

COMMISSIONING STRATEGY - TRAVEL ASSIST

Version	Author	Changes	Date
V0.1	Sarah Sinclair	First version	17.7.18
V0.2	Samantha Richardson	Demand Modelling Added (where data was available)	10.10.18
V0.3	Carol Woodfield	Options Appraisal Information	07.11.18
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V0.7	Sarah Sinclair	Further drafting changes. Incorporating comments from Ian Burgess and Paul Stevenson	20.11.18

Birmingham City Council

Travel Assist Commissioning Strategy 2018 - 2023

DRAFT 0.7

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Birmingham City Council (the Council) is spending more than it can afford on travel assistance for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Whilst improvements have been made within the service in recent years, significantly more needs to be done. There needs to be a brave and bold approach to addressing this complex priority. There are no easy options due to the sometimes challenging and complex needs of service users, relationships with stakeholders and the level of dependencies with other services.
- 1.2 This commissioning strategy has been developed in recognition of the quality improvements and financial efficiencies that need to be made. It sets out the required actions to promote and develop services to deliver more sustainable, healthier and safer journeys for education. The strategy sets out the vision for travel assistance for children and young people in Birmingham, the strategic and policy context and an outline of the proposed commissioning approach.

Context

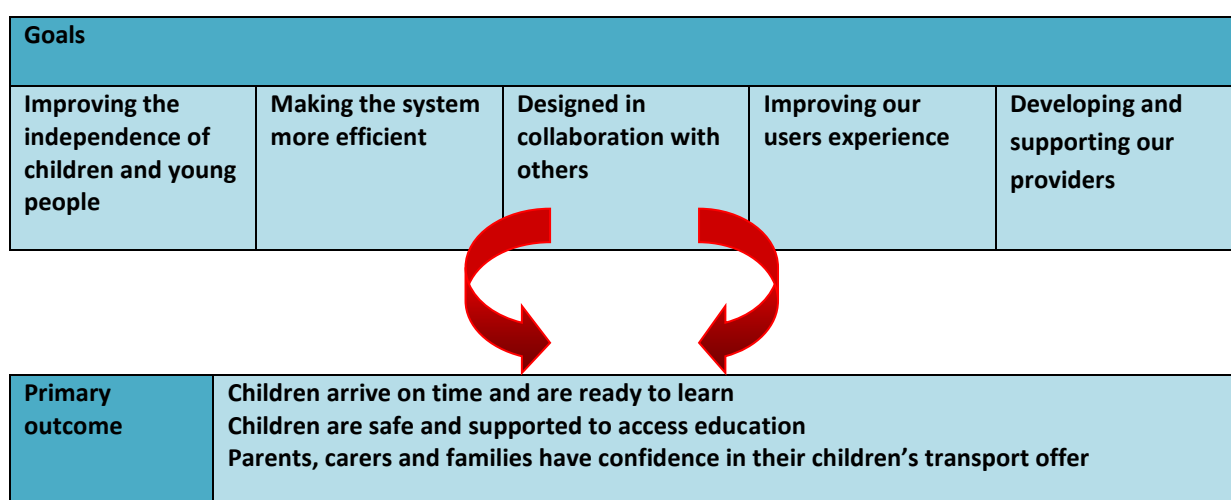
- 1.3 The Council is seeking to improve the SEND offer as well as reducing the cost of providing this vital service. Birmingham's travel assist service provides a variety of transport options to over 4,250 children and young adults on a daily basis, with an additional 1,500 receiving bus passes and an overall budget of £18.4m for 2018/19. Over 330 additional families successfully applied for specialist transport during the 2017/18 academic year and the numbers of children being transported across the city have grown year on year in line with an increase in Education, Health and Care Plans. On current spend sustainable savings of circa £2.488m will need to be made by 2021-21, in addition to containing additional demand through the impact of the Commissioning Strategy and policy changes.
- 1.4 The Children and Families Act 2014 introduced major reforms to the way local authorities and their partners support children and young people with SEND. There have been previous attempts to reduce spend on travel assist but these to date have not delivered the level of savings needed.
- 1.5 The Council is required to have a robust, equitable and coherent transport policy in line with the Department for Education (DfE) Home to School Transport Statutory Guidance July 2014, the Post-16 Transport to Education and Training Statutory Guidance 2017 and the SEND Code of Practice 2014. These documents set out guidance on legal duties and best practice expectations each local authority is required to meet. This includes a guideline for maximum travel times (45 minutes for primary and 75 minutes for secondary and post 16), plus the provision of supporting escorts. The Council's SEND transport offer is set out in the transport

policy which outlines the scope and parameters of the Councils SEND transport offer based on the above statutory guidance.

