

BCP Council
Review of home to school transport

The key objective of the review was to identify strategic and operational opportunities that support the development of independent travel options and make improvements to how home to school transport is delivered with a focus on potential efficiencies and service improvement.

The report details clear recommendations, and options for decision, before culminating in an implementation plan including timeline, resource required and investment implications.

This report is not intended to be a detailed description of the service and a catalogue of observations which do not contribute directly to key opportunities.

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Director
July 2025

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.0 OVERVIEW & CONTEXT

2.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overall findings

Summary observations & recommendations

3.0 ORGANISATION, GOVERNANCE, RESOURCES & OVERALL PERFORMANCE

4.0 KEY EFFICIENCY INITIATIVES

Supply management and procurement

Routing and group pick-up

Passenger Assistants

5.0 ASSESSMENT & POLICY

Assessment

Placement decisions – ‘Criss-Crossing’

Travel training

Personal Transport Budgets and shifting the travel offer.

Post 16 transport changes

Changes to policy to underpin initiatives.

6.0 IMPLEMENTATION

7.0 SUMMARY RECOMMENDATIONS

8.0 FINANCIAL OPPORTUNITY PLAN

APPENDICES

- A Growth estimates
- B Headline capability gaps
- C ITU resource comparison
- D Example KPI metrics
- E Suppliers identified and not used
- F Potential supplier survey
- G Examples of re-procurement success
- H Re-route detail solution
- I Headteacher feedback
- J Recommended compliance check regime

1.0 OVERVIEW & CONTEXT

- 1.1 This report sets out opportunities to enhance our home-to-school transport arrangements, with a purposeful emphasis on children and young people with special educational needs. By focusing on those who may encounter the most significant challenges to independent travel, we are committed to identifying new approaches that foster autonomy, build confidence, and support their transition into adulthood—both in terms of personal development and practical mobility.
- 1.2 According to The Sunday Times analysis in June 2025, spending on home-to-school transport for children with additional needs has tripled over the past decade, reaching £2.25bn. Home-to-school transport expenditure is now higher than the total expenditure on fostering services (£2.14 billion), family support (£1.3 billion) or children’s centres (£444 million).
- 1.3 Analysis by The Times suggests that rising numbers of children with additional needs, limited capacity at special schools and demand for individual transport have contributed to the increase.
- 1.4 BCP Council provides home to school transport to 1,639 passengers with additional needs on a day-to-day basis, with 1,334 receiving door-to-door transport on supplied bus or taxi and the remainder receiving bus passes, an allowance for fuel wear and tear or a personal transport budget (PTB).
- 1.5 Over recent years the service has largely mirrored that of other local authority operations across England and Wales. Increasing pressure has been created by a rising number of children entitled to transport which has been largely driven by growing numbers and complexity of children with an EHCP. This has combined with more costly external taxi and bus supply for inflationary and other operational reasons.
- 1.6 The overall cost of the service in 2024/5 was £13.8million with the budgeted annual expenditure for 2025/6 being £16.3million and predicted to grow to £21.2million by 2028/29 (Appendix A)
- 1.7 Expenditure on transporting SEND children has more than doubled, increasing by 119% since 2021/22 driven by a 36% increase in overall passenger demand and escalating costs of supply from the external market which have resulted in a cost per passenger increase of 51% from £6,484 to £9,810 per year.
- 1.8 The key driver for the increased demand in passenger numbers has been an increase to the number of children with an EHCP which has increased by 45% since 2021/22 to around 5,000.
- 1.9 It is within this context that Edge public solutions conducted a headline review of the service. The review considered how home to school transport delivery can be improved to promote independent travel, better manage demand for door-to-door transport solutions from the

point of assessment and how it can deliver wider benefits and improve outcome for children and young people while, at the same time, delivering efficiencies and securing value for money. The review culminated in a plan to deliver a raft of initiatives as part of an overall transformation strategy over the next 3 years and has considered investment and further estimated growth.

2.0 KEY FINDINGS – EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overall

- 2.1 BCP Council performs similarly to other progressive authorities and has put into place many initiatives in recent years to improve control of demand and service delivery.
- 2.2 We observed a laudable eligibility assessment regime which clearly contributes to only 33% of children with an EHCP receiving transport which is lower than expected when comparing to other authorities.
- 2.3 The Transport team are committed and knowledgeable and have already considered and implemented many initiatives with some controls and protocols delivering exceptional performance such as the low number of PA's allocated to routes.
- 2.4 However, both the School Admissions and Transport Team and the Passenger Transport Unit have been hampered by poor systems and are at full capacity delivering a demanding service with little headroom and resources to enable significant change.
- 2.5 This report will clearly show how there is a real opportunity to embark on a fundamental service transformation over the next 3 years and deliver an **annual financial impact of £2.7 million from 2028/29** and cost avoidance associated with applying the efficiencies to projected new volume of passengers in future years.
- I. This is a saving against the current projected expenditure in each coming year which includes growth in demand and cost.
 - II. Savings should be considered separately from cost avoidance, which is the impact of applying the efficiencies to predicted new demand and cost growth.
- 2.6 Each key initiative will require careful phasing to allow time to properly implement in a sustainable and low risk manner over 2-3 years. The table below summarises the headline annual savings and investments required in each year versus a 2025 start point. (A detailed financial plan can be found at section 8.0).

Versus the start point '000£	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
Efficiencies	576	2,611	3,167
Investments	558	487	439
Total net saving	18	2,114	2,728
Cost avoidance/ new volume	159	786	999

- 2.7 Investment in resources will be necessary to properly support and deliver the implementation; including to ensure schools, parents and passenger needs and expectations are managed. There will also be a requirement for some modest additional investment in systems and permanent resources.
- 2.8 Successful delivery of the changes and efficiencies will be dependent on fully implementing initiatives across some critical themes,
- I. Developing and delivering a clear transport strategy under a joined up and accountable Governance structure for transport supported by more integrated systems and clear metrics of performance.
 - II. Enhancing the control of the supply market and securing better value by moving to a more flexible dynamic purchasing system (DPS), and managing a complex re-engagement, re-procurement, and routing overhaul exercise including the option of introducing safe pick-up points.
 - III. Considering the options for providing passenger assistants, including exploring opportunities to move to a mixed model of PA supply including transport providers.
 - IV. Investment in a travel training offer, which will underpin a re-assessment regime to support moving away from expensive door-to-door transport to other travel solutions such as PTB's.
 - V. Better using policy to communicate strategy and manage expectation, and specifically considering changes to Post 16 policy and the greater use of default offer PTB's.
- 2.9 Implementation will present a significant challenge and be dependent on five critical building blocks necessary for sustainable delivery.
- I. Political and officer buy-in, appetite and understanding of the changes, including the rationale and the need for a joined up holistic strategy. This can be achieved by leveraging strong governance and leadership across the directorates involved in transport and better visibility of the service with a joined-up database.
 - II. Parent and user understanding of the rationale and the benefits of the programme with a clear focus on promoting independent travel. Ensuring that the benefits of independent travel are promoted and principles of consistency, fairness, delivering policy and best use of valuable resources are at the heart of all changes.
 - III. Delivering a positive message to parents and schools, working with all partners to manage expectations and navigate changes through thoughtful planning, clear communication and careful management. Transformation should be communicated as

a period of transition followed by a lengthy period of certainty and settled arrangements. This can be managed very successfully with expertise.

