

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL – EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

TITLE: Cheshire East Holiday and Activities Food Programme

VERSION CONTROL

Date	Version	Author	Description of Changes
31/010/2022	FINAL	Gill Betton	NA

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL –EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Stage 1 Description: Fact finding (about your policy / service /

Department	People		Lead officer responsible for assessment		Gill Betton, Head of Children’s Development and Partnerships	
Service	Children’s Development and Partnerships		Other members of team undertaking assessment		NA	
Date	31 October 2022		Version 1			
Type of document (mark as appropriate)	Strategy	Project	Function	Policy	Procedure	Service
Is this a new/ existing/ revision of an existing document (please mark as appropriate)	New		New		Revision	
Title and subject of the impact assessment (include a brief description of the aims, outcomes, operational issues as appropriate and how it fits in with the wider aims of the organisation) Please attach a copy of the strategy/ plan/ function/ policy/ procedure/ service	<p>Children and Young People’s Travel Support Review The local authority is required by both the Education Act 1996 and the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to make travel arrangements for certain eligible children to attend school. This includes the duty to promote sustainable modes of travel for children and young people of compulsory school age.</p> <p>In recent years there has been an increase in demand for school transport, in particular in relation to children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). The costs of providing transport have also increased significantly due to a reduction in the supply of transport providers and an increase in their running costs. The council approved a one-year increased budget for 2022-23, whilst a full review was carried out.</p> <p>EDGE Public Solutions was appointed to carry out the independent review. The aims of the review were to explore the current arrangements and costs of school and other transport and to identify recommendations and a detailed action plan to reduce the budget pressures and improve the effectiveness and customer experience in relation to sustainable travel support for children and young people.</p>					

A copy of the final review report is attached at Appendix 1. This is due for consideration by the Children and Families Committee on 14 November 2022, with the following recommendations:

- a. Note and agree the report contents and the underlying principles and cultural change set out in the independent review of travel support for children and young people at Appendix 1.
- b. Endorse the proposal to procure specialist professional capacity, funded from the children and families transformation fund, to drive the initial transformation plans, achievable savings and establishment of the integrated travel support team.
- c. Delegate authority to the Executive Director of Children and Families, in consultation with the Executive Director of Place, to make decisions in relation to:
 - i. The roll out of a three-year transformation and modernisation programme to deliver the recommendations in the report, including a new strategy and integrated travel team, supported by clear performance and budget management reporting and consultation, communication and engagement with stakeholders.
 - ii. Proposal to streamline and revise the school transport policy and process from application to delivery, including a new application, reassessment and appeals process and the immediate development of alternative travel solutions, such as personal budgets and independent travel training.
 - iii. Proposals to embark on a comprehensive exercise around the operational delivery and re-procurement of school transport to improve the effectiveness of routes, encourage and support new suppliers to Cheshire East, improve value-for-money and the experiences for families.
 - iv. Developing a business case for investment for small capital schemes to improve safe walking routes on potential high-volume routes, including the production of an agreed protocol and strategy for implementing safe walking routes and supporting the council's priority outcomes for active travel and decarbonisation.
- d. Agree to receive interim reports around specific actions that require committee approval, along with an initial update report within six months and annually thereafter.

<p>Who are the main stakeholders and have they been engaged with? (e.g. general public, employees, Councillors, partners, specific audiences, residents)</p>	<p><u>Stakeholders</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cheshire East children and young people in receipt of travel support, including those with SEND • Cheshire East parents/carers whose children are in receipt of travel support • Parents who purchase spare seats for their child/children on existing transport • Cheshire East primary schools • Cheshire East secondary • Cheshire East special schools • Cheshire East further education colleges • Cheshire East pupil referral units • Out of borough schools and settings that Cheshire East children travel to • Other settings that children currently receive travel support to travel to/from • Local bus operators • Local taxi operators • Neighbouring local authorities • Elected members • Corporate Leadership Team • Cheshire East School Transport Team • Cheshire East Strategic Parking and Transport Service, including active travel • Cheshire East Licencing Team • Cheshire East Highways Team • Children’s Social Care Teams • Cheshire East Education Teams • Cheshire East enabling services – Legal, Procurement, Finance, Communication, Audit, Risk Management, HR <p><u>Engagement</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A briefing was sent to all stakeholders in May 2022 setting out the reason for the review, the aims, timeline and how to get involved. • A steering group of key officers from the council and Parent Carer Forum was formed in May 2022 and meets monthly to help to shape the review.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The independent reviewer contacted a number of the above stakeholders to inform the review findings. • Corporate Leadership team have been updated through reports. • Elected members have received a number of papers including the budget position around school transport and received a paper in May 2022 outlining the scope and purpose of the review. • A comprehensive communication and engagement plan will ensure that key stakeholders are involved in the proposed change programme and kept informed as plans develop. 	
Consultation/ involvement carried out.	YES	NO
What consultation method(s) did you use?	The travel support steering group were consulted with from the outset. This included scoping out the initial review to the final review recommendations. Formal consultation is expected to take place in relation to specific changes proposed in the review recommendations.	

