

# Birmingham City Council

## Report to Cabinet

21<sup>st</sup> March 2023



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**Subject:** TRAVEL TO SUCCEED – REQUEST TO EXTEND FUNDING TIMESCALE

**Report of:** Sue Harrison, Strategic Director Children and Families

**Relevant Cabinet Member:** Cllr Karen McCarthy, Children, Young People & Families  
Cllr Yvonne Mosquito, Finance & Resources

**Relevant O &S Chair(s):** Cllr Kerry Jenkins, Education and Children Social Care  
Cllr Akhlaq Ahmed, Resources

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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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, add Forward Plan Reference: 011126/2023		
Is the decision eligible for call-in?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input 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 In 2022 £1.2M one off discretionary funding was allocated from the Corporate Policy Contingency fund to support the recommendations in Breaking Down Barriers specifically reduce the number of young people not actively participating in some form of education, employment, or training due to travel barriers that young people highlighted as part of breaking down barriers identified.
- 1.2 This investment will support removal of barriers and increase participation in employment, education and training (EET) and improve general wellbeing during the of cost-of-living crisis, by providing up to 12 months' travel passes to meet each individual's travel needs.
- 1.3 This funding supports the delivery of the Council's Breaking Down Barriers report, published in July 2021 [Breaking Down Barriers: Working Towards Birmingham's Future | Birmingham City Council Portal](#), specifically the recommendation to: *Reduce the cost of public transport for 16–18-year-olds by using the £1.2m funding for NEET young people; particularly those accessing unpaid work experience or internship opportunities.* As such it will also contribute to the Council's response to the cost-of-living crisis through a reduction in the cost of public travel for this cohort of young people.

## **2 Recommendations**

- 2.1 That Cabinet:
  - 2.1.1 Notes there is the sum of £1.228m held in the Corporate Policy Contingency, which is intended for the Travel to Succeed project.
  - 2.1.2 Agree that any unused funds for the financial year 2022/23 be set aside for use in the 2023/24 and 2024/25 financial years.
  - 2.1.3 Note that the financial plan agreed by Full Council on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2023 agreed a corresponding increase to the 14 – 19 Participation and Skills Team budget which is contingent on this decision being made.
  - 2.1.4 Agrees to the implementation of the Travel to Succeed Project as described in this report.
  - 2.1.5 Authorises the Section 151 Officer to transfer the funds to the relevant service area's budget
  - 2.1.6 Approves the extension of the timescale of the delivery of this fund from the current one-year (2022/2023) timescale, to be delivered over a 3-year period (2022 – 2025) which would better utilise the funding and to support more young people, up to 1,000 per year over the extended period(s)
  - 2.1.7 Authorises the City Solicitor & Monitoring Officer to negotiate, execute and complete all necessary documents to give effect to the above recommendations.

### **3 Background**

- 3.1 Under the Education and Skills Act 2008, local authorities are required to track the participation of young people aged 16-18 into education, employment or training. Effective tracking enables local authorities to identify young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) and support NEET young people to re-engage. The DfE publishes performance data in the form of a 'NEET Scorecard' which shows comparative performance with other local authorities.
- 3.2 While this tracking shows an improving picture in Birmingham, there is a one percentage point gap compared to the national average for Not Knowns (NKs), showing more support is needed for young people who may not be enrolling in college or other provision. The current not known figure is 1,445 16–18-year-olds, 4.49% as of 14<sup>th</sup> December 2022.
- 3.3 Through delivery of this project, the 14-19 tracking service is discharging the Council's statutory duties to 'encourage, enable and assist' young people to re-engage in education, training or employment.

#### **3.4 Access to services:**

Through this project, we will enable young people to access:

- Mental health services including counselling and therapeutic services.
  - Charitable services – such as food banks and places of welcome
  - Libraries – for support services to resources, IT equipment, safe spaces
  - Youth Centres – for a safe space to develop their emotional and social intelligence with a youth worker.
  - Places of worship
  - Birmingham Careers Service (BCS) to receive impartial careers, Advice and guidance from Level 6 qualified advisors to ensure their needs are met.
- 3.5 There are clear links to the Children & Young People's Travel Service, to ensure that this Travel to Succeed project complements the existing support agreements for Birmingham residents and will not duplicate funding.
- 3.6 The Children and Young Peoples Travel Service will use the IT systems to purchase travel passes and the posts for delivery on this project will sit in their team structure.

