



Special Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board

Date **Wednesday 28 June 2023**
Time **9.30 am**
Venue **Committee Room 1A/1B, County Hall, Durham**

Business

Part A

**Items during which the Press and Public are welcome to attend.
Members of the Public can ask questions with the Chair's agreement.**

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Substitute Members
3. Declarations of Interest
4. Home to School Transport Services - Consultation Outcomes - Request for Call-in
 - A) Statement of Request for Call-in from Councillors S Deinali, J Miller, L Hovvels, I Cochrane, K Shaw, A Batey, V Andrews, I Roberts, C Marshall and A Surtees (Pages 3 - 4)
 - B) Executive Decisions of 14 June 2023 - Home to School Transport Services - Consultation Outcomes together with the report of the Joint Report of the Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Services; Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth and Corporate Director of Resources (Pages 5 - 94)

- C) Constitution Extracts for reference
 - a. Article 10 - Decision Making
 - b. Part 4E - Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules - Call In (Pages 95 - 104)
- 5. Such other business as, in the opinion of the Chair of the meeting, is of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration

Helen Lynch
Head of Legal and Democratic Services

County Hall
Durham
20 June 2023

To: **The Members of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board**

Councillor R Crute (Chair)
Councillor C Lines (Vice-Chair)

Councillors V Andrews, A Batey, J Charlton, J Cosslett, B Coult, S Deinali, J Elmer, K Hawley, P Heaviside, L Hovvells, M Johnson, P Jopling, L Maddison, C Marshall, C Martin, J Miller, B Moist, E Peeke, A Reed, K Shaw, M Stead, A Sterling, A Surtees and R Yorke

Contact: Jackie Graham

Tel: 03000 269 704

Scrutiny Call-in Request

Home to School Transport

Dear Helen Lynch,

Please can the Home to School Transport decision made by Cabinet on Wednesday 14th June 2023 be called into Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board.

We, the below signatories, feel that this will impact people and families across the County in a negative way. We are particularly concerned about the £2 uplift, the move away from single person transport for children with additional needs, and the safety concerns with active travel to and from school.

Kind Regards,

S. Deinati

J Miller

Lucy Howells

Stobson

Kevin Shaw

Abbatey

V Andrews

J Roberts

L. Marshall

Suster

This page is intentionally left blank



RECORD OF EXECUTIVE DECISIONS

The following is a record of the decisions taken at the meeting of **CABINET** held on **Wednesday 14 June 2023**. The decisions will come into force and may be implemented from **Monday 26 June 2023** unless the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee or its Committees object to any such decision and call it in.

Annual Enforcement Programme. Tackling underage sales of age restricted products and sales of illicit and non-compliant age restricted goods

Summary

The Cabinet considered a report of the Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods and Climate Change which reviewed enforcement activities relating to the underage sales and illicit age restricted products over the period April 2022 to March 2023 and sought approval of a new enforcement programme for 2023/2024. The report provided details of enforcement activity during 2022 / 2023 in relation to age restricted products and tackling supplies of illicit tobacco and non-compliant vaping products. Information was provided in relation to test purchase and seizure activity for the period. The report also included the legislation enforced by the Community Protection Service of Durham County Council, relating to age restricted products. Details of the proposed enforcement programme for 2023/2024 were also provided.

Decision

The Cabinet:

- a) noted the enforcement activity undertaken during 2022 / 2023;
- b) approved the proposed enforcement programme for 2023 / 2024.

County Durham Housing Strategy Principles and Priorities Paper

Summary

The Cabinet considered a report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth which sought agreement of the Housing Strategy Principles and Priorities Paper for public consultation.

The County Durham Housing Strategy is being developed to consider housing issues across County Durham. The Strategy provides a strategic framework to inform the actions and investment of the Council and its partners and has been developed to ensure the Council is well positioned to maximise future opportunities for funding support. The new Housing Strategy 2024 will replace the current Housing Strategy adopted in 2019. The Principles and Priorities Paper is the first stage in the preparation of the Housing Strategy and the Council is seeking views on a draft vision, eight principles and five priorities. The report proposed that a consultation be undertaken on the Principles and Priorities Paper for eight weeks, rather than the usual six, from 26 June 2023 to 18 August 2023, to recognise that the consultation will take place partly in school holidays. Consultation will be undertaken with residents of County Durham and other stakeholders with a potential interest in the content of the document. The Council will make use of its partnership structure to assist in disseminating information about the Housing Strategy. This will also provide a means to ensure engagement with the providers of specialist housing products and services. The outcome of the consultation will then inform the drafting of the Housing Strategy which will then be consulted on again. The Strategy will be modified as necessary and presented to Cabinet and Council for adoption in Spring 2024.

Decision

The Cabinet:

- a) agreed the Housing Strategy Principles and Priorities Paper for consultation from 26 June 2023 to 18 August 2023;
- b) delegated authority to the Corporate Director for Regeneration Economy and Growth in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Resources, Investments and Assets to prepare and consult on a draft Housing Strategy based on the outcome and feedback received from the consultation on the Housing Strategy Principles and Priorities Paper; and
- c) requested that a report is presented to a future meeting of the Cabinet in Spring 2024 advising of the outcome of the consultation on the draft Housing Strategy and seeking approval of the final Housing Strategy.

Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans

Summary

The Cabinet considered a report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth which outlined the Council's commitment to undertake 12 Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs). The first three LCWIPs (Chester-le-Street, Durham City and Newton Aycliffe) were adopted in October 2021.

The report sought approval to formally adopt eight further LCWIPs for Bishop Auckland, Consett, Crook, Peterlee, Seaham, Spennymoor, Shildon and Stanley. Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) are an evidence-based strategic approach to identifying cycling and walking improvements required to facilitate increased active travel for everyday journeys.

The Government's Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (2017) recommends that local authorities prepare LCWIPs and the previously adopted County Durham's Strategic Cycling and Walking Delivery Plan 2019-2029 sets out the Council's commitment to produce the plans for our 12 main towns. LCWIPs represent a robust approach for prioritising investment in walking and cycling infrastructure in the short, medium and long term, and support the County Council with making the case for future funding, particularly as the Government is prioritising funding for those authorities which have developed such plans.

LCWIPs form an important part of the overall work the Council is doing to encourage active travel. Across the County, the Council is delivering on many infrastructure schemes, projects, campaigns, and initiatives to enable and encourage more people to walk and cycle as an active mode of transport, both as part of the long-term approach (Strategic Cycling and Walking Delivery Plan 2019-2029) and in response to new opportunities and funding bids developed by the Council and through partner working. These include short, medium and long term schemes and projects such as local path improvements to large scale schemes. LCWIPs will support the Council's ambitions to develop broader active travel work across the County and will tie in wherever possible to other planned and upcoming schemes and opportunities.

LCWIPs can support the green economy and healthy workforces in alignment with the Inclusive Economic Strategy, by improving physical connectivity between places in the County and promoting better access to services. In terms of funding, the LCWIP process and adoption has recently become a prerequisite for bidding into national and regional funding opportunities. The key outputs of an LCWIP include local walking and cycling network plans, a prioritised programme of improvements and underpinning technical report.

These plans will be an essential component in attracting future national funding for the delivery of our walking and cycling infrastructure but will not exclude projects outside of the plans from coming forward. LCWIPs intentionally have tight audit boundaries which cover the continuous urban areas of the towns. This is consistent with the LCWIP approach set out by Government as it aims to facilitate and encourage short everyday intra urban trips. Longer inter urban links between settlements will be addressed in future LCWIP Lite programme.

The LCWIPs will be embedded across the County Council's services supporting transport, environment, health, economic growth, leisure and planning agendas. Following the adoption of the first three draft LCWIPs, the Council secured funding from the Government's Active Travel Capability Fund to continue the work across nine more towns (Shildon, Spennymoor, Seaham, Peterlee, Barnard Castle, Bishop Auckland, Stanley, Crook and Consett) and develop an LCWIP Lite methodology which is a streamlined approach to developing LCWIPs for inter-urban routes and smaller settlements. Eight of these LCWIPs were included in the report.

The ninth town, Barnard Castle, was withdrawn from the current programme of LCWIP production and will instead become the first LCWIP Lite town which will include interventions better suited to the rural nature of the area. The LCWIP Lite project uses the LCWIP framework, but the methodology has been amended to better suit smaller towns, villages and inter-urban routes. This ensures the priority schemes identified will fulfil funding bid requirements, the process will be quicker to implement, and the outcomes will be more in keeping with rural areas. Once the LCWIP Lite for Barnard Castle has been completed we will deliver suitable interventions to enable and encourage active travel in the town.

£177,586 was granted through the DfT's Capability and Ambition revenue funding, a bid strongly supported by the 12 town LCWIPs. The Council will now be able to take priority routes from the eight town LCWIP's to outline design and further develop the LCWIP Lite methodology and Routes within 5 miles of Durham City project. The Council will continue to seek funding to develop design work and deliver schemes on the ground.

Consultation is a key component of the LCWIP process. A consultation and engagement plan was executed as per the DfT's LCWIP Technical Guidance. Workshops for internal and external stakeholders, including local members, were held in each LCWIP area. The consultation was targeted on key stakeholders to engage with those most likely to be able to contribute to the discussion on current and future active travel demand. Further informal consultation took place with Cabinet Members to agree the recommendations of the report.

Decision

The Cabinet approved the remaining eight LCWIPs for Bishop Auckland, Consett, Crook, Peterlee, Seaham, Spennymoor, Shildon and Stanley.

Barningham Parish Meeting: Application for Order Conferring Functions of a Parish Council

Summary

The Cabinet considered a report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer which considered an application made by Barningham Parish Meeting for an order conferring upon it functions of a parish council.

Barningham Parish Meeting has applied to Durham County Council for an order conferring upon it the powers of expenditure available to a parish council. Section 109 of the Local Government Act 1972 provides that, on the application of the parish meeting of a parish not having a separate parish council, the district (or in this case unitary) council may by order confer on the parish meeting any functions of a parish council. The report set out the implications for Cabinet to consider when determining such an application.

Decision

Cabinet agreed:

- a) By Order under section 109 of the Local Government Act 1972 confer upon Barningham Parish Meeting those of the powers available to a parish council to incur expenditure set out in the draft Order appended to the report;
- b) To delegate authority to the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to execute the said Order and send copies to the Secretary of State, subject to Barningham Parish Meeting agreeing to discharge the cost of any additional insurance premium associated with the indemnity mentioned at (3) below; and
- c) That an indemnity be provided to the Proper Officer of Durham County Council for the purposes of undertaking the duties of a Parish Trustee under Section 13 of the Local Government Act 1972.

Home to School Transport Services – Consultation Outcomes

Summary

The Cabinet considered a joint report of the Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Services, the Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth and the Corporate Director of Resources which presented Cabinet with the outcomes of the public consultation on Durham County Council's Home to School Transport Service for Children and Young People.

The Local Authority has a statutory duty to provide Home to School Transport to children and young people who meet circumstances prescribed in legislation. The Home to School Transport offer for eligible children and young people is currently set out in the Durham County Council “Home to Primary, Secondary and Special School and College Travel and Transport Policy”, which mirrors the statutory guidance and also allows for additional discretionary arrangements. The existing Home to School Transport (H2ST) service provides daily transport for over 9,000 children and young people, with over 1,000 contracts in place with Transport Providers.

In financial year 2022/23 net expenditure on statutory Home to School Transport was £23.4 million, against a net budget of £19.5 million. This represents an overspend of £3.9 million. It is estimated that net expenditure on Home to School Transport will increase to £29.1 million in 2023/24, reflecting the full year impact of price increases experienced in 2022/23 and an estimate of further demand and price pressures in 2023/24. An external review of the County Council’s Home to School Transport Service was undertaken in 2021, in order to identify opportunities to transform the service and manage the demand and pressures on the service. Following the review, a number of priorities were identified which were the subject of a public consultation which took place between 27 February 2023 and 12 April 2023. The priorities were detailed in the report. The consultation included a public survey, targeted briefings and meetings, information sheets and an animation and it was promoted through a range of channels. There was a total of 324 responses to the online questionnaire, as well as written responses from key stakeholder group. Relevant feedback was reflected throughout the report, which also provided a summary of a number of proposals.

Decision

The Cabinet:

- a) agreed a charge for the Standard and Maintained Concessionary scheme of £2.00 to align to the Bus Service Improvement Plan offer for the 2023/24 academic year;
- b) agreed that in the event of the withdrawal of this fare in the future, that the annual charge for the concessionary schemes is aligned to commercial child travel fares;
- c) agreed in principle to phase out the Maintained Concessionary scheme subject to further appraisals of the options available to achieve this and their associated impact on stakeholders and Transport arrangements, with a further report to Cabinet on the findings and recommendations;

- d) agreed to undertake a review of the needs of those individual children who are in receipt of single person transport and/or a passenger assistant to ensure that the most appropriate transport assistance relevant to their needs is provided;
- e) agreed to review the existing Personal Travel Budget Scheme and promote this as a travel option to parents;
- f) agreed to develop a Travel Training scheme in partnership with schools and parents;
- g) agreed to undertake a trial of Pickup Points for Children with SEND to assess the effectiveness of this option, which is developed in co-production with a small number of Special Schools and parents;
- h) agreed to review those routes which are currently assessed as unsafe to determine the feasibility of making them safe and also review the current configuration of school transport journeys with an initial focus on those schools which have the highest number of vehicles and/or cost associated with transporting pupils to their school;
- i) agreed to review the suggestions and alternative procurement options raised during the consultation, especially those which can have the most impact on efficiency, effectiveness, safety and environmental issues;
- j) agreed to receive reports on any future potential changes to Home to School Transport Policy arising from the recommended programme of work outlined in the report.

Helen Lynch
Head of Legal & Democratic Services
16 June 2023

This page is intentionally left blank

Cabinet

14 June 2023

**Home to School Transport Services –
Consultation Outcomes**



Report of Corporate Management Team

John Pearce, Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Services

Amy Harhoff, Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth

Paul Darby, Corporate Director of Resources

Councillor Ted Henderson, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People's Services

Councillor Richard Bell, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Finance

Councillor Elizabeth Scott, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Economic Regeneration and Partnerships

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To present Cabinet with the outcomes of the public consultation on Durham County Council's Home to School Transport Service for Children and Young People.

Executive summary

- 2 The Local Authority has a statutory duty to provide Home to School Transport to children and young people who meet circumstances prescribed in legislation. This is set out in statutory guidance from the Department for Education.
- 3 The Home to School Transport offer for our eligible children and young people is currently set out in the Durham County Council "Home to Primary, Secondary and Special School and College Travel and

Transport Policy”, which mirrors the statutory guidance and also allows for additional discretionary arrangements.

- 4 The existing Home to School Transport (H2ST) service provides daily transport for over 9,000 children and young people, with over 1,000 contracts in place with Transport Providers.
- 5 In financial year 2022/23 net expenditure on statutory Home to School Transport was £23.4 million, against a net budget of £19.5 million. This represents an overspend of £3.9 million.
- 6 It is estimated that net expenditure on Home to School Transport will increase to £29.1 million in 2023/24, reflecting the full year impact of price increases experienced in 2022/23 and an estimate of further demand and price pressures in 2023/24.
- 7 With increasing pressure on funding and growing demand for council services, especially statutory services, decisions need to be made about how the council meets this demand in an affordable yet effective way in the future.
- 8 An external review of the County Council’s Home to School Transport Service was undertaken in 2021, in order to identify opportunities to transform the service and manage the demand and pressures on the service.
- 9 Following the Service review, a number of priorities were identified which were the subject of a public consultation which took place between 27 February 2023 and 12 April 2023. The priorities were as follows:
 - Review the provision of the Durham County Council’s Concessionary Schemes.
 - Consider how the Council can more effectively and efficiently support the provision of journeys and passenger assistants on transport.
 - Promote Independence skills of young people through travel training and other opportunities
 - Introduce a simplified process for providing personal travel budgets for parents/carers of pupils with SEN and those living in remote rural areas where it is cost effective to do so.
 - Review unsafe walking routes and existing travel routes across the County, especially schools with high volumes of routes.

- Review potential procurement options for home to school transport services in relation to impact on value for money and associated competitive pricing.
- 10 The Consultation included a public survey, targeted briefings and meetings, information sheets and an animation. It was promoted through a range of channels including:
- The Council's web site, social media, other online tools.
 - Council Libraries and Access Points
 - Local press including local TV News, radio and newspaper articles
 - Briefings to senior leader school forums and through direct communication with School Leaders
 - Notification to Providers of Transport Services.
 - Voluntary Groups and Partnerships
- 11 There was a total of 324 responses to the online questionnaire, as well as written responses from key stakeholder group. Relevant feedback is reflected throughout the report with a full summary of responses provided to the questionnaire (appendix 2), a summary of questions/points raised at consultation meetings (appendix 3) and the Equalities Impact Assessment (appendix 4).
- 12 Based on the work we have done and the consultation findings the report provides a number of proposals which are summarised below:
- Charging for the concessionary scheme and the future provision of this scheme.
 - Ensuring appropriate and efficient provision of single person journeys and passenger assistants which meet needs and achieve value for money.
 - Developing travel options with the involvement of parents and schools to promote Independence.
 - Reviewing travel routes, including unsafe routes
 - Appraising the suggestions from the consultation feedback to help inform future transport procurements.

