



Neuadd y Sir / County Hall, Llandrindod, Powys, LD1 5LG

QUESTIONS AT ANY TIME TO CABINET PORTFOLIO HOLDERS

Response by the Cabinet Member:

Firstly, can I apologise for the delay in responding. There has been many discussions around this and I can only apologise for coming back to you late.

I've looked into the background of the service and its worth noting that in April 2019, the Home to School Transport Budget was transferred from the Schools Service to the Highways, Transport & Recycling Service [HTR]. When the budget transferred, so did the responsibility for the policy. The HTR service reviewed the policy, consulted on it and the Cabinet agreed it in August 2020 for implementation in September 2021. The previous Cabinet Members were keen to retain an element of choice in the policy, which is why the policy states in the qualification criteria that "Home to school transport will be provided for learners who ordinarily reside in Powys to attend their nearest suitable school or catchment school".

The word Catchment has been in the school transport and admissions policy for many years, however, where we refer to Catchment Areas, we must be able to produce maps of the catchment areas so that parents can make informed decisions on their choice of school and any transport implications. Unfortunately, it would appear that the Council has never produced 'proper' catchment area maps, so there was and still is a lot of transport decisions based on historical 'custom and practice' which highlights areas of inconsistency where some communities have a choice of schools and transport, where other communities don't. Therefore, the Council recognises the need to produce and publish catchment area maps, which is being led by the school admissions team. Once the catchment area maps are finalised and agreed, we intend to review our transport policy to align it with the school admissions policy so that transport is provided consistently to the catchment area school only in order to make this fair and equitable across the Council.

Unfortunately, and to answer your point directly, there is no definitive list available at the moment that describes the information you are requesting for the reasons stated above. However, I have had assurance from Matt Perry and the team who are committed to revising, aligning and implementing our School Admissions Policy along with the School Transport Policy to ensure that transport is provided fairly and equitably across the County.

I am happy to meet with you anytime to clarify points that you feel we may not have covered in this response. As we start to assess the realignment of the School Admissions and School Transport Policy you would be very welcome look at any policy change as we move through the process.