg Y Cymoedd, Pencoed or St John's. These costs would need to be deducted from the initial £45k that would be saved.
- Although there are additional legislative requirements to promote WM education, Council could be seen as not providing a fair and equal service to students receiving statutory education out of county i.e., pupils attending faith-based statutory education out of county (St John Baptist's CiW High School) would not be able to continue faith-based education into Post 16, whereas pupils choosing Welsh-Medium would be able to.
- Potential impact on coach/taxi operators with the loss of some post-16 contracts.
- Restricted choice for students as courses not available in The College, Merthyr, could no longer be accessed in Bridgend College (Pencoed), or Coleg Y Cymoedd (Aberdare or Ystrad Mynach campuses).
- Likely negative feedback from some parents and schools. Based on current numbers this would impact approx. 18 young people each year currently receiving transport to Coleg Y Cymoedd, Bridgend (Pencoed) or St John's for Post 16 education.
- Could negatively impact the number of students continuing in post-16 education although the option of attending The College, Merthyr would be available.
- Potential small negative impact on people not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET's).
- The cost of running the service in the future is likely to increase due to operators/travel fare increases.
- Ongoing budget pressures may mean that a different solution to Post 16 transport is required in future to ensure it is sustainable for the long-term. Alternative options may need to be revisited.
- Due to the phasing required when stopping school transport, students who have already commenced studies at a school (St John's) prior to September 2025 will continue to receive free transport for the full duration of their schooling through to year 13. The removal of Post 16 transport would only affect those pupils starting Year 7 from September 2025 onwards.

#### Potential total saving

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
<b>Costs (Uplifts etc.)</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>
<b>Savings</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£26,130</b>	<b>£44,795</b>
<b>Other</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>
<b>Net savings</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£26,130</b>	<b>£44,795</b>

### Option 3 – Do maximum (only complete if asked to by CMT)

Option 3 Description – Remove the service

**Does this mean that the level of service is reduced?** Yes

**Is this option directly relating to a reduction in a statutory service?** No

**Can further reductions take place without the Council failing to meet its statutory duty(ies)?** No

#### Benefits of this option

- This option will achieve significant long-term savings.

#### Consequences of this option

- Potentially a significant negative impact on the number of Merthyr resident pupils continuing in post-16 education.
- Potentially a significant negative impact on number of people not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET's).
- Potentially a significant negative impact on the number of pupils accessing post 16 education at The College, Merthyr
- Likely to be a significant negative impact on the number of pupils leaving post 16 education proficient in the Welsh language, limiting suitable candidates for Welsh language speaking jobs and contributing negatively to the Council's WESP
- Removing Post 16 Transport would be at odds with the Council's Raising Aspiration, Raising Standards (RARS) Strategy and result in reputational damage for the Council
- Significant negative feedback likely from parents, schools/colleges and public.
- Disproportionately affects Welsh language students as all have to travel over 3 miles out of county, unlike the majority of English language students who are able to attend their preferred post-16 provider much closer to their home.
- Likely to result in some WM learners instead choosing an EM post-16 education because of travel arrangements and cost
- Likely to result in a bigger fall in learners accessing WM post 16 education than EM post-16 education
- Likely to result in a reduction in the number of Welsh speakers in the County Borough
- Likely to reduce the opportunities for learners to use the Welsh Language (at school, socially, and/or in the community)
- May result in a reduction in the number of parents choosing Welsh education for their children at Nursery, Primary and Secondary if there are barriers to completing the education pathway fully through the medium of Welsh
- May impact on the viability of Welsh Medium schools if pupil numbers are adversely affected
- Potential challenge for failure to sufficiently promote Welsh medium education without appropriate alternative within the County Borough
- No support for faith based post-16 education
- Due to the phasing required when stopping school transport, students who have already commenced studies at a school (Ysgol Rhydywaun / St John's) prior to September 2025 will continue to receive free transport for the full duration of their schooling through to year 13. The removal of Post 16 transport would only affect those pupils starting Year 7 from September 2025 onwards.

#### Potential total saving

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
<b>Costs (Uplifts etc.)</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>
<b>Savings</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£56,452</b>	<b>£96,774</b>
<b>Other</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>
<b>Net savings</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£56,452</b>	<b>£96,774</b>

## Option 4 – Remain as is

Option 4 Description – To retain the current level of service being provided.