Recommendation(s)

13 Cabinet is recommended to:

- (a) agree a charge for the Standard and Maintained Concessionary scheme of £2.00 to align to the Bus Service Improvement Plan offer for the 2023/24 academic year;
- (b) agree that in the event of the withdrawal of this fare in the future, that the annual charge for the concessionary schemes is aligned to commercial child travel fares;
- (c) agree in principle to phase out the Maintained Concessionary scheme subject to further appraisals of the options available to achieve this and their associated impact on stakeholders and Transport arrangements, with a further report to Cabinet on the findings and recommendations;
- (d) undertake a review of the needs of those individual children who are in receipt of single person transport and/or a passenger assistant to ensure that the most appropriate transport assistance relevant to their needs is provided;
- (e) review the existing Personal Travel Budget Scheme and promote this as a travel option to parents;
- (f) develop a Travel Training scheme in partnership with schools and parents;
- (g) undertake a trial of Pickup Points for Children with SEND to assess the effectiveness of this option, which is developed in co-production with a small number of Special Schools and parents;
- (h) review those routes which are currently assessed as unsafe to determine the feasibility of making them safe and also review the current configuration of school transport journeys with an initial focus on those schools which have the highest number of vehicles and/or cost associated with transporting pupils to their school;
- (i) review the suggestions and alternative procurement options raised during the consultation, especially those which can have the most impact on efficiency, effectiveness, safety and environmental issues;
- (j) receive reports on any future potential changes to Home to School Transport Policy arising from the recommended programme of work outlined in the report.

Background

- 14 The Council has a statutory duty under various Acts and Statutory Guidance to provide free education transport to eligible students. The main legislation is set out in the following:
- The Education Act 1996;
 - Education and Inspections Act (EIA) 2006;
 - The Home to School Travel and Transport Guidance 2014;
 - Post 16 Transport to Education and Training Guidance 2014.
- 15 In order to comply with statutory Home to School Transport duties local authorities must undertake the following :
- Promote the use of sustainable travel and transport;
 - Make transport arrangements for all eligible children.
- 16 In particular, the Education Act 1996, states that a statutory duty is placed on the Council to make suitable travel arrangements to facilitate attendance at school for eligible children of compulsory school age (5-16). This is based on statutory walking distance for children to a qualifying school as follows:
- Beyond 2 miles (below the age of 8);
 - Beyond 3 miles (age 8 – 16);
 - Between 2 – 6 miles for pupils from low income families (for example in receipt of free school meals);
 - Pupils with a disability or mobility requirement.
- 17 The Home to School Travel and Transport Guidance 2014 (Special Education Needs) requires Local Authorities to make transport arrangements for those children who cannot reasonably be expected to walk to school because of their mobility or associated health and safety issues related to their special education needs and disabilities.
- 18 Durham County Council's Home to School Transport service provides daily transport to over 9,000 passengers. This is made up of mainstream and SEND passengers along with other special provision. This requires over 1,000 transport contracts to be in place which utilise over 300 different transport suppliers.

- 19 Expenditure on Home to School Transport has been increasing steadily over recent years due to demographic growth, inflationary pressures and prices. Over the five-year period since 2018/19, expenditure has more than doubled.

	2018/19 (£m)	2019/20 (£m)	2020/21 (£m)	2021/22 (£m)	2022/23 (£m)
Budget	9.933	11.308	14.731	16.482	19.576
Outturn	10.795	14.434	15.550	18.555	23.422
Variance	0.862	3.126	0.819	2.073	3.846

- 20 Grant received from Government to support Home to School Transport services has not had a significant impact on the above expenditure increases. Councils receive the Extended Rights to Free Travel Grant, which supports with the costs of providing free transport for pupils on free school meals or where their parents are in receipt of working tax credit (outlined in the Legal implications in Appendix 1 to the report). The grant has increased by £1.210 million, from £0.726 million in 2018/19 to £1.936 million in 2022/23. There is no other direct government support for the increasing costs of Home to School Transport.
- 21 The final outturn position for 2022/23 was net expenditure of £23.4m, compared to the current net budget of £19.5m, representing an overspend of £3.9 million. The budget for 2023/24 has been increased to £29.1 million, a further increase of £9.6 million
- 22 Increased expenditure on Home to School Transport has been driven by a range of demand and cost factors:
- SEND Transport delivery, including the increased demand for Taxis and Passenger Assistants over recent years. Expenditure on SEND/other specialist transport represents 72% of the total expenditure on the service;
 - National Regulations, such as Public Sector Vehicles Accessibility Regulations, which have required vehicles to meet additional specification requirements;
 - Increasing contractor costs, driven by a range of factors including fuel prices, inflation and wage increases;
 - Parental/School demands and expectations, including meeting the needs of a significantly increased number of pupils with Education, Health and Care Plans.

- 23 Transport costs are forecasted to rise further in future years with continuing price inflation and increases in the National Minimum Wage. It is estimated that net expenditure on Home to School Transport will increase to £29.1 million in 2023/24, reflecting the full year impact of price increases experienced in 2022/23 and an estimate of further demand and price pressures in 2023/24.
- 24 As a result, the Home to School Transport budget has been increased by £1.3 million in 23/24 to reflect the standard 5% price increase assumption used by the County Council. In addition, the budget has also been increased by a further £8.3 million to cover the additional estimated demand and cost pressures in 2023/24.
- 25 To help understand the above issues in more detail and be informed by best practice elsewhere in the country, the Council commissioned a review of the Home to School Transport service in 2021.
- 26 The outcome of the review was a range of key findings and potential improvements to the effectiveness and efficiency of the Service were identified, which were presented to the Council for consideration as priorities for Service transformation. The priorities were as follows:
- Review the provision of the Durham County Council's Concessionary Schemes.
 - Consider how the Council can more effectively and efficiently support the provision of journeys and passenger assistants on transport.
 - Promote Independence skills of young people through travel training and other opportunities
 - Introduce a simplified process for providing personal travel budgets for parents/carers of pupils with SEN and those living in remote rural areas where it is cost effective to do so.
 - Review unsafe walking routes and existing travel routes across the County, especially schools with high volumes of routes.
 - Review potential procurement options for home to school transport services in relation to impact on value for money and associated competitive pricing.
- 27 The Review identified the need to balance the needs and expectations of parents and young people against the need to achieve value for money and to manage the impact on Council taxpayers in County Durham.

- 28 On 8 February 2023, Cabinet agreed to undertake a public consultation on the above priorities for Service transformation. The report sets out the consultation process undertaken, the findings of the consultation and the recommendations relating to each of the Transformation priorities above.

Consultation Approach and Timeline

- 29 The Consultation took place between **27 February 2023 and 12 April 2023**. The consultation was implemented in accordance with the Council's Consultation Statement and Consultation Protocol (March 2019), statutory and government guidance, as well as the general requirements of public law.
- 30 The Consultation comprised a range of activities as follows:
- A consultation information sheet in plain English detailing a summary of the key proposals, questions, closing date and how to be involved;
 - A paper/online survey for the public to feedback on the key proposals.
 - A web page outlining the consultation with links to the cabinet report, survey and other supporting materials;
 - A supporting video/animation to support the main consultation;
 - A series of focus groups held with young people (with and without additional needs) and parents of young people with special educational needs. Events were held either in person or online;
 - Attendance and discussion at key stakeholder meetings, such as the SEND Partnership Board and Children and Young Peoples Overview and Scrutiny Committee;
 - An easy read version of the information and survey;
- 31 The Consultation was also promoted through a range of channels, including:
- Social media coverage which signposted to the web page and online survey.
 - A variety of press related coverage including local TV News, radio and newspaper articles
 - Briefings delivered at a range of senior leader school forums and through direct communication with School leaders

- Notification to providers of transport services.
- Promotion through the Councils Libraries and Access Points
- Voluntary groups and partnerships

Response to the Online Consultation and Questionnaire

32 There was a total of 324 responses to the online questionnaire. A profile of responders is detailed below (note that some responders have identified themselves against more than 1 cohort).

	Frequency	%age
A parent/carer of a child/children with additional needs	88	27.8%
A parent/carer of a child/children without additional needs	157	49.7%
A child or young person with additional needs	1	0.3%
A child or young person without additional needs	9	2.8%
A resident (not parent/carer of a child using home to school transport)	33	10.4%
An educational professional/governor	28	8.9%
A transport provider	12	3.8%
Other	8	2.5%

33 Of those responders who identified themselves as a parent, the following information was also provided:

	Frequency	%age
My child receives school transport which we pay for	83	35.9%
My child receives free school transport due to an unsafe walking route	51	22.1%
My child receives solo transport with a passenger assistant	6	2.6%
My child receives solo transport without a passenger assistant	7	3.0%
My child receives group transport with a passenger assistant	34	14.7%
My child receives group transport without a passenger assistant	26	11.3%
My child does not get home to school transport provided by the council	46	19.9%

34 Relevant feedback is reflected throughout the report with a full summary of responses provided to the questionnaire at appendix 2 and a

summary of questions/points raised at consultation meetings at appendix 3.

- 35 The feedback from the consultation has been aggregated and included in this report, which has been used to help shape the report recommendations.

Findings from the Survey Feedback and Consultation Meetings

Priority 1 - Review the DCC Concessionary Scheme

- 36 The Concessionary scheme provides transport to some young people with seats being sold to pupils who are **not** statutorily entitled to free transport. There are three schemes which operate in County Durham:
- ***The standard scheme.*** When the Council commissions transport for statutorily entitled pupils there may be some spare seats available which can be made available to non-entitled pupils. There are 60 Young People currently accessing this scheme. This practice is common across Local Authorities in England. The current charge is £1.63 per day.
 - ***The maintained scheme.*** This was implemented following policy changes that took effect in September 2012, where transport capacity was maintained on some established school transport routes that did not have an alternative suitable local bus service. There are 455 young people accessing this scheme, who attend 12 schools. The Council does not operate a full cost recovery model for this scheme and incurs a financial loss each year of over £250,000. The current charge is £1.63 per day.
 - ***The Schools' Scheme.*** Concessionary transport is also provided by some partner schools which the Council arranges on their behalf. There are currently 11 secondary schools participating covering travel by 2,110 children. Schools set their own charges for the provision. This scheme is cost neutral to the Council as it is fully funded by the participating schools. This scheme was therefore not included in the consultation.
- 37 The consultation sought views on the following:
- 38 **We currently provide subsidised concessionary transport for some children who are not statutorily entitled to free transport. The current charge is £1.63 per return journey. Do you agree or disagree that we should charge a higher fare to help meet more of the cost.**

- 39 63% (201 responses) disagreed/strongly disagreed with this proposal, with 23.2% of responses agreeing/strongly agreeing. A further 13.8% neither agreed nor disagreed.
- 40 The percentage of respondents who were parents and are currently paying for transport who disagreed/strongly disagreed was 86.6% (78 responses).
- 41 52.4% (165 responses) felt this would have a negative or extremely negative impact on them. This increased to 89% of the parents who responded who are currently paying for Home to School Transport.
- 42 There were 204 free text comments received which expanded on the reasons for responses to the above question. The most prevalent themes were as follows:
- 48 responses identified that a significantly higher fare would add to the cost of living pressures currently being experienced.
 - 30 responses responded that Home to School Travel should be provided free to children.
 - 29 responses identified that the increase was unaffordable.
- 43 **A proposed increase to the daily charge for the provision of the standard and maintained Concessionary schemes which aligns to the Go North East Under 19 fare of £2.80 for a return journey from 2023/24 academic year.**
- 44 71.4% (228 responses) disagreed/strongly disagreed with this proposal, whilst 18.2% agreed/strongly agreed. A further 10.3% neither agreed nor disagreed.
- 45 The percentage of respondents who were parents and are currently paying for transport who disagreed/strongly disagreed was 94% (78 responses).
- 46 There were 190 free text comments received which expanded on the reasons for responses to the above question. The most prevalent themes were as follows:
- 45 responses identified that the increase was unaffordable
 - 34 responses identified the additional pressure this level of fare would add to the cost of living increases currently being experienced
 - 28 responses identified that the increase was too high

- 25 responses responded that Home to School Travel should be provided free to children.
- 47 The consultation also highlighted the inequity of the current charging arrangements for concessionary schemes. Within the County, there are wide variations in the level of subsidy provided by individual schools for the School Schemes, which creates wide variations in the parental contributions required. Charges for the DCC Standard and Maintained Schemes are significantly below actual cost which benefits the parents of 515 young people who use these schemes. This variation in charging has created inequity within the system and has the potential to create significant dissatisfaction amongst parents in the future. For example, one response to the consultation made the point that 'If you compare rates for other schools in Durham County, the fee for School X is significantly higher.
- 48 **Do you agree or disagree with the proposal to review and phase out concessionary transport for children who are not statutorily entitled to it?**
- 49 66.2% (208 responses) disagreed/strongly disagreed with this proposal, with 20.7% of responses agreeing/strongly agreeing. A further 13.1% neither agreed nor disagreed.
- 50 The percentage of respondents who were parents and are currently paying for transport who disagreed/strongly disagreed was 76.9% (63 responses).
- 51 50.5% of responders (165 responses) felt this would have a negative or extremely negative impact on them. This increased to 76.5% for parents who are currently paying for Home to School Transport.
- 52 There were 190 free text comments received which expanded on the reasons for their responses to the above question. The most prevalent themes were as follows:
- 25 responses stated that it would impact on school attendance of pupils
 - 21 responses stated that Home to School Travel should be provided free to children.

Feedback from Group Consultations

- 53 Direct consultation on the proposals took place with the groups identified in paragraph 30 and written feedback received.

- 54 Durham County Council Children and Young Peoples Overview and Scrutiny Committee made the following comments:
- Referring to the maintained scheme it was suggested that consideration should be given to the working poor who may have difficulty affording additional costs.
 - A £2.80 fare was expensive for some parents especially when there is a cost of living crisis.
- 55 Durham County Youth Council made the following comments:
- They worry about it going up and people not being able to afford it. £2.80 fare was expensive for some parents especially when there is a cost of living crisis.
 - They talked about some pupils taking multiple buses to get to school (service buses) which could total £5 per day.
- 56 Relevant questions/points raised during the Online Consultation events were as follows:
- Would there be an option to pay for the journeys used rather than a blanket charge.
 - If costs increase in line with public buses, will there be other similarities introduced e.g. being able to use a different bus to go to a different location on some days.
 - By raising the cost to £2.80 per child will this result in a like for like service the child would receive if they used a public bus.
 - How will these proposals affect schools with special arrangements in place as some parents already pay more per seat than the amount proposed.
 - In rural areas, if the bus was withdrawn there is no alternative viable way for those children to get to school other than their parents driving them. There is no appropriate public transport alternative and walking or cycling would not be appropriate / safe. If each child had to be driven to school (instead of using the bus) this would mean approx. 16 separate car journeys which would have a negative impact on the environment as well as increasing congestion around the school.

Priority 2 - Consider how the Council can more effectively and efficiently support the provision of journeys and passenger assistants on transport

- 57 Single person journeys and passenger assistants are mainly provided for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities and mainly to pupils in Special schools. They are usually taxis which is the most expensive form of transport. The transported pupil is often accompanied by a Passenger Assistant. There has been a significant increase in numbers over recent years.
- 58 The consultation sought views on:
- 59 **Do you agree or disagree that the council should regularly review the types of home to school travel assistance it offers to meet the needs of children and ensure the most appropriate and cost-effective mode of transport is provided?**
- 60 76.5% of responses agreed/strongly agreed with the proposal, with 8.7% of responses disagreeing/strongly disagreeing. A further 14.8% neither agreed nor disagreed.
- 61 When reviewing responses to this question from parents who have children with additional needs, 75.8% either strongly agreed/ agreed, which is broadly in line with the overall response.
- 62 There were 133 free text comments received which expanded on the reasons for responses to the above question. The most prevalent themes were as follows:
- 23 Responses identified the Best Interests of the Child as a key consideration.
 - 20 responses stated that the review of provision should be undertaken as the needs of children change over time.
 - 17 Responses stated that reviews should be undertaken to ensure best use of resources.
 - 14 responses identified the safety of the child as a key factor.
- 63 **Do you agree or disagree that the council should regularly review the provision of individual passenger assistants to ensure they are used cost effectively for children in receipt of home to school travel assistance?**
- 64 71.6% of responses agreed/strongly agreed with this proposal, with 10% of responses disagreeing/strongly disagreeing. A further 18.4% neither agreed nor disagreed.

- 65 When reviewing responses to this question from parents who have children with additional needs, 70.1% strongly agreed/agreed, which is broadly in line with the overall response.
- 66 There were 100 free text comments received which expanded on the reasons for responses to the above question. Responses received followed similar themes to those in the previous question relating to single person transport. The most prevalent themes were as follows:
- 18 responses identified the safety of the child as a key factor.
 - 18 responses stated that reviews should be undertaken to ensure best use of resources.
 - 16 responses identified the best interests of the Child as a key consideration.
 - 14 responses stated that review of provision should be undertaken as the needs of children change over time.

Feedback from Group Consultations

- 67 Consultation on the proposals took place with the groups identified in paragraph 30 and written feedback received.
- 68 Durham County Council Children and Young Peoples Overview and Scrutiny Committee made the following comments:
- With reference to single person transport was this at the parents request or was it due to out of area placements being required for the Young Person.
- 69 Durham County Youth Council made the following comments:
- Reviewing Single Person Transport will reduce cost and encourage social engagement of young people (if some move to other types of shared transport).
 - Young People's needs would need to be carefully analysed.
 - The need to consider the safety of passengers and Young People with SEND as they may struggle to engage in bus transport. If a child needs to be transported alone, this should be maintained.
- 70 The Xtreme Group, which is a representative group of Young People with special educational needs made the following comments:

Reviewing Single Person Transport

- The need to consider routes and length of journey. Can Young People change their mind if they tried and weren't happy?
- Group transport can be overwhelming for some children, but also some children prefer to be on transport with their friends.
- Long transport journeys take up too much of the day and can mean the Young Person can get home quite late.
- The Council should look at individual needs not costs.
- Escorts should get to know the children/young people before they support young people on transport.
- Sometimes Escorts are not needed. They should be more targeted at younger children. They gave an example where a young person had a PA but didn't need one once they got older.
- The need for PA's who can support with medical needs.

Priority 3 - Develop independence skills of young people and introduce an updated personal travel budget scheme

- 71 Independent Travel Training (ITT) is a process that trains individuals on how to travel independently in a safe and responsible way. Travelling independently is a life skill that reduces isolation and dependency and opens opportunities for education, employment and enjoyment.
- 72 Many children with SEND currently receive door-to-door transport from the time they start school until the time they leave college and as such they do not gain the necessary travel and social skills that other children do. Whilst some children with SEN will not be able to travel independently, those that are able, should be given the opportunity to do so.
- 73 The consultation sought views on:
- 74 **Do you agree or disagree with the introduction of an independent travel training scheme for children with SEND when it is appropriate to their abilities and needs?**
- 75 56.4% of responses agreed/strongly agreed with the proposal, with 21.3% of responses disagreeing/strongly disagreeing. A further 22.3% neither agreed nor disagreed.