- IV. Securing investment in project leadership, expertise, and capacity to drive the necessary short-term changes and implement the complex range of sustainable service improvement initiatives.
- V. Having a clear roadmap for developing the right level of resources for the business-as-usual operation after the transformation phase.

3.0 ORGANISATION, GOVERNANCE, RESOURCES & OVERALL PERFORMANCE

Organisation & governance

- 3.1 Whilst this review focused on home to school transport there are 5 main service areas, across 3 directorates of BCP council, which have a stake in passenger transport and these are indicated in the table below,

Team	Directorate	Role
Passenger Transport (Social Care)	Environment	The procurement and organisation of social care passenger transport. This includes the internal fleet of accessible minibuses. The direct provision of some home to school transport. Support for community transport.
Passenger Transport (Education)	Environment	The procurement and coordination of home to school transport. Determines most appropriate travel solution. Recruits and manages Passenger Assistants (PAs).

		Organises fuel, wear and tear (FWT) and personal travel budget (PTB) payments.
School Admissions and Transport	Education/ Children's Services	Assesses entitlement for home to school transport.
Education Health Care Coordinators (EHCCoS)	Education/ Children's Services	Completes EHCP EHCP review Placement decisions
Social Care	Wellbeing	Social Care transport budget Social Care eligibility

- 3.2 It is not uncommon for transport to be delivered from several service areas, but this typically causes issues with control and governance. In this respect, the following observations were made of SEND transport which are likely replicated in social care and therefore transport as a holistic service:
- I. There is a lack of coordinated visibility and transparency supported by clear metrics which are visible across all areas of the operation resulting in evident lack of trust and confidence that best value is being achieved and the right assessment decisions are being made and in line with policy. The team have been hampered by using three different databases in the last 5 years.
 - II. There are gaps in accountability for overall expenditure and other key areas. This is often the case where a transport team re-charges for services and has no control over demand, and the commissioning services (SEND) have some control of demand but little control over the delivery cost. Other examples or unclear accountability include SEND or transport team making decisions on discretionary transport in isolation, where transport is not offered by policy.
 - III. There is a challenge to making clear overarching decisions for transport to drive best value for the council. For example, whether to pursue moving away from door-to-door transport and support independence and driving initiatives to support this. It is unclear whether accountability rests with the School Admissions

and Transport Team, the Passenger Transport Unit or the SEND Team and, if all three, then how this would work in practice.

- IV. There is little evidence of a clear overarching strategy for transport in respect of future proofing and transforming it to make it efficient.
 - V. It is unclear which department owns the communication of strategy and decisions to parents and schools.
 - VI. It has been a challenge for Passenger Transport Unit culture to keep up with a fast-changing culture and direction within Children's Services. Being detached from the service makes this more difficult to achieve.
- 3.3 Many local authorities have taken steps to become more integrated to resolve some of these challenges and some have re-organised into one integrated transport team. However, this has also been achieved with better Governance for the whole of transport and its commissioners, and we recommend better overall Governance for BCP Council.
- 3.4 Whilst there is good communication between the School Admissions and Transport Team and the Passenger Transport Unit, this relates in the main to tactical decision making, the forums in place don't have the teeth or remit to control all the parts of the operation or agree and drive more strategic changes.
- 3.5 The service has a significant opportunity to improve its Governance and develop a joined up overarching control of transport across the stakeholders involved, ensuring a joined-up approach to strategy, forecasting, expenditure, and delivery.
- 3.6 It is recommended that a Travel Board be implemented to be accountable for overall performance. The Travel Board will have the 'teeth' to manage transport performance for home to school transport and social care; drive forward a joined-up strategy to achieve the best possible value and outcomes for the authority. The board will be accountable for all decisions which are discretionary and over and above policy. Social care involvement is important given their future strategy and the potential for the availability of 30 internal minibus resources for SEND passengers or growing this fleet to accommodate SEND passengers.
- 3.7 In respect of a Travel Board recommendation, there are some critical considerations,
- I. There must be representation from all key areas and finance.
 - II. Its Chair and leadership must be of sufficient seniority to bring together accountability for overall expenditure and probably from Children's services given the lion's share of the budget.

- III. Care must be taken to ensure the board is not over-engineered and overburdened with operational detail and decision making. It is envisaged that the board will set clear protocols on decisions and have clear mechanisms to ensure compliance.
- IV. The Board will require clear reporting and metrics of performance to manage progress, see Appendix D for an example of a Key Metric report.

3.8 The table below shows how the 4 key areas in transport can be brought together by stronger Governance and clear accountabilities.

Directorate	Who?	Specific Accountabilities
TRAVEL BOARD	Director Leadership Finance Transport Education Social Care	Governance Strategy Budget Forecasting Communications

Well-being	Social Care Commissioning	Policy Assessment Re-assessment
Children's	SEND (EHCCoS)	Transport needs in EHCP Consider transport in EHCP
Children's	Admissions/ Assessment	Transport Policy Assessment Re-assessment
Environment	Passenger Transport Service	Effective travel solution Delivery

Overall performance

- 3.9 Whilst there are many opportunities for improvement it is important to note that the transport service across all areas performs in a similar fashion to other authorities struggling to develop and respond to rapidly increasing demand. There are many progressive initiatives in place or having recently been implemented. The knowledge and dedication of the School Admissions and Transport Team and the Passenger Transport Unit is laudable.
- 3.10 The headline metric comparison (for passengers with special educational needs) below highlights some areas of strength and some of opportunity. It is important to understand that metrics provide only a headline gauge of where opportunities might be. They can be misleading and it is important for a review to look further at the bespoke conditions and the

practical situation in the operation to assess opportunity. In summary, transport metrics are indicating that BCP Council:

- I. Provides transport to slightly fewer children with EHCPs than is the norm. 33% versus an average expectation of 38%. This is likely to be an indication of good quality assessment and robust eligibility controls. The number of first stage appeals is significantly higher than expected which may indicate robust controls in the context of high parent expectation. But with some authorities improving on 33% then there are some best practice opportunities to examine.
- II. Does not promote personal transport budgets (PTBs) to good effect and under-performs most other authorities in this respect. PTBs are an effective way of providing parents, and transport users with greater autonomy to make their own arrangements and are delivered at a cheaper cost than organised transport.
- III. Has a very high number of single passengers per route at 47% of all routes, which cost significantly more at £16,000 per year than a passenger on a group route. These routes can be indicative of poor routing control, but also indicative of placement locations which are out of borough, smaller satellite placements with fewer passengers attending on a day-to-day basis.
- IV. Has a low number of routes with passenger assistants (PAs) indicating good control, but which could in part be driven by difficulty in recruitment of PAs.
- V. The cost per passenger is higher than typically seen elsewhere at £9,810 per year. Whilst high level metrics of these types can only ever present a gauge and an indicator it is a signal that there may be an opportunity to better deliver, route and procure transport arrangements.
- VI. The number of passengers per route is very low at 2.11 versus a benchmark average of nearer 5 passengers per route. This is a headline indicator and work to understand and improve this metric will be critical. Though unlikely to be practically possible, it cannot escape notice that making improvements to meet the benchmark would result in approximately halving current total transport costs.

Metrics (SEN)	BCP	Benchmark expectation
% of EHCP receiving transport	33%	38%
% Personal Travel Budgets offered of total passengers	2.2%	6%
Single passenger routes	47%	37%
Routes with a PA	31%	62%
Cost per passenger	£9,810	£6,317
Passengers per route	2.11	5.12

- 3.11 The review covered all key aspects of a passenger transport operation and from a headline perspective was able to indicate whether performance was good or had room for improvement. *NB: benchmarks can be misleading as local authorities have very different dynamics, benchmarks are not intended to allow a precise science to ascertain opportunity. We have only used performance from councils where we have worked and can verify data. Benchmarks have only been used as a headline indicator of where there may be an opportunity.*

Data and systems

- 3.12 The transport team have struggled in recent years to keep records that can produce robust reporting based on up-to-date data. This has caused some concern from the services seeking assurance that best possible value is being delivered. However recent improvements and the introduction of the Mobisoft product MTC has provided a database and routing tool which is the foundation for better data and metrics. However, there is still work to do to fully transition data into the new system and it has not yet been used for re-routing. Full use of MTC will provide some headroom from the admin burden associated with invoice checking, PA timesheet checking and inputting etc. The transport team is still catching up with the assimilation work associated with the merging the councils into BCP Council.
- 3.13 However, each of the two other areas in Children's services uses a different system. The School Admissions and Transport Team have an in-house built system based on excel and do not use the Synergy interface available. The team, alongside colleagues in Education services use synergy for other tasks. Synergy does not link with the in-house system and neither system currently links with MTC. Hence there are interfaces which are not seamless and cause work with inputting and valuable data is not readily available for all to see.
- 3.14 It is recommended that a solution is found to provide a seamless solution from Synergy to MTC. There are two options, each which would allow synergy to interface with MTC and therefore seamless access to data without re-input being required after changes are made or new transport arrangements are required.

- I. Synergy can be interfaced with MTC and Synergy has an assessment module which can replace the in-house system used by admissions.
- II. MTC also has an assessment module.

3.15 MTC will allow the production of quality reports which can be used by the Travel Board to manage performance. An example of a report can be seen at Appendix D.

3.16 The table below, whilst not exhaustive, outlines typical measures across the travel service which can be used for setting targets and monthly performance appraisals. These metrics will also be important to give a Travel Board the teeth to govern.

Category	Common measures	Function
Overall team	Cost per passenger. Demand increase, each category of passenger Demand decrease, each category of passenger	Assessment & Transport Team
Supplier value	Cost per mile. Cost per vehicle type. Cost per supplier (based on passengers) Number of suppliers Variance to base contract summary on re-tender and during contract term reflecting variations	Assessment & Transport Team
Day to day	New allocations Single person journeys per total (separated by reason) PAs per passenger route Complaints Numbers allocated to existing routes. New routes procured. Short term quotes	Assessment & Transport Team

Financial forecasting

- 3.17 There was evidence of robust forecasting of future demand (over next 3 years) and potential cost growth based on EHCP growth from within the Admissions function. Remarkably this is unusual and represents excellent practice. However, there was little evidence of how these forecasts manifested in delivery plans and strategy. This will be especially critical in the future, given estimated demand growth of 26% and an estimated increase in costs of 30% between now 2025/26 and 2028/29. This supports the need for a Travel Board and improved Governance and strategy.

Resources

- 3.18 The passenger transport team is knowledgeable, and many progressive initiatives have been implemented. However, major change, a progressive approach and some core activities are hampered by lack of resources in the team. Appendix C shows how the Transport team is at least 3.5 FTE short of what would be expected in terms of resource to manage home to school with the current number of SEND passengers; Whilst this is not a precise science; given BCP Council manage their own PAs which others do not...and others have an in-house operation which BCP Council does not....it is still a useful guide given the need for BCP Council to carry out some other key activities.
- 3.19 Whilst a transformation to implement the recommendations of this review will require significant temporary resources, expertise, and leadership (which are outlined later) there are some activities which will require continued added resources permanently to ensure sustainable operational change and to continue the activities of the transformation phase after temporary resources have gone. The activities currently needing additional focus include:
- I. On-going new supplier engagement
 - II. Supplier compliance checking.
 - III. Support for the on-going re-assessment of passengers
 - IV. Driving forward Personal Travel Budgets
 - V. Providing a travel training function (whether this is led by Transport or Admissions)
- 3.20 It is recommended that additional, permanent resources are recruited and developed alongside the transformation activity to deliver these progressive activities, each of which are covered later in the report and amount to 2 additional resources to support travel training and 2 resources to support I-IV above.

Compliance checks

- 3.21 It is important to note that compliance checking in respect of ensuring contractors are meeting contractual and legal responsibilities is lacking focus.

- 3.22 The BCP Council operation is not sufficiently resourced to carry out a regime of proactive compliance checking. A recommended regime is outlined at Appendix J. The operation is currently:
- I. Reliant on the Private Hire, Hackney Carriage and PSV licensing regimes to ensure roadworthiness.
 - II. Reliant on Operation Coachman for occasional unannounced spot checks of all compliance issues.
 - III. Reliant on PAs to report issues.
- 3.23 This leaves BCP Council vulnerable. If there is an incident and authorities request a record of checks or a record of supplier performance and therefore, we have recommended additional resources to enable a compliance regime to take place.