**Does this mean that the level of service is reduced?** No

**Is this option directly relating to a reduction in a statutory service?** No

**Can further reductions take place without the Council failing to meet its statutory duty(ies)?** No

### Benefits (advantages) of this option

- There will be no immediate changes to the service the Council currently provides.
- The Council will continue to provide transport arrangements to support young people aged 16 to 19 access appropriate further education and training in their nearest education provider, maximising accessibility of courses and future pathways to employment and higher education
- Bus operators will continue with contracts so no negative impact on local businesses.
- This option maximises the number of learners that will choose WM Post 16 education, supporting the Council's aims with respect to the WESP

### Consequences (disadvantages) of this option

- The Council will fail to achieve any short term or long-term financial savings
- This potentially puts other services at risk as savings would have to be found from elsewhere
- The cost of running the service in the future is likely to increase due to operators/travel fare increases although contract price increases are built into the MTFP.
- By continuing to support access to English Medium post-16 education courses outside the county borough, the Council will fail to maximise pupil numbers for the local post 16 education college
- Ongoing budget pressures may mean that a different solution to Post 16 transport is required in future to ensure it is sustainable for the long-term. Alternative options may need to be revisited.

## Consultation Questionnaire and Drop in Events

There is a public questionnaire available on the MTCBC website where all stakeholders are invited to complete. We want your views on the proposed options to change the current post-16 home to school transport provision. Paper copies are available upon request from [post16transport@merthyr.gov.uk](mailto:post16transport@merthyr.gov.uk)

There will be two 'drop in events' which are as follows:-

The College, Merthyr Tydfil on 12<sup>th</sup> June 2024 from 16:00pm – 18:00pm  
 Soar, Merthyr Tydfil on 17<sup>th</sup> July 2024 from 16:00pm – 18:00pm

Your views matter, please tell us what you think about the proposals by:

- completing the online response form at MTCBC Consultation Page

[Consultation – Post16 School/college Transport | Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council](#)



- answering the consultation questions and adding your points of view on this form.
- please return the form to the free post address at the bottom of the form.

**Please note that all comments must contain the full name and full postal address of the person making the comments.**

**The closing date for responses to this consultation is 09<sup>th</sup> August, 2024.**

**Unfortunately, no responses received after this date can be considered by the Council.**

Consultation responses will not be counted as objections to the proposals, although considered by Cabinet when making its decision.

### **CONSULTATION QUESTIONS**

**By entering numbers 1-4 (1 = Most preferred and 4 = Least preferred), please rank the options according to your preference:**

**Option 1** – Cost recovering service with full saving, costs passed to pupils (will produce 100% saving)

**Option 2** – Streamline service - Provide free post-16 transport only to The College Merthyr Tydfil, Ysgol Gyfun Rhydywaun for pupils choosing Welsh-medium post-16.

**Option 3** – Remove the service (will produce 100% saving)

**Option 4** - Remain as is (no savings)

If you have any comments or suggestions on options we may have not considered, please comment below:

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**Welsh Language Impact**

1. What, in your opinion, would be the likely effects of the proposals on the Welsh language? We are particularly interested in any likely effects on opportunities to use the Welsh language and on not treating the Welsh language less favourably than English.

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2. Do you think that there are opportunities to promote any positive effects? Do you think that there are opportunities to mitigate any adverse effects?

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.....

.....

Please tick the box below if you wish to be notified of publication of the consultation report.

☐

If you wish to be notified of the publication of the consultation report, please supply your contact details:

**Your Name:**.....

**Address:** .....

**Postcode:** .....

**Email Address:** .....

**Date:** .....

Any responses received can be requested under the Freedom of Information Act and may have to be made public. However, any information that would identify an individual such as name, email address and postal address would be removed.

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Post 16 Transport  
Director of Education  
Learning Department  
Civic Centre  
Castle Street  
Merthyr Tydfil  
CF47 8AN

**Please return this form to Merthyr Tydfil County Borough  
Council no later than Friday 9<sup>th</sup> August 2024**

Please tell us whether you are responding as:

		✓	Name of School/Provision
1.	Parent		
2.	Pupil		
3.	Governor		
4.	Member of staff		
5.	Local resident		
6.	Other (please specify)		

## About You

In order to ensure we capture the views and lived experiences of all protected characteristic groups, it would be really helpful if you could answer the following questions about yourself. These questions are optional.

All answers remain totally anonymous and are purely for data collection purposes. By completing all/some of the questions it gives us a better understanding of who has completed the questionnaire as we want to hear from different people.