- 76 When reviewing responses to this question from parents who have children with additional needs, 51.1% strongly agreed/ agreed with the proposal which is broadly in line with the overall response. A further 37.5% of responses disagreed/strongly disagreed.
- 77 There were 145 free text comments received which expanded on the reasons for responses to the above question. The most prevalent themes were as follows:
- 50 responses identified that any scheme would have to be appropriate to the needs of the pupil/parent.
 - 50 Responses stated that a scheme could provide long-term benefit in helping to develop independent life skills.
 - 31 Responses identified concerns about the safety of the pupil.

Feedback from Group Consultations

- 78 Consultation on the proposals took place with the groups identified in paragraph 30 and written feedback received.
- 79 Durham County Council Children and Young Peoples Overview and Scrutiny Committee made the following comments:
- With reference to independence members suggested there were varying levels of vulnerability that should be taken into consideration and this should be reviewed child by child.
- 80 The Xtreme Group, which is a representative group of Young People with special educational needs made the following comments:
- Independent Travel Training is not appropriate for all young people but could work for some.
 - Getting transport with other children can make you feel more normal.
 - A good idea, only if the young person wants to try – not forced.
 - Young People who travel on their own can encourage other young people.
 - Should do a trial and get young people used to it.
 - It should be people you know who are supporting you with travel training e.g. school staff, family, support workers etc, not someone you don't know. Ask Young People who they want to support them.

- Travel training is part of SEND Promise so in line with this.
- 81 Making Changes Together (MCT), which is a representative group of parents of young people with special educational needs made the following comments:
- Supportive of Travel Training and feel that this can help children approaching 14-16 years and also their parents.
 - Consider starting Travel Training earlier than 14-16 years, maybe at start of Secondary school.
 - Highlighted the impact of Covid on some children who may have been happy to travel on a group/public transport pre-covid, but not now.
 - Queried whether travel training opportunities will apply to children who don't have an EHCP.
- 82 The Council is also considering options in respect of the introduction of Pick up Points. Pick up Points are similar to bus stops, where the Council identifies designated pick-up and drop-off locations for the pupil to meet the bus or taxi rather than offering a door-to-door service. This reduces the time needed for the route to pick up the pupils and supports children and young people to become more independent and better prepares them for adulthood.
- 83 **When it is appropriate to their abilities and needs, do you agree or disagree that the use of agreed pickup points for children and young people with SEND can help to provide a more cost-effective service?**
- 84 46.1.% of responses agreed/strongly agreed with this proposal, whilst 24.7% of responses disagreed/strongly disagreed. A further 29.3% neither agreed nor disagreed.
- 85 When reviewing responses to this question from parents who have children with additional needs, 37.5% strongly agreed/ agreed with the proposal. However, 47.7% of responses disagreed/strongly disagreed.
- 86 There were 118 free text comments received which expanded on the reasons for responses to the above question. The most prevalent themes were as follows:
- 37 Responses identified concerns about the safety of the pupil.
 - 22 responses identified the practicality of getting to the pick-up point / impact on parents..

- 17 Responses stated that it should be appropriate to the child/ young person's needs.
- 14 responses stated that where appropriate it could support the longer term independence of young people.

Feedback from Group Consultations

87 Consultation on the proposals took place with the groups identified in paragraph 30 and written feedback received.

88 Making Changes Together (MCT), which is a representative group of parents of young people with special educational needs made the following comments:

- There will be a number of really important consideration which include family circumstances (such as other Young People in the family), age of the young person, the distance to travel – both to the pickup point and then to school etc).
- Suggested a separate survey of parents to get their views when looking at the development of a scheme.

89 Durham Youth Council made the following comment:

- The location of the Pickup Point will be an important factor.

90 Relevant questions/points raised during the Online Consultation events were as follows:

- How would designated pick up points work for taxis. Surely the whole point is for a safe pick up and drop off from home. What if a child is a no show, how long does a driver wait.
- SEND hubs (pickup points) - where will the hubs be located? Is there a distance set from your home? Who will decide when children attend these hubs - medical professionals, parents?
- How will the hubs be policed and will parents get a travel budget to get their child to these hubs?

91 A Personal Travel Budget is a sum of money provided by the Council to parents or carers of children with SEND who are eligible for travel assistance. The budget allows families to make their own arrangements for travel, thereby increasing choice and flexibility. It also provides an opportunity for the Council to reduce expenditure and management time associated with day-to-day arrangements. Personal

Travel Budgets are typically offered to SEN passengers but in Durham there is an increased opportunity to offer them in rural areas.

92 **Do you agree or disagree that simplified personal travel budgets can provide parents of children with SEND and those in rural areas with more flexibility to arrange their own transport for their child?**

93 39.1% of responses agreed/strongly agreed with the proposal, whilst 25.3% of responses disagreed/strongly disagreed. A further 35.5% neither agreed nor disagreed.

94 When reviewing responses to this question from parents who have children with additional needs, opinion was evenly distributed with 40% strongly agreeing/ agreeing with the proposal and 37.6% of responses disagreeing/strongly disagreeing.

95 There were 118 free text comments received which expanded on the reasons for responses to the above question. The most prevalent themes were as follows:

- 22 Responses identified that a Personal Budget could provide flexibility and also promote independence.
- 19 responses queried if the budget payment would be sufficient to cover parents' costs.
- 19 Responses raised concerns about the practicality of parents managing transport.
- 10 responses identified that complexity of the scheme and value for money should be considered.

Feedback from Group Consultations

96 Consultation on the proposals took place with the groups identified in paragraph 30 and written feedback received.

97 Durham County Council Children and Young Peoples Overview and Scrutiny Committee made the following comments:

- Rural areas suffer from poor transport and consideration should be given to their impact on working parents.
- Sought clarity regarding the payment of personal budgets as to whether this was only for the time the child was in the vehicle.
- Queried if parents will be subject to the same rules as other drivers who transport children and will this be looked at as an option?

- 98 Making Changes Together (MCT), which is a representative group of parents of young people with special educational needs made the following comments:
- Many parents are not aware of Personal Travel Budgets and the Council's current scheme.
 - How the scheme will be promoted to parents.
 - If the Personal Travel Budget option is taken up by some parents, then this will be more efficient than the Council arranging a taxi.
- 99 The Xtreme Group, which is a representative group of young people with special educational needs made the following comments:
- Will the budget be tailored to parents' availability and circumstances.
 - Will Personal Travel budgets increase with inflation, will they cover medical needs and will distance be a factor in determining the budget e.g. if someone lives further away from a school then they get a bigger budget.
- 100 Durham County Youth Council made the following comments:
- Suggest that parents are refunded for mileage.
- 101 Relevant questions/points raised during the Online Consultation events were as follows:
- This could have an impact on some families who claim benefits example universal credit, it could mean that payments would have to be declared as income which could cause difficulties with claims.
 - A lack of awareness by some parents of the availability of the scheme.

Priority 4 - Review Unsafe Walking Routes and Re-Routing

- 102 The Council provides free transport for pupils travelling to their nearest suitable school, who would not otherwise qualify due to being under the relevant distance threshold, where the shortest walking route(s) are assessed as unsuitable to walk. A suitable route is one on which a pupil, accompanied as necessary, can walk with reasonable safety to school.

- 103 There is an opportunity to make some unsuitable routes safe through highways works, with associated costs, enabling children to safely walk to school, as well as providing wider benefits to the community such as helping to improve fitness and potentially contributing to reduced child obesity.
- 104 The consultation sought views on:
- 105 **Some children receive free transport because a route to school has been formally assessed as unsafe. Do you agree or disagree that we should make routes safe wherever possible so that pupils can walk or cycle to school?**
- 106 70.2% of responses agreed/strongly agreed with this proposal, with 18.2% of responses disagreeing/strongly disagreeing. A further 11.7% neither agreed nor disagreed.
- 107 When reviewing responses to this question from parents who receive free home to school transport due to unsafe walking routes, 58.8% strongly agreed/ agreed with the proposal. A further 29.4% of responses disagreed/strongly disagreed.
- 108 There were 151 free text comments received which expanded on the reasons for responses to the above question. The most prevalent themes were as follows:
- 57 Responses identified the child's safety on the route as a key factor in determining whether it is safe to walk.
 - 33 responses identified the benefits to the young people of walking/cycling and to the wider community of safe walking routes.
 - 25 Responses identified distance as a key factor alongside whether a route is safe to walk.

Feedback from Group Consultations

- 109 Consultation on the proposals took place with the groups identified in paragraph 30 and written feedback received.
- 110 Durham County Council Children and Young Peoples Overview and Scrutiny Committee made the following comments:
- Regarding unsafe routes members suggested that the service should be mindful of capital investment and ensure it was cost effective.

- 111 The Xtreme Group, which is a representative group of young people with special educational needs made the following comments:
- A lot of Young People travel out of area for school. How far is acceptable to walk/cycle?
- 112 Durham County Youth Council made the following comments:
- Supported walking routes to schools and to make these routes safer e.g. paths, cycle paths, lighting. This will support carbon zero agenda but there will be a large cost to do this.
 - There may be comparable cost to promoting walking routes as to putting on more transport.
 - Walking routes is a better long-term plan.
- 113 Relevant questions/points raised during the Online Consultation events were as follows:
- How often are walking assessments carried out and is there a time limit on when these routes should be assessed.
 - Need to ensure safe walking route assessments are up to date and if not, then re-assess the route.
- 114 The Review of Home to School Transport identified opportunities for effectiveness and efficiency through an annual re-routing exercise. It is common practice amongst councils to evaluate opportunities for re-routing journeys to reflect changes in demand and other changes in the lead up to the new school year.
- 115 The consultation sought views on:
- 116 **Do you agree or disagree that the council should regularly review travel routes so that it is providing the most cost effective and environmentally friendly journeys to transport children to school?**
- 117 74.1% of responses agreed/strongly agreed with this proposal, with 9.2% of responses disagreeing/strongly disagreeing. A further 16.7% neither agreed nor disagreed.
- 118 There were 100 free text comments received which expanded on the reasons for responses to the above question. The most prevalent themes were as follows:
- 22 Responses identified achieving value for money as a key factor for this proposal.

- 12 responses highlighted impact on the environment as a consideration.
- 12 Responses identified child safety as a consideration.
- 11 responses stated that reviews should be undertaken to provide the best possible service.

Feedback from Group Consultations

- 119 Consultation on the proposals took place with the groups identified in paragraph 30 and written feedback received.
- 120 Durham County Council Children and Young Peoples Overview and Scrutiny Committee made the following comments:
- Volunteer drivers picking up one or two children would be more cost effective than public transport.
- 121 Durham County Youth Council made the following comments:
- Ensure travel routes are the most effective, that children are collected in right order and that there are more pick-ups.
 - Not door to door any longer as journey time will increase.
 - There are issues with transport queueing time at schools to get children into school (SEN).
- 122 Making Changes Together (MCT), which is a representative group of parents of young people with special educational needs made the following comments:
- Gave examples of taxis which travel through villages which are not full and could take more young people from the same village. Is this explored by council and could they not pick up extra children to reduce cost.
- 123 Relevant questions/points raised during the Online Consultation events were as follows:
- The lack of accessible vehicles forces the price up. Are you going to work/liaise with licensing to change the policy in order to save cost.
 - DCC should consult with contractors to agree the best route and number of pupils carried around that area going to the same destination. An example was given where a transport provider asked DCC to consider combining two contracts into one.

- To save congestion at the schools, could we not stagger start and finish times? I'm only suggesting this at SEN schools at which vehicles queue. The pupils will still be off loaded from their vehicles in a timely manner, but it will aid the (management of) congestion. It may also allow operators to link contracts which should save money.

Priority 5 - Review potential procurement options for home to school transport services in relation to impact on value for money and associated competitive pricing

124 Due to challenges of increasing price inflation, contract costs, transport supply and market competition, it is pivotal to the delivery of the Service that the Council has a clear strategy and approach in relation to the procurement and supply of transport moving forward. This will involve assessing opportunities to develop the supply base further and increase competition and deliver better value on routes and contracts.

125 The consultation sought views on:

126 **When reviewing and improving how we purchase Home to School Transport Services, what do you think are the key considerations that we should bear in mind?**

127 There were 9 responses to this question with the most frequent theme (3 responses) identifying quality as the key consideration in procuring transport. The next most frequent theme identified was the likelihood of cheaper contract prices if longer contract durations are offered (2 responses).

Feedback from Group Consultations

128 Consultation on the proposals took place with the groups identified in paragraph 30 and written feedback received.

129 Durham County Council Children and Young Peoples Overview and Scrutiny Committee made the following comments:

- Referring to procurement of services members suggested engaging with community groups to come to an arrangement to share minibuses.
- Could special schools use their own buses and driver escort.
- Where possible use the same provider to attract economies of scale.

- Use/provision of school minibus with Durham County Council funding the maintenance and also paying for driver training. A non-teaching member of staff drives and would transport the children. The bus could be used for other school activities such as visits.

130 Relevant questions/points raised during the Online Consultation events were as follows:

- It is a difficult process for a new private hire or hackney carriage driver to gain their licence. This reduces the number of cars/minibuses that could be available.

Equalities Impact Assessment

131 A full Equalities Impact assessment (EIA), updated with relevant consultation feedback, is at appendix 4. The EIA highlights potential impacts (both positive and negative) in relation to the protected characteristics of disability, age and sex (women) although several mitigations have been identified to remove or minimise potential negative impact.

132 The following summarises impact for each proposal area and potential mitigations:

- (a) **Review DCC Concessionary Scheme:** The financial impact for those affected by proposals to increase the daily fare charges for the standard and maintained schemes will impact families accessing the service with school aged children, who are most likely to be working age people. This may also disproportionately impact lone parents who are predominately female. Proposals do not however affect those pupils eligible for free transport to school as set out in the Home to School Transport Policy. Consultation feedback highlighted the financial impact on those groups mentioned. The recommendation to agree a charge for the Standard and Maintained Concessionary scheme of £2.00 for the 2023/24 academic year to align to the Bus Service Improvement Plan offer, is lower than the £2.80 fare proposed as part of the consultation. This should mitigate some of the financial impact for working age families, and potentially, women.
- (b) **Consideration of how the Council can more effectively and efficiently support the provision of journeys and passenger assistants on transport:** This proposal directly impacts children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and their families. Whilst the proposal won't impact decisions to award transport to those meeting statutory eligibility criteria, it may lead to changes in the mode of transport provided to some children

with SEND and/or the level of support provided to them on that transport. This could impact some families, for example, if a child is provided with shared vehicle/group transport when they have previously accessed single person transport. Similarly, the proposal to review the provision of passenger assistants may result in some young people no longer receiving this additional support. The consultation feedback highlighted strong support for a review of single person transport and passenger assistance. It is proposed to establish a programme to review the needs of those individual children who are in receipt of single person transport and/or a passenger assistant to ensure that the most appropriate transport assistance relevant to their needs is provided. This will remove any adverse impact for children with SEND.

- (c) **Introduction of independent travel training, pick up points and updated personal travel budget scheme:** This aims at having a positive impact on pupils with special educational needs and disabilities by providing them with a broader range of travel options. The proposals can provide a range of benefits including increased confidence, greater flexibility and enhanced independence skills which can help a young person as they transition to adulthood. A personal travel budget for eligible children with SEND allows families to make their own arrangements for travel, thereby increasing choice and flexibility. Consultation feedback about Independent Travel Training was mixed with 51% agreeing with the introduction of a scheme when appropriate to the needs of a young person. A total of 46% of respondents supported the introduction of pick up points, when appropriate to a young person's needs and abilities. Whilst fewer than half of respondents supported the introduction of pick up points and personal travel budgets, there were some positives identified for both initiatives, as well as suggestions made from consultees which may minimise impact. Travel options to support Independence will be developed with parents and stakeholder groups, including a trial of pick-up points with a small number of special schools to ensure safety needs are addressed for each individual and to remove any potential adverse impact. The Personal Travel budget scheme will be reviewed to ensure it is fit for purpose for those parents who wish to take it up.
- (d) **Review Unsafe Walking Routes and Re-Routing:** There are potential impacts for those 491 children currently receiving free transport as a result of their walking route being assessed as unsuitable. However, the potential to make some of these unsuitable routes safe, enabling children to safely walk or cycle to school, will provide wider benefits to the community such as

helping to improve health and wellbeing and potentially contributing to reduced child obesity. Consultation feedback was reasonably supportive of the review of unsafe walking routes and travel routes. Although there are still many complexities to consider and consultees highlighted some of these, increasing resilience and independence, health benefits and lowering the impact on the environment is recognised and this is positive for young people and working age families. In mitigation it is recommended to establish a programme of reviews to consider routes which are currently assessed as unsafe and the feasibility of making them safe, as well as the current configuration of school transport journeys with an initial focus on those schools which have the highest number of vehicles and/or cost associated with transporting pupils to their school.

- (e) **Review potential procurement options for home to school transport services in relation to impact on value for money and associated competitive pricing:** There are no specific equality impacts.

Conclusion

- 133 Home to School Transport is a statutory service and is highly valued by parents, children and young people who use the Service. However, it also represents a challenge to the Council in terms of effective management and control of costs, value for money and the impact on Council tax payers.
- 134 The consultation has highlighted a wide range of view and opinions about the Councils proposals which can be summarised as follows:
- Priority 1 - Review the DCC Concessionary Scheme.
- 135 The majority of responses disagreed with increasing the charge for concessionary scheme users to £2.80 per trip (70% of responses). This was also the case for the proposal to increase the charge to the market rate to cover more of the County Council's transport costs (63%). Main reasons provided were due to cost of living pressures and the increase being unaffordable for families.
- 136 However, the maintained Concessionary Scheme is not a statutory entitlement and is provided by the Council based on circumstances/decisions from over 10 years ago. The scheme costs the Council over £250,000 per annum to operate and is provided to 12 schools and a total of 455 pupils. It contributes to inequity in the charges that parents pay for concessionary transport across the different schemes.