Head Teacher feedback

- 3.24 Many observations and opportunities for improvement were supported by feedback from Headteachers who we interviewed as part of the review. A summary of this feedback is contained at Appendix I. However, the key headlines in terms of solutions and recommendations from the feedback are listed below:
- **Routing and Timing:** Reduce unnecessary early arrivals and optimise routes to prevent delays.
 - **Enhance Communication:** Establish regular meetings and clearer feedback mechanisms between schools and the transport team.
 - **Strengthen Compliance:** Conduct routine site audits and checks.
 - **Improve Training:** Ensure all PAs and drivers receive appropriate training, especially on safeguarding and working with pupils with SEND.
 - **Clarify Processes:** Develop and publish clear SLAs for application processing and issue resolution.

4.0 EFFICIENCY OPPORTUNITIES

Supply management and procurement

- 4.1 Around £10.6million per annum in 2024/5 is spent, and £12.9m budgeted to be spent for 2025/26 on contracted supply of taxi and minibuses. Routes are tendered using a fixed framework contract of 49 suppliers which comes to an end in July 2027. Of these 49 suppliers, 36 are used with one supplier carrying out 40% of all the work.
- 4.2 Given that 40% of the work is carried out by one provider and there is significantly more work given to the top 3 providers than is expected from the norm, this indicates that competition for tenders could potentially be improved.

% total value given to top 3 providers	
BCP Council	52
Hillingdon	36
Luton	38
Cheshire East	39
Gloucestershire	33
Lewisham	40

- 4.3 Our analysis further supported the conclusion that supply value could be improved by the following:
- I. Through a search using Yell and the Traffic Commissioner we established that there are 28 other PSV operators and 109 taxi providers currently not used and available in the region which cannot engage because of the fixed framework in place. Many authorities have over 100 suppliers on a flexible Dynamic purchasing system (DPS) which allows suppliers to access at any point following an evaluation.
 - II. The cost per mile of contracted saloon routes (without PAs) was compared with the licensed tariff for an ad-hoc taxi journey in BCP Council over the average 15mile trip. The table below shows that the contract price is 292% (nearly 3 times) more expensive than the standard tariff. We would normally only expect to see a 50% premium to account for peak demand, waiting time, dedicated drivers and complexities of transporting children to school on a strict timetable. Whilst this does not indicate that contract priced can

match standard licensed tariff it does clearly indicate the value that providers must place on securing BCP Council contracted work.

BCP Saloon	Licensed Tariff £	Contract £
15mile trip	45.70	133.50

- III. We can also see how the cost per mile compares with some other authorities. This is not a precise science, it can be skewed by geography and it only includes the mileage for a sample of routes in Bournemouth, Christchurch, and Poole (about 30%), nevertheless it provides an indicator.

Council	Cost per mile (5-20miles)	
	Saloons	16 seats
Somerset	2.14	3.10
Lincs	3.74	4.50
Cumbria	3.60	4.20
Durham	3.56	4.50
Cornwall	3.38	5.60
Wirral	4.56	8.46
BCP Council	8.90	8.78

- IV. Indeed, a comparison of average prices per day and per annum (not including PA's) provides a similar picture with saloon cars 16% more expensive and 16 seat buses 31% more than a basket of other authorities.

	Benchmark (No PA)		BCP Council		Comparison
	Cost per annum	Cost per Day	Cost per annum	Cost per. Day	% More expensive
Saloon car	14,010	77.83	16,339	90.77	16%
16 seat bus	32,000	168.42	41,940	233.00	31%

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- V. We assessed the number of bids per tenders issued in 2023/24 and 2024/25 where there were 375 tenders issued and the result was that 28 tenders attracted 3 or less bids. Generally, this did not indicate a stand-out concern, however clearly it indicates that there is likely to be some benefit of increasing suppliers and raising competition by generating more bids.

Bid received	Number of tenders per bids received
0-3	28
4-6	195
7-9	161
10+	227
Total	611

- 4.4 There is clearly an opportunity to identify, ignite and educate the supply market to engage with the council. We identified a significant number of companies that were not currently used and whilst many may not be suitable these high numbers are not often available to local authority operations elsewhere and they represent a significant opportunity to enhance competition. This can be delivered by setting up a new DPS to open the market up to new suppliers, conducting evaluations for all suppliers and giving notice of up to three months on the current framework to allow this happen.
- 4.5 Increasing the number of providers will increase competition alongside the activities of encouraging more bids, developing suppliers, and increasing visibility of the work that is available. Our review included a small survey of suppliers (see Appendix F) currently not engaged which identified an appetite and willingness for suppliers to engage if supported by a better understanding of how to bid and the opportunities available.
- 4.6 Better contract value will also be driven by the application of a robust competitive procurement process. It is recommended that electronic reverse auctioning is utilised to evaluate bids for taxi/minibus contracts. This will provide all bidders with visibility of the best priced bid and thus enable them further chances to bid a better price. This practice has recently proven to drive much improved competitive value if managed carefully to ensure quality and viability of each contract and coaching is offered to suppliers to bid effectively.

- 4.7 Procurement software, 'Proactis', which has reverse auction functionality and is highly recommended from our experience of using it, is currently available, and in place within the council. Software has developed to be very effective in recent years and whilst some local authorities experimented with reverse auctions 5-10 years ago, with mixed success, many are returning to it with great success today.
- 4.8 The current framework is due to expire in Summer 2027 which given the potential to make significant improvements in value, is too far away to delay action.
- 4.9 A full re-tender using reverse auction is not recommended in one go for all contracts. Therefore, it is recommended to carry on a timely basis and reprocure in at least 3 tranches commencing in September 2026, January 2027, and April 2027. This will provide enough time to set up a DPS, encourage the supply market to engage, and to develop and retender routes.
- 4.10 Re-procurement in tranches is recommended to smooth the workload of building tenders and linking this work to any potential re-route opportunities as well as to provide the team with confidence in the process. Work should also be undertaken to understand the implications of the new Dynamic Market under the Procurement Act 2023 which will be transitioned to in 2025 and impact the transport operation on termination of the Framework contract in 2027. Our informed view is that the new legislation provides for open frameworks (effectively a DPS) where competitive procurement can then be deployed (effectively reverse auction) with some workarounds for low threshold contract values.
- 4.11 By igniting the supply base and improving competition we believe that there will be a conservative opportunity to improve the c£12.9 million of taxi expenditure budgeted for 2025/6 by at least 7.5% delivering a saving of £967,500 per year by 2028/29.
- 4.12 Appendix G shows recent achievements in councils with similar circumstances to BCP Council. Whilst no two councils are the same, and comparison is challenging, it can clearly be seen where similar circumstances such as an opportunity to develop the supply market, and to work with them to develop understanding of reverse auction, then a significant opportunity has resulted in all cases.
- 4.13 Timing of re-procurement events, and care to enable the effective management of workload peaks associated with a complex re-procurement process will be critical and it is recommended to commence market engagement at latest by April 2026 to increase the number of suitable contractors and start to develop their expertise in reverse auction protocols.