## WHICH WARD DO YOU LIVE IN?

- ☐ Aberfan/Merthyr Vale
- ☐ Bedlinog/Trelewis
- ☐ Cyfarthfa
- ☐ Dowlais/Pant
- ☐ Gurnos
- ☐ Park
- ☐ Penydarren
- ☐ Plymouth
- ☐ Town
- ☐ Treharris
- ☐ Vaynor
- ☐ I don't live in Merthyr Tydfil

## I AM

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Prefer not to say
- ☐ Prefer to self-describe Please describe:

### WHAT BEST DESCRIBES YOUR GENDER?

- ☐ Man
- ☐ Woman
- ☐ Non-binary
- ☐ Prefer not to say
- ☐ Prefer to self-describe. Please describe:

### AGE

- ☐ 16-25
- ☐ 26-39
- ☐ 40-49
- ☐ 50-65
- ☐ 66-75
- ☐ 76-85
- ☐ 86-95
- ☐ 96+
- ☐ Prefer not to say

### SEXUAL ORIENTATION

- ☐ Asexual
- ☐ Bisexual
- ☐ Gay or Lesbian
- ☐ Heterosexual
- ☐ Prefer not to say
- ☐ Please describe:

### MARITAL STATUS

- ☐ Civil Partnership or Married
- ☐ Living with a Partner

- ☐ Single
- ☐ Prefer not to say
- ☐ Separated
- ☐ Divorced
- ☐ Widowed
- ☐ Please describe:

## DISABILITY

- ☐ I am not disabled
- ☐ Hearing Impaired
- ☐ Learning Difficulties
- ☐ Physical/Mobility Impaired
- ☐ Speech Impaired
- ☐ Visually Impaired
- ☐ Prefer not to say
- ☐ Please describe:

## MAIN LANGUAGE

- ☐ English
- ☐ Welsh
- ☐ British Sign Language (BSL)
- ☐ Prefer not to say
- ☐ Please describe

## PREGNANCY AND MATERNITY

- ☐ Pregnant
- ☐ Maternity
- ☐ Not applicable
- ☐ Prefer not to say

**WHAT IS YOUR ETHNIC GROUP:**

- ☐ WHITE - Welsh
- ☐ WHITE - English
- ☐ WHITE - Scottish
- ☐ WHITE - Northern Irish
- ☐ WHITE - British
- ☐ WHITE - Irish
- ☐ WHITE - Gypsy or Irish Traveller
- ☐ WHITE - Other background
- ☐ MIXED/MULTIPLE ETHNIC GROUPS - White and Black Caribbean
- ☐ MIXED/MULTIPLE ETHNIC GROUPS - White and Black African
- ☐ MIXED/MULTIPLE ETHNIC GROUPS - White and Asian
- ☐ MIXED/MULTIPLE ETHNIC GROUPS - Other Mixed/Multiple ethnic background
- ☐ ASIAN/ASIAN BRITISH - Indian
- ☐ ASIAN/ASIAN BRITISH - Pakistani
- ☐ ASIAN/ASIAN BRITISH - Other Asian background
- ☐ BLACK /AFRICAN/CARIBBEAN/BLACK BRITISH - African
- ☐ BLACK /AFRICAN/CARIBBEAN/BLACK BRITISH - Caribbean
- ☐ BLACK /AFRICAN/CARIBBEAN/BLACK BRITISH - Other background
- ☐ OTHER ETHNIC GROUP - Arab
- ☐ OTHER ETHNIC GROUP - Other ethnic background
- ☐ If you answered 'Other', please describe:

**RELIGION OR BELIEF**

- ☐ Buddhist
- ☐ Christian
- ☐ Hindu
- ☐ Humanist
- ☐ Jewish
- ☐ Muslim
- ☐ Sikh
- ☐ Prefer not to say

- ☐ No Religion
- ☐ Please describe:

## Appendix 'A'

### **Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council - Integrated Impact Assessment**

(Includes Well-being of Future Generations, Protected Characteristics, Welsh Language, Socio-economic Disadvantage, Decarbonisation, Sustainability and Biodiversity, Consultation/Engagement and Data/Evidence).



Before completing this Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA), please refer to the corresponding **guidance document**, which provides essential background information. An IIA MUST be completed for:

- Any Council / Cabinet report.
- Any strategic decisions being taken where due regard is required to reduce inequalities of outcome resulting from socio-economic disadvantage.
- Any project (i.e. something that has a start and end date and is different from day to day business).
- Where you are implementing significant change e.g. service provision.

This IIA helps to support the Council in making informed and effective decisions whilst ensuring compliance with a range of relevant legislation. This IIA must be completed at the start of any project or proposal.

