

Birmingham City Council

Report to Cabinet

6th September 2022



Subject: UPDATE ON HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT SERVICE

Report of: Sue Harrison
Strategic Director for Children & Families

Relevant Cabinet Members: Cllr Karen McCarthy - Children, Young People & Families

Relevant O&S Chairs: Cllr Kerry Jenkins - Education & Children's Social Care

Report author: John Elsegood
Interim Head of Service Home to School Transport
Email: john.elsegood@birmingham.gov.uk

Are specific wards affected?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No – All wards affected
If yes, name(s) of ward(s):		
Is this a key decision?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, add Forward Plan Reference:		
Is the decision eligible for call-in?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, state which appendix is exempt, and provide exempt information paragraph number or reason if confidential:		

1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the Home to School Transport Service, along with additional information on how the service is readying for the new academic year. This report does not provide further information on the future operating model or transformation programme, details of which will be reported to Cabinet before the end of the Calendar year.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That Cabinet notes the progress that has been made to date in the Children and Young Person's Travel Service improvement journey and the impact of the investment already made, as set out in this report.

3 Background – Review of past experiences

- 3.1 In previous years, the Home to School transport service has not delivered the level of service that our children and young people should expect. The reasons for this are consolidated into the following.
 - 3.1.1 Data was poor and unreliable: Route planning was based on inconsistent and outdated information,
 - 3.1.2 Planning started too late,
 - 3.1.3 Change control processes were not applied to the routes, impacting operational delivery and tracking costs.

4 Mitigations in place for 2022

- 4.1 Significant progress has been made to mitigate the issues of previous years.
- 4.2 Data: Phase 1 of a Transport Management System is being introduced this year, and Phase 2 is being delivered in 2023.
- 4.3 A full suite of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) will be in place to measure against targets and maintain focus on service delivery.
- 4.4 Planning for September 2022 is advanced. A significant number of schools have already submitted data to allow routing to start.
- 4.5 Extensive resource planning has taken place to react to late changes in requirements or new additions.
- 4.6 Change control processes are being applied in all areas. This will improve route delivery, bring financial efficiencies, and will enhance the governance around DBS checks.
- 4.7 Our children are at the heart of our service. With a new structure, clear lines of responsibility, the combination of approval services, and a clear communications plan, we are listening to the views of our children and their families and are building a service around that.

5 Preparation for September 2022

- 5.1 The immediate target is to have transparency of every child's application for transport and to understand at what stage that application is at any given time.
- 5.2 A SharePoint-based Interim Solution has been developed alongside 365 Response to have a single record that captures all service users irrespective of service type, Bus Pass, Personal Travel Budget Operator-based service delivery.

- 5.3 The data captured from schools for the new school year is on schedule. Regular, and early, correspondence has been sent to schools to understand new requirements and changes, allowing routing to start and inset days and out-of-term time contacts to be captured.

6 Children and Young People Travel Service

- 6.1 Recent changes within the Children and Families directorate were made to reflect our customers and the people we serve more accurately. It is recognised the same requirement for this clarity in the Home to School Transport service.
- 6.2 The service recognises its responsibility to use travel as a medium to improve the wellbeing and life experience of the children and young people that we serve. Therefore, over the coming months, the service will transition to the “Children and Young People Travel Service”

7 Options considered and Recommended Proposal

- 7.1 Cabinet is asked to note the information provided in the update.

8 Consultation

- 8.1 No formal consultation is required at this stage. However, the Parent Carer Forum Staff, school leaders, and Members have all been consulted on the vision and plans for the Improvement Programme.

9 Risk Management

- 9.1 All risks are captured, monitored, and mitigated via the appropriate governance forums. There is full oversight of risks throughout the programme.

10 Compliance Issues:

10.1 How are the recommended decisions consistent with the City Council's priorities, plans, and strategies?

- 10.1.1 Birmingham is an aspirational city to grow up in. Delivering the described activities, the Local Authority will support sustainable change in Children's Services for the City.

10.2 Legal Implications

- 10.2.1 The Children and Young People's Travel Service exercise the Council's powers and duties which are set out under sections 508A – 509AE of the Education Act 1996 and the associated pieces of statutory guidance.

10.3 Financial Implications

- 10.3.1 This is a progress update report, no additional funds are currently being requested as a result of this update. Work is being undertaken to establish a financial projection for the service for financial year 2022/23, however the

detail of all September 2022 routes is required in order to calculate this projection accurately. The financial projection is therefore likely to be reported via the Quarter 2 2022/23 Budget Monitoring process.

10.4 Procurement Implications (if required)

10.4.1 Some services are provided by a third-party supplier, and all appropriate procurement processes are followed. A procurement exercise is currently underway to secure a 4-year contract on routes that are currently operated by HATS.

10.4.2 The new contract will run for four years, providing consistency to children, parents, and schools. The process is already underway, and several suppliers have expressed an interest. The exercise will have concluded at the beginning of August, allowing time to onboard their staff prior to the new academic year.

10.5 Human Resources Implications (if required)

10.5.1 There will be human resources implications when the programme transformation is operationalised. All work will be carried out in close collaboration with colleagues in accordance with BCC corporate policies in relation to recruitment, staff engagement, consultation, and organisation design.

10.6 Public Sector Equality Duty

10.6.1 The recommendations in this report will support the Council to fulfil its obligations under the Equality Act. We will have regard to the public sector equality duty at all stages of the programme set up, mobilisation and delivery.

10.7 Environmental and Sustainability Implications

10.7.1 Not applicable - Progress report on a current issue.

11 Appendices

11.1 No appendices are attached to this report.

12 Background Documents

12.1 None.