Stage 2 Initial Screening

<p>Who is affected and what evidence have you considered to arrive at this analysis? (This may or may not include the stakeholders listed above)</p>	<p>Whilst the implementation of the recommendations is likely to have some impact on all of the above stakeholders, the main impact will be on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cheshire East children and young people who are not in receipt of travel support • Cheshire East parents/carers whose children are in receipt of travel support • Parents who purchase spare seats for their child/children on existing transport • Local bus operators • Local taxi operators • Cheshire East School Transport Team • Cheshire East Strategic Parking and Transport Service, including active travel <p>The recommendations will impact on these groups as there is expected to be changes in the way that eligibility for travel support is assessed, procured and delivered. The move to one integrated</p>
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team will affect existing staff working within the school transport teams in children and families and the place directorate.

Current data in relation to children and young people who access travel support is set out below:

Date	Children with SEND	Mainstream education children	Children supported by social care	Total
September 2022	1036	2652	24	3712

As of September 2022:

- 444 SEND children travel to out of borough settings
- 184 SEND children travel to post-16 settings.
- 390 mainstream children attend primary
- 229 mainstream children travel out of borough to settings.
- 88 mainstream children are receiving transport through hardship reasons.
- 46 mainstream children receive travel assistance due to eligibility of faith and hardship reasons.
- There were 141 contracts with personal assistants supporting children to travel to a school or setting.
- 162 are in sole occupancy travel arrangements; 9 mainstream and 153 SEND
- There were 48 children receiving travel support to faith schools; 1 SEND, 36 secondary and 11 primary children.

Travel support in Cheshire East is delivered through a network of transport contractors including bus and coach companies and private hire taxi companies. The council also has an agreement in place with the arms length company, Ansa. All contracts are expected to be delivered in line with requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

Who is intended to benefit and how

Travel support enables eligible children to access appropriate education.

	<p>There are expected to be benefits for some children and young people with SEND and their families. The review recommends that the assessment process identifies those children who will be capable of responding to travel training, being able to walk, and those passengers where the parent is willing to consider being compensated for transporting their own child or making their own arrangements if it is deemed appropriate.</p> <p>The long-term transport process for mainstream school children is that they attain increasing level of travel independence as they develop and learn to either walk to school or catch public transport. For children with SEND this is not always possible. In many cases they receive door-to-door transport from the time they start school until the time they leave college such that they do not gain the necessary travel skills that other children do. However, whilst some children with SEND will never be able to travel independently, those that can, should be given the opportunity. The recommendation to fund independent travel training will produce better outcomes for children over the long term and will have benefits for their future mobility, social integration, and employability.</p> <p>Personal travel budgets or cash grants provide flexibility to parents to make their own arrangements.</p>
<p>Could there be a different impact or outcome for some groups?</p>	<p>Implementation of the recommendations will affect children and young people aged 0-25.</p> <p>Compared to the percentage of the population, there are a higher proportion of children and young people with SEND who access travel support. As of September 2022, approximately 28% of those accessing travel support had SEND. The numbers of SEND children who receive travel support has increased significantly over recent years and this increase is set to continue.</p> <p>Parents of post-16 SEND children who receive travel support and those who buy spare seats will be affected by the proposed increase in fares.</p>
<p>Does it include making decisions based on individual characteristics, needs or circumstances?</p>	<p>Yes, proposed changes to the school transport policy and assessment process will involve making decisions on individual circumstances.</p>