Birmingham Vision for travel assistance

- 1.6 Birmingham's vision for travel assistance is to ensure every pupil with SEND is able to access a safe and efficient service that is reliable and flexible. Our aim is to ensure pupils arrive at their destination safely, giving them the best possible opportunity to start the day ready to learn. We understand that supporting educational attainment and independence helps to tackle the causes of deprivation and inequality through improving educational performance and confidence. We wish to introduce new and alternative models of delivery, including pick up points and school led transport, in order to reduce carbon emissions in line with the clean air and green agenda.
- 1.7 Our mission is to offer every pupil the opportunity, where appropriate, to undertake travel training to feel empowered and enabled to access school or college independently and to utilise those skills through to adulthood. Maximising independence improves the social and life skills of pupils and this stays with them through to adulthood.
- 1.8 Birmingham will support families and schools with all pupils' transitions towards independence and encourage a reduction in the dependency on the system and the Council.
- 1.9 The Council aspires to provide an environment and ethos which supports children and young people to travel on foot, by bike or by public transport. We want to embed a culture of sustainable travel for educational journeys, particularly focusing on walking and cycling, to tackle congestion, improve air quality, improve public health, support community cohesion and improve road safety.

Goals and outcomes



Secondary outcome	<p>Children experience a consistent and timely service to reduce anxiety/uncertainty</p> <p>Children travel for the minimum amount of time possible to get to school</p> <p>Children are relaxed and ready to learn each day</p> <p>Children are supported to travel to school effectively</p> <p>Children are protected from harm</p> <p>Children are enabled to travel as independently as possible</p> <p>Parents and carers have trust and confidence in their children's transport offer</p> <p>Parents and carers feel supported to develop their own family life balance</p> <p>Parents, carers and young people have involvement in the decision making related to their or their children's travel</p>
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2.0 Legislative requirements, strategic and policy context

- 2.1 A child or young person has SEND if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her. A child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she;
- a) Has significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age, or
 - b) Has a disability which prevents or hinders him or her from making use of facilities generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 institutions.
- 2.2 Many children and young people who have SEND may have a disability under the Equality Act 2010 – that is ‘a physical or mental impairment which has a long-term and substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities’. This definition provides a relatively low threshold and includes more children than many realise: ‘long-term’ is defined as ‘a year or more’ and ‘substantial’ is defined as ‘more than minor or trivial’. This definition includes sensory impairments such as those affecting sight or hearing, and long-term health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, and cancer. Children and young people with such conditions do not necessarily have SEND, but there is a significant overlap between disabled children and young people and those with SEND. Where a disabled child or young person requires special educational provision they will also be covered by the SEND definition.
- 2.3 The Equality Act 2010 sets out the legal obligations that schools, early years providers, post-16 institutions, local authorities and others have towards disabled children and young people.

Related legislation and guidance

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018): Statutory guidance from the Department for Education which sets out what is expected of organisations and individuals to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Children and Families Act 2014: This Act makes provision about children, families, and people with special educational needs or disabilities.

Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years – statutory guidance: Guidance on the SEND system.

Education Act 1996: This Act contains the main provisions relating to home to school transport.

Home to school travel and transport guidance: statutory guidance 2014.

Post-16 transport to education and training: statutory guidance 2017.

Equality Act 2010: This Act sets out the legal obligations that schools, early years' providers, post-16 institutions, local authorities and others have towards disabled children and young people.

The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 2 (Care Planning Placement and Case Review) and Volume 3 (Planning Transition to Adulthood for Care Leavers): Guidance setting out the responsibilities of local authorities towards looked after children and care leavers.

Reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils (2012): Technical guidance from the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions (2014): statutory guidance from the Department for Education.