<b>Title of Report / Project:</b>	Post 16 Transport					
<b>Service:</b>	Learning – School Transport					
<b>IIA completion date:</b>	6 <sup>th</sup> February 2024 (Updated 1 <sup>st</sup> July 2024)					
<b>Type of proposal:</b> (please place an X in the relevant box)	X	Policy		Strategy		Plan
		Practice		Restructure		Procedure
	Other (please identify):					
<b>Give a brief description of the proposal including the aims, and any links to relevant reports or documents:</b>	To amend the Post 16 Transport policy to either i. charge for all Post 16 Transport provided to ensure cost recovery, ii. streamline service to only provide to The College, Merthyr and WM provision out of county, iii. remove all Post 16 Transport, or iv. Retain the status quo					



1. <b>Merthyr Tydfil Well-being Objectives</b>					
Does your proposal help to deliver any of the Council's Well-being Objectives? How does your proposal help to deliver any or all of the Council's Well-being Objectives?					
Well-being Objectives	Does your proposal have a positive or negative impact on the Council's Well-being Objectives? Please place an X in the relevant box.			Why have you come to this decision? Please provide an explanation.	What actions have been/will be taken to better contribute to positive impacts and/or mitigate any negative impacts? How will you know when this has been achieved?
	Positive	Negative	Neutral		
<b><u>'An Aspirational Merthyr Tydfil focused on learning'</u></b> We will strengthen how we enable people to grow and reach their potential.		x		By either streamlining Post 16 Transport, removing it altogether or introducing charges, the proposal has a potentially negative impact on the number of 16-19 year-olds accessing Post 16 Education.	A statutory consultation period is required prior to changing the Council's Home to School Transport policy in line with the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure, 2008.  Subject to consultation, introducing a fair and reasonable charging policy may help to ensure as wide access as possible to Post 16 Education continues and is preferable to removing Post 16 Transport altogether.
<b><u>'A Healthier Merthyr Tydfil'</u></b> We will empower people to live independent and dignified lives.		x		Streamlining or removing the provision of Post 16 Transport may reduce the number of pupils accessing courses to secure pathways to skilled employment – also there will be a reduction in contracts to local businesses providing the transport.	Subject to consultation, introducing a fair and reasonable charging policy may help to ensure as wide access as possible to Post 16 Education continues and may be preferable to removing Post 16 Transport that is currently provided.
<b><u>'A Safe &amp; Prosperous Merthyr Tydfil'</u></b> We will support how our economy recovers and grows; ensuring people feel safe in their local area.			X	Neutral impact	
<b><u>'A Clean &amp; Green Merthyr Tydfil'</u></b> We will support the creation of a clean and green environment now and in the future.			X	Neutral impact	
<b>Sources of evidence to support the above (please use this information when completing the section 'Data and Evidence'):</b>   					

## 2. Sustainable Development Principles (The Five Ways of Working)

### Does your proposal demonstrate you have met the sustainable development principles (five ways of working)?

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 requires the Council to consider how any proposals improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being, whilst also looking to the future, planning for the long term and ensuring that we do not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Please consider the national well-being goals when completing this section.

Five Ways of Working	How does your proposal demonstrate you have met the five ways of working when developing the proposal?	Are there any additional actions to be taken to better contribute to the five ways of working and/or mitigate any negative impacts? How will you know when this has been achieved?
<b>Long Term</b> - Thinking and planning for the long term, balancing short term and long term needs.	Financial implications and risks have been considered in the context of short, medium and long-term needs.	Following any statutory consultation, each option consulted on will be reconsidered against each of the five ways of working, in light of the feedback received.
<b>Prevention</b> - Preventing problems occurring or getting worse.	This risk assessment considers the impact of possible options.  Further consideration will be given to mitigating negative impacts identified following consultation.	As above
<b>Integration</b> - Impact on our well-being objectives, national well-being goals and the well-being objectives of other public bodies.	The integration and alignment to other strategic priorities has been considered in the options appraisal and reflects in benefits/consequences and the risk assessments.	As above
<b>Collaboration</b> - Acting in collaboration with others inside and outside the Council.	This proposal has been developed in collaboration with senior Education staff, the lead school transport officers and following a review of previous school transport efficiency proposals.	As above
<b>Involvement</b> - Involving people with an interest in achieving the well-being goals and who reflect the diversity of our communities.	A statutory consultation period is required prior to recommending any school transport policy changes to Council.	As above

### Sources of evidence to support the above (please use this information when completing the section 'Data and Evidence'):

Consultation Report

### 3. Protected Characteristics (including Welsh Language)

**Does your proposal directly impact on service users, employees and/or the wider community, including the nine protected characteristic groups and Welsh language as identified below?**

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires the Council to have 'due regard' to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different groups. Please note that an individual may have more than one protected characteristic.

