

Section 1 – Details of the service, service change, decommissioning of the service, strategy, function or procedure

Proposal Title	Available walking routes in Prestbury and Willaston
Date of Assessment	5 June 2023
Assessment Lead Officer Name	Richard Hibbert
Directorate/Service	Place Directorate
Details of the service, service change, decommissioning of the service, strategy, function or procedure.	<p>Cheshire East Council provides travel support (also known as school transport) for nearly 3800 children and young people. This vital service enables eligible children to attend a school or college that meets their needs as close as possible to where they live. Travel support may be provided to those who live some distance away from their nearest school or college, where the route for them to walk is unsafe or who have to travel further to have their needs met, for example, in a special school.</p> <p>An independent review of travel support carried out in 2022/23 identified a number of changes to meet the pressures of existing demand and transform the way that travel support is provided to children and families.</p> <p>One of the proposed changes is that, where appropriate, transport provided because a portion of the walking route has been labelled as 'Unavailable' based upon the Councils adopted 'Available routes to school' policy 2018 should be reviewed and where it is possible (and financially viable) work should be undertaken to make those portions of the route 'Available' such that the overall requirement for provided transport can be reduced.</p> <p><i>This assessment is undertaken in accordance with Cheshire East Council's Available Routes to School Policy, which reflects guidance notes issued by Road Safety GB in 2021 'Assessment of</i></p>

	<p><i>Walked Routes to School’ and the Department for Education and Skills in 2014 ‘Home to School Travel and Transport Guidance’.</i></p> <p>A comprehensive review of opportunities to enhance walking routes will be undertaken and where financially viable proposed schemes will be brought forward. This immediate proposal is to amend two existing areas where the walking route has already been made ‘Available’ some time ago but this has not been communicated to parents / carers and the Council has continued to provide free travel assistance despite this. The two routes in question are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From Willaston to Brine Leas Academy – the area which was originally deemed as making this route unavailable to walk was an inadequate crossing point at the Cheerbrook roundabout. A traffic light controlled pedestrian crossing on the Nantwich bypass at Cheerbrook roundabout has been in place since 14 October 2008 and as such this route should have been redesignated a number of years ago. • From Prestbury to Fallibroome Academy – a scheme to put a traffic light controlled pedestrian crossing on the B5087 Prestbury Road was completed on 6 January 2020 and as such the redesignation of this route is also overdue. <p>Current pupils receiving free school transport from Prestbury to Fallibroome Academy is 122 of which c.70 will no longer be eligible for free school transport following this change.</p> <p>Current pupils receiving free school transport from Willaston to Brine Leas Academy is 9 of which 5 will no longer be eligible for free school transport following this change.</p> <p>Both of these enhancements mean that walking routes for pupils are now available and that those deemed eligible for free transport because of a lack of ‘Available’ walking route can now be reclassified as not eligible as laid out in the Councils policies: Cheshire East school transport policies</p>
<p>Who is Affected?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children & young people who are currently classified as eligible for free school transport because of the unavailability of a walking route to school.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents and carers of those students • Fallibroome Academy and Brine Leas Academy • The School Transport Team • Current transport providers to these schools
Links and impact on other services, strategies, functions or procedures.	Cheshire East Council's medium term financial strategy 2023-27 (reference 24, school transport pressures) Cheshire East school transport policies
How does the service, service change, strategy, function or procedure help the Council meet the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty?	<p>These initial proposals will affect two schools only and those pupils and parents / carers who will no longer have an entitlement to free school transport.</p> <p>This proposal once completed will mean that the Council is adhering to its current school transport policies and treating all pupils in an equitable manner, currently those who receive free school transport are an anomaly as the walking route has been 'Available' for some time and therefore pupil entitlement to free provided transport should have been removed some time ago.</p> <p>Upon implementation and therefore removal of eligibility for free provided school transport, in line with the Council's policy a 12 week notice period will be given and transport arrangements / contracts will be reviewed and vehicle sizes altered to accommodate only those pupils who remain eligible due to their distance from school.</p> <p>Discussions will be held with existing suppliers to assess whether they would wish to provide a paid for service but this will be a commercial decision for that operator, the scheduled route 19 is available on this route albeit with limited capacity.</p>

Section 2- Information – What do you know?

What do you know?	What information (qualitative and quantitative) and/or research have you used to commission/change/decommission the service, strategy, function, or procedure?
Information you used	An independent review of travel support was carried out in 2022/23 which identified a number of changes, but also recognised that the current budget would not meet demand in the short term. The proposed growth of £5.2

	<p>million over the next three years (£4 million in 2023/24) will meet the pressures of existing demand, whilst we transform the way that travel support is provided to children and families.</p> <p>Over the next three years we propose to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where appropriate, shift the offer to provide travel support for children and young people, including the increased and easier use of personal travel budgets and independent travel training. • Work together with parents and carers to introduce a customer charter that sets clear expectations between parents, the council and transport providers. • Create an integrated travel team within the council to provide a joined-up travel offer, consistent and fair policy and strategic direction. • Greater use of software to provide effective routes to meet children's needs and best use of transport. Improve the way we procure transport for children to make it more effective and to minimise change. <p>Implementation of the transformation plan will require significant input from corporate services. The transformation will require policy changes that will be subject to formal consultation and subject to approval from the children and families committee.</p> <p>This proposal forms part of these plans. In addition to the findings of the independent review we have also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewed the walking routes for hazards including reviewing the latest traffic data on the routes. • Walked the full routes to understand the actual walking experience. • Reviewed the routes at busy school times to understand traffic conditions. • Arranged site visits for relevant Ward and Committee members.
Gaps in your Information	<p>The review of these 2 routes has been thorough and based upon the Councils available routes policy which in turn is based upon guidance notes from Road Safety GB and the DfE. We have not undertaken any specific consultation because this is simply an application of existing policy. We will major on communications with stakeholders – parents / carers, schools, suppliers etc.</p>