The Mental Capacity Act Code of Practice: Protecting the vulnerable (2005)

Underpinning principles in the SEN Code of Practice

Participating in decision making – children, young people and their parents must be involved in discussions and decisions about their individual support and about local provision.

Supporting children, young people and their parents to participate in decisions about their support - providing information, advice and support as necessary to enable them to participate in discussions and decisions about their support.

Involving children, young people and their parents in planning, commissioning and reviewing services - children, young people with SEND and their parents must be consulted with when reviewing education and training provision, social care provision and when preparing and reviewing the Local Offer.

Identifying children and young people's needs – local authorities must carry out their functions with a view to identifying all the children and young people in their area who have or who may have a disability.

Greater choice and control for parents and young people over their support – the Local Offer should reflect the services that are available as a result of strategic needs assessments and reviews of local education and care provision.

Collaboration between education, health and social care services to provide support – local authorities must ensure that services work together where this promotes children and young people’s well-being or improves the quality of special education provision and must work together to assess local needs and to plan and commission services jointly.

High quality provision to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND – schools and colleges must use best endeavours to ensure provision is there for those who need it underpinned by high quality teaching.

Focus on inclusive practice and removing barriers to learning – when a child or young person has SEND but does not have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) they must be educated in a mainstream setting, except in specific circumstances.

Supporting successful preparation for adulthood - partners should work together to help children and young people achieve their ambitions in relation to employment, independent living, participating in society and being as healthy as possible in adult life.

0-25 Travel Policy

2.4 At present the Council has three different policies/approaches for transport based on the ages of children: 4/5-16; 16-18; 19+ and there has been a lack of consistency and clarity in their application. This Commissioning Strategy has been shaped by the proposed changes to the 0-25 Travel Policy.

2.5 Proposed changes include:

- a) Combining the policies into a single 0-25 policy document
- b) Reviewing the level of charges for some travel assistance
- c) A focus on independent travel training and alternative modes of transport
- d) Support for parents with transitions and reducing dependency on the system and the Council
- e) A review of transport where families live very close to school (in line with other local authorities and national guidance)
- f) Changing the appeals process
- g) Greater clarity of the application process and eligibility for parents (what we will and won’t do)
- h) Clarity concerning the rights and responsibilities of parents, schools, Council and the transport provider
- i) Transparency regarding budgets
- j) Packages of support with other SEND-related services
- k) The green transport agenda/emission reductions in line with the Councils clean air strategy
- l) Working more closely with schools, parents and carers collaborate on how best to deliver the home to school transport for children in their care

Policy and strategic context –sustainability and the green agenda

2.6 The Education Act 1996 places a general duty on local authorities to promote the use of sustainable travel and transport. The duty applies to children and young people of compulsory school age who travel to receive education or training in a local authority's area. The duty relates to journeys to and from institutions where education or training is delivered.

2.7 There are five main elements to the duty which local authorities must undertake:

Assessing the travel and transport needs of children and young people – developing and implementing a package of measures to improve safety and reduce car use, supported by a partnership involving the school, education, health and transport officers from the local authority, and the police. This needs to seek to secure benefits for both schools and children by improving health through active travel and reducing congestion caused by school runs, which in turn helps improve local air quality.

Audit of infrastructure to support sustainable school travel – developing a comprehensive understanding of local infrastructure supporting sustainable school travel. The audit should include a mapping exercise showing how schools are served by bus and other public transport routes; footpaths, cycle ways, roads and associated features and any other arrangements made to support sustainable school transport that may be in operation. The audit should also consider data relating to personal safety and security, and other factors that influence travel choices, such as poor behaviour on school buses and/or the incidence of bullying on the journey to school.

Strategy to develop infrastructure to support travel needs of pupils - establishing a strategy for developing existing infrastructure so that it better meets the needs of children and young people in their area.

Promotion of sustainable travel and transport to and from school - The sustainable school travel duty should have a broad impact, including providing health benefits for children, and their families, through active journeys, such as walking and cycling. It can also bring significant environmental improvements, through reduced levels of congestion and improvements in air quality to which children are particularly vulnerable.

Publish a Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy - Local authorities are required to publish their Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy on their website by 31 August each year.