Protected Characteristics	Does your proposal have a positive or negative impact on service users, employees and/or the wider community, including the nine protected characteristic groups and Welsh language? Please place an X in the relevant box.			Why have you come to this decision? Please provide an explanation.	What actions have been/will be taken to better contribute to positive impacts and/or mitigate any negative impacts? How will you know when this has been achieved?
	Positive	Negative	Neutral		
<b>Age</b> - People of all ages.		X		Potential streamlining / removal of Post 16 Transport or introduction of charges that could reduce the number of people aged 16-19, able to access further education.	Consider solution that minimises any negative impacts on numbers of pupils likely to access Post 16 education
<b>Disability</b> - People with disabilities/long term conditions.			X	Not relevant to proposal	
<b>Gender Reassignment</b> - People whose gender identity or gender expression is different to the sex they were assigned at birth.			X	Not relevant to proposal	
<b>Marriage and Civil Partnership</b> - People who are married or in a civil partnership.			X	Not relevant to proposal	
<b>Pregnancy and Maternity</b> - Women who are pregnant and/or on maternity leave.			X	Not relevant to proposal	
<b>Race</b> - People from black, Asian and minority ethnic communities and different racial backgrounds.			X	Not relevant to proposal	
<b>Religion or Belief</b> - People with different religions and beliefs including people with no beliefs.		X		Potential streamlining / removal of Post 16 Transport or introduction of charges that could reduce the number of people able to access further education in a faith-based institution.	Consider solution that minimises any negative impacts on numbers of pupils in this category likely to access Post 16 education.
<b>Sex (Gender)</b> - Women and men, girls and boys and those who self-identify their gender.			X	Not relevant to proposal	

<b>Sexual Orientation</b> - Lesbian, gay, bisexual, heterosexual.			X	Not relevant to proposal	
<b>Welsh Language</b> The Welsh Language Wales Measure 2011 and the Welsh Language Standards require the Council to have 'due regard' for the positive or negative impact a proposal may have on opportunities to use the Welsh language and ensuring the Welsh language is treated no less favourably than the English language.					
<b>Welsh Language</b> - Opportunities for people to use and promote the Welsh language, treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language, compliance with Welsh Language Standards, links with internal and external Welsh Language strategies.		X		<p>Potential removal of Post 16 Transport or the introduction of charges could reduce the number of people who access further education in a welsh-medium education institution</p> <p>The above proposals to remove or charge for Post 16 transport, disproportionately affect Welsh language students as all have to travel over 3 miles out of county unlike the majority of English language students who are able to attend their preferred post 16 provider within 3 miles of their home.</p> <p>This may result in some WM learners instead choosing an EM post-16 education because of cost and travel arrangements</p> <p>This may result in a bigger fall in learners accessing WM post 16 education than EM post 16 education because of cost and travel arrangements</p> <p>This may result in a reduction in the number of Welsh speakers in the County Borough and for those who no longer choose WM Post 16 education will reduce the opportunities for pupils to use the Welsh Language (at school, socially, and/or in the community)</p> <p>If Post 16 transport is removed altogether there is likely to be a significant negative impact on the number of pupils leaving post 16 education proficient in the Welsh language, limiting suitable candidates for Welsh language speaking jobs and contributing negatively to the Council's WESP.</p> <p>If removed altogether this will negatively impact</p>	<p>Consider solution that minimises any negative impacts on numbers of pupils likely to access Post 16 education through the medium of Welsh.</p> <p>A charging policy could significantly mitigate the negative impacts arising from removing Post 16 transport altogether, though this would need to be considered further to further address negative impacts and the disproportionate impact between WM and EM learners.</p> <p>E.g. if a cost-recovery charging policy is decided upon then this may require a discounted charge for WM learners should be considered.</p> <p>One of the options is to streamline the service but retain the free transport to Welsh Medium providers. This would have a positive impact on the Welsh Language compared to other options and would be as favourable as the status quo position. Overall, a streamlined position may be better for MW learners, as financial savings are provided which benefits the Council and the sustainability of the service, without impacting free transport for learners choosing Welsh Medium.</p> <p>If Post 16 transport was removed altogether further consideration would need to be given to mitigating the adverse impacts on the Welsh Language.</p> <p>Further consideration will be given to mitigating the potentially negative impacts and increasing the positive impacts by asking this as a direct question in the consultation.</p>

			<p>the number of Welsh speakers in the County Borough and reduce the opportunities for pupils to use the Welsh Language (at school, socially, and/or in the community)</p> <p>If either charges are introduced or Post 16 provision is removed altogether there may be a negative impact on the numbers of parents choosing Welsh Medium education at Primary and Secondary if there are barriers to completing the education pathway fully through the medium of Welsh.</p> <p>There may also be a further negative impact on language progression as pupils move between stages of education as some parents may choose to opt out of WM education if there is not a pathway fully through the medium of Welsh.</p> <p>If there was a negative impact on the numbers of WM pupils accessing Nursery, Primary, Secondary and / or Post 16 Education then this could potentially impact negatively on the viability of local WM primary schools and the WM secondary school that currently provides Post 16 education. This needs to be considered further.</p>	
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**Sources of evidence to support the above (please use this information when completing the section 'Data and Evidence'):**

Consider consultation report / outcomes. Review impacts on protected characteristics prior to making final recommendations. In line with the Welsh Language Standards Regulations, 2015, a 'conscientious effort' will be made to consider the impact of any decision on the Welsh Language during the consultation and considerate to consultation feedback received and any other evidence that is able to be obtained.