<p>Are relations between different groups or communities likely to be affected? (eg will it favour one particular group or deny opportunities for others?)</p>	<p>The proposed changes will favour those children and young people who are eligible to travel support in line with statutory guidance. This is a relatively small group compared to the total population of children and young people in Cheshire East.</p> <p>Children with SEND could be more affected through proposed changes to the assessment process and review of contract arrangements. These children are often more affected by change than their mainstream counterparts, however, it is hoped that this will be a one-off change that will result in less changes on an ongoing basis.</p> <p>The proposed recommendations mean that those parents who contribute to travel support through post-16 transport and spare seats scheme will see an increase in the cost of their transport. Post-16 pupils will be signposted to the government's 16-19 bursary. This provides support to vulnerable groups and those that need financial help. For other children, whose families are in financial hardship, they have a right to free school transport if they get free school meals or you get the maximum level of Working Tax Credit, and if any of the following distance criteria apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • they are aged 8-11 and the nearest school is more than 2 miles away • they are aged 11-16, the nearest school is between 2 and 6 miles away, and there are fewer than three suitable nearer schools • they are aged 11-16 and the school is between 2 and 15 miles away and is the nearest school that meets your religious preferences
<p>Is there any specific targeted action to promote equality? Is there a history of unequal outcomes (do you have enough evidence to prove otherwise)?</p>	<p>The council works in line with the statutory guidance for school transport, which sets out which children and young people are eligible for travel support. This means that some children and young people, eg, those with SEND, are more likely to be affected by the proposed changes. We are working closely with the Parent Carer Forum to ensure that these proposed changes have positive benefits for these children.</p> <p>There are a number of children who currently receive free transport as their route to school is deemed as either hazardous (726 children) or not an available walking route (101 children).</p> <p>Hazardous routes are assessed taking into consideration a range of factors, including:</p>

- the age of the child;
- whether any potential risks might be mitigated if the child were accompanied by an adult
- the width of any roads travelled along and the existence of pavements;
- the volume and speed of traffic travelling along any roads;
- the existence or otherwise of street lighting; and
- the condition of the route at different times of the year, at the times of day that a child would be expected to travel to and from school.

Due to the above factors, a number of hazardous routes affect those living in rural areas. Children in these areas are also more likely to be eligible for travel support due to the distance they need to travel to their nearest school. The review recommends that the council conducts a programme of identification of small capital schemes to improve safe walking routes on potential high-volume routes. Also, that it agrees a protocol and strategy for implementing safe walking routes.

Is there an actual or potential negative impact on these specific characteristics? (Please tick)

Age		Y	Marriage & civil partnership		N	Religion & belief		Y
Disability		Y	Pregnancy & maternity		N	Sex		N
Gender reassignment		N	Race		N	Sexual orientation		N

Stage 3 Evidence

	What evidence do you have to support your findings? (quantitative and qualitative) Please provide additional information that you wish to include as appendices to this document, i.e., graphs, tables, charts	Level of Risk (High, Medium or Low)
Age	<p>Implementation of the recommendations will affect children and young people aged 0-25 and their families. There are a total of 3712 children aged 0-25 who currently receive travel support.</p> <p>Parents of post-16 SEND children who receive travel support and those who buy spare seats will be affected by the proposed increase in fares.</p>	High
Marriage and Civil Partnership	<p>This information is not currently collected, but children and young people from all backgrounds receive travel support. It is not expected that the review recommendations will have a greater impact on children whose parents have a particular marital status.</p>	Low
Religion	<p>There are currently 48 children receiving travel support to faith schools; 1 SEND, 36 secondary and 11 primary children. These children are subject to the same eligibility criteria as all other children, although they generally travel further to attend these schools.</p>	Medium
Disability	<p>Compared to the percentage of the population, there are a higher proportion of children and young people with SEND who access travel support. As at September 2022, 1036 children or 28% of those accessing travel support had SEND. The numbers of SEND children who receive travel support has increased significantly over recent years and this increase is set to continue.</p> <p>Parents of post-16 SEND children who receive travel support and those who buy spare seats will be affected by the proposed increase in fares.</p>	High
Pregnancy and Maternity	<p>This information is not currently collected but travel support is inclusive to any young person who meets the eligibility criteria.</p>	Low
Sex	<p>It is not expected that the review recommendations will have a greater impact on children of a particular sex.</p>	Low

Gender Reassignment	This information is not currently collected, but travel support is inclusive and open to all children and young people as long as they meet the eligibility criteria.	Low
Race	It is not expected that the review recommendations will have a greater impact on children of a particular race.	Low
Sexual Orientation	This information is not currently collected, but it is not expected that the review recommendations will have a greater impact on children of a particular sexual orientation.	Low