3.0 Travel assistance in Birmingham - current service overview

Home to school transport

3.1 Local authorities have a duty to make such travel arrangements as they consider necessary to facilitate attendance at school for eligible children. Eligible children are defined as those children of compulsory school age (5-16) in an authority's area for whom free travel arrangements will be required. Local authorities are required to:

- a) 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)
- b) 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.
- c) Make transport arrangements for all children who cannot reasonably be expected to walk to nearest suitable school because the nature of the route is deemed unsafe to walk.

- 3.2 Birmingham's travel assist service provides a variety of transport options to over 4,200 children on a daily basis, with an additional 1,500 receiving bus passes and has an overall budget of £18.4m for 2018/19. The majority of the children using the service have requirements related to SEND with the service also supports looked after children; children in temporary accommodation and other vulnerable groups. The service operates more than 590 routes and has a range of support options including: 1-to-1's; mini bus/coach transport; Travel Guides; Personal Transport Budgets; bus passes and Independent Travel Training. The latter has been introduced over the last 18 months and has been extremely well received by schools with many developing their own programmes.
- 3.3 Travel Assist is experiencing an increase in demand. Over 330 additional families successfully applied for specialist transport during the 2017/18 academic year and the numbers of children being transported across the city have grown year on year, in line with an increase in Education, Health and Care Plans.
- 3.4 The increase in the number of children on mini-buses has put the service under enormous strain, particularly with regards to travel guides and sufficient and suitable tail hoist vehicles to allow for wheelchair access. The service simply cannot continue to provide transport in the manner it has to date, and the full range of options available, including personal transport budgets and bespoke solutions for families must be developed and considered.
- 3.5 Using regularly updated service data and evidence, including examples of best practise from elsewhere, new small scale models of delivery (school ownership of transport; joint working with the adult service fleet; pick-up points) have been launched in recent months and have subsequently impacted positively upon market conditions. All these changes present, for the first time since August 2016, an opportunity to transform how the service operates across the city and supports children and families by introducing a hybrid model of delivery. A new commissioning strategy and plan will outline what this could look like, alongside the development of a new policy informed through consultation with families, schools and stakeholders.

Pupil headcount

- 3.6 There are currently 8472 children in Birmingham with an EHCP or statement of Special Education Need in schools across Birmingham broken down by:
- a) 6975 pupils in LA maintained settings which includes: Special Schools (4550); Mainstream Schools (1799); Resource Provision (624) and PRU (2)
 - b) 317 pupils in further education at LA Further Education Settings: Special Colleges (27) and Further Education Mainstream Colleges (209)
 - c) 302 pupils are in Other Local Authority Maintained settings which includes: Special Schools (136); Resource Provision (12) and Mainstream (154),
 - d) 64 pupils are in Other Local Authority Further Education Settings - Special Colleges (11) and Mainstream (53)
 - e) 895 are in independent settings – Special Schools (583); Alternative (117); Mainstream (129); Home Education (65) and one pupil is in an independent 'other' setting

- 3.7 Demand projections show that there will be approximately 9862 pupils with an EHCP or statement of SEND by 2020/2021; an increase of 1390 pupils over the next 3 years.

School Type	01/09/2013	01/09/2014	01/09/2015	01/09/2016	01/09/2017	01/09/2018	01/09/2019	01/09/2020	01/09/2021
LA Maintained Special	3624	3822	3923	4152	4342	4550	4776	5003	5232
LA Maintained Resource Provision	476	521	548	564	592	624	657	691	726
LA Maintained PRU	31	50	15	12	4	2	1	1	1
LA Maintained Mainstream	2132	1999	1938	1906	1849	1799	1751	1705	1669
LA Out of School	0	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
LA Referrals	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
LA FE Special	1	1	11	15	21	27	33	39	45
LA FE Mainstream	38	97	8	125	166	209	251	293	335
OLA Maintained Special	46	60	34	89	112	136	159	183	206
OLA Maintained Resource Provision	1	5	2	7	10	12	15	18	20
OLA Maintained PRU	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
OLA Maintained Mainstream	148	108	79	125	138	154	174	195	216
OLA FE Specials	6	7	3	7	9	11	14	16	19
OLA FE Mainstream	11	20	4	31	42	53	65	76	87
Independent Specials	228	212	275	408	496	583	670	758	848
Independent Alternative	7	64	84	83	100	117	133	150	166
Independent Mainstream	37	62	78	90	109	129	148	167	187
Independent Home Education	0	22	27	40	53	65	78	91	104
Independent Other	1	3	17	1	1	1	1	1	1
	6788	7067	7046	7655	8044	8472	8926	9387	9862