- 137 Based on the findings of the consultation and the Councils financial and statutory responsibilities it would seem inappropriate to increase the charge for the Concessionary Schemes to the market rate of £2.80.
- 138 The region's Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) is to offer a £1.00 Under 22 years single fare ticket on all registered local bus services across the region. Registered local bus services are services that are open to the general public, so are different from the Concessionary schemes (which are only open to students at particular schools). Offering the Spare Seats Concessions fare charge at £2.00 per day, with effect from September 2023 and therefore aligning with and to continue to match the BSIP Under 22 single fare ticket price (2 x £1 single fares = £2 per day) offers a better value alternative to the fares propose in the consultation and takes into consideration the consultation feedback.
- 139 Should this ticket be withdrawn, the Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Services, following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People's Services, will (when the BSIP Under 22 single fare is no longer available) review the Spare Seats Concessions fare on an annual basis and increase the fare where required to ensure the fare remains comparable with other available fares, including commercial child fares. This will ensure that Spare Seats Concessions fare is consistent and relevant to those in the commercial marketplace.
- 140 It is therefore recommended that a charge of £2.00 is applied for the 2023/24 academic year. Increasing the charge from the current level of £1.63 to £2.00 will generate additional income of circa £40,000 and reduce the level of subsidy from the Home to School Transport budget.
- 141 In relation to the proposal to review and phase out the Maintained Concessionary Seats scheme, it is recommended that the Council agree in principle to phase out the Maintained Concessionary scheme subject to further appraisals of the options available to achieve this and their associated impact on stakeholders and Transport arrangements. A further report will be presented to Cabinet with this information for consideration.

Priority 2 - Consider how the Council can more effectively and efficiently support the provision of journeys and passenger assistants on transport.

- 142 The consultation response highlighted a strong majority of responses who supported both of these proposals. Over 75% agreed that the Council should regularly review the types of home to school travel assistance it offers to meet the needs of children and over 70% agreed

that it should review the provision of individual passenger assistants. Key reasoning provided to explain views were that needs change and provision should reflect this, as well as ensuring cost effective use of resources. Responses also highlighted that the Child's safety and their best interests should also be a key part of any reviews.

- 143 Based on the findings of the consultation and the Councils financial and statutory responsibilities it is recommended that a programme is established to review the needs of those individual children who are in receipt of single person transport and/or a passenger assistant to ensure that the most appropriate transport assistance relevant to their needs is provided.

Priority 3 - Develop independence skills of young people and introduce an updated personal travel budget scheme.

- 144 The consultation considered 3 specific questions in relation to reviewing the personal travel budget scheme, setting up an independent travel training scheme and introducing pickup points for some children with SEND where it is appropriate to their needs. Feedback was as follows:

- The majority of responses (56.4%) agreed with the proposal to develop a Travel Training scheme where it is appropriate to the needs of the young person. Over 50% of parents with children with additional needs also supported the proposal. They highlighted the long-term benefits in relation to Independence, but also identified child safety as an important consideration.
- 46.1% of the overall response supported the introduction of pickup points for children with SEND when appropriate to their needs. However, this reduced to 37.5% of parents of children with additional needs agreeing to the proposal with 47.7% disagreeing. This range of opinion reflects the specialist nature of services for young people with SEND in that it may be supportive of independence and socialisation for some young people but for others meeting at a pickup point won't be possible due to safety concerns and best interests of the young person.
- There were mixed opinions around the benefits of personal travel budgets with 39.1% of responses supporting this proposal, whilst 25.3% of responses disagreed. Similarly, when responses from parents of children with additional needs were equally variable with 40% agreeing and 37.6% disagreeing. Those in agreement made comments around the flexibility that a Personal Budget can provide, whilst those disagreeing queried whether the budget payment would cover costs and the practicality of parents managing transport.

- 145 Both the Personal Travel Budget scheme and setup of an Independent Travel Training scheme will be optional to parents and young people and need only be accessed by those who believe it is an appropriate option for them. Based on the responses to the consultation, it is recommended that the Council commences a review of the existing Personal Travel Budget Scheme available to parents to ensure it reflects feedback received during the consultation. It is also proposed to commence the development of a Travel Training scheme in partnership with schools and parents.
- 146 In relation to setup of Transport Pickup points for Young People with SEND, it is proposed to work with a small number of special schools and parents to introduce a trial to assess the effectiveness of this option.

Priority 4 - Review Unsafe Walking Routes and Re-Routing

- 147 There was strong support for making routes safe wherever possible so that pupils can walk or cycle to school (over 70% of responses to the survey). The majority of responses from parents of children who receive free transport due to an unsafe route were also supportive. Key considerations highlighted in the survey were the child's safety on the route, the wider benefits to the young people of walking/cycling and to the wider community of safe walking routes and the consideration of distance as a determining factor in deciding if a route is safe.
- 148 There was equally strong support (74% of responses) for a regular review of travel routes to provide the most cost effective and environmentally friendly journeys to transport children to school. Key considerations highlighted when undertaking reviews were achieving value for money, impact on the environment, child safety and providing the best possible service.
- 149 Based on the feedback received during the consultation it is therefore recommended that a programme of route reviews is established. The Review will focus on routes which are currently assessed as unsafe and the feasibility on making them safe. The Review will also consider the configuration of school transport journeys with an initial focus on those schools which have the highest number of vehicles and/or cost associated with transporting children to their school.

Priority 5 - Review potential procurement options for home to school transport services in relation to impact on value for money and associated competitive pricing.

- 150 There were a number of potential areas for the County Council to explore in relation to procuring home to school transport, including use of school minibuses, voluntary and community transport, the Council

expanding its own fleet and working closely with the market on transport solutions.

- 151 It is recommended that a programme of work is developed by the County Council to investigate the suggestions and alternative travel options raised during the consultation, especially those which can most impact on efficiency, effectiveness, safety and environmental issues, whilst ensuring that any future procurement activity will also maintain a robust home to school transport market and supply chain.

Background papers

- [Home to School Transport Consultation Report 8th Feb 2023](#)

Other useful documents

- Not applicable

Author

Keith Forster

Tel: 03000 267396

Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

The Education Act 1996 and Education and Inspections Act (EIA) 2006 sets out the statutory duty on Local Authorities to make such travel arrangements as they consider necessary to facilitate attendance at school for eligible children.

The EIA 2006 defines eligible children as follows:

Statutory walking distances eligibility

The Local Authority must provide free transport for all pupils of compulsory school age (5-16) if their nearest suitable school is:

- Beyond 2 miles (if below the age of 8); or
- Beyond 3 miles (if aged between 8 and 16)

Special educational needs, a disability or mobility problems eligibility

The Local Authority must make transport arrangements for all children who cannot reasonably be expected to walk to school because of their mobility problems or because of associated health and safety issues related to their special educational needs (SEN) or disability. Eligibility for such children should be assessed on an individual basis to identify their particular transport requirements. Usual transport requirements (e.g. the statutory walking distances) should not be considered when assessing the transport needs of children eligible due to SEN and / or disability.

Unsafe route eligibility

The Local Authority must make transport arrangements for all children who cannot reasonably be expected to walk to nearest suitable school because the nature of the route is assessed as unsafe to walk.

Extended rights eligibility

The Local Authority is required to provide free transport where pupils are entitled to free school meals or their parents are in receipt of maximum level of Working Tax Credit if:

- The nearest suitable school is beyond 2 miles (for children aged 8 but under 11)
- One of their three nearest suitable schools, if that school is between 2 and 6 miles (for children aged 11 -16)
- The nearest school preferred on the grounds of religion or belief, for pupils whose parents adhere to that particular faith, where that school is between 2 and 15 miles (for children aged 11 – 16)

Finance

The Consultation includes proposals to increase the charge for the concessionary scheme to a commercial rate of £2.80 per day from the current daily rate of £1.63. Increasing the charge from the current level of £1.63 to £2.00 will generate additional income of circa £40,000 and reduce the level of subsidy from the Home to School Transport budget.

Consultation

The Consultation plan is included in the main report.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

A full Equalities Impact Assessment is attached at Appendix 4 detailing potential impacts (both positive and negative) in relation to the protected characteristics of disability, age and sex (women). The assessment has been updated throughout and following the consultation to assess the impact of the proposed changes on the protected characteristic groups and to identify and evaluate any mitigations.

Climate Change

A Sustainability Assessment has been undertaken for the Home to School Transport Review and reported to CMT previously. This includes a specific response in relation to impact on Climate Change.

A Climate Change Impact Assessment has also been developed in respect of the Review of the Concessionary Scheme and Review of Unsafe Walking routes which concluded that proposals to change existing arrangements for the provision of home to school transport have the potential to impact on climate change through reducing transport routes and therefore carbon emissions. The consultation must be careful to consider any potential increase in the use of personal vehicles.

Human Rights

None.

Crime and Disorder

None.

Staffing

None.

Accommodation

None.

Risk

There is a risk of challenge if the consultation and equalities impact are not undertaken in accordance with legislative requirements.

Procurement

The consultation will seek views on how the Council can best procure home to school transport services which have an impact on value for money and maintain quality of service.

Appendix 2 - Home to School Transport Consultation 2023 - Responses

Table 1: Format of response

	Frequency	Percent
PC	74	22.8%
Mobile	245	75.6%
Tablet	5	1.5%
Total	324	100.0%

Table 2: Are you responding as...

	Frequency	Percent
A parent/carer of a child/children with additional needs	88	27.8%
A parent/carer of a child/children without additional needs	157	49.7%
A child or young person with additional needs	1	0.3%
A child or young person without additional needs	9	2.8%
A resident (not parent/carer of a child using home to school transport)	33	10.4%
An educational professional/governor	28	8.9%
A transport provider	12	3.8%
Other	8	2.5%

Table 2.1: If other, please specify.

	Frequency
Resident	1
Parent of child that walks to school	2
Parent	1
Panel member for School Admissions appeals	1
One Point worker	1
Occupational therapist	1
Belmont Community School Governing Body	1
Total	8

Table 3: If you are a parent or carer, which of the following apply to your child or children?

	Frequency	Percent
My child receives school transport which we pay for	83	35.9%
My child receives free school transport due to an unsafe walking route	51	22.1%
My child receives solo transport with a passenger assistant	6	2.6%
My child receives solo transport without a passenger assistant	7	3.0%
My child receives group transport with a passenger assistant	34	14.7%
My child receives group transport without a passenger assistant	26	11.3%
My child does not get home to school transport provided by the council	46	19.9%

Table 4: We currently provide subsidised concessionary transport for some children who are not statutorily entitled to free transport. The current charge is £1.63 per return journey. Do you agree or disagree that we should charge a higher fare to help meet more of

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	32	10.0%
Agree	42	13.2%
Neither agree nor disagree	44	13.8%
Disagree	65	20.4%
Strongly disagree	136	42.6%
Total	319	100.0%

Table 4.1: Please tell us why.

	Frequency	Percent
Response	204	63.0%
No response	120	37.0%
Total	324	100.0%

Table 4a: Parent of child receiving paid for home to school transport: We currently provide subsidised concessionary transport for some children who are not statutorily entitled to free transport. The current charge is £1.63 per return journey. Do you agree or disagree that we should charge a higher fare to help meet more of

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	4	4.8%
Agree	4	4.8%
Neither agree nor disagree	3	3.6%
Disagree	15	18.1%
Strongly disagree	57	68.7%
Total	83	100.0%

Table 4a.1: Parent of child receiving paid for home to school transport: Please tell us why.

	Frequency	Percent
Response	63	75.9%
No response	20	24.1%
Total	83	100.0%

Table 5: Do you agree or disagree that it is reasonable for the council to charge the market rate (currently £2.80) for a return concessionary journey from September 2023?

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	32	10.0%
Agree	26	8.2%
Neither agree nor disagree	33	10.3%
Disagree	70	21.9%
Strongly disagree	158	49.5%
Total	319	100.0%

Table 5.1: Please tell us why.

	Frequency	Percent
Response	190	58.6%
No response	134	41.4%
Total	324	100.0%

Table 5a: Parent of child receiving paid for home to school transport: Do you agree or disagree that it is reasonable for the council to charge the market rate (currently £2.80) for a return concessionary journey from September 2023?

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	2	2.4%
Agree	2	2.4%
Neither agree nor disagree	1	1.2%
Disagree	11	13.3%
Strongly disagree	67	80.7%
Total	83	100.0%

Table 5a.1: Parent of child receiving paid for home to school transport: Please tell us why.

	Frequency	Percent
Response	63	75.9%
No response	20	24.1%
Total	83	100.0%

Table 6: What do you feel will be the impact of this approach upon you?

	Frequency	Percent
Extremely negative	116	36.8%
Negative	49	15.6%
Neither negative nor positive	137	43.5%
Positive	10	3.2%
Extremely positive	3	1.0%
Total	315	100.0%

Table 6.1: Why do you believe this to be the case?

	Frequency	Percent
Response	168	51.9%
No response	156	48.1%
Total	324	100.0%

Table 6a: Parent of child receiving paid for home to school transport: What do you feel will be the impact of this approach upon you?

	Frequency	Percent
Extremely negative	61	74.4%
Negative	12	14.6%
Neither negative nor positive	7	8.5%
Positive	2	2.4%
Extremely positive	0	0.0%
Total	82	100.0%

Table 6a.1: Parent of child receiving paid for home to school transport: Why do you believe this to be the case?

	Frequency	Percent
Response	59	71.1%
No response	24	28.9%
Total	83	100.0%

Table 7: Do you agree or disagree with the proposal to review and phase out concessionary transport for children who are not statutorily entitled to it?

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	36	11.5%
Agree	29	9.2%
Neither agree nor disagree	41	13.1%
Disagree	67	21.3%
Strongly disagree	141	44.9%
Total	314	100.0%

Table 7.1: Please tell us why.

	Frequency	Percent
Response	168	51.9%

No response	156	48.1%
Total	324	100.0%

Table 7a: Parent of child receiving paid for home to school transport: Do you agree or disagree with the proposal to review and phase out concessionary transport for children who are not statutorily entitled to it?

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	8	9.8%
Agree	3	3.7%
Neither agree nor disagree	8	9.8%
Disagree	9	11.0%
Strongly disagree	54	65.9%
Total	82	100.0%

Table 7a.1: Parent of child receiving paid for home to school transport: Please tell us why.

	Frequency	Percent
Response	51	61.4%
No response	32	38.6%
Total	83	100.0%

Table 8: What do you feel will be the impact of this approach upon you?

	Frequency	Percent
Extremely negative	111	35.5%
Negative	47	15.0%
Neither negative nor positive	146	46.6%
Positive	5	1.6%
Extremely positive	4	1.3%
Total	313	100.0%

Table 8.1: Why do you believe this to be the case?

	Frequency	Percent
Response	131	40.4%
No response	193	59.6%
Total	324	100.0%

Table 8a: Parent of child receiving paid for home to school transport: What do you feel will be the impact of this approach upon you?

	Frequency	Percent
Extremely negative	56	69.1%
Negative	6	7.4%
Neither negative nor positive	15	18.5%
Positive	1	1.2%
Extremely positive	3	3.7%
Total	81	100.0%

Table 8a.1: Parent of child receiving paid for home to school transport: Why do you believe this to be the case?

	Frequency	Percent
Response	44	53.0%
No response	39	47.0%
Total	83	100.0%

Table 9: If we phase out subsidised transport for some children, do you have any views on how we should do this?

	Frequency	Percent
Response	158	48.8%
No response	166	51.2%
Total	324	100.0%

Table 9.1: Parent of child receiving paid for home to school transport: If we phase out subsidised transport for some children, do you have any views on how we should do this?

	Frequency	Percent
Response	47	56.6%
No response	36	43.4%
Total	83	100.0%

Table 10: Do you agree or disagree that the council should regularly review the types of home to school travel assistance it offers to meet the needs of children and ensure the most appropriate and cost-effective mode of transport is provided?

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	114	36.8%
Agree	123	39.7%
Neither agree nor disagree	46	14.8%
Disagree	12	3.9%
Strongly disagree	15	4.8%
Total	310	100.0%

Table 10.1: Please tell us why.

	Frequency	Percent
Response	134	41.4%
No response	190	58.6%
Total	324	100.0%

Table 10a: Parent of child using H2S transport (all but non-users): Do you agree or disagree that the council should regularly review the types of home to school travel assistance it offers to meet the needs of children and ensure the most appropriate and cost-effective mode of transport is provided?

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	54	29.2%
Agree	78	42.2%
Neither agree nor disagree	34	18.4%
Disagree	9	4.9%
Strongly disagree	10	5.4%
Total	185	100.0%

Table 10a.1: Parent of child using H2S transport (all but non-users): Please tell us why.

	Frequency	Percent
Response	86	45.3%
No response	104	54.7%
Total	190	100.0%

Table 10b: Parent/carer of child/children with additional needs: Do you agree or disagree that the council should regularly review the types of home to school travel assistance it offers to meet the needs of children and ensure the most appropriate and cost-effective mode of transport is provided?

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	27	31.0%
Agree	39	44.8%
Neither agree nor disagree	8	9.2%
Disagree	7	8.0%
Strongly disagree	6	6.9%
Total	87	100.0%

Table 10b.1: Parent/carer of child/children with additional needs: Please tell us why.

	Frequency	Percent
Response	39	44.3%
No response	49	55.7%
Total	88	100.0%

Table 11: Do you agree or disagree that the council should regularly review the provision of individual passenger assistants to ensure they are used cost effectively for children in receipt of home to school travel assistance?

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	110	35.5%
Agree	112	36.1%
Neither agree nor disagree	57	18.4%
Disagree	17	5.5%
Strongly disagree	14	4.5%
Total	310	100.0%

Table 11.1: Please tell us why.