Stage 4 Mitigation

Protected characteristics	Mitigating action <i>Once you have assessed the impact of a policy/service, it is important to identify options and alternatives to reduce or eliminate any negative impact. Options considered could be adapting the policy or service, changing the way in which it is implemented or introducing balancing measures to reduce any negative impact. When considering each option you should think about how it will reduce any negative impact, how it might impact on other groups and how it might impact on relationships between groups and overall issues around community cohesion. You should clearly demonstrate how you have considered various options and the impact of these. You must have a detailed rationale behind decisions and a justification for those alternatives that have not been accepted.</i>	How will this be monitored?	Officer responsible	Target date
Age	<p>As part of the policy review, we will consult with relevant stakeholders to ensure that any appropriate mitigations can be put in place.</p> <p>The steering group will be reviewed to ensure it has the appropriate membership.</p> <p>Any proposed changes will be implemented in a sensitive and, if appropriate, phased to ensure</p>	The Children and Families Committee will approve the final policy	Head of service responsible for school transport	To be confirmed in the implementation plan

	that there is sufficient time to adapt to new arrangements.			
Marriage and Civil Partnership	The service will continue to be accessible and inclusive to all those with protected characteristics.	-	-	-
Religion	The service will continue to be accessible and inclusive to all those with protected characteristics.	-	-	-
Disability	<p>As part of the policy review, we will consult with relevant stakeholders to ensure that any appropriate mitigations can be put in place.</p> <p>The steering group will be reviewed to ensure it has the appropriate membership in relation to disability.</p> <p>Any proposed changes will be implemented in a sensitive and, if appropriate, phased to ensure that there is sufficient time to adapt to new arrangements.</p>	-	-	-
Pregnancy and Maternity	The service will continue to be accessible and inclusive to all those with protected characteristics.	-	-	-
Sex	The service will continue to be accessible and inclusive to all those with protected characteristics.	-	-	-
Gender Reassignment	The service will continue to be accessible and inclusive to all those with protected characteristics.	-	-	-

Race	The service will continue to be accessible and inclusive to all those with protected characteristics.	-	-	-
Sexual Orientation	The service will continue to be accessible and inclusive to all those with protected characteristics.	-	-	-

5. Review and Conclusion

The aims of the travel support review were to explore the current arrangements and costs of school and other transport and to identify recommendations and a detailed action plan to reduce the budget pressures and improve the effectiveness and customer experience in relation to sustainable travel support for children and young people. The review sets out the need to roll out a three-year transformation programme, proposing change in a number of areas of travel support under the following key areas:

- Organisation – resources, systems and performance
- Policy, assessment and shifting the travel offer
- Delivery

This EIA sets out the initial considerations of the travel support review broad recommendations. Subject to approval by the Children and Families Committee on 14 November 2022, detailed plans will be developed on the proposed changes. This is likely to result in individual EIAs on specific policy changes.

Specific actions to be taken to reduce, justify or remove any adverse impacts	How will this be monitored?	Officer responsible	Target date
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Procure additional specialist professional capacity to drive the initial transformation plans, achievable savings and establishment of the integrated travel support team.	Through the Children and Families Directorate Management Team (DMT)	Head of Service responsible for school transport	December 2022
Review the steering group terms of reference and membership and other governance arrangements in relation to the review to ensure stakeholder involvement	Reports to the Children and Families and Place DMTs	Head of Service responsible for school transport	December 2022
Develop and implement communication and engagement plan in relation to implementation of review recommendations	Reports to the Children and Families and Place DMTs	Head of Service responsible for school transport	November 2022
Increase engagement with local bus and taxi operators	Through management information to the Children and Families and Place DMTs	Head of Service for Strategic Parking and Transport Service	Asap
Please provide details and link to full action plan for actions			
When will this assessment be reviewed?	This EIA will be reviewed in line with the implementation plan as more information becomes available in relation to specific areas of the recommendations.		

Are there any additional assessments that need to be undertaken in relation to this assessment?	An update of this EIA or the completion of new EIAs are likely to be required as the policy and processes are changed.		
Lead officer sign off	Gill Betton	Date	31/10/22
Director sign off	Jacky Forster	Date	02/11/22

Please publish this completed EIA form on the relevant section of the Cheshire East website