### **4 Options considered and Recommended Proposal:**

- 4.1 The recommended project option is to commence delivery in 2022/2023 over a 1-month period followed by an initial review of the delivery model, then continue delivery for a further 2 financial years. This option will enable sustainment of support once the uptake has been established, through marketing and awareness raising with all professionals linked to supporting young people and evaluation built in to improve the delivery in-flight.

An alternative option would be to do nothing other than provide young people with additional advice and guidance on how to access existing travel support – this option was rejected as it would not support addressing the cost-of-living crisis and the recommendations made in Breaking Down Barriers report and also it would mean that the allocated funding would be lost.

## **5 Consultation**

- 5.1 Consultation has taken place with the Interim Head of Service for Children's Travel Service and has resulted in agreement that project beneficiaries can access the existing travel confidence training for those young people who require it, this will complement the funded travel support proposed in this report.

## **6 Risk Management**

- 6.1 The risk of underspend on the funding will be mitigated by strong awareness raising and promotion of this support with partners and strong performance monitoring and delivery evaluation
- 6.2 The risk of wasted resource i.e., funding tickets/passes that are not fully utilised will be mitigated by seeking to only pay for actual travel journeys (based on the funding model used for the TfWM Older Persons Travel Pass).

## **7 Compliance Issues:**

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

- 7.1.1 This project supports the Council's duty to track and reduce the number of young people who are currently NEET
- 7.1.2 The project directly responds to the wider challenges young people face as set out in the Breaking Down Barriers report recommendations.
- 7.1.3 The project supports the Council response to the cost-of-living crisis, for example helping young people to access food banks and other charitable services.

### **7.2 Legal Implications**

- 7.2.1 The Travel to Succeed project supports the Council to discharge its duty to make available to young persons and relevant young adults for whom it is responsible such services as it considers appropriate to 'encourage, enable and assist' young people to effectively participate in education, training or employment pursuant to section 68 of the Education and Skills Act 2008.
- 7.2.2 The City Council has the power to enter into this activity by the general power of competence secured by Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011. The activity is within the boundaries and limits of the general power set out in Section 2 and 4 of the Localism Act 2011 respectively.

### 7.3 Financial Implications

- 7.3.1 The funding for this project is already identified and committed, this report seeks to extend the delivery timescales as set out in the table below:

	2022/23 Mar £	2023/24 £	2024/25 £	Total £
Travel Passes - 12 months @ £350 x 1000 people	29,167	350,000	350,000	<b>729,167</b>
Project Management Officer - GR4 SCP25	3,881	48,907	50,129	<b>102,918</b>
Children's Coordinator - GR5 SCP 35	5,060	63,752	65,346	<b>134,158</b>
Marketing Costs	30,000	15,000	15,000	<b>60,000</b>
Project Costs - (website, application process, evaluation etc)	18,000	53,000	129,216	<b>200,216</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>86,108</b>	<b>530,659</b>	<b>609,691</b>	<b>1,226,458</b>

- 7.3.2 This expenditure will be monitored to ensure that it remains within the amount allocated, and mitigating action will be taken to reduce expenditure if changes in funding availability require.
- 7.3.3 Any unspent funding in each financial year will be subject to a further report for proposed carry forward.

### 7.4 Procurement Implications (if required)

- 7.4.1 No procurement is required because TfWM are the provider partner as the statutory body to deliver on the multiple travel modes needed to meet the varied needs of young people.

### 7.5 Human Resources Implications (if required)

- 7.5.1 To support delivery the posts listed below will be created and recruited to in line with the Council's current Recruitment and Selection and Equal Opportunities Policies.
- 7.5.2 All posts will be advertised to Priority Movers first, followed by internal advertisement as Secondment opportunities or Acting Up and external opportunities as Fixed Term Contracts.
- 7.5.3 The posts to be recruited to are:
- 1.0 FTE Project Management Officer
  - 1.0 FTE Children's Co-ordinator

### 7.6 Public Sector Equality Duty

Equality Impact Assessment – has been completed and is attached as an appendix

## **7.7 Environmental and Sustainability Implications**

- 7.7.1 This project enables young people to access public travel which is recommended as part of the Council's response to Climate Change and the Clean Air Zone implementation.

## **8 Appendices**

- 8.1 Appendix 1 - Equality Assessment
- 8.2 Appendix 2 - Environmental and Sustainability Assessment

## **9 Background Documents**

- 9.1 [Breaking Down Barriers: Working Towards Birmingham's Future | Birmingham City Council Portal](#)