	Frequency	Percent
Response	102	31.5%
No response	222	68.5%
Total	324	100.0%

Table 11a: Parent of child with individual passenger assistant: Do you agree or disagree that the council should regularly review the provision of individual passenger assistants to ensure they are used cost effectively for children in receipt of home to school travel assistance?

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	1	16.7%
Agree	2	33.3%
Neither agree nor disagree	3	50.0%
Disagree	0	0.0%
Strongly disagree	0	0.0%
Total	6	100.0%

Table 11a.1: Parent of child with individual passenger assistant: Please tell us why.

	Frequency	Percent
Response	1	16.7%
No response	5	83.3%
Total	6	100.0%

Table 11b: Parent of child with group passenger assistant: Do you agree or disagree that the council should regularly review the provision of individual passenger assistants to ensure they are used cost effectively for children in receipt of home to school travel assistance?

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	8	24.2%
Agree	10	30.3%
Neither agree nor disagree	4	12.1%
Disagree	7	21.2%
Strongly disagree	4	12.1%
Total	33	100.0%

Table 11b.1: Parent of child with group passenger assistant: Please tell us why.

	Frequency	Percent
Response	18	52.9%
No response	16	47.1%
Total	34	100.0%

Table 11c: Education provider: Do you agree or disagree that the council should regularly review the provision of individual passenger assistants to ensure they are used cost effectively for children in receipt of home to school travel assistance?

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	17	60.7%
Agree	10	35.7%
Neither agree nor disagree	0	0.0%
Disagree	1	3.6%
Strongly disagree	0	0.0%
Total	28	100.0%

Table 11c.1: Education provider: Please tell us why.

	Frequency	Percent
Response	11	39.3%
No response	17	60.7%
Total	28	100.0%

Table 11d: Transport provider: Do you agree or disagree that the council should regularly review the provision of individual passenger assistants to ensure they are used cost effectively for children in receipt of home to school travel assistance?

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	4	33.3%
Agree	4	33.3%
Neither agree nor disagree	3	25.0%
Disagree	0	0.0%
Strongly disagree	1	8.3%
Total	12	100.0%

Table 11d.1: Transport provider: Please tell us why.

	Frequency	Percent
Response	4	33.3%
No response	8	66.7%
Total	12	100.0%

Table 11e: Parent/carer of child/children with additional needs: Do you agree or disagree that the council should regularly review the provision of individual passenger assistants to ensure they are used cost effectively for children in receipt of home to school travel assistance?

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	24	27.6%
Agree	37	42.5%
Neither agree nor disagree	12	13.8%
Disagree	10	11.5%
Strongly disagree	4	4.6%
Total	87	100.0%

Table 11e.1: Parent/carer of child/children with additional needs: Please tell us why.

	Frequency	Percent
Response	33	37.5%
No response	55	62.5%
Total	88	100.0%

Table 12: What do you feel will be the impact of this approach upon you or your child?

	Frequency	Percent
Extremely negative	47	15.6%
Negative	34	11.3%
Neither negative nor positive	197	65.2%
Positive	17	5.6%
Extremely positive	7	2.3%
Total	302	100.0%

Table 12.1: Why do you believe this to be the case?

	Frequency	Percent
Response	100	30.9%
No response	224	69.1%
Total	324	100.0%

Table 12a: Parent of child with individual passenger assistant: What do you feel will be the impact of this approach upon you or your child?

	Frequency	Percent
Extremely negative	1	16.7%
Negative	1	16.7%
Neither negative nor positive	3	50.0%
Positive	1	16.7%
Extremely positive	0	0.0%
Total	6	100.0%

Table 12a.1: Parent of child with individual passenger assistant: Why do you believe this to be the case?

	Frequency	Percent
Response	2	33.3%
No response	4	66.7%
Total	6	100.0%

Table 12b: Parent of child with group passenger assistant: What do you feel will be the impact of this approach upon you or your child?

	Frequency	Percent
Extremely negative	8	25.8%
Negative	9	29.0%
Neither negative nor positive	10	32.3%
Positive	3	9.7%
Extremely positive	1	3.2%
Total	31	100.0%

Table 12b.1: Parent of child with group passenger assistant: Why do you believe this to be the case?

	Frequency	Percent
Response	19	55.9%
No response	15	44.1%
Total	34	100.0%

Table 12c: Education provider: What do you feel will be the impact of this approach upon you or your child?

	Frequency	Percent
Extremely negative	2	7.4%
Negative	1	3.7%
Neither negative nor positive	17	63.0%
Positive	3	11.1%
Extremely positive	4	14.8%
Total	27	100.0%

Table 12c.1: Education provider: Why do you believe this to be the case?

	Frequency	Percent
Response	9	32.1%
No response	19	67.9%
Total	28	100.0%

Table 12d: Transport provider: What do you feel will be the impact of this approach upon you or your child?

	Frequency	Percent
Extremely negative	2	20.0%
Negative	0	0.0%
Neither negative nor positive	8	80.0%
Positive	0	0.0%
Extremely positive	0	0.0%
Total	10	100.0%

Table 12d.1: Transport provider: Why do you believe this to be the case?

	Frequency	Percent
Response	3	25.0%
No response	9	75.0%
Total	12	100.0%

Table 12e: Parent/carer of child/children with additional needs: What do you feel will be the impact of this approach upon you or your child?

	Frequency	Percent
Extremely negative	17	20.0%
Negative	18	21.2%
Neither negative nor positive	41	48.2%
Positive	8	9.4%
Extremely positive	1	1.2%
Total	85	100.0%

Table 12e.1: Parent/carer of child/children with additional needs: Why do you believe this to be the case?

	Frequency	Percent
Response	36	40.9%
No response	52	59.1%
Total	88	100.0%

Table 13: Do you agree or disagree with the introduction of an independent travel training scheme for children with SEND when it is appropriate to their abilities and needs?

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	67	22.0%
Agree	105	34.4%
Neither agree nor disagree	68	22.3%
Disagree	22	7.2%
Strongly disagree	43	14.1%
Total	305	100.0%

Table 13.1: Please tell us why.

	Frequency	Percent
Response	147	45.4%
No response	177	54.6%
Total	324	100.0%

Table 13a: Parent/carer of child/children with additional needs: Do you agree or disagree with the introduction of an independent travel training scheme for children with SEND when it is appropriate to their abilities and needs?

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	12	13.6%
Agree	33	37.5%
Neither agree nor disagree	10	11.4%
Disagree	12	13.6%
Strongly disagree	21	23.9%
Total	88	100.0%

Table 13a.1: Parent/carer of child/children with additional needs: Please tell us why.

	Frequency	Percent
Response	58	65.9%
No response	30	34.1%
Total	88	100.0%

Table 13b: Education provider: Do you agree or disagree with the introduction of an independent travel training scheme for children with SEND when it is appropriate to their abilities and needs?

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	15	55.6%
Agree	10	37.0%
Neither agree nor disagree	1	3.7%
Disagree	0	0.0%
Strongly disagree	1	3.7%
Total	27	100.0%

Table 13b.1: Education provider: Please tell us why.

	Frequency	Percent
Response	16	57.1%
No response	12	42.9%
Total	28	100.0%

Table 14: What do you feel will be the impact of this approach upon you?

	Frequency	Percent
Extremely negative	40	13.3%
Negative	26	8.7%
Neither negative nor positive	199	66.3%
Positive	25	8.3%
Extremely positive	10	3.3%
Total	300	100.0%

Table 14.1: Why do you believe this to be the case?

	Frequency	Percent
Response	100	30.9%
No response	224	69.1%
Total	324	100.0%

Table 14a: Parent/carer of child/children with additional needs: What do you feel will be the impact of this approach upon you?

	Frequency	Percent
Extremely negative	26	30.2%
Negative	15	17.4%
Neither negative nor positive	31	36.0%
Positive	10	11.6%
Extremely positive	4	4.7%
Total	86	100.0%

Table 14a.1: Parent/carer of child/children with additional needs: Why do you believe this to be the case?

	Frequency	Percent
Response	46	52.3%
No response	42	47.7%
Total	88	100.0%

Table 14b: Education provider: What do you feel will be the impact of this approach upon you?

	Frequency	Percent
Extremely negative	2	7.4%
Negative	2	7.4%
Neither negative nor positive	13	48.1%
Positive	5	18.5%
Extremely positive	5	18.5%
Total	27	100.0%

Table 14b.1: Education provider: Why do you believe this to be the case?

	Frequency	Percent
Response	6	21.4%
No response	22	78.6%
Total	28	100.0%

Table 15: When it is appropriate to their abilities and needs, do you agree or disagree that the use of agreed pickup points for children and young people with SEND can help to provide a more cost-effective service?

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	41	13.5%
Agree	99	32.6%
Neither agree nor disagree	89	29.3%
Disagree	27	8.9%
Strongly disagree	48	15.8%
Total	304	100.0%

Table 15.1: Please tell us why.

	Frequency	Percent
Response	119	36.7%
No response	205	63.3%
Total	324	100.0%

Table 15a: Parent/carer of child/children with additional needs: When it is appropriate to their abilities and needs, do you agree or disagree that the use of agreed pickup points for children and young people with SEND can help to provide a more cost-effective service?

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	5	5.7%
Agree	28	31.8%
Neither agree nor disagree	13	14.8%
Disagree	14	15.9%
Strongly disagree	28	31.8%
Total	88	100.0%

Table 15a.1: Parent/carer of child/children with additional needs: Please tell us why.

	Frequency	Percent
Response	47	53.4%
No response	41	46.6%
Total	88	100.0%

Table 15b: Education provider: When it is appropriate to their abilities and needs, do you agree or disagree that the use of agreed pickup points for children and young people with SEND can help to provide a more cost-effective service?

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	11	39.3%
Agree	11	39.3%
Neither agree nor disagree	2	7.1%
Disagree	2	7.1%
Strongly disagree	2	7.1%
Total	28	100.0%

Table 15b.1: Education provider: Please tell us why.

	Frequency	Percent
Response	11	39.3%
No response	17	60.7%
Total	28	100.0%

Table 15c: Transport provider: When it is appropriate to their abilities and needs, do you agree or disagree that the use of agreed pickup points for children and young people with SEND can help to provide a more cost-effective service?

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	0	0.0%
Agree	4	33.3%
Neither agree nor disagree	0	0.0%
Disagree	2	16.7%
Strongly disagree	6	50.0%
Total	12	100.0%

Table 15c.1: Transport provider: Please tell us why.

	Frequency	Percent
Response	8	66.7%
No response	4	33.3%
Total	12	100.0%

Table 16: What do you feel will be the impact of this approach upon you?

	Frequency	Percent
Extremely negative	42	14.1%
Negative	31	10.4%
Neither negative nor positive	200	67.1%
Positive	19	6.4%
Extremely positive	6	2.0%
Total	298	100.0%

Table 16.1: Why do you believe this to be the case?

	Frequency	Percent
Response	85	26.2%
No response	239	73.8%
Total	324	100.0%

Table 16a: Parent/carer of child/children with additional needs: What do you feel will be the impact of this approach upon you?

	Frequency	Percent
Extremely negative	29	33.7%
Negative	18	20.9%
Neither negative nor positive	31	36.0%
Positive	5	5.8%
Extremely positive	3	3.5%
Total	86	100.0%

Table 16a.1: Parent/carer of child/children with additional needs: Why do you believe this to be the case?

	Frequency	Percent
Response	39	44.3%
No response	49	55.7%
Total	88	100.0%

Table 16b: Education provider: What do you feel will be the impact of this approach upon you?

	Frequency	Percent
Extremely negative	1	3.7%
Negative	4	14.8%
Neither negative nor positive	15	55.6%
Positive	7	25.9%
Extremely positive	0	0.0%
Total	27	100.0%

Table 16b.1: Education provider: Why do you believe this to be the case?

	Frequency	Percent
Response	5	17.9%
No response	23	82.1%
Total	28	100.0%

Table 16c: Transport provider: What do you feel will be the impact of this approach upon you?

	Frequency	Percent
Extremely negative	5	45.5%
Negative	1	9.1%
Neither negative nor positive	4	36.4%
Positive	1	9.1%
Extremely positive	0	0.0%
Total	11	100.0%

Table 16c.1: Transport provider: Why do you believe this to be the case?

	Frequency	Percent
Response	2	16.7%
No response	10	83.3%
Total	12	100.0%

Table 17: Do you agree or disagree that simplified personal travel budgets can provide parents of children with SEND and those in rural areas with more flexibility to arrange their own transport for their child?

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	42	13.8%
Agree	77	25.3%
Neither agree nor disagree	108	35.5%
Disagree	29	9.5%
Strongly disagree	48	15.8%
Total	304	100.0%

Table 17.1: Please tell us why.

	Frequency	Percent
Response	119	36.7%
No response	205	63.3%
Total	324	100.0%

Table 17a: Parent/carer of child/children with additional needs (distance related travel not included): Do you agree or disagree that simplified personal travel budgets can provide parents of children with SEND and those in rural areas with more flexibility to arrange their own transport for their child?

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	13	15.3%
Agree	21	24.7%
Neither agree nor disagree	19	22.4%
Disagree	12	14.1%
Strongly disagree	20	23.5%
Total	85	100.0%

Table 17a.1: Parent/carer of child/children with additional needs (distance related travel not included): Please tell us why.

	Frequency	Percent
Response	44	50.0%
No response	44	50.0%
Total	88	100.0%

Table 18: What do you feel will be the impact of this approach upon you?

	Frequency	Percent
Extremely negative	42	13.9%
Negative	23	7.6%
Neither negative nor positive	206	68.2%
Positive	21	7.0%
Extremely positive	10	3.3%
Total	302	100.0%

Table 18.1: Why do you believe this to be the case?

	Frequency	Percent
Response	79	24.4%
No response	245	75.6%
Total	324	100.0%

Table 18a: Parent/carer of child/children with additional needs (distance related travel not included): What do you feel will be the impact of this approach upon you?

	Frequency	Percent
Extremely negative	24	27.9%
Negative	13	15.1%
Neither negative nor positive	36	41.9%
Positive	6	7.0%
Extremely positive	7	8.1%
Total	86	100.0%

Table 18a.1: Parent/carer of child/children with additional needs (distance related travel not included): Why do you believe this to be the case?

	Frequency	Percent
Response	31	35.2%
No response	57	64.8%
Total	88	100.0%

Table 19: Some children receive free transport because a route to school has been formally assessed as unsafe. Do you agree or disagree that we should make routes safe wherever possible so that pupils can walk or cycle to school?

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	111	35.9%
Agree	106	34.3%
Neither agree nor disagree	36	11.7%
Disagree	20	6.5%
Strongly disagree	36	11.7%
Total	309	100.0%

Table 19.1: Please tell us why.

	Frequency	Percent
Response	152	46.9%
No response	172	53.1%
Total	324	100.0%

Table 19a: Parent of child with free home to school transport due to unsafe walking route: Some children receive free transport because a route to school has been formally assessed as unsafe. Do you agree or disagree that we should make routes safe wherever possible so that pupils can walk or cycle to school?

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	12	23.5%
Agree	8	35.3%
Neither agree nor disagree	6	11.8%
Disagree	6	11.8%
Strongly disagree	9	17.6%
Total	51	100.0%

Table 19a.1: Parent of child with free home to school transport due to unsafe walking route: Please tell us why.

	Frequency	Percent
Response	33	64.7%
No response	18	35.3%
Total	51	100.0%

Table 20: What do you feel will be the impact of this approach upon you?

	Frequency	Percent
Extremely negative	42	13.9%
Negative	24	7.9%
Neither negative nor positive	170	56.1%
Positive	48	15.8%
Extremely positive	19	6.3%
Total	303	100.0%

Table 20.1: Why do you believe this to be the case?

	Frequency	Percent
Response	104	32.1%
No response	220	67.9%
Total	324	100.0%

Table 20a: Parent of child with free home to school transport due to unsafe walking route: What do you feel will be the impact of this approach upon you?

	Frequency	Percent
Extremely negative	12	24.0%
Negative	4	8.0%
Neither negative nor positive	24	48.0%
Positive	7	14.0%
Extremely positive	3	6.0%
Total	50	100.0%

Table 20a.1: Parent of child with free home to school transport due to unsafe walking route: Why do you believe this to be the case?

	Frequency	Percent
Response	20	39.2%
No response	31	60.8%
Total	51	100.0%

Table 21: Do you agree or disagree that the council should regularly review travel routes so that it is providing the most cost effective and environmentally friendly journeys to transport children to school?

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	102	33.4%
Agree	124	40.7%
Neither agree nor disagree	51	16.7%
Disagree	13	4.3%
Strongly disagree	15	4.9%
Total	305	100.0%

Table 21.1: Please tell us why.

	Frequency	Percent
Response	102	31.5%
No response	222	68.5%
Total	324	100.0%

Table 21a: Parent of child with free home to school transport due to unsafe walking route: Do you agree or disagree that the council should regularly review travel routes so that it is providing the most cost effective and environmentally friendly journeys to transport children to school?

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	17	34.7%
Agree	16	32.7%
Neither agree nor disagree	13	26.5%
Disagree	0	0.0%
Strongly disagree	3	6.1%
Total	49	100.0%

Table 21a.1: Parent of child with free home to school transport due to unsafe walking route: Please tell us why.

	Frequency	Percent
Response	20	39.2%
No response	31	60.8%
Total	51	100.0%

Table 22: What do you feel will be the impact of this approach upon you?

	Frequency	Percent
Extremely negative	24	8.4%
Negative	16	5.6%
Neither negative nor positive	174	60.6%
Positive	57	19.9%
Extremely positive	16	5.6%
Total	287	100.0%

Table 22.1: Why do you believe this to be the case?

	Frequency	Percent
Response	68	21.0%
No response	256	79.0%
Total	324	100.0%

Table 22a: Parent of child with free home to school transport due to unsafe walking route: What do you feel will be the impact of this approach upon you?