Internal provision

- 3.8 Travel assist is part of a group of services that support families with children with SEND. These include SENAR, Early Support and Access to Education. The services currently provide travel assistance for over 4,000 pupils. We also issue bus passes to SEND pupils instead of door to door transport. Travel assistance for eligible pupils is provided in the following ways:

Bus/Train Pass - pupils (or in some cases the pupil and parent) are provided with a bus or train pass. This can be a weekly/monthly/annual pass, dependent on the requirement.

Door to door transport – this is provided by various suppliers and methods including, private hire, black cab, accessible (tail hoist) and non-accessible minibuses. This is generally provided by suppliers on the T23 Framework; however we have a small number of vehicles (12) that are commissioned from BCC Adult Services Transport that provide a service to one school.

Pick up points – we provide transport to two schools whereby parents/carers are required to take their child to a pick up point. The pick-up points are a short distance from the pupils' home but this reduces the time the pupils are on board the vehicle, allows for bigger vehicles to be used, reduces carbon emissions and driver/guide working hours. Travel training can also be provided for pupils that wish to be trained to get to and from the pickup point independently.

Guides – guides are only provided on vehicles where the pupil(s) need additional support. Travel Assist currently employs over 600 permanent and relief guides and also procures agency guides. Parents are generally required to act as a guide if their child is a lone traveller and requires a guide.

Public Transport Guides – guides support pupils to travel on public transport. This is used as a gateway to travel training.

Travel Training – we have a small team of travel trainers that work with four schools to travel train pupils. We are currently looking at external suppliers that can increase the number of pupils that are travel trained. We work with schools and have provided travel training support in order that they can provide travel training to their pupils.

3.9 We also supply transport for life limited pupils that travel with complex care nurses.

Current commissioning and procurement arrangements

3.10 A contract for the provision of Transport Services was entered into in August 2009. The contract duration was 2 years with an option to extend for a further 2 years. Further subsequent contract extensions were approved and the current contract is due to expire in August 2019. The annual value of the contract is £13.805m, and the primary user of the contract is the travel assist team within the Children and Young People Directorate. The contract operates under 3 lots, consisting of various call-off contracts which cover transport provided through taxis, minibuses and specialist vehicles, transporting children to and from schools within Birmingham.

3.11 There are a number of contracts currently in place for travel assist that end 31 October 2019:

Supplier	% Of Allocated Work
A KHAN T/A CASTLE CARS	0.17%
ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORT GROUP LTD	46.86%
ATTAIN TRAVEL LTD	0.01%
BEARWOOD COACHES	7.69%
BEAUFORT CARS	1.39%
CHASEBASE LTD T/A PARKER RADIO CARS	0.14%
COMMUNITY TRANSPORT	0.50%
CRUCIBLE EDUCATION LTD	0.30%
ELITE RADIO CARS LTD	0.93%
ELMDON CARS (TAXIS) LTD	0.11%
ENDEAVOUR COACHES LTD	0.15%
EURO LINERS	1.64%
FINTAX CARS LTD	0.29%
GREAT BARR CARS	1.58%
KINGS NORTON COACHES	2.10%
LAWRENCE'S GARAGE LTD	16.68%
LOCAL RADIO CARS	0.38%
M J GROSVENOR (MOTORS) LTD	0.14%
MARK TAYLOR PRIVATE HIRE	0.15%
NORTH BIRMINGHAM TRAVEL LTD	1.55%

PLAZA CARS	0.56%
ROUNDABOUT CARS BHAM LTD	1.75%
SELECT PRIVATE HIRE LTD	6.21%
SHEN CARE VOLUNTARY TRANSPORT	1.29%
STAR CARS & COACHES LTD	2.88%
STATION TAXIS	0.00%
TC CARS	1.30%
TOUCHWOOD PRIVATE HIRE LTD	3.26%

- 3.12 Commissioning and contract management arrangements need significant improvement, with a specific focus on performance management, quality assurance and health and safety compliance, risk management and financial management.