Routing

- 4.14 An overhaul of routing is carried out annually in many effective operations as new passengers allocated to existing routes quickly erode effectiveness. Whilst the transport teams work hard to optimize routes, and new passengers are carefully examined for best route each year there

is little evidence of fundamental overhaul across all passengers using routing software capability. The team does not currently use the available MTC software as it has only recently been commissioned. But it has good routing tool capability and it is recommended that this takes place.

- 4.15 A fundamental route overhaul requires resource to carry out the task and manage impacted users and parental expectations. There is a common reluctance to fundamentally change the arrangements of passengers and suppliers when parent expectation is high. Interestingly some Headteachers fed back that they wished to see a routing improvement and would like to see less smaller vehicles arriving at their premises. Whilst anecdotal, this feedback is positive in that Headteachers might be supportive of such an initiative and support work with parental expectations.
- 4.16 We used Q Routes (a similar product to MTC) to re-route all routes going into the three schools with the most routes (Linwood, Winchelsea, and Victoria Education Centre) a total of 85 routes.
- 4.17 The analysis ensured PA space was considered and ensured that journey times were not extended beyond current maximum times. We retained all single passenger routes as is, in the absence of information to suggest that these passengers could not travel in a group.
- 4.18 The analysis indicated an opportunity to implement a 24% reduction in routes from 85 routes down to 64, with similar reductions in time, route mileages. The table below summarises the results from the Q Route analysis:

	Total Route Miles*	Total Route Time*	Passengers	Routes
Original	941	64:33	339	85
Average per route	11	00:45	3.99	
Solution	391	35:29	339	64
Average per route	7	00:39	5.78	
Reduction %	58%	45%		24%

*excluding PA pick up and drop off

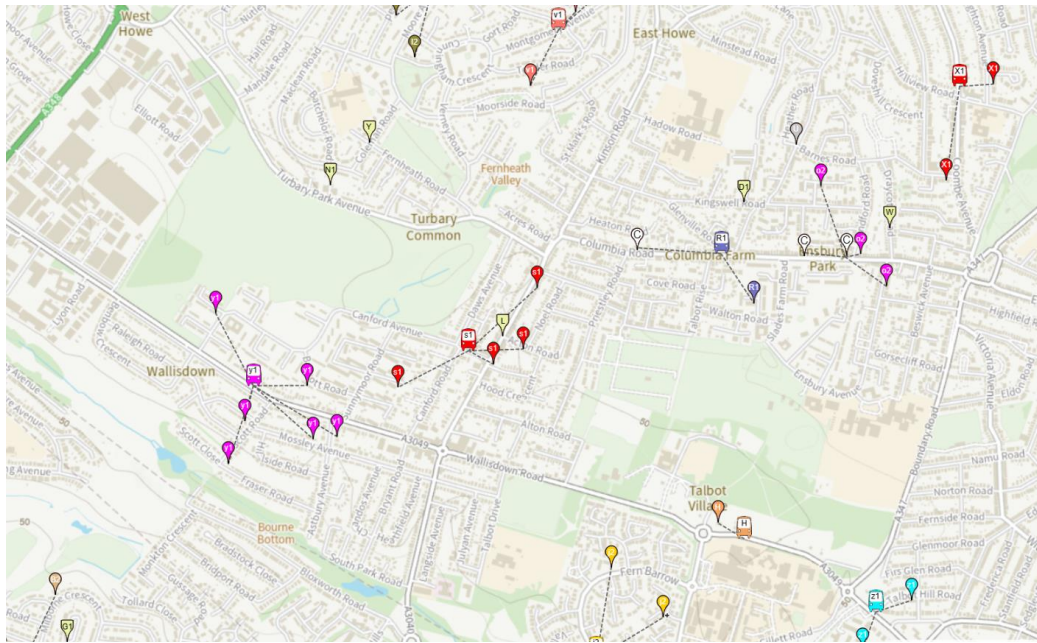
- 4.19 We have considered this opportunity very conservatively and can confidently outline an opportunity of at least 7.5% route reduction of all routes going into destinations with 5 or more routes. This represents 75% of all routes (468 out of 631) where rationalization will be effective. The reason for reducing the Q route estimation of 36% reduction down to 7.5% is because we were unable to source data including which passengers travel by wheelchair

which could reduce minibus capacity and we also cannot be sure of the market capacity to provide significantly more 16 seat minibuses although we are certain that engaging the market will generate improvement.

- 4.20 Savings from using software and conducting a route overhaul will be at least £776,250 per annum and a further saving from reduction of PAs of £121,500 per annum. This equates to a reduction of c70 routes which will enhance competition by providing more available supply, and result in less congestion at schools and a reduction in carbon emissions of c390 tonnes per year. This could offer a safe, efficient, and social enriching experience for children, particularly when tailored to their individual needs. Where appropriate, these shared journeys can help foster peer interaction, build routine, and reduce overall travel time and costs. Crucially, any group travel must be carefully planned to ensure safeguarding standards are met, with pick-up points and timings designed to suit the specific requirements of each child – balancing convenience with comfort, safety, and developmental goals.

Group/ safe pick-up

- 4.21 Route reduction should be further supported by the introduction of group/safe pick-up where passengers are accompanied as necessary by parents for short walks of less than quarter of a mile to pick-up points in appropriate locations.
- 4.22 Grouped pick up will reduce total route distance and travel time. Some authorities have shown how route savings of around 30% can be made and this initiative also supports the independence and transition to adulthood of passengers.
- 4.23 In BCP Council we conducted analysis using passengers at each of the top 3 schools and considered the results after a general routing solution is first implemented. The impact indicated there are further benefits of saving 12% of route miles and 28% of route time by applying a group/ safe pick-up solution with a further reduction of 2 routes from the 54 required.
- 4.24 We have not targeted this saving as it is based on every passenger being able to walk 0.25 miles to a safe stop and this clearly will not always be possible. But the concept provides food for thought and an option which is recommended to pursue and include in the transport offer and policy.
- 4.25 The map below shows how passengers (marked by coloured dots), could make their way to a safe pick-up point by a short walk.



- 4.26 This could represent a significant saving opportunity of up to 20% for some school route patterns. Whilst this does not require a policy change, the initiative will be supported by clearly articulating it as a travel option in policy and be considered as part of a re-assessment programme.