	Frequency	Percent
Extremely negative	4	8.9%
Negative	1	2.2%
Neither negative nor positive	30	66.7%
Positive	9	20.0%
Extremely positive	1	2.2%
Total	45	100.0%

Table 22a.1: Parent of child with free home to school transport due to unsafe walking route: Why do you believe this to be the case?

	Frequency	Percent
Response	10	19.6%
No response	41	80.4%
Total	51	100.0%

Table 23: We are planning to review and improve how we purchase Home to School Transport Services. What do you think are the key considerations that we should bear in mind?

	Frequency	Percent
Response	10	3.1%
No response	314	96.9%
Total	324	100.0%

Table 24: Do you have any alternatives to help the council manage the costs of providing home to school transport, whilst maintaining service quality and continuing to meet statutory needs?

	Frequency	Percent
Response	153	47.2%
No response	171	52.8%
Total	324	100.0%

Table 25: Are you:

	Frequency	Percent
Male	63	21.3%
Female	233	78.7%
Total	296	100.0%

Table 26: What is your age?

	Frequency	Percent
Under 18	3	1.0%
18-24	2	0.7%
25-34	15	5.0%
35-44	136	45.3%
45-54	94	31.3%
55-64	32	10.7%
56-74	14	4.7%
75+	4	1.3%
Total	300	100.0%

Table 27: Do you consider yourself to be a disabled person?

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	46	15.3%
No	254	84.7%
Total	300	100.0%

Table 28: What is your religion or belief?

	Frequency	Percent
Christian	170	59.2%
Sikh	1	0.3%
Muslim	1	0.3%
Jewish	1	0.3%
None	112	39.0%
Pagan	1	0.3%
Norse heathen	1	0.3%
Total	287	100.0%

Table 29: What is your ethnicity?

	Frequency	Percent
White British	281	96.2%
White non-British	5	1.7%
Arab or Middle Eastern	2	0.7%
Asian or Asian British	1	0.3%
Mixed Race	3	1.0%
Total	292	100.0%

Table 30: How would you describe your sexual orientation?

	Frequency	Percent
Heterosexual/straight	264	96.0%
Gay or lesbian	4	1.5%
Bisexual	7	2.5%
Total	275	100.0%

Appendix 3 – Summary of responses from Key Stakeholder Groups and the Online Consultation Events

Making Changes Together (16th March 2023)

Personal Travel Budgets

- Would a Personal Travel Budget be received via Direct Payments
- Many parents not aware of Personal Travel Budgets and the Councils current scheme
- If the Personal Travel Budget option is taken up by some parents – this will be more efficient than council arranging taxi etc.

Travel Training

- MCT generally in support of Travel Training and feel that this can help children approaching 14-16 and also their parents.
- Starting Travel training earlier than 14-16, maybe at start of Secondary school
- Covid had impacted on some children and dented confidence to use group transport. Some children happy to travel on a bus pre-covid, but not now.
- Other examples given of children who can use public transport well on their own.
- Will travel training opportunities apply to children who don't have an EHCP
- Need to ensure the Travel Training Offer is clear to parents as don't want to raise expectations or create perception that it is related to having an EHCP as this will increase demand for an EHCP

Pickup Points

- When developing Pickup Points arrangements there will be a number of really important considerations which include family circumstances (other Young People in the family), age of the young person, the distance to travel – both to the pickup point and then to school etc)
- Could do a survey of parents to get views on Pickup Points

General

- Examples of Taxis which travel through villages which are not full and could take more young people from the same village. Is this explored by council and could they not pick up extra children to reduce cost.

Xtreme Group (14th March 2023)

Types of Transport

- Group transport can be overwhelming for some children, but also some children prefer to be on transport with their friends. Gave an example where shared a taxi with 3 other children and it worked fine.
- Sometimes flexibility of transport can be improved, for example, one taxi wouldn't pick up 100 yards from a home, when they were with a carer.
- Need to be cautious of long transport journeys, as take up too much of the day and can get home quite late.
- Consider routes and length of journey.
- Can Young Person change their mind if they tried and weren't happy?

Escorts

- Escorts should get to know the children/young people before they support young people on transport
- Sometimes Escorts not needed, should be more targeted at younger children. Gave example where had a PA but didn't need one when getting older.
- Who decides who gets a PA as don't always get this right
- Do we have PA's who can support with medical needs
- Look at individual needs of Young Person not costs.

Independent Travel Training

- Not appropriate for all young people, but could work for some.
- Getting transport with other children can make you feel more normal
- Think it a good idea but if only if the young person wants to try – not forced
- Young People who travel on their own can encourage other young people
- Should do a trial and get young people used to it.
- It should be people you know who are supporting you with travel training e.g. teacher, school staff etc, not someone you don't know.
- Travel training is part of SEND Promise so in line with this.
- Ask Young Person who they'd like to support them to do this? Family, support workers.

Personal Travel Budget

- Will increasing inflation be factored in every year
- Can it be tailored to parents availability and circumstances
- Will Personal Travel budgets cover medical needs e.g. if you need to buy a trained person to travel with a young person
- Will distance be included e.g. if someone lives further away from a school then they get a bigger budget or is it on size fits all

Unsafe Routes

- A lot of Young People travel out of area for school. How far is acceptable to walk/cycle?

Youth Council (13th March 2023)

Review concessionary scheme.

- Currently offer these on some routes with a charge of £1.63 (could go up 37p approx.).
- 'spare seats'. People who don't get it? Worry about it going up and people not being able to afford it. Would be £2.80 a day ticket. – could be historic reasons.
- Talked about taking multiple buses to get to school (service buses) which could total to £5 a day. – shared benefit would be more appropriate.
- Would cost be placed on parents if this is taken away? (Paddy did the maths here for a year £210).
- Could phase this scheme out.

How can we more effectively and efficiently support single person journeys?

- 376 from 286 – taxis are expensive.
- Route review for car-pooling.
- Reducing cost and encouraging social engagement.
- 93% (64% elsewhere) have passenger assistants. Needs would be analysed to meet needs and ratio.
- Safety to passengers and SEND struggling to engage in bus transport etc. School trips? Resources? Risk Assessing. If a child needs to be alone, this will be maintained.

Developing independent skills of young people.

- Independent travel training.
- Location of pick up.
- Personal travel budgets for parents – refunded for mileage etc
- Post 16 target to have them a little more independent.

Reviewing unsafe walking routes an existing travel routes.

- Travel routes are they most effective, children collected in right order, more pick-ups.
- Not door to door any longer. Journey time will increase.
- Queueing time to get children into school (SEN).

Unsafe routes

- Walking routes to schools to make these routes safer, paths, cycle paths, lighting.
- Carbon zero agenda but large cost to do this.
- Comparable cost to promoting walking routes to putting on more transport.
- Walking routes is a better long-term plan.
- SEN children on buses for longer? Time home? Homework allowances?
- Sacrifice a longer journey time, and more people accessing the transport is more important for people.
- Less isolated people, or people not being able to get to schools. Experience of young person who has struggled with transport

How can we get best service from transport providers.

- What are the other options?

CYP Overview and Scrutiny (10th March 2023)

- In reference to the County Council Network survey which council advised that their home to school transport was manageable?
- In relation to the £1.63 fare raising to £2.80 members advised of an arrangement between St Bede's school at Lanchester and Go North East charging £13.00 per week and suggested engaging with Go North East to see if there was scope to reach a similar arrangement.
- In relation to independence members suggested that this should go wider across all services as there were opportunities for all sectors.
- Regarding unsafe routes members suggested that the service should be mindful of capital investment and ensure it was cost effective.
- Referring to procurement of services members suggested engaging with community groups to come to an arrangement to share mini buses and suggested paying parents a mileage rate.
- Do special schools use their own buses and driver escort?
- With reference to single person transport is this at parents request or was this due to out of area placements?
- With reference to independence members suggested there were varying levels of vulnerability that should be taken into consideration and was this reviewed child by child?
- Referring to the maintained scheme members suggested consideration should be given to the working poor who may have difficulty affording additional costs.
- Referencing personal budgets, especially in rural areas members suggested that these areas suffer from poor transport and consideration should be given to the impact on working parents.
- Members asked if children and young people who are using the service had been included in the consultation exercise?
- Members referenced the online consultation and suggested the service re look at how it is structured and the language used.
- In relation to budgets members suggested that where possible using the same provider to attract economies of scale.
- Members sought clarity regarding personal budgets as to whether this was only when the child was in the vehicle.
- Members asked if the parents would be subject to the same rules as other drivers who transport children and asked if the service were looking at this as an option?
- Members advised that historically friends of the school had fund raised to purchase a school mini bus that was maintained by DCC and DCC paid for driver training, a non teaching member of staff would pick up the children and the bus could be used for other activities such as visits and be back to take children home.
- Members suggested volunteer drivers picking up one or two children would be more cost effective than public transport.
- £2.80 fare was expensive for some parents especially when there is a cost of living crisis.

Online Consultation Event (15th and 16th March 2023)

- We pay for my son to make 10 bus journeys per week. He has autism (but uses a regular school bus, not specific SEND transport). He finds the bus too difficult to manage in the morning (bad behaviour etc). And he goes to an after school club two evenings per week. So he actually only makes three bus journeys per week yet we pay for 10.
- I would be happy to pay extra if there was an option to pay for the journeys we use rather than a blanket charge for ALL journeys. Will this be an option?
- By rising the cost to £2.80 per child is this going to be a like for like service the child will receive if they used a public bus? For example you cant vape on the public bus, but for some reason you can vape on the school bus.... how will you make it a like for like service?
- How will these proposals affect schools with special arrangements in place (e.g. St Leonards School) where we already pay more per seat than the amount you are proposing? Will these routes still be maintained? Will the costs increase further, if so by how much (or when will we find out how much)?
- How often are walking assessments carried out? is there a time limit on when these routes should be assessed?
- Can you offer a half weekly pass for the school bus? My daughter does not use the bus everyday, however i pay the monthly fee.
- Can everyone who uses the bus not pay a contribution to the bus service?
- If costs increase in line with public buses, will there be other similarities introduced? e.g. being able to use a different bus to go to a different location on some days? When I asked if this was possible recently (my son has a concessionary seat) I was told I'd need to pay the full cost for him to use both buses (even though he would only need to use the second bus for one journey per week).
- Can the survey be issued out via email to all parents who used the home to school travel? As a lot of parents are not aware of the consultation.
- SEND hubs.. where will be send hubs be? is there a distance set from your specific home? Who will decided when children attend these hubs? medical professionals, parents???
- DCC undoubtedly need to save money. One of the main reasons why contract prices are so high is that it is so difficult for a new private hire or hackney carriage driver to gain their licence.
- Another reason iOS that's the lack of accessible vehicles forces the price up. Are you going to be working/liasing with licensing to change the policy in order to save money?
- How will the hubs be policed? passenger assistants? Will parents get a travel budget to get their child to these hubs?
- Are Durham County Council considering using section 19 minibuses for contracts and if so who will monitor & police the not for profit rules as from 2018 rules changed and are now stricter than in previous years
- Back to walking assessments..... when looking at the policy 2013 certain criteria had to be met to class the route as safe and walkable. However not every route was assessed this way. For example A182 from South Hetton to Hall walk. Assessment carried out July 2012, not in line with the 2013 policy. This route was deemed safe, however the 3 hours monitoring was not conducted at the right

times, stated in the policy and by the report and a lot has changed over 10 years. Can an assessment be carried out on this route?

- Why don't DCC consult with contractors to agree the best route and number of pupils carried around that area going to the same destination. This was a situation that I was in this year and asked DCC to consider me combining two contracts into one
- we live in a rural area, the bus my daughter uses to travel to and from school is, as far as I am aware, entirely made up of concessionary seats (as no one this far out would qualify for free transport, as the school she attends is not our nearest school - it is the second nearest, however as a parent I do not feel that our nearest school is appropriate for my daughter). I do not have an issue with paying the increased amount (£2.80), however if this bus was withdrawn there is no alternative viable way for those children to get to school other than their parents driving them, there is no appropriate public transport alternative and walking or cycling would not be appropriate / safe. If each child had to be driven to school (instead of using the bus) this would mean approx. 16 separate car journeys which would have a negative impact on the environment as well as increasing congestion around the school. Please can you confirm that in situations such as ours (where there is no viable alternative way for the children to travel to school) that you will continue to maintain this service? When we applied for a place at this school for our daughter it was on the basis that there was a school bus route available that she (and other children in our area) could use, she is now well settled at this school and so it would have a negative impact on her if she were to have to change schools due to the lack of transport (i can only speak for my daughter as i have not conducted a survey of the other students who use her bus, but I would imagine they would be in the same situation). if this service were withdrawn for future students I believe that this would have a negative impact on them as they would be left with only 1 choice of school (which is our nearest school), which is limited in the amount of syllabus options it can provide for children due to its small size.
- Everyone should pay towards the bus and services who use the bus. My child is discriminated against because we live 2.8 miles from the nearest school.
- To save congestion at the schools as you've mentioned, could we not stagger start and finish times? I'm only suggesting this at SEN schools which vehicles queue. The pupils will still be off loaded from their vehicles in a timely manner, but it will aid the congestion. It may also allow operators to link contracts which should save money.
- How do you propose to stop the queuing in SEND schools? this happens in all schools not just send schools?
- with regards to parents been paid to take their children to school themselves this could have an impact on some families who claim benefits example universal credit, it could mean that payments would have to be declared as income which could cause difficulties with claims
- Has personal budgets been offered to parents? as i have never been told or offered this?
- When will the results of the consultation be put into practice. Will this be for the school transport tender pack for September 2023
- Long shot.... can schools be provided with their own buses to transport children?

- why is the taxi test so hard to pass with dcc if it wasn't there would be more cars /minibuses
- I don't feel like the first set of questions got a proper answer - what further consultation will take place on this? Isn't THIS the consultation?
- Why should working parents constantly be penalised and pay and non payment parents just keep receiving
- Thank you for your question, we have noted this for the Q&A to follow (We pay for my son to make 10 bus journeys per week. He has autism (but uses a regular school bus, not specific SEND transport). He finds the bus too difficult to manage in the morning (bad behaviour etc). And he goes to an after school club two evenings per week. So he actually only makes three bus journeys per week yet we pay for 10.
- I would be happy to pay extra if there was an option to pay for the journeys we use rather than a blanket charge for ALL journeys. Will this be an option?)

Appendix 4

Durham County Council Equality Impact Assessment

The Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010) requires Durham County Council to have 'due regard' to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people from different groups. Completion of this template allows us to provide a written record of our equality analysis and demonstrate due regard. It must be used as part of decision making processes with relevance to equality.

Please contact equalities@durham.gov.uk for any necessary support.

Section One: Description and Screening

Service/Team or Section	Children and Young Peoples Services Regeneration, Economy and Growth
Lead Officer name and job title	Keith Forster, Strategic Manager, Operational Support CYPS Cathy Knight, Integrated Passenger Transport Manager
Subject of the impact assessment	Home to School Transport Review
Report date (Cabinet)	14/06/2023 08/02/2023
MTFP Reference (if relevant)	
EIA Start Date	13/09/2022
EIA Review Date	May 2023

Subject of the Impact Assessment

Please give a brief description of the policy, proposal or practice which is the subject of this impact assessment.

Home to School Transport is a statutory service provided by the Council for pupils who meet statutory eligibility criteria. If eligible, a pupil will receive free transport to School. Durham County Councils arrangements are set out in the Councils Home to School Transport Policy.

Following a review of the Councils policy and provision, five priority areas emerged with a number of changes proposed for further development as part of a three year transformation programme:

Priority One: Review the DCC Concessionary Scheme.

Description - Concessionary seats are spare seats available on a school bus, that are sold to pupils who are not entitled to free transport. There are three schemes – standard, maintained and the school's scheme.

The key areas to explore in the consultation are:

- A proposed increase to the daily charge for the provision of the **standard** and **maintained** Concessionary schemes which aligns to the Go North East Under 19 fare of £2.80 for a return journey from 2023/24 academic year.
- The future provision of the **maintained** Concessionary scheme, in particular the cessation of the scheme and options for implementation.

Priority 2 - Consider how the Council can more effectively and efficiently support the provision of single person journeys and passenger assistants on transport.

Description - Single person journeys and passenger assistants are mainly provided for children with special educational needs and disabilities and mainly to pupils in special schools. They are usually taxi's, which is the most expensive form of transport, and the transported pupil is often accompanied by a Passenger assistant.

Durham has a higher than average proportion of young people with SEND receiving single person transport in County Durham with/without a passenger assistant. Additionally, a much higher proportion of transport routes are provided with a passenger assistant

The key areas to explore in the consultation are:

- Explore how best to ensure the optimum use of home to school transport resources, in particular the provision of single person vehicles and passenger assistants whilst discharging statutory responsibilities.
- Seek views on the potential impact on the duration of transport journeys and the benefits of independence/ socialisation with peers.

Priority 3 - Develop independence skills of young people and introduce an updated personal travel budget scheme.

Description - Independent Travel Training (ITT) equips individuals on how to travel independently in a safe and responsible way. Travelling independently is a life skill that reduces isolation and dependency and opens opportunities for education, employment and enjoyment.

Children with SEND currently receive door-to-door transport from the time they start school until the time they leave College and as such do not gain the necessary travel skills that other children do. Whilst many children with SEND will not be able to travel independently, those that are able should be given the opportunity to do so.

Description - Pickup points are similar to bus stops, where the Council identifies designated pick-up and drop-off locations for the pupil to meet the bus or taxi rather than offering a door-to-door service.

This reduces the time needed for the route to pick up the pupils and supports children and young people to become more independent and better prepares them for adulthood.

It will require pupils to walk a reasonable distance in order to access public transport and the maximum distances will depend on a range of circumstances, including the age of the child, their individual needs and the nature of the routes they are expected to walk to the designated pickup or set down points.

Description - A Personal Travel Budget is a sum of money provided by the Council to parents or carers of children with SEND who are eligible for travel assistance. The budget allows families to make their own arrangements for travel, thereby increasing choice and flexibility. They also represent an opportunity for the council to reduce expenditure and management time associated with day-to-day arrangements.

