

Overview & Scrutiny Review Scoping Document

Project Title:

Home to School Transport – Joint Committee Scrutiny

Link with the Corporate Objectives

This review will support the following Corporate Plan objectives:

- a) Education, skills and life-long learning leads to employment and roles in the community.
- b) Communities connected through an improved, accessible rural and urban transport network including active travel.
- c) Children and young people thrive and reach their potential with targeted support when and where they need it.
- d) Financially sustainable council, enabled by council-wide service transformation and improvement.

Project Background:

This project will enable members of both Highways & Transport Committee and Children & Families Committee to jointly scrutinise the Councils' arrangements for provision of Home-to-School Transport, including SEND. The Council provides transport for approximately 4000 students to educational establishments in the borough and beyond. The MTFS provides an increase in budget (FY2025-26) of £1.5 million with further growth expected in future years. Transport services make up 17% of the overall children's revenue budget. There have been recent planned changes to the council's policies, procedures and procurement arrangements for home-to-school transport and members are interested to understand the effectiveness of these and what else can be done to ensure services provide value-for-money.

Project Objectives:

The objectives of this project are:

- To enable members to scrutinise recent developments in the Councils Home-to-School travel policy and consider what opportunities there are for further improvement.
- To enable members to scrutinise arrangements for procurement of home-to-school transport contracts to consider whether they are satisfied the Council achieves value-for-money.
- To scrutinise arrangements for delivery of all aspects of the home-to-school travel policy, especially the initiatives that rely on cross directorate working and integration of capital and revenue budgets – examples could include delivery of Available Walking Routes and/or integration with public local bus services.
- To scrutinise the arrangements for delivering savings and efficiencies relating to Home-to-School transport that are incorporated in the adopted MTFS.
- To identify any areas of national legislation that can be brought into the project for discussion.

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To learn from what is happening national and locally, including bringing ideas in from the sub regional project the Council is engaged in on home to school transport. |
| Timescales: | <p>This scrutiny project is intended to be completed within the 2025/26 civic year.</p> <p>Task & finish group will meet informally in July with a view to holding monthly meetings to be attended by members, lead officers (as and when required) and Democratic Services.</p> <p>Task & Finish group to decide on whether update reports will be taken to C & F and H & T committees through the process.</p> <p>Final report will be taken to C & F committee with a view to looking nearer the time at how it is fed into H & T Committee.</p> |
| Lead Officers: | <p>Gill Betton and Clair Kiffin – Children’s and Families Directorate</p> <p>Richard Hibbert, Jenny Marston, and Mike Mitchell – Infrastructure and Highways Directorate</p> <p>Officer from Finance, Public Rights of Way and Cheshire East Highways will be available to support, as necessary.</p> |