Supply of passenger assistants

- 4.27 Passenger assistants are employed directly and applied to contractor routes where necessary. There appears to be a robust risk assessment of when PAs are required and indeed BCP Council performs exceptionally well against other authorities with only 31% of routes being applied a PA versus a benchmark expectation of 62%. This may be slightly lower than planned given the challenges of finding PAs.
- 4.28 The provision of PAs presents BCP Council some significant challenges in recruitment, retention, and training. There are 196 routes requiring a PA and there are currently 133 directly employed with c30 on a casual contract. Attrition is around 10% per annum, as is sickness.
- 4.29 Many local authorities source PAs through their contracted taxi provision and this can work more effectively if compliance and training is managed. Not only would this approach mitigate the recruitment burden and eradicate the direct costs of sickness and attrition, but the costs will undoubtedly be less. The rate per hour (after all costs) that BCP Council currently pays is c£15 per hour against an expected contractor rate of £13 per hour.
- 4.30 With there being 196 PAs needed at an average of 15 hours per week each, then a saving of £2 per hour would amount to £223,440 over a 38week year.

- 4.31 A move to a mixed model including contracted provision can be managed slowly to ensure management of risk and sustainability including that compliance and training is conducted and that BCP Council job loss costs are mitigated. To this end, 83% of those currently employed have less than 2years service and could transfer to contracted provision.
- 4.32 It is recommended that options for providing passenger assistants, including exploration of different models of PA supply through transport providers is carefully considered.
- 4.33 There is also strong evidence that sourcing PAs through contractors can reduce the travel time associated with picking and dropping PAs from their homes before and after the core route. Contractors tend to be more innovative in finding the most economical solution and in some cases arrange convenient pick-up points for PAs to reduce travel time and cost.
- 4.34 PA checks and training are critical and there was some anecdotal feedback through the review, from headteacher interviews and other stakeholders that these were not delivered robustly.
- 4.35 Mandatory checks must include:
- I. Enhanced DBS Check (with barred list check): Required for working with children. Must be current and regularly reviewed (often every 3 years or via the DBS Update Service).
 - II. Right to Work and Identity Checks:
To ensure legal employment and verify identity.
 - III. References:
At least two, ideally one from a previous employer in a relevant role.
 - IV. Medical Fitness Declaration:
Particularly where the role involves physical activity such as assisting wheelchair users.
- 4.36 Core training requirements which should be delivered internally for employed staff and/or by external providers (and detailed in contracts) for external staff include:
- I. Safeguarding Children Training:
Typically, Level 1 or 2. Covers recognising signs of abuse and procedures for reporting concerns.
 - II. SEND Awareness Training:
Understanding various needs such as autism, ADHD, and physical disabilities, and how to support children appropriately.

- III. Manual Handling and Personal Safety:
Especially where assisting with mobility equipment like wheelchairs or dealing with challenging behaviour.
- IV. Emergency Procedures and First Aid:
Basic first aid or emergency awareness training – not always a full certificate unless required by the contract.
- V. Conflict Resolution and De-escalation:
Techniques for managing challenging behaviour calmly and safely.

5.0 ASSESSMENT & POLICY

Assessment overview

- 5.1 Eligibility assessment for SEND passengers is carried out by the School Admissions and Transport Team. There are many observations representing good practice and a robust assessment regime including:
- I. Parents are signposted to complete a comprehensive on-line application form and the School Admissions and Transport Team have access to all key information in the EHCP. Current decision making is robust and generally aligned to policy unless over-ridden by SEND or occasionally services adapted by transport team.
 - II. Outcomes and reasons for decisions are well tracked and recorded.
 - III. There were about 150 stage one appeals in 2024 which is a high number but against high parental expectation this reflects a robust assessment process. Only 12 were heard at second stage and only 4 of these upheld.
 - IV. Only 33% of children with an EHCP receive transport which is lower than the expected 38% benchmark. This in part may reflect a robust assessment process.
 - V. The Education Health Care Coordinators (EHCCoS), SEND teams and placement panels are getting better at making placement decisions which consider transport and transport costs which is good practice.
 - VI. There appears to be a robust practice of not granting transport when parents do not choose the nearest school. This is the case even when the school may have been a mainstream school for SEND provision.
- 5.2 However, some general observations were made, some of which are outside of the control of the School Admissions and Transport Team:
- I. There are many discretionary decisions made by the SEND team, sometimes under pressure from schools to provide transport when BCP Council is not compelled to by statutory obligation or policy. This includes special circumstances and part-time timetables where schools seek special arrangements and which cost significantly more to design transport solutions. There needs to be better understanding of the costs of these decisions and control of them centrally. This will be provided by better Governance. A clear stance should be agreed and protocols for schools to potentially release funding where their needs are greater than statutory obligations. An SLA should be developed between- It seems being flexible and customer focussed over past years have created an expectation from schools. However, decisions outside of the agreement should be

considered by Transport Board and ultimately Children's Services, the home to school transport budget holder.

- II. There appears to be many short 'home to school' walking distance children transported who may be ambulant and able to walk accompanied as necessary. There are 500 children under statutory safe walking distance which is about 33% of total passengers which is unusual as we would expect to see around 20%. More specifically there are 193 children under 2 miles and 40 under 1 miles which should be re-assessed periodically and potentially considered as part of a travel training regime. The School Admissions and Transport Team expressed a wish for improved software to determine safe walking distances and this is available through most transport software packages including MTC and Q Routes.
- III. There is no periodic re-assessment regime, this is important as children develop and situations and abilities change. Although re-application is expected at transition. Re-assessment should be set at a frequency bespoke for each child and there will be a significant benefit in resourcing and carrying out a re-assessment overhaul to catch up for the years that it has not been place.
- IV. There is no travel training offer currently in place to support independence, though the benefits are well understood and work has taken place with the parent/carers forum to coproduce a travel training offer that helps to prepare young people for adulthood.
- V. There is a general sufficiency challenge where placements have been difficult to identify resulting in longer travel distances and more individual (single person) journeys. The council is implementing its SEND sufficiency strategy, and this strategy is considering transport. A programme of expansion is underway which is delivering an annual increase to the availability of local places for local children. The routing and re-procurement overhaul process should consider these potential changes.
- VI. The challenge of sufficiency and identifying suitable available placements over recent years has in part resulted in many children 'criss-crossing' each other across the boroughs with children attending placements further from their home than the nearest ones if they had places available at the time of commencement. If we look at just two schools, Linwood, and Winchelsea then in total 73 passengers (25%) live closer to the school that they do not attend.