The key areas to explore in the consultation are:

- The introduction of an independent travel training scheme to support independence and socialisation of young people.
- The benefits of Personal Travel Budgets and how a simplified scheme can provide greater flexibility and incentive to parents to transport their own children to school.
- The benefits and impact of the introduction of pickup points

Priority 4 - Review Unsafe Walking Routes, Re-Routing and Pickup Points

Description - The Council provides free transport for pupils travelling to their nearest suitable school, who would not otherwise qualify due to being under the relevant distance threshold, where the shortest walking route(s) are assessed as unsafe to walk.

There is no statutory requirement for home to school transport to be a door-to-door service or to provide for individual establishments. An analysis of unsafe routes and consideration of collective pick-up points and multiple destinations requires further exploration.

The key areas to explore in the consultation are:

- The introduction of improvements to existing unsuitable routes to make them safe for children to attend school without the need for Home to School Transport and
- The Benefits of undertaking a comprehensive route review to deliver efficiencies and benefits in the provision of transport routes

Priority 5 - Review potential procurement options for home to school transport services in relation to impact on value for money and associated competitive pricing.

Description - The Home to School Transport Service is currently operating in an environment of increasing price inflation and contract costs with challenges around transport supply and market competition. It therefore is pivotal to the delivery of the Service that the Council has a clear strategy and approach in relation to the procurement and supply of transport moving forward. To move this forward the Council will establish an improvement team to review how procurement and contracting processes currently work with the aim of introducing improvement which achieve the above.

The key areas to explore in the consultation will be:

- To seek views on proposals to identify and assess additional ways to achieve better value for money, whilst maintaining quality of service.

Who are the main people impacted and/or stakeholders? (e.g. general public, staff, members, specific clients/service users, community representatives):

- Pupils, including SEND pupils
- Parents and carers
- Transport providers
- Schools
- Staff
- General public

Screening

Is there any actual or potential negative or positive impact on the following protected characteristics ¹ ?		
Protected Characteristic	Negative Impact Indicate: Yes, No or Unsure	Positive Impact Indicate: Yes, No or Unsure
Age	Yes	No
Disability	Potentially	Yes
Gender reassignment	No	No
Marriage and civil partnership (only in relation to 'eliminate discrimination')	No	No
Pregnancy and maternity	No	No
Race	No	No
Religion or Belief	No	No
Sex	Potentially	No
Sexual orientation	No	No

Please provide **brief** details of any potential to cause discrimination or negative impact. Record full details and any mitigating actions in section 2 of this assessment.

The Programme has the potential to impact on equalities' groups as follows:

Disability: The transformation programme includes consideration of transport provision for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Whilst this won't impact on the decision to award transport to those meeting statutory eligibility criteria, it may impact on the mode of transport provided to some children with SEND and the level of support provided to them on that transport. For example, some children who currently travel in a single person vehicle may need to be transported in shared transport with other children, some children who currently receive a dedicated passenger assistant to accompany them on transport may have that PA removed or may need to share with other children.

Age: Review affects children and young people accessing home to school transport. As part of the review of concessionary travel charging any

¹ <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/equality-act/protected-characteristics>

additional/increased transport costs will impact families with school aged children (accessing this), who are most likely to be working age people.

Religion or Belief: There are a number of faith schools whose pupils travel on transport provided as part of Concessionary Schemes. However, of 498 Pupils using the maintained concessionary scheme, 43 are travelling to Faith schools and as such would not indicate a disproportionate impact on faith schools.

Sex: There is potential to increase fares charged, which are most likely paid for by parents/carers. There is potential disproportionate impact for lone parents who are predominately female. Proposals do not affect those pupils eligible for free transport to school as set out in the Home to School Transport Policy.

Please provide **brief** details of positive impact. How will this policy/proposal promote our commitment to our legal responsibilities under the public sector equality duty to:

- advance equality of opportunity,
- eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and
- foster good relations between people from different groups?

The potential to introduce independent travel training is aimed at having a positive impact on those older pupils with special educational needs and disabilities by providing them with increased confidence and independence skills which will help with their transition to an adult.

A personal travel budget for eligible children with SEND allows families to make their own arrangements for travel, thereby increasing choice and flexibility.

Consultation is designed to be as inclusive as possible, engaging a broad range of stakeholders, including listening to the views of young people.

Evidence

What evidence do you have to support your data analysis and any findings?

Please **outline** any data you have and/or proposed sources (e.g. service user or census data, research findings). Highlight any data gaps and say whether or not you propose to carry out consultation. Record your detailed analysis, in relation to the impacted protected characteristics, in section 2 of this assessment.

Passenger data

The home to school transport service provides daily transport to approx. 9,000 passengers in 2021, made up of mainstream and SEND passengers along with other special provision. This is delivered by over 1,000 transport routes utilising over 300 different contracted suppliers. SEN Pupils account for 1,474 pupils.

The Review of home to school transport services undertaken in 2021 identified that in total there are 369 single passenger routes with 41% of SEN routes being single passenger. In larger Rural Councils the average is 38%. In all Councils it is around 30%.

Council data at November 2022 identified that there are 90 Children, who based on their needs, have been assessed as requiring Single Person Transport to school. The remaining young people receive a single person transport for a variety of other reasons

The Review also identified that there are 537 passenger assistants overall (mainly applied to SEN and special passenger routes where there are 450). Chaperones/PAs are deployed on 93% of all SEN routes against a normal expected deployment in other LA's per SEN route of around 64%.

Independent Travel Training

Durham does not currently have a travel training offer and as such have no children with SEN who are travelling independently. Methods of coaching include tuition in timetable reading and practical coaching in catching buses. The scheme can be extremely successful and in some authorities over 50 children every year are helped to travel independently. Independent Travel Training is a long-term commitment which will produce better outcomes for children over the long term and will have benefits for their future mobility, social integration, and employability

Travel training will underpin the shift in the travel offer as there is a real opportunity to promote the service better, engage schools and develop a real momentum for training more children to travel independently for those children who can respond to it

Personal Budgets

The review identified that against a benchmark for councils it would be expected that at least 2.5% of passengers entitled to travel benefitting from a private travel budget (PTB) and in some local authorities this is seen as high as 12%, however in Durham there are negligible numbers.

Promotion of carefully agreed Personal Travel Budgets to attract take-up can contribute to the development of independence and in many cases promote better interaction of parent and school at daily drop and pick-up.

Review DCC Concessionary Scheme

There are currently 61 pupils taking advantage of the Standard Spare Seat Concessions offer.

There are currently 498 pupils taking advantage of the 'Maintained Capacity' Spare Seats Concessions offer.

Currently there are agreements with 13 schools for concession schemes covering travel by 2,300 pupils, 3 of these are faith schools.

Review Unsafe Walking Routes (most populous)

- i. Lumley New Road to Park View Community School
Pupils affected: 87
- ii. High Jobs Hill to Parkside Academy
Pupils affected: 64
- iii. A181 to Wellfield School
Pupils affected: 41
- iv. Broomside Lane to Belmont School
Pupils affected: 21
- v. Esh Hill top to Durham Community Business College
Pupils affected: 16
- vi. A167 to Woodham Academy
Pupils affected: 15

Consultation – Update May 2023

Cabinet (February 2023) approved permission to consult with a broad range of stakeholders on the priority areas of the programme. There was a total of 324 responses to the online questionnaire, as well as written responses from key stakeholder groups. Relevant consultation feedback has been used to update sections 2&3 of this equality impact assessment, and mitigations formulated as a result of the consultation are included. A full summary of responses provided to the questionnaire and a summary of questions/points raised at consultation meetings are appended to the June Cabinet Report.

Screening Summary

On the basis of the information provided in this equality impact screening (section 1), are you proceeding to a full impact assessment (sections 2&3 of this template)?	Please confirm Yes
---	-----------------------

Sign Off

Lead officer sign off: Keith Forster	Date: 16/12/2022 19/05/2023
Equality representative sign off (where required): Mary Gallagher, E&D Team Leader	Date: 16/12/2022 19/05/2023

If carrying out a full assessment please proceed to sections two and three.

If not proceeding to full assessment, please ensure your screening record is **attached to any relevant decision-making records or reports**, retain a copy for update where necessary, and forward a copy to equalities@durham.gov.uk

If you are unsure of assessing impact please contact the corporate equalities team for further advice: equalities@durham.gov.uk

Section Two: Data analysis and assessment of impact

Please provide details of impacts for people with different protected characteristics relevant to your screening findings. You need to decide if there is or likely to be a differential impact for some. Highlight the positives e.g. benefits for certain groups and advancement of equality, as well as the negatives e.g. barriers or exclusion of particular groups. Record the evidence you have used to support or explain your conclusions, including any necessary mitigating actions to ensure fair treatment.

Protected Characteristic: Age		
What is the actual or potential impact in relation to age?	Record of evidence which supports and/or explains your conclusions on impact.	What further action or mitigation is required?
<p>The project is related to home to school transport as such the impacts of all proposals will affect young people and their families who are likely to be of working age.</p> <p>As part of the review of concessionary travel charging any additional/increased transport costs will impact families with school aged children (accessing this), who are most likely to be working age people.</p> <p>Update May 2023: Consultation feedback highlighted the financial impact of fare increases on working age families. The recommendation to agree a charge for the Standard and Maintained Concessionary</p>	<p>LG Inform:</p> <p>Of the 522,100 people in Durham, 89,100 were 5-19 (17% of the population).</p> <p>Review DCC Concessionary Scheme</p> <p>There are currently 61 pupils taking advantage of the Standard Spare Seat Concessions offer.</p> <p>There are currently 498 pupils taking advantage of the 'Maintained Capacity' Spare Seats Concessions offer. 43 pupils are travelling to Faith Schools</p> <p>Currently there are agreements with 11 schools to support the Schools Concessionary scheme. This covers travel by 2,300 pupils</p>	<p>Stakeholder consultation – public and targeted</p> <p>Targeted engagement with Youth Council</p> <p>Raise awareness of Durham County Council - Help with Your Money</p> <p>An initial trial of 'making safe' three sites currently assessed as unsafe</p> <p>Proposed charge for the Standard and Maintained Concessionary scheme of £2.00 to align to the Bus</p>

scheme of £2.00 to align to the Bus Service Improvement Plan offer for the 2023/24 academic year, is lower than £2.80 increase proposed as part of the consultation which should mitigate some of the financial impact.

Further investigative work and route reviews will be undertaken to better understand impact and identify potential mitigations.

and is not part of the consultation.

Review of most populous Unsafe Walking Routes

- i. Lumley New Road to Park View Community School
Pupils affected: 87
- ii. High Jobs Hill to Parkside Academy
Pupils affected: 64
- iii. A181 to Wellfield School
Pupils affected: 41
- iv. Broomside Lane to Belmont School
Pupils affected: 21
- v. Esh Hill top to Durham Community Business College
Pupils affected: 16
- vi. A167 to Woodham Academy
Pupils affected: 15

Update May 2023: Survey respondent's age ranges

	Frequency	Percent
Under 18	3	1.0%
18-24	2	0.7%
25-34	15	5.0%
35-44	136	45.3%
45-54	94	31.3%
55-64	32	10.7%
56-74	14	4.7%
75+	4	1.3%
Total	300	100.0%

Focus groups with children and young people with disabilities included:

- Making Changes Together
- Xtreme Group

Service Improvement Plan offer for the 2023/24 academic year

Undertake further work to investigate options for phasing out the Maintained Concessionary Scheme which take account of the impact on the cohort of families/pupils who will be affected and the impact on the local transport network

To establish a programme of reviews to consider routes which are currently assessed as unsafe and the feasibility on making them safe and the current configuration of school transport journeys with an initial focus on those schools which have the highest number of vehicles and/or cost associated with transporting pupils to their school

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth Council <p>Also, CYP Overview and Scrutiny and one live online consultation event open to all.</p>	
--	--	--

Protected Characteristic: Disability

What is the actual or potential impact in relation to disability?	Record of evidence which supports and/or explains your conclusions on impact.	What further action or mitigation is required?												
<p>Whilst the review of transport provision for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) won't impact decisions to award transport to those meeting statutory eligibility criteria, it may change the mode of transport provided to some children with SEND and the level of support provided to them on that transport. For example, some children who currently travel in a single person vehicle may need to be transported in shared transport with other children, some children who currently receive a dedicated passenger assistant to accompany them on transport may have that PA removed or may need to share with other children.</p> <p>The potential to introduce independent travel training is aimed at having a positive impact on those older pupils with special educational needs and disabilities by providing them with increased confidence and independence skills which</p>	<p>LG Inform:</p> <p>In Durham 17.6% of school age pupils have a statutory plan of SEN (statement or EHC Plan) or are receiving SEN support (previously school action and school action plus).</p> <p>There are 281 Transport contracts with a single passenger. The majority of these will be for pupils with SEND.</p> <p>There are 520 contracts with a Passenger Assistant. The majority of these will be to support pupils with SEND</p> <p>Update May 2023: Survey respondents by disability status</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Frequency</th> <th>Percent</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Yes</td> <td>46</td> <td>15.3%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No</td> <td>254</td> <td>84.7%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>300</td> <td>100.0%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Focus groups with children and young people with disabilities included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Making Changes Together Xtreme Group 		Frequency	Percent	Yes	46	15.3%	No	254	84.7%	Total	300	100.0%	<p>As above</p> <p>Targeted engagement with Special schools in development of consultation approach.</p> <p>Alternative formats, including easy read, will be made available.</p> <p>Reasonable adjustments will be made were requested and necessary.</p> <p>Agree that a programme is established to review the needs of those individual children who are in receipt of single person transport and/or a passenger assistant to ensure that the most appropriate transport assistance</p>
	Frequency	Percent												
Yes	46	15.3%												
No	254	84.7%												
Total	300	100.0%												

<p>will help with their transition to an adult.</p> <p>A personal travel budget for eligible children with SEND allows families to make their own arrangements for travel, thereby increasing choice and flexibility. This also reduces management time for the council associated with day-to-day travel arrangements.</p> <p>Update May 2023: Consultation feedback on the impact of proposals affecting children and young people indicated a broad level of agreement, less so for pick-up points and travel budgets. Independent travel options will be worked up with parents and stakeholder groups and a trial of pick-up points will be carefully considered as part of implementation plans.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth Council <p>Also, CYP Overview and Scrutiny and one live online consultation event open to all.</p>	<p>relevant to their needs is provided</p> <p>Commence a review of the existing Personal Travel Budget Scheme available to parents and also agree to the development of a Travel Training scheme in partnership with schools and parents</p> <p>To work with a small number of Special Schools and parents to introduce a trial of Pickup Points for Children with SEND to assess the effectiveness of this option</p>
--	--	--

Protected Characteristic: Gender reassignment		
What is the actual or potential impact in relation to gender reassignment?	Record of evidence which supports and/or explains your conclusions on impact.	What further action or mitigation is required?
It is not anticipated that the proposals will differentially impact trans people.	Currently there is no robust data about the number of trans people in County Durham or in the UK.	N/A

Protected Characteristic: Marriage and civil partnership (only in relation to 'eliminate discrimination')
--

What is the actual or potential impact in relation to marriage and civil partnership?	Record of evidence which supports and/or explains your conclusions on impact.	What further action or mitigation is required?
It is not anticipated that the proposals will differentially impact on the grounds of marriage and civil partnership.		N/A

Protected Characteristic: Pregnancy and maternity		
What is the actual or potential impact in relation to pregnancy and maternity?	Record of evidence which supports and/or explains your conclusions on impact.	What further action or mitigation is required?
It is not anticipated that the proposals will differentially impact on the grounds of pregnancy and maternity.		N/A

Protected Characteristic: Race																							
What is the actual or potential impact in relation to race?	Record of evidence which supports and/or explains your conclusions on impact.	What further action or mitigation is required?																					
It is not anticipated that the proposals will differentially impact on the grounds of race.	Update May 2023: Survey respondent's ethnicity	N/A																					
	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Frequency</th> <th>Percent</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>White British</td> <td>281</td> <td>96.2%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>White non-British</td> <td>5</td> <td>1.7%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Arab or Middle Eastern</td> <td>2</td> <td>0.7%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Asian or Asian British</td> <td>1</td> <td>0.3%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mixed Race</td> <td>3</td> <td>1.0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>292</td> <td>100.0%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			Frequency	Percent	White British	281	96.2%	White non-British	5	1.7%	Arab or Middle Eastern	2	0.7%	Asian or Asian British	1	0.3%	Mixed Race	3	1.0%	Total	292	100.0%
			Frequency	Percent																			
	White British		281	96.2%																			
	White non-British		5	1.7%																			
	Arab or Middle Eastern		2	0.7%																			
	Asian or Asian British		1	0.3%																			
	Mixed Race		3	1.0%																			
Total	292	100.0%																					

Protected Characteristic: Religion or belief																													
What is the actual or potential impact in relation to religion or belief?	Record of evidence which supports and/or explains your conclusions on impact.	What further action or mitigation is required?																											
<p>There are a number of faith schools whose pupils travel on transport provided as part of Concessionary Schemes. However, of 498 Pupils using the maintained concessionary scheme, 43 are travelling to Faith schools and as such would not indicate a disproportionate impact on faith schools.</p>	<p>Currently there are agreements with 13 schools covering travel by 2,300 pupils, 3 of these are faith schools.</p> <p>Update May 2023: Survey respondent's religion/belief</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Frequency</th> <th>Percent</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Christian</td> <td>170</td> <td>59.2%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sikh</td> <td>1</td> <td>0.3%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Muslim</td> <td>1</td> <td>0.3%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Jewish</td> <td>1</td> <td>0.3%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>None</td> <td>112</td> <td>39.0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pagan</td> <td>1</td> <td>0.3%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Norse heathen</td> <td>1</td> <td>0.3%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>287</td> <td>100.0%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Frequency	Percent	Christian	170	59.2%	Sikh	1	0.3%	Muslim	1	0.3%	Jewish	1	0.3%	None	112	39.0%	Pagan	1	0.3%	Norse heathen	1	0.3%	Total	287	100.0%	<p>As above</p> <p>Keep SACRE informed of proposals.</p> <p>Raise awareness of Durham County Council - Help with Your Money</p>
	Frequency	Percent																											
Christian	170	59.2%																											
Sikh	1	0.3%																											
Muslim	1	0.3%																											
Jewish	1	0.3%																											
None	112	39.0%																											
Pagan	1	0.3%																											
Norse heathen	1	0.3%																											
Total	287	100.0%																											