Demand pressures

- 3.13 As with other parts of the country, the Birmingham travel assist service continues to see a year on year increase in demand. Over 330 additional families successfully applied for specialist transport during the 2017/18 academic year. The growth in demand for travel assist can be linked to the growth in EHCPs over recent years and the forecast further increase in EHCPs associated with demographic changes. It is projected that demand for special education travel will increase by approximately 31.8% over the next four years, with an estimated 5651 children receiving SEND transport in the financial year 2020/2021. Based on the current delivery model, it is projected that the cost of delivering the service could be in the region of just under £30m per year by 2021.

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2121/22
Overall costs	£21,912,000	24,168,509	26,840,939	29,689,956
Difference per Year		2,256,509	2,672,430	2,849,017
Cumulative Difference		2,256,509	4,928,939	7,777,956
Percentage Difference from 2018/19		10.3	22.5	35.5

- 3.14 At the current average cost, and without any efficiencies and improvements, this increase could potentially create additional budget pressures of just over £8m per annum by 2022. This is based on the current travel assist uptake of children requiring a transport service following EHCP agreement remaining the same (around 37% based on 2017/18 service data).
- 3.15 There are additional pressures as under the Education and Skills Act 2008, where young people have been required, by law, to stay longer in education or training.
- 3.16 There needs to be a comprehensive modelling of future service demand and required capacity across the city. Service demand needs to be stratified to ensure service commissioning and modelling meets need. Greater focus needs to be placed on flexibility

and ensuring that service provision can reflect changing needs. Services need to be able to enable children and families to develop independence from an early age, and through key transition periods.

- 3.17 Between 2017 and 2018 the service has seen an increase of 330 children. The increase in the number of children on mini-buses has put the service under enormous strain, particularly with regards to travel guides and sufficient and suitable tail hoist vehicles to allow for wheelchair access. The service simply cannot continue to provide transport in the manner it has to date, and the full range of options available, including personal transport budgets and bespoke solutions for families must be developed and considered.
- 3.18 Using regularly updated service data and evidence, including examples of best practise from elsewhere, new small scale models of delivery (school ownership of transport; joint working with the Adults fleet; pick-up points) have been launched in recent months and have subsequently impacted positively upon market conditions. All these changes present, for the first time since August 2016, an opportunity to transform how the service operates across the city and supports children and families by introducing a hybrid model of delivery.

What needs to be improved?

- 3.19 Since 2016 the service has been the subject of a root and branch review and associated improvements have been made. Consequently, complaints have reduced, operational efficiency has improved and external relationships have improved with key stakeholders such as head teachers. However, a 'stepped' changes and a new commissioning approach is now needed to deliver the required quality improvements and financial efficiencies, shaped by a new 0-25 travel policy.

4.0 Future commissioning approach

- 4.1 This commissioning strategy for travel assistance is a key element of the Birmingham SEND Improvement Programme. We need a radical and dynamic approach to commissioning that will underpin and support our collective capacity to bring together the breath of improvement that is needed in order improve outcomes, experiences of using services and to reduce financial pressures. We are supporting children with SEND, wherever possible, to become increasingly independent, resilient, and better connected to the opportunities that are available to all children.
- 4.2 To address the medium term financial plan challenge and in order to improve outcomes and experiences for children, young people, parents, carers and stakeholders, a new cross council approach to commissioning has been established. This is a combined and concerted effort to re-design the current system and to assess, design and implement new models for the future.
- 4.3 Commissioning is an ongoing process that involves understanding local needs and resources, taking decisions about priorities and ensuring the resources available are used in the best possible way in order to improve outcomes. A commissioning approach ensures that we

target our resources and develop or procure services where they will make the most difference, and also that we enable children, young people and their families to have a say over how their needs can best be met.