	Passengers attending	Live nearer other school
Linwood	183	51
Winchelsea	114	22

This needs to be considered as part of the sufficiency strategy and whether as part of the EHCP annual review process, there are opportunities to support children and young

people in transitioning to educational placements closer to home where appropriate. Careful consideration at key transition points may offer a chance to thoughtfully consider whether a local setting could better meet a child's evolving needs. Reducing travel time not only brings practical benefits, such as less time spent commuting and more time for learning and rest but also supports wellbeing and independence.

Whilst it will take some time it is recognised that any changes must be carefully planned and sensitively managed. With clear communication and collaborative planning, aiming to ensure that transitions are smooth, respectful of each child's journey, and ultimately beneficial for both families and learners.

As a comparison, and to provide confidence from elsewhere, our team supported Dundee Council to re-locate 40% of their ASN base to local nearest suitable settings reducing students with transport from 477 to 310 and the number of routes by half and overall saving £855,000 per annum.

Any work to deliver this must be driven by the SEND sufficiency strategy, working closely with the SEND Service, and supported by cross council appetite, therefore we have made no estimations of benefits in this review.

Re-assessment

- 5.3. BCP Council does not have a robust, periodic reassessment process of those passengers receiving transport. Children develop and needs change, often children receiving transport aged 11 do not require it by age 14.
- 5.4 The main reasons for not having a robust re-assessment protocol include,
- I. The council does not have the resources to conduct this process in depth and on a periodic basis.
 - II. The EHCCoS in the SEND Service typically have 300 children in their case load and cannot know the individual needs of each child in respect of transport.
 - III. Transport is not a subject discussed in the annual review of a child's EHCP.
 - IV. The lack of knowledge of each child results in the parent and school view being taken and this is rarely likely to result in door-to-door transport being taken away.
 - V. Independence of the child which can be supported in the right circumstances by the removal of door-to-door transport is not a central theme of focus for parents or schools.

- 5.5 Given that robust reviews have not taken place for the lifetime of most current passengers (aside from at transition) then there is likely to be a significant opportunity to review all current passengers to ensure that they are in receipt of the most appropriate form of transport, whether they still need a PA, need to travel alone etc. Reassessment will be particularly useful in the context of considering other forms of travel such as PTB, group pick-up or whether the child would benefit from travel training to access public transport.
- 5.6 We recommend that resources with transport knowledge and knowledge of the child gathered from EHCP and feedback from schools and PA, are applied to carry out transport re-assessments as an initial exercise and then periodic re-assessment dates set as part of an on-going re-assessment regime. We often find that this is best conducted separately from EHCP review, however relevant information from an EHCP review where the subject of transport has been discussed is made available.
- 5.7 Rather than current assessment, the greater challenge for the council are the decisions that have been made in the past 7 years, where arguably a less stringent test has been applied to determine those that need transport.
- 5.8 In addition to not having a re-assessment regime there are gaps in terms of:
- I. There is a parental expectation of transport until transition and of door-to-door transport with reduced opportunities for independence.
 - II. No travel training is offered which limits opportunities for learning key life skills such as route planning, time management and navigating in public spaces.
- 5.9 It is recommended that capacity and expertise be provided in the short term, potentially by an external partner to carry out a robust re-assessment exercise outside of the current process and be driven by information gathered from schools, parents, and PAs on individual passenger transport needs. This will provide traction to catch up many years of limited re-assessment. In parallel, internal resources can be developed to carry out the process on a routine basis and for all passengers to have an identified next re-assessment date based on their individual circumstances which will support the management of parental expectation that transport is not granted for school life.
- 5.10 Whilst clearly there will always be a requirement for door-to-door transport for many passengers with complex needs; there will be those that are not ambulant irrespective of distance; and there are bespoke circumstances in BCP Council such as a propensity for short distances which may skew comparisons with other authorities, the indications are nevertheless strong that there are likely to be many children who may not require transport, and could walk, accompanied as necessary.
- 5.11 We expect that re-assessment supported by travel training would identify at least 2% (30 SEND passengers) in each of the next 3 years and a sensible assumption would be the

opportunity to at least halve the average annual transport cost of £9,800 for those coming off group transport onto alternative means such as bus passes/ walking, recognising that not all reductions in passengers will result in a saving.

- 5.12 A re-assessment process should prioritise single person route passengers and those passengers who are travelling short distances.

Single person Journeys

- 5.13 BCP Council has 293 single person routes which represents 47% of all routes having one passenger. This is significantly more than that seen in many other authorities. (NB that this equates to 20% of all passengers being transported singularly). Single routes are a cost driver given that the average cost of is £16,150 per annum. Whilst there are likely some bespoke reasons for their high number such as the sufficiency challenge and more children going to further away placements, there are 60 destinations which have a single passenger attending. However, there is also evidence of high numbers of single person journeys going to the bigger schools too such as Winchelsea, Linwood, and Victoria Centre.
- 5.14 It is recommended that single person routes are re-assessed and brought nearer to the benchmark expectation but recognizing BCP Council's challenge of 60 single person destinations. By conservatively moving around 20% (60 single person routes) over the next 3 years to group routes then this would result in around 40% of all routes being single person, still more than expectation but reflecting BCP Council challenges. By doing this there is an opportunity to save the difference between a single person route £16,150 and the average annual cost of a group route £9,810 for each one of them.

Moving away from door-to-door transport – shifting the travel offer

- 5.15 BCP Council has an under-developed process of changing parent/user expectation away from door-to-door transport to alternative and more independent ways of travel. Whilst the home to school policy contains many of the key aspects of a good policy it would benefit from being re-written to better set out all the travel options and outline parental obligations in getting their child to school. An exercise of enhanced communication and proactive targeting of opportunities must then take place to further develop the benefits of alternatives such as personal transport budgets (PTBs)
- 5.16 Currently, PTBs are occasionally offered but are not promoted and targeted in a strategic manner. BCP Council performance is poor against other authorities that have focussed on this area. The initiative is generally in its infancy across the country and many authorities have big plans. There is significant potential to identify more opportunities in BCP Council. It should be noted that BCP Council, like most authorities, make many FWT (fuel wear and tear) payments at a basic level of 45ppm. These are often not attractive to the more parents of the more expensive single person journeys. In promoting PTBs care must be

taken to mitigate the risk of those with a FWT payments asking for more. This can be done with careful, individual targeting and payments made based on individual circumstances.