Protected Characteristic: Sex		
What is the actual or potential impact in relation to sex?	Record of evidence which supports and/or explains your conclusions on impact.	What further action or mitigation is required?
<p>There is potential that the proposals will differentially impact on the grounds of gender.</p> <p>There is potential to increase fares charged, are most likely paid for by parents. Lone parents are predominately female.</p> <p>Update May 2023 Consultation survey respondents were predominately female and</p>	<p>LG Inform:</p> <p>Of the 522,100 people in Durham, 266,800 were women (51.1% of the population) and 255,300 men (48.9%).</p> <p>Lone parents are predominately female, which affects socio economic status and access to own a car.</p> <p>A higher proportion of female carers than male carers.</p> <p>Update May 2023: Survey respondents by sex</p>	<p>As above (for age and disability)</p> <p>Raise awareness of Durham County Council - Help with Your Money</p>

<p>concerns were raised in terms of cost increases.</p> <p>Several mitigations are in place (see sections above for age and disability) inc. a lower than proposed fare increase and further investigative work and route reviews to better understand impact and potential mitigations.</p>		Frequency	Percent
	Male	63	21.3%
	Female	233	78.7%
	Total	296	100.0%

Protected Characteristic: Sexual orientation																	
What is the actual or potential impact in relation to sexual orientation?	Record of evidence which supports and/or explains your conclusions on impact.	What further action or mitigation is required?															
It is not anticipated that the proposals will differentially impact people on the grounds of their sexual orientation.	<p>Update May 2023: Survey respondent's sexual orientation</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Frequency</th> <th>Percent</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Hetero/straight</td> <td>264</td> <td>96.0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Gay or lesbian</td> <td>4</td> <td>1.5%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Bisexual</td> <td>7</td> <td>2.5%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>275</td> <td>100.0%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Frequency	Percent	Hetero/straight	264	96.0%	Gay or lesbian	4	1.5%	Bisexual	7	2.5%	Total	275	100.0%	N/A
	Frequency	Percent															
Hetero/straight	264	96.0%															
Gay or lesbian	4	1.5%															
Bisexual	7	2.5%															
Total	275	100.0%															

Section Three: Conclusion and Review

Summary

<p>Please provide a brief summary of your findings; a summary of any positive and/or negative impacts across the protected characteristics, links to the involvement of different groups and/or public consultation, mitigations and conclusions made.</p>
<p>Post Consultation Update May 2023</p> <p>There are potential impacts (both positive and negative) in relation to the protected characteristics of disability, age and sex (women) although several mitigations have been identified to remove or minimise potential negative impact.</p> <p>Consultation feedback highlighted impacts such as cost pressures on families which will impact working age parents and for those single parent families, the cost increase is more likely to affect women. In mitigation a lower fare increase is proposed.</p>

For proposals which impact children with SEND, such as pick up points and travel budgets, there has been lower consultee agreement, although some positives have been recognised and suggestions made by consultees which may minimise impact. There has been a higher level of agreement with proposals, such as travel independence schemes for SEND as the potential positive benefits for children and young people is recognised, especially for older SEND children as this supports lifelong independence skills. Several reviews, alongside working with parents and special schools are proposed to mitigate negative impact and ensure children with SEND are transported safely, with opportunities to maximise the independence of individuals supported.

The consultation highlighted more favourable support for reviews of unsafe walking routes and travel routes. Although there are still many complexities to consider and consultees highlighted some of these, the health benefits and lowering impact on the environment is recognised and this is positive for young people and working age families.

The impacts on groups of people with protected characteristics will continue to be reviewed as the wider project and reviews progress. The council will work with parents, schools and partners to identify and evaluate any mitigations to address any adverse impact.

Summary (February 2023):

Proposals may have disproportionate impact for the following protected groups.

All proposals:

The project is related to home to school transport as such will affect young people and working age families.

Impact of how the Council can more effectively and efficiently support the provision of single person journeys and passenger assistants on transport.

Whilst this won't impact on the decision to award transport to those meeting statutory eligibility criteria, it may change the mode of transport provided to some children, especially those with SEND, as well as the level of support provided to them on that transport. For example, some children who currently travel in a single person vehicle may need to be transported in shared transport with other children, some children who currently receive a dedicated passenger assistant to accompany them on transport may have that PA removed or may need to share with other children.

Impact of developing independence skills of young people and introducing an updated personal travel budget scheme.

The potential to introduce independent travel training is aimed at having a positive impact on those older pupils with special educational needs and disabilities by providing them with increased confidence and independence skills which will help with their transition to an adult.

A personal travel budget for eligible children with SEND allows families to make their own arrangements for travel, thereby increasing choice and flexibility. This also reduces management time for the council associated with day-to-day travel arrangements.

Review the DCC Concessionary Scheme.

There is potential to increase fares charged for the standard and maintained concessionary scheme, which are most likely paid for by parents/carers of working age. Lone parents are predominately female and therefor may be a disproportionate impact on women.

Will this promote positive relationships between different communities? If so how?

None identified.

Action Plan

Action	Responsibility	Timescales for implementation	In which plan will the action appear?
Consultation	Complete		
An initial trial of 'making safe' three sites, sites currently assessed as unsafe	TBC		
Keep SACRE informed of proposals.	TBC/CYPS	TBC	N/A
Raise awareness of Durham County Council - Help with Your Money	TBC	TBC	N/A
Undertake further work to investigate options for phasing out the Maintained Concessionary Scheme which take account of the impact on the cohort of			

families/pupils who will be affected and the impact on the local transport network;			
Agree that a programme is established to review the needs of those individual children who are in receipt of single person transport and/or a passenger assistant to ensure that the most appropriate transport assistance relevant to their needs is provided;			
Commence a review of the existing Personal Travel Budget Scheme available to parents and also agree to the development of a Travel Training scheme in partnership with schools and parents			
To establish a programme of Reviews to consider routes which are currently assessed as unsafe and the feasibility on making them safe and the current configuration of school transport journeys with an initial focus on those schools which have the highest number of vehicles and/or cost associated with transporting pupils to their school			
To work with a small number of Special Schools and parents to introduce a trial of Pickup Points for Children with SEND to assess the effectiveness of this option			

Review and connected assessments

Are there any additional or connected equality impact assessments that need to be undertaken? (If yes, provide details)	
When will this assessment be reviewed? Please also insert this date at the front of the template	At decision points, then reviewed annually post implementation

Sign Off

Lead officer sign off: Keith Forster, Strategic Manager, Operational Support CYPS	Date: 19/05/2023
Equality representative sign off (where required): Mary Gallagher, E&D Team Leader	Date: 19/05/2023

Please ensure:

- **The findings of this EIA are carefully considered and used to inform any related decisions and policy development**
- **A summary of findings is included within the body of any relevant reports or decision-making records**
- **The EIA is attached to reports or relevant decision-making records and the report Implications Appendix 1 is noted that an EIA has been undertaken**

Please retain a copy for review and update where necessary, and forward a copy to equalities@durham.gov.uk

This page is intentionally left blank

Article 10 – Decision Making

10.1 Responsibility for decision making

The Council will issue and keep up to date a record of what part of the Council or individual has responsibility for particular types of decisions or decisions relating to particular areas or functions. This record is set out in these Articles.

10.2 Principles of decision making

All decisions of the Council will be made in accordance with the following principles:

- (a) proportionality (i.e. the action must be proportionate to the desired outcome);
- (b) due regard to all relevant and material considerations and disregard of irrelevant considerations;
- (c) due consultation and the taking of professional advice from officers;
- (d) respect for human rights;
- (e) a presumption in favour of openness;
- (f) clarity of aims and desired outcomes;
- (g) the giving of reasons for decisions;
- (h) due regard to equality legislation; and
- (i) due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.

10.3 Types of decision

- (a) **Decisions reserved to full Council.** Decisions relating to the functions listed in Article 4.2 will be made by the full Council and not delegated.
- (b) **Key decisions** – this means an executive decision which is likely to result in the Council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant, having regard to:
 - i. the Council's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates, or

- ii. to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards or electoral divisions in the area of the Council
- (c) For the purposes of paragraph 10.3(b) above, the incurring of expenditure is not a key decision, if it is:
 - i. to implement or give effect to a provision of the Council's Budget or Policy Framework and, where appropriate, for which financial provision has been made;
 - ii. to implement nationally or provincially agreed pay awards for officers of the Council in accordance with the terms of such award;
 - iii. iii) expenditure incurred by the Corporate Director, Resources in the exercise of Treasury Management powers delegated to them.
- (d) For the purposes of paragraph 10.3(b) above, any decision taken for the purpose of implementing an approved plan or strategy is not a key decision if it relates to a matter for which the plan or strategy makes provision.

10.4 Decision making by the full Council

Subject to Article 10.8, the Council meeting will follow the Council Procedure Rules set out in this Constitution when considering any matter.

10.5 Decision making by the Executive

Subject to Article 10.8, the Executive will follow the Executive Procedure Rules set out in this Constitution when considering any matter.

10.6 Decision making by Overview and Scrutiny Committees

The Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board and the Scrutiny Committees will follow the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules set out in this Constitution when considering any matter.

10.7 Decision making by other Committees and Sub-Committees established by the Council

Subject to Article 10.8, other Council committees and sub-committees will follow those parts of the Council Procedure Rules set out in this Constitution as apply to them.

10.8 Decision making by Council bodies acting as tribunals

The Council, a councillor or an officer acting as a tribunal or in an administrative manner or determining / considering (other than for the purposes of giving advice) the civil rights and obligations or the criminal responsibility of any person will follow a proper procedure which accords with the requirements of natural justice and the right to a fair trial contained in Article 6 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

This page is intentionally left blank

and it is the duty of those persons to attend if so required.

- (b) For this purpose, senior officer includes any chief officer, deputy chief officer, third tier officer and other appropriate senior officer. Where there are concerns about the appropriateness of the officer who should attend, the relevant chief officer shall discuss this with the appropriate Scrutiny Chair or Vice Chair with a view to achieving consensus.
- (c) Where any member or officer is required to attend the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board or a Scrutiny Committee under this provision, the Chair of that Committee will inform the Head of Legal and Democratic Services. The Head of Legal and Democratic Services shall inform the member or officer, if necessary in writing, giving at least 7 working days' notice of the meeting at which they are required to attend (unless agreed otherwise). Any notice will state the nature of the item on which they are required to attend to give account and whether any papers are required to be produced for the Board or Committee.

Where the account to be given to the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board or Scrutiny Committee will require the production of a report, then the member or officer concerned will be given sufficient notice to allow for preparation of that documentation.

- (d) Where, in exceptional circumstances, the member or officer is unable to attend on the required date, then the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board or Scrutiny Committee shall in consultation with the member or officer arrange an alternative date for attendance.

16. Attendance by others

The Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board or a Scrutiny Committee may invite people other than those people referred to in paragraph 15 above to address it, discuss issues of local concern and/or answer questions. It may for example wish to hear from residents, stakeholders and members and officers in other parts of the public sector and shall invite such people to attend.

17. Call-in

- (a) The Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board has the power to call in decisions made by the Executive (which term shall also include a Joint Committee) but not yet implemented. The purpose is to consider whether to recommend that a decision be reviewed by the Executive. This is a power which should only be used in exceptional

circumstances and cannot be used in respect of day-to-day management and operational decisions.

- (b) When a decision is made by the Executive, an individual member of the Executive with delegated powers or under joint arrangements, notice of the decision shall be published on the Council website normally within 2 working days of being made. All Overview and Scrutiny Members will be sent copies of the records of all such decisions within the same timescale, by the person responsible for publishing the decision.
- (c) That notice will bear the date on which it is published and will specify that the decision will come into force, and may then be implemented, on the expiry of 5 working days after the publication of the decision, unless the decision is called in under the provisions set out below.
- (d) Within that period:
 - (i) the Chair or, in their absence the Vice-Chair of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board; or
 - (ii) any five members of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board or the Scrutiny Committee within whose remit the decision falls

may sign a notice requesting that the decision is called in and submit the notice to the Head of Legal and Democratic Services. The notice should give reasons for the request for call-in, having regard to the principles of decision making set out in Article 10 of this Constitution.

- (e) On receipt of the notice the Head of Legal and Democratic Services will, as soon as possible, seek the views of the Chair or in their absence, the Vice-Chair of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board, or in the absence of both, a Chair or Vice-Chair of another Scrutiny Committee.
- (f) The Chair or Vice-Chair to whom the request is referred will consider whether the request is reasonable. They will take account of whether a case has been made out for calling in the decision and whether delaying the implementation of the decision would be likely to cause significant damage to the Council's interests. They will have regard to the advice of the Monitoring Officer and Chief Finance Officer, where appropriate, in conjunction with the Scrutiny Officer, on this point.
- (g) If it is considered that the request for call-in is reasonable, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services will convene a meeting of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board within 7 working days, after consulting the Chair of the Board about the date. The Board will then proceed as in sub-paragraph (i) below.

- (h) If the Chair or Vice-Chair to whom the request is referred considers that the request is unreasonable the decision will not be called in. The decision of the Chair or Vice Chair will be communicated to the signatories to the Call-in request within 2 working days. The Head of Legal and Democratic Services will submit a report to the next available meeting of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board giving details of the request and Chair's/Vice-Chair's reasons for refusing it.
- (i) Where the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board considers a call-in request, the format of the meeting will be as follows:-
- after the Chair opens the meeting the members who asked for the decision to be called in will be asked to explain their reasons for the request and what they feel should be reviewed;
 - on matters of particular relevance to a particular electoral division, electoral division members who are not signatories to a call-in have the opportunity to make comments on the call-in at the meeting, such speeches not to exceed five minutes each. Electoral division members will take no further part in the discussion or vote. Electoral division members must register their request to speak by contacting the Head of Legal and Democratic Services by 12 noon one working day prior to the relevant hearing;
 - the relevant portfolio holder (or holders if more than one is relevant) will then be invited to make any comments;
 - the relevant Corporate Director or their representative will advise the Board on the background and context of the decision and its importance to achieving Service priorities;
 - Board members will ask questions of members and officers in attendance;
 - the portfolio holder(s) will be invited to make any final comments on the matter.

The Board, after considering the evidence presented to the meeting, will make one of the following decisions:

- to take no further action, in which case the decision will take effect immediately;
- to refer the decision back to the decision-maker for reconsideration, setting out the nature of the Board's concerns;

- the decision-maker must then re-consider the matter with a further 10 working days, taking into account the concerns of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board, before making a final decisions;
- to refer the matter to full Council, in which case paragraph (k) below will apply; or
 - to refer the matter to a sub group of the Board for further consideration and report back to the Board within a specified period not exceeding 14 days, in which case the Board will, at its reconvened meeting take one of the decisions set out above; if the Board does not reconvene within 14 days or does reconvene but does not refer the matter back to the decision maker or to the full Council, the decision will take effect on the date of the reconvened Board meeting or the expiry of that further 14 day period, whichever is the earlier.
- (j) If, following a request for call-in, the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board does not meet in the period set out above, or does meet but does not refer the matter back to the decision maker or to full Council, the decision will take effect on the date of the relevant Board meeting, or the expiry of that further 7 working day period, whichever is the earlier.
- (k) If the matter is referred to full Council and the Council does not object to a decision which has been made, then no further action is necessary and the decision will be effective in accordance with the provision below. However, if the Council does object, it has no locus to make decisions in respect of an Executive decision unless it is contrary to the policy framework, or contrary to or not wholly consistent with the budget. Unless that is the case, the Council will refer any decision to which it objects back to the decision maker, together with the Council's views on the decision. That decision maker shall choose whether to amend the decision or not before reaching a final decision and implementing it. Where the decision was taken by the Executive, a meeting will be convened to reconsider within 10 working days of the Council request. Where the decision was made by an individual, the individual will reconsider within 10 working days of the Council request.
- (l) If the Council does not meet, or if it does but does not refer the decision back to the decision maker, the decision will become effective on the date of the Council meeting or expiry of the period in which the Council meeting should have been held, whichever is the earlier.

18. Exceptions

In order to ensure that call-in is not abused, nor causes unreasonable delay, certain limitations are to be placed on its use. These are:

- (a) that the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board may only call-in a maximum of 3 decisions per three month period;
- (b) that call-in can be invoked in respect of a decision only once;
- (c) that call in will not apply to individual decisions made by the Audit Committee, the County Planning Committee or Area Planning Committees, the Highways Committee, the Statutory Licensing Committee, the General Licensing and Registration Committee, the Appeals and Complaints Committee, the Chief Officers' Appointments Committee, the Standards Committee or the Human Resources Committee, or any Sub-Committee of those Committees.

19. Call-in and Urgency

- (a) The call-in procedure set out above shall not apply where the decision being taken by the Executive is urgent. A decision will be urgent if any delay likely to be caused by the call in process would seriously prejudice the Council's or the public's interests. The record of the decision, and notice by which it is made public shall state whether in the opinion of the decision maker, the decision is an urgent one, and therefore not subject to call-in. The Chair of the Council in consultation with the Chair of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board must agree both that the decision proposed is reasonable in all the circumstances and to it being treated as a matter of urgency. In the absence of the Chair of the Council, the Vice-Chair's consent shall be required (again in consultation with the Chair of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board). In the absence of both the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Council, the Chief Executive or their nominee's consent shall be required. Decisions taken as a matter of urgency must be reported to the next available meeting of the Council, together with the reasons for urgency.
- (b) The operation of the provisions relating to call-in and urgency shall be monitored annually, and a report submitted to Council with proposals for review if necessary.

20. Reports to the Local Authority where the key decision procedure is not followed

20.1 Where an executive decision has been made and:-

This page is intentionally left blank