- 4.4 Service modelling will be undertaken to inform formal option appraisals, including “do nothing” or “de minimus” options. All modelling will draw upon the evidence base of ‘what good looks like’, evaluation of best practice elsewhere and will be based upon the existing SEND and Inclusion and Placement Strategies.
- 4.5 A key aspect of service modelling will be to set out the current baseline demand and performance of the service and the future and projected service demands. Opportunities will be explored for joint working, for example with neighbouring local authorities.
- 4.6 There are a number of dependencies that need to be considered in relation to the commissioning of travel assistance services. These include new policy development for SEND, travel assist and clean air; buildings and school place planning and actions taken to improve the timeliness and quality of ECHPs.
- 4.7 Market stimulation, development and management will be a key critical success factor. Supply market evaluation, development and stimulation is required to ensure a broad supply base and not a reliance on a single supplier (or if there is one main supplier the hybrid delivery solutions will need to be developed with other parties and partners) to seek innovative solutions to meet our outcomes.
- 4.8 We will establish a commissioning plan for our key commissioning activity between 2018-2020. This plan will include;
 - a) Underpinning **commissioning framework and governance**, to include any joint or aligned commissioning with the NHS and schools;
 - b) Arrangements for ensuring ‘the **voice of the child, young person, parents and carers**’ influences all aspects of the commissioning work;
 - c) **HR and workforce** considerations, including potential TUPE implications, staff and trade union consultation and union engagement;
 - d) **Communications and Engagement** requirements, internal and with stakeholders and partners;
 - e) **Market testing and engagement**, provider stimulation and development;
 - f) **Option appraisal**, making proper consideration of all options for outsourcing and internal provision;
 - g) Establishing **procurement** ‘routes to market’ and undertaking the procurement process;
 - h) **Data Modelling**, undertaking service capacity and demand modelling, now and in the future, creating a profile of demand based on current and future schools and settings and demographic changes;

- i) **Contract development**, ensuring the proper establishment of the 'core contractual pillars' of the service specification, dependency schedule and the performance, governance and finance frameworks;
- j) **Contract mobilisation and implementation planning**, including establishing phasing arrangements wherever possible and the assessment and mitigation of any potential risks to service stability;
- k) Establishing the **Intelligent client function** for on-going commissioning and contracts management arrangements;
- l) **Financial modelling** - evaluation of suppliers, opportunities for invest to save
- m) **Legal considerations** including compliance with relevant legislation, statutory duties, new policy and procedures and the development of new contracts;
- n) Undertaking **Equality Impact Assessment**
- o) **ICT and information governance** considerations for any technology changes, including applications.

Travel Assist commissioning principles

- 4.9 There are key relationships between service quality, contract and financial management and control practices that impact on costs and service experience. In order to achieve the high quality, sustainable and efficient services the following commissioning principles will be applied;

Strong voice and influence of the child, parents and carers

- Children, young people, parents and carers are seen, and treated, as partners as well as service users and this is evidenced by a clear voice and influence through the commissioning and procurement process;
- Children should always be supported to travel using mainstream travel arrangements and local travel schemes where they can.
- When arrangements are made for home to school travel, children, parents and carers are provided with clear and accessible information.
- More children, where possible and appropriate, will travel independently;
- Shorter assisted journeys (in terms of distance and time) with children being placed in schools as near to their home and community as possible;

Best in class procurement and contract management

- Approaches to procurement are used that enable contracts to be let on a rolling programme based upon blocks of activity for periods of at least five years to enable a relatively stable planning period for contractors / in house fleets to plan for the purchase or lease of vehicles;

- Contracts are sufficiently flexible and allow for service change in response to changes in need and requirements;
- Transparent contract management in relation to service activity, quality and financial performance;
- Where possible we will procure services into discrete areas of activity; these may be routes to a particular school, to a group of schools, or within an area of the authority;
- Service provision to be reviewed at least annually to ensure the most cost-effective use of vehicles, staff and resources; there can be an annual turnover in some client groups of 25-30%.
- Plain English is used in procurement documentation to encourage bids, especially from small operators, including the voluntary sector
- Must be in line with the SEND and Inclusion Strategy and the Admissions Strategy;
- There will be a hybrid delivery model that ensures no reliance on a single supplier and the introduction of flexibility to improve the quality and reliability of the service;
- A supplier (or suppliers) and services are procured which are able to deliver to an agreed set of performance measures to include capacity, quality and reliability, safety, financial management and improved efficiency and performance;
- The contract will ensure delivery of the Council's Social Value Policy through pre-market engagement to determine the social value opportunities, adherence to the Birmingham Business Charter for Social Responsibility and adoption of the Birmingham Living Wage by the supply chain;
- Compliance with the clear air and green agenda.

