

# Decision Pathway – Report



**PURPOSE:** Key decision

**MEETING:** Cabinet

**DATE:** 05 March 2024

<b>TITLE</b>	Home to School Travel Support Policy Changes		
<b>Ward(s)</b>	All wards		
<b>Author:</b> Gail Rogers	<b>Job title:</b> Head of Children’s Commissioning		
<b>Cabinet lead:</b> Asher Craig, Cabinet Member for Children’s Services, Education and Equalities	<b>Executive Director lead:</b> Hannah Woodhouse, Executive Director Children and Education		
<b>Proposal origin:</b> BCC Staff			
<b>Decision maker:</b> Cabinet Member <b>Decision forum:</b> Cabinet			
<b>Purpose of Report:</b> To seek approval of changes to the Home to School 5-16 Travel Support Policy and Home to School 16-25 Travel Support Policy.			
<b>Evidence Base:</b> <b>Background</b> Department for Education (DfE) updated their statutory guidance in June 2023 in relation to 5-16 travel. Bristol City Council has reviewed both policies for Home to School Travel support 5-16 and post. We did this to make our existing offer clearer for Parents and Carers and make sure our policies are still in line with current DfE guidelines. As part of the review, we have proposed some changes to both policies that support transformation of the service to deliver it in a more efficient way.			
<b>Proposal</b> <b>1. Bristol City Council Home to School (5-16) Travel Support Policy</b> In June 2023, Department for Education (DfE) updated its statutory guidance on travel support for 5 to 16 year-olds. We have therefore reviewed our policy to make sure it is still in line with the current guidelines. No changes have been made to eligibility for travel support in this policy. We are proposing the introduction of a passenger code of conduct for pupils and some changes in how we deliver parts of our service in the future. For example, by proposing the introduction of meeting points for travel and offering an Independent Travel Training (ITT) programme to fully promote preparation for adulthood and lifelong independence skills.			
<b>2. Bristol City Council Home to School (16-25) Travel Support Policy</b> Most young people who use Home to School Travel can access their education or training by walking or public transport. Where communities are not well served by public transport, several providers offer arrangements such as the Bursary Fund and concessionary schemes listed on the Local Offer and our travel support policy.  We have included travel support options for pupils in the new policy, so it is clearer to parent and carers what is available as well as what is not available. We have reviewed travel support options for pupils aged 16 to 18 and propose to remove council- arranged vehicles, although we may still offer support. This is different from our current policy but still is in line with DfE guidance.			
<b>Impact on service users and citizens</b> Where pupils have already started their course and travel to school via a council- arranged vehicle, we would continue this arrangement until they finish their course. The changes in the new policy would start for any pupils			

transitioning into post-16 education as of September 2025, or any pupils in years 12 or 13 starting a new course in September 2025. Taking this approach means we can engage with parents and carers over a longer period and facilitate strategies that ensure we're not disadvantaging those who do not have access to transport networks or resources.

### **Consultation**

Public:

1. A public consultation was held between 4 December 2023 and 17 January 2024
2. Responses were received from parents and carers, as well as from other stakeholders.
3. The consultation highlighted a range of views which have been considered as part of the decision-making process and proposed changes to policies. Many responses were in support of proposed changes. Responses in disagreement with proposals have been taken into consideration and informed our approach.
4. An equalities impact assessment, at appendix E, was evaluated alongside the consultation feedback to determine impact of proposals to those with a protected characteristic.
5. Based on the public consultation survey, the following points have informed changes to proposals:
  - clarification of support available for children and young people – this will be clear within the policy.
  - ensuring parents and carers have enough information and time to plan for change – we will phase the introduction of our post 16 policy so that school choices have been made with full knowledge of travel support options.
  - working with parents and carers to pilot proposals such as pick up points, and piloting these before making wholesale changes.
  - amending and clarifying wording in the passenger code of conduct.
  - outlining the process taken to make exceptions to the 6-week cut-off for applications.
  - Future service delivery transformation will be developed and progressed in collaboration with parents and carers.
6. The results of the consultation, at appendix B, will be published and available to members of the public and stakeholders.
7. The next step is for the results of the consultation to be presented to cabinet who will ultimately decide on the proposed policy changes.
8. The recommendation to be made to cabinet is to approve the proposed policy changes outlined in the consultation.
9. We are committed to sharing information transparently and to working with everyone affected to make sure they have the information they need, when they need it.
10. Once cabinet has met, we will continue to communicate and engage with parents and carers and to work together.