#### **4. Socio-economic Disadvantage (Strategic Decisions)**

##### **Does your proposal impact/deliver better outcomes for those who are experiencing socio-economic disadvantage?**

The Socio-economic Duty places a responsibility on the Council to have 'due regard' to how we can reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage when making strategic decisions. This duty gives us an opportunity to do things differently and put tackling inequality at the heart of key decision-making. Socio-economic disadvantage means living on a low income compared to others in Wales, with little or no accumulated wealth, leading to greater material deprivation, restricting the ability to access basic goods and services.

Please consider: Single parents and vulnerable families, pensioners, carers, looked after children, single adult households, armed forces community, people with low literacy/numeracy, people who are homeless, people who have experienced the asylum system, students, people of all ages leaving a care setting, people living in the most deprived areas of Wales, people misusing substances, people involved in the criminal justice system, people who are not in education, employment or training. Please see the guidance document for more information.

Socio-economic Disadvantage	Does your proposal have a positive or negative impact on socio-economic disadvantage for service users, employees and/or the wider community? Please place an X in the relevant box.			Why have you come to this decision? Please provide an explanation.	What actions have been/will be taken to better contribute to positive impacts and/or mitigate any negative impacts? What steps will be taken to reduce inequalities of outcome? How will you know when this has been achieved?
	Positive	Negative	Neutral		
<b>Low Income/Income Poverty</b> - Unable to afford to maintain regular payments such as bills, food, clothing, transport, other essential items etc.		x		By streamlining / removing or introducing charges for Post 16 transport additional cost pressure is placed on families experiencing socio-economic disadvantage to support their children access post 16 education.	If introducing charges a fair and reasonable charge should be considered even if full cost recovery is not achieved.  Helpful payment terms spread throughout the year should also be considered.  Charges should apply equally to all colleges/schools to smooth costs for those required to travel the greatest distances.  Consideration could be given to providing a discounted rate to pupils in receipt of EMA (Education Maintenance Allowance).
<b>Low and/or No Wealth</b> - Enough money to meet basic living costs and pay bills but have no savings to deal with any unexpected spends and no provision for the future.		X		By streamlining / removing or introducing charges for Post 16 transport additional cost pressure is placed on families experiencing socio-economic disadvantage to support their children access post 16 education.	See above
<b>Material Deprivation</b> - Unable to access basic goods and services i.e. financial products like life insurance, repair/replace broken electrical goods, warm home, leisure and hobbies etc.		X		By streamlining / removing or introducing charges for Post 16 transport additional cost pressure is placed on families experiencing socio-economic disadvantage to support their children access post 16 education.	See above
<b>Area Deprivation</b> - Where you live e.g. rural areas, and where you work		X		By streamlining / removing or introducing charges for Post 16	See above

e.g. accessibility of public transport.				transport additional cost pressure is placed on families experiencing socio-economic disadvantage to support their children access post 16 education. This is exacerbated in areas of deprivation where public transport may not be as accessible.	
<b>Socio-economic Background -</b> Social class i.e. parents' education, employment and income.		x		By streamlining / removing or introducing charges for Post 16 transport additional cost pressure is placed on families experiencing socio-economic disadvantage to support their children access post 16 education.	See above
<b>Socio-economic Disadvantage -</b> What cumulative impact will the proposal have on people or groups because of their protected characteristic(s) or vulnerability or because they are already disadvantaged?		x		By streamlining / removing or introducing charges for Post 16 transport additional cost pressure is placed on families experiencing socio-economic disadvantage to support their children access post 16 education.	See above
<b>Sources of evidence to support the above (please use this information when completing the section 'Data and Evidence'):</b>  Consider consultation report / outcomes. Review impact on socio-economic disadvantage prior to making final recommendations.					



## 5. Decarbonisation and Climate Change Objectives

### Does your proposal help to deliver the Council's Decarbonisation Plan?

How does your proposal impact on the 6 key themes to help achieve the Council's commitment to become carbon neutral by 2030?

Welsh Government is aiming to achieve a carbon neutral public sector by 2030. This is driven by key legislation including: Well Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015; Environment (Wales) Act 2016; Climate Change (Wales) Regulations 2018.