Informed and timely service planning and decision making

- Proactive use of risk assessments in order to identify the least restrictive form of travel for each individual pupil to meet his or her particular needs;
- The travel needs of each eligible pupil are reviewed at least annually to ensure that provision is safe and appropriate;
- A close relationship between those who authorise entitlement, and those with responsibility for the budget and its management;
- Proactive use of Birmingham and benchmarking data to routinely review costs, trends, service outcomes and quality standards in order to achieve on-going improvements;
- Geographical Information System (GIS) routing software is used to support frequent route planning and review;

- All services are planned and delivered ensuring full compliance with service standards, best practice and relevant legislative and regulatory requirements;
- Service planning and improvement is driven by a deep understanding of need and shaped by evidence based practice;
- Reduction of service demand over time as more children travel independently and the SEND/Inclusion and Placements strategies are implemented;
- A service which meets the current and future demand and will flex to meet the projected profile and needs of families and their children in the future;
- A broader range of provision will be included – taking into account the new models (in-house; school-led; school to pick-up) and operational services underpinned by an extended Independent Travel Training programme;

Strong focus on quality and safety

- There will be an integrated framework for health and safety and quality and service standards that run central through all service commissioning and delivery. This will include vehicle standards and maintenance, safeguarding, risk management and logistics management;
- Systems in place to ensure full compliance with service and quality standards and health and safety requirements;
- All operators comply with vehicle licensing, insurance and taxation requirements and Vehicle Construction and Use Regulations;
- All vehicles have a means of communication available for use in emergencies;
- Journeys minimise stress and there are established service standards of between 45 and 75 minutes that pupils should be on vehicles;
- Each journey is assessed to identify whether a passenger assistant is required in addition to the driver;
- Essential information and contact details are carried on vehicles and known to drivers and escorts. Pupils should normally remain on vehicles unless it is unsafe for them to do so.
- All drivers and escorts have positive enhanced CRB clearance prior to working with children;
- All drivers and escorts should carry photo identification at all times;
- All drivers of appropriate vehicles take Minibus Awareness Training (MIDAS) or training to a similar standard;
- All escorts take Passenger Transport Assistance Training (PAT) or a similar accredited course;

- Additional training is provided, including but not limited to conflict resolution, safe handling and working with children with particular medical conditions or disabilities;
- Individual pupil requirements are reviewed regularly and are repeated whenever there is a change in their needs, in order to assess whether the level of provision remains appropriate. A review period should be stated in the risk assessment.
- Drivers and escorts know what to do in the case of a medical emergency;
- Where children have life threatening conditions, specific care plans should be carried on vehicles. These should be agreed with the school, parents or carers and the responsible medical practitioner for the pupil concerned. They will specify the steps to be taken to support the normal care of the pupil as well as the appropriate responses to emergency situations;
- Subject to full consultation, there will be a revised and modernised policy for evaluation of what the service provides and the appeals process:
- A service that is clear and transparent, with consistent approvals and appeals processes that everyone can understand.

Effective partnerships working

- There will be a representative stakeholder and partner group established to ensure we have a full and comprehensive knowledge about our current services and that we capture ideas and aspirations for improvement;
- Opportunities to integrate travel services between education, social care and healthcare are maximised;
- It will be standard practice to provide regular and high quality information to children, parents and carers and other key stakeholders;
- Joined up delivery options with partners, providing economy of scale and opportunities to work differently with partners;

Robust and transparent financial management

- Contract prices are agreed for vehicles, drivers and escorts based on time and mileage; these enable routes to be varied to minimise costs whilst offering some protection to the operator and an incentive to invest;
- On-going financial analysis of activity and spend to ensure effective and efficient use of resources;
- The service will deliver within budget and the cost per child will reduce over time.