### **Financial implications**

The changes proposed to the Home to School Travel Support Policy for pupils aged 16 to 18 are projected to reduce the expenditure on HTST by the following amount in the next three financial years based on current baseline numbers and costs:

	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
	£000s	£000s	£000s
HTST projected reduction in expenditure	305	896	1,163

### **Cabinet Member / Officer Recommendations:**

That Cabinet

1. Approve the proposed policy changes for Home to School Travel as set out in Appendix A, which includes:
  - a. Removal of council arranged vehicles for pupils (16 to 18)
  - b. To explore transformation of future service delivery and possible pick-up points model
2. Authorise the Executive Director Children & Education, in conjunction with the Cabinet Member for, Children's Services, Education and Equalities to take all steps required to implement the new policy.
3. Note the outcomes of the consultation as set out in this report and at appendix B.

**Corporate Strategy alignment:**

The proposal supports delivery of the following commitments outlined in the Corporate Strategy 2022-27:

Theme 1: Children and Young People

Ensure children and young people are supported to thrive by the city and reach their full potential. Promoting equality and inclusion by making sure high quality specialist provision is effectively targeted.

Theme 3: Environment and Sustainability

Support delivery of One City Climate Strategy and minimise our contribution to climate change.

Theme 6: Transport and Connectivity

A more efficient sustainable and inclusive approach to travel. Promoting safe and active travel to support environmental sustainability and cleaner air.

**City Benefits:**

Reviewing Home to School Travel support ensures that council policies are still in line with national guidance, fair for children and families and represent effective use of available resources.

The net effects of proposals will likely result in a reduction in the number of cars and therefore a reduction in emissions to support creating a cleaner city.

**Consultation Details:**

A public consultation was held. See above in evidence base, nos 1 – 10 and appendix B

**Background Documents:**

[Travel to school for children of compulsory school age \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

<b>Revenue Cost</b>	n/a	<b>Source of Revenue Funding</b>	n/a
<b>Capital Cost</b>	n/a	<b>Source of Capital Funding</b>	n/a
<b>One off cost</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Ongoing cost</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Saving Proposal</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Income generation proposal</b> <input type="checkbox"/>

**Required information to be completed by Financial/Legal/ICT/ HR partners:****1. Finance Advice:**

The proposals within the decision paper bring local policies in line with the updated Department for Education (DfE) statutory guidance and this change will contribute to the savings delivery for the Home to School Travel project and the wider Our Families Programme as presented within this paper.

**Finance Business Partner:** Guy Marshall, Finance Business Partner 6 February 2024

**2. Legal Advice:**

Consultation

The consultation responses must be conscientiously taken into account in finalising the decision. The leading cases on consultation provide that consultation should occur when proposals are at a formative stage, should give sufficient reasons for any proposal to permit intelligent consideration and should allow adequate time for consideration and response. There must be clear evidence that the decision maker has considered the consultation responses, or a summary of them, before taking its decision.

The proposed policy has been drafted in accordance with the statutory guidance - Travel to school for children of compulsory school age January 2024 and The Post-16 transport and travel support to education and training Statutory guidance for local authorities January 2019.

**Legal Team Leader:** Husinara Jones, Team Manager/Solicitor 15 January 2024 & Kate Meller, Team Manager/Solicitor 8 February 2024

**3. Implications on IT:** I can see no implications on IT in regard to this activity.

**IT Team Leader:** Alex Simpson – Lead Enterprise Architect, 17 January 2024

**4. HR Advice:** The report is seeking approval from Cabinet to approve the changes proposed to the HTST policy following the consultation process. The report does not have any significant HR implications arising from this

proposal for Bristol City Council employees.		
<b>HR Partner:</b> Lorna Laing, HR Business Partner 23 January 2024		
<b>EDM Sign-off</b>	Vanessa Wilson	17/01/2024
<b>Cabinet Member sign-off</b>	Cllr Asher Craig	25/01/2024
<b>For Key Decisions - Mayor's Office sign-off</b>	Mayor's Office	05/02/2024

<b>Appendix A – Further essential background / detail on the proposal</b> Appendix A.1 BCC Home to School 5-16 Travel Support Policy Appendix A.2 BCC Home to School 16-25 Travel Support Policy	<b>YES</b>
<b>Appendix B – Details of consultation carried out - external</b>	<b>YES</b>
<b>Appendix C – Summary of any engagement with scrutiny</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>Appendix D – Risk assessment</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>Appendix E – Equalities screening / impact assessment of proposal</b>	<b>YES</b>
<b>Appendix F – Eco-impact screening/ impact assessment of proposal</b>	<b>YES</b>
<b>Appendix G – Financial Advice</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>Appendix H – Legal Advice</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>Appendix I – Exempt Information</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Appendix J – HR advice</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>Appendix K – ICT</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>Appendix L – Procurement</b>	<b>NO</b>