3. What did people tell you?

What did people tell you	What consultation and engagement activities have you already undertaken and what did people tell you? Is there any feedback from other local and/or external regional/national consultations that could be included in your assessment?
Details and dates of the consultation/s and/or engagement activities	<p>We have not undertaken any specific consultation because this is simply an application of the Councils Current School Travel policies.</p> <p>As such we have ensured that our communications plan is clear for parents / carers.</p>
Gaps in consultation and engagement feedback	<p>We have not undertaken any specific consultation regarding these proposals.</p>

4. Review of information, consultation feedback and equality analysis

Protected characteristics groups from the Equality Act 2010	What do you know? Summary of information used to inform the proposal	What did people tell you? Summary of customer and/or staff feedback	What does this mean? Impacts identified from the information and feedback (actual and potential). These can be either positive, negative or have no impact.
Age	Implementation of the recommendations will affect children and young people aged 11-18 and their families who attend Brine Leas Academy and Fallibroome Academy and are currently eligible for free provided school transport.	<i>No consultation undertaken, this is an implementation of existing policy</i>	<i>Positive impact – Walking routes to school will now be available for all pupils where there was not a viable walking route previously</i>
Disability	Pupils eligible for free provided transport due to disability under the current policy will not be affected.	<i>No consultation undertaken, this is an implementation of existing policy</i>	<i>No impact</i>
Gender reassignment	It is not expected that this proposal will have a greater impact for those who have experienced gender reassignment. Each young person's application is assessed based upon gender neutral criteria.	<i>No consultation undertaken, this is an implementation of existing policy</i>	<i>No impact</i>
Pregnancy and maternity	Each young person's application is assessed on an individual basis against current policy.	<i>No consultation undertaken, this is an implementation of existing policy</i>	<i>No impact</i>

Race/ethnicity	It is not expected that the proposals will have a greater impact on children or parents of a particular race. Each young person's application is assessed on an individual basis against current policy.	<i>No consultation undertaken, this is an implementation of existing policy</i>	<i>No impact</i>
Religion or belief	It is not expected that the proposals will have a greater impact on children or parents of a particular religion or belief. Each young person's application is assessed on an individual basis against current policy.	<i>No consultation undertaken, this is an implementation of existing policy</i>	<i>No impact</i>
Sex	It is not expected that the proposals will have a greater impact on children or parents of a particular sex. Each young person's application is assessed on an individual basis against current policy.	<i>No consultation undertaken, this is an implementation of existing policy</i>	<i>No impact</i>
Sexual orientation	It is not expected that the proposals will have a greater impact on children of a particular sexual orientation. Each young person's application is assessed on an individual basis against current policy.	<i>No consultation undertaken, this is an implementation of existing policy</i>	<i>No impact</i>
Marriage and civil partnership	Each young person's application is assessed on an individual basis against current policy.	<i>No consultation undertaken, this is an implementation of existing policy</i>	<i>No impact</i>

5. Justification, Mitigation and Actions

Mitigation	What can you do? Actions to mitigate any negative impacts or further enhance positive impacts
<p>Please provide justification for the proposal if negative impacts have been identified? Are there any actions that could be undertaken to mitigate, reduce or remove negative impacts?</p> <p>Have all available options been explored? Please include details of alternative options and why they couldn't be considered?</p> <p>Please include details of how positive impacts could be further enhanced, if possible?</p>	<p>No negative impacts have been identified, the proposal implements the current policy and seeks to provide equity of treatment (as defined in the policy) across all school aged children and within current statute.</p> <p>Further work will be undertaken with suppliers to understand whether commercial services will be offered, this is unlikely in the case of the Prestbury as service route 19 already provides morning and afternoon services between the school and the village, it is also unlikely in the case of the Willaston to Brine Leas route as the numbers of pupils effected is so low.</p>

6. Monitoring and Review

Monitoring and review	How will the impact of the service, service change, decommissioning of the service, strategy, function or procedure be monitored? How will actions to mitigate negative impacts be monitored? Date for review of the EIA
Details of monitoring activities	We have not detailed any negative impacts. The service change will be brought forward to September 2023 committee and will thereafter follow the agreed process in the School transport policy meaning that service will be removed in January 2024. A review of impacts of the change will be scheduled for 1 st March 2024.
Date and responsible officer for the review of the EIA	1 st March 2024, Head of Service

7. Sign Off

When you have completed your EIA, it should be sent to the [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Mailbox](#) for review. If your EIA is approved, it must then be signed off by a senior manager within your Department (Head of Service or above).

Once the EIA has been signed off, please forward a copy to the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer to be published on the website. For Transparency, we are committed to publishing all Equality Impact Assessments relating to public engagement.

Name	Richard Hibbert
Signature	
Date	