In response to this the Council has developed a Net Zero Roadmap with a themed approach to deliver our Decarbonisation Plan. This will be delivered through the 6 key themes below:

Decarbonisation Plan Theme Areas	Does your proposal have a positive or negative impact on the Council's Decarbonisation Plan? Please place an X in the relevant box.			Why have you come to this decision? Please provide an explanation.	What actions have been/will be taken to better contribute to positive impacts and/or mitigate any negative impacts? How will you know when this has been achieved?
	Positive	Negative	Neutral		
<b>Theme 1 – Buildings and Planning</b> Reducing or removing GHG emissions from existing property portfolio and new developments e.g. heat pump systems, solar panels.			X	Proposal has no impact	N/a
<b>Theme 2 – Travel and Transport</b> Reducing or removing GHG emissions in the Council's fleet and equipment, and supporting sustainable travel e.g. electric vehicles, bike schemes, EV charging.	X	X	X	If post 16 transport is streamline / removed there will be fewer contracted vehicles on the road which is positive.  However, students will require alternative transport, and this may result in more vehicles on the road doing the same journey and so removing Post 16 transport may have a negative impact overall.  Consider further following consultation.	Consider further following consultation.
<b>Theme 3 – Procurement of Goods &amp; Services</b> Consideration of carbon reduction options in procurement process, Consider ways to reduce supply			X	Proposal has no impact	N/a

chain impacts.					
<b>Theme 4 – Outsourced services (Leisure Trust)</b> Reduce and remove GHG emissions from leisure facilities e.g. low carbon options in new building or refurbishments <b>(N.B. only complete this section if direct impact on Leisure Trust).</b>			X	Proposal has no impact	N/a
<b>Theme 5 – Land Management</b> Maximising the Council's land to increase biodiversity in open spaces, parks and woodlands.			X	Proposal has no impact	N/a
<b>Theme 6 – Governance</b> The Council is required to measure and report carbon emissions and carbon absorption. Are there outputs that can be captured and recorded from this project/decision?			X	Proposal has no impact	N/a

Sources of evidence to support the above (please use this information when completing the section 'Data and Evidence'):

## 6. Biodiversity and resilience of Ecosystems

### How does your proposal impact on Biodiversity and therefore the resilience of Ecosystems?

Under Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 we must seek to maintain and enhance Biodiversity within the proper exercise of our functions. In doing so, we must also seek to promote the resilience of Ecosystems.

Biodiversity and resilience of Ecosystems	What is the expected impact on Biodiversity? Please place an X in the relevant box.			Why have you come to this decision? Please provide an explanation.	What actions have been/will be taken to better contribute to the maintenance and enhancement of Biodiversity? How do you know when this has been achieved?
	Maintained	Enhanced	Reduced		
To maintain and enhance Biodiversity (and therefore promote the resilience of Ecosystems).	X			No impact on biodiversity	N/a

Sources of evidence to support the above (please use this information when completing the section 'Data and Evidence'):

## 7. Consultation and Engagement

### What consultation and/or engagement has been undertaken to inform the development of the proposal?

There may be a legal requirement to consult in some instances, or a legitimate expectation that consultation will take place. Where it has been determined that consultation is required, the Gunning Principles must be adhered to.

- The proposals are still at a formative stage.
- There is sufficient information to give 'intelligent consideration'.
- There is adequate time for consideration and response.
- 'Conscientious consideration' must be given to the consultation responses before a decision is made.

Please consider: Protected Characteristic groups, those who are experiencing socio-economic disadvantage, communities and places of interest, other stakeholders, forums, community groups and community councils. Please see the guidance document for more information.

Consultation and Engagement	Has consultation and/or engagement been undertaken on the proposal? Please place an X in the relevant box.			Briefly describe any recent or planned consultation and/or engagement exercises, paying particular attention to evidencing the Gunning Principles. Please identify when the consultation and/or engagement took place or will take place, or why it is not required.	Who was consulted/engaged with? Was sufficient information provided to allow an informed decision on the proposal to be made? What were the key findings of the consultation and/or engagement? Have these findings been taken into account? Is further consultation and/or engagement required?
	Undertaken	Due to be undertaken	Not required		
Requirement for consultation and/or engagement to be undertaken, or a legitimate expectation that it will take place.		X		A statutory public consultation is required to change a school transport policy in line with the Learner Travel Measure (Wales), 2008.  This will be undertaken subject to agreement with Council.	

Sources of evidence to support the above (please use this information when completing the section 'Data and Evidence'):

Learner Travel Measure (Wales), 2008

## 8. Data and Evidence

### What data or other evidence has been used to inform the development of the proposal?

Evidence may include the outcome of previous consultation or engagement exercises, existing databases, pilot projects, review of customer complaints and compliments and other service user feedback, national and regional data, academic publications and reports, future trends, horizon scanning, business plans etc. Consider the sources of evidence from all of the sections in your explanation.

Data and Evidence	Has data and evidence been used in order to inform the proposal? Please place an X in the relevant box.		What data or other evidence has been used to inform the development of the proposal? What have been the key findings of this data and evidence? Has this data and evidence helped to inform the proposal?	How has the data and evidence helped to inform the proposal? If the data and evidence did not support the proposal, why was this? Have there been any gaps identified? If so, what steps will be taken to cover the identified gaps?
	Yes	No		
<b>Data and evidence used in order to inform the proposal.</b>	x		School Transport contracts, pupil numbers, destinations and costs.  Previous public consultations on Post 16 Transport.	
<b>Sources of evidence to support the above:</b>  School Transport Consultation & Council reports 2014 and 2018 Welsh Language Standards Regulations, 2015				

## 9. Summary

**As a result of completing this IIA, please identify below;**

- The number of positive, negative or neutral scores for the Council's Well-being objectives, the sustainable development principles, protected characteristics including Welsh Language and Socio-economic disadvantage.
- If consultation and/or engagement has been undertaken, is due to take place or is not required.
- If data and evidence has been used in order to inform the proposal.
- If the proposal maintains, enhances or reduces the resilience of ecosystems.

**The table below should then be included in the related Council/Cabinet report.**

	Positive Impacts	Negative Impacts	Neutral
1. Merthyr Tydfil Well-being Objectives	0 of 4	2 of 4	2 of 4
2. Sustainable Development Principles	2 of 5	0 of 5	3 of 5
3. Protected Characteristics (including Welsh Language)	0 of 10	3 of 10	7 of 10
4. Socio-economic Disadvantage	0 of 6	6 of 6	0 of 6
5. Decarbonisation	0 of 6	0 of 6	6 of 6
6. Biodiversity and the resilience of Ecosystems	Maintained	Enhanced	Reduced
	1 of 1	0 of 1	0 of 1
7. Consultation and Engagement	Undertaken	Due to be Undertaken	Not Required
	0 of 1	1 of 1	0 of 1
8. Data and Evidence	Yes		No
	1 of 1		0 of 1

### Summary

<b>The main positive impacts are:</b>	The proposal contains options for moderate to significant financial savings for the Council and includes a recommended option that secures sustainable long-term provision of Post 16 transport.
<b>The main negative impacts are:</b>	<p>The proposal contains options that streamline, remove or introduce charges for Post 16 transport which has potentially negative impacts for young people aged 16-19, those seeking a Welsh-Medium or faith-based education, and those from a background of socio-economic disadvantage.</p> <p>There is potentially a disproportionate negative impact on learners choosing WM post-16 education due to the only provision being out of county and requiring transport to access. This requires further 'conscientious effort' to be made when considering the impacts on the Welsh Language as part of any final decision making.</p> <p>Due to the potentially negative impact on numbers of young people accessing Post 16 education and securing pathways to higher education, training and employment, the proposal may also have a negative impact on the Council's Wellbeing objectives; 'An Aspirational Merthyr Tydfil focused on Learning' and 'A Healthier Merthyr Tydfil'.</p>

#### 10. Actions

**Based on the summary of your positive and negative impacts identified in the Summary section above, will you need to make changes to your proposal to better contribute to positive impacts and/or mitigate any negative impacts?**

Please identify any further actions you will need to undertake to better inform this proposal e.g. whether further consultation is required or more data and evidence is required to better inform the proposal.

What are you going to do?	Estimated completion date	Who will be responsible?	Timelines/Milestones e.g. 6 months/over a year, etc.	Progress
Undertake a statutory consultation	July 2024	Education Department / School Transport Team	Commence May 2024	Subject to Council approval

#### 11. Version Control

**The IIA should be used at the earliest stages of the development of the proposal and decision making process, and then honed and refined throughout to strengthen and shape the proposal. This section will act as an audit trail to evidence how the IIA has been developed over time.**

Please use the table below to keep a record of this process so that we can demonstrate how we have delivered the sustainable development principles.

Version No.	Decision making stage	Date considered	Brief description of any amendments made following consideration
1.0	Business case proposal to consult on options to amend Post 16 Transport policy	9 <sup>th</sup> February 2024	
2.0	Updated IIA to reflect additional consideration on potential impacts on the Welsh Language	4 <sup>th</sup> July 2024	Additional potential impacts and mitigations have been considered and reflected in the IIA in the section on Welsh language (Protected Characteristics – Section 3) and in the overall summary of potential impacts (Section 9)