Local authority	PTB % SEN passengers
BCP Council	3
Hounslow	9
Bexley	22
Gloucestershire	12
Enfield	12
Luton	14
Lincs	10

- 5.17 The PTB offer will support resolving the issue of the high number of single person journeys.
- 5.18 PTBs provide flexibility to parents to make their own arrangements and represent an opportunity for a council to reduce its cost burden and management time for day-to-day arrangements, in many cases travel arrangements can typically be made for significantly reduced cost.
- 5.19 In most local authorities PTBs are typically offered to SEND passengers, where appropriate, at the council's discretion, as they largely represent those in receipt of special door to door transport arrangements which are costly.
- 5.20 From our experience the likely reasons for not fully developing the opportunity of PTBs include,
- I. The amounts offered are not enough to be appealing and are typically based on HMRC mileage allowances of 45ppm. This is the case with the BCP Council offer for fuel wear and tear.
 - II. There is little resource and focus applied strategically to generating interest, identifying, influencing, and negotiating with likely candidates. Blanket offers do not tend to work.
 - III. Parents can be concerned about the impact on their tax or benefits and do not find it easy to give up the perceived entitlement to a door-to-door transport service.

- 5.21 It is recommended that PTB opportunities are pursued with clear drive and with resource applied. Not least because the potential for savings on some route costs will be significant.
- 5.22 From our experience, where the following factors are implemented, then there will be significant benefits,
- I. Encourage children and young people and their families to explore more independent travel options and the associated benefits this brings.
 - II. Dedicated roles/ resources for at least a 3year period to evaluate the current cohort of passengers.
 - III. Target offers to single person journeys as a priority and then move strategically onto routes with vehicles with valuable spaces which can be filled.
- 5.23 If we examine the number of PTBs currently offered and the number of single person journeys in place in the table below, the scale of the opportunity becomes evident when we consider that the average cost of a single person journey is £16,500 per annum.

	Overall passengers	Single passengers	Number PTB's	% of total	Average annual cost PTB £
SEN	1,334	293	36	3%	5,271

- 5.24 A conservative target is at least 15 of the remaining single person journeys can be converted to PTBs per year for the next 3 years which would result in a total saving of £427,087 per annum by 2028/9 if the difference between the average cost of a single journey and the average cost of a PTB is applied per passenger. Coincidentally in the period since September 2024 in Cheshire East Council, 38 new PTBs have been agreed for single passengers with an average cost of £3,168 p.a. The average annual cost of a 4-seat taxi is £17,663 which equates to an average annual saving of £14,495 per PTB.
- 5.25 Common concerns include ensuring that the scheme is equitable across parents. This is best achieved by payments made in bands according to circumstances, however, to be most effective the scheme must consider that every circumstance is different dependent on factors such as other children in the household, vehicles at the parent's disposal, distance, needs of the child, time taken etc. and therefore ultimately the council will be best able to negotiate a mutually acceptable payment which represents the costs incurred by parents.
- 5.26 It is recommended that clear arrangements are agreed with parents for payment. These will normally be based on the number of times children are taken to school and not be linked to

investments and other commitments made such as investments in vehicles. As a specific example there would therefore be no liability for payment when schools are closed.

Post 16 travel

- 5.27 Providing home to school travel assistance for post 16 students is not a statutory obligation for UK local authorities (for either mainstream or SEND pupils) although there is an expectation of 'reasonable provision' and an obligation to publish an annual policy statement in respect of post 16 travel support. Whereas for 19-25 students there is a legal duty under section 508F of the Education Act 1996 for local authorities to provide free transport with SEND to enable attendance at their education course.
- 5.28 In respect of mainstream students, this has led many councils, including BCP Council, to withdraw any form of travel support for post 16 altogether. Others have adopted a compromise stance where they organise bus transport where necessary, but make an annual charge, based either on the actual cost of the transport commissioned, or a significant parental contribution towards that cost. The charging is normally means tested to some degree to ensure that students from low-income families continue to be able to access further education. This means that (dependent on the charging policy) post 16 mainstream transport is relatively easy to adjust to reduce the financial burden on councils and even to make cost neutral.
- 5.29 For students with additional needs, most authorities continue to provide travel assistance in some form, based either on a personal travel budget (PTB), independent travel training (ITT), a bus pass or traditional door to door transport.
- 5.30 The proportion of students with additional needs who can effectively be travel trained is naturally limited (normally 10-15% of the SEND cohort is capable of independent travel) and hence the proportion of SEND students that can be supported via this (generally the cheapest option) is limited. Therefore, the cost implications of the Post 16 Policy and the design of travel support arrangements has a much greater potential cost impact for councils and can represent a significant area of expenditure.
- 5.31 There are currently 168 16-18 aged students receiving transport and costing the council c£1.3million per annum. Those that can afford to pay are charged £525 per year, but even assuming 100% recovery then this only equates to £88,000 per annum. Interestingly, £500,000 is spent on single person journeys of which there are 42.
- 5.32 The policy as a minimum should be amended to set out a clear hierarchy of travel options, starting with independent travel without any assistance and setting out subsequent travel support options in the order of cost effectiveness for the Council (travel training, public transport bus pass, PTB, shared transport etc.) and making it clear that door-to-door minibus or taxi transport will be considered only as a final option.

- 5.33 The above will provide the platform for effective planning of travel assistance provision in a way that is most cost effective for the Council.
- 5.34 BCP Council should also consider offering default PTBs to post 16 students in circumstances such as they need a single person journey. If this is implemented, then there is the potential to save the difference between the average post 16 single person journey cost and the average PTB cost which would amount to an annual saving of £285,348 in 2028/29 with a September 2027 implementation.

Charges/ contribution

- 5.35 The council has an opportunity to review charges for Post 16 SEND passengers to cover some of the cost of their journey. In a survey conducted by Thurrock Council, nearly a third of the 45 councils that charged, had set contributions over £700 per year but BCP Council has charged £525 for many years without review, and it is recommended that this be increased to £750 and be reviewed annually to consider inflation.
- 5.36 Assuming that 60% could afford to pay by means test this would contribute a further £22,000 per annum.

The role of Independent Travel Training

- 5.37 The long-term transport process for mainstream school children is that they attain increasing levels of travel independence as they develop and learn to either walk to school or catch public transport.
- 5.38 For children with additional needs this is not always possible. In many cases they receive door-to-door transport from the time they start school until the time they leave College such that they do not gain the necessary travel skills that other children do. However, whilst many children with SEND will never be able to travel independently, those that can, should be given the opportunity to do so.
- 5.39 Independent travel training (ITT) is one of the key aspects that supports children and young adults with mild learning and physical difficulties providing a range of non-tangible benefits to the individual concerned, that engender self-confidence, independence, and self-esteem, including:
- Builds confidence and self-belief.
 - Improves social mobility and enhances prospects for further education, employment, and training.
 - Promotes an understanding of the value of money.

- Improves focus on personal safety.
- Assists in getting a job when leaving school or college by supporting travel to and from the workplace.
- Enables independent socialising / visits to family and friends as required to be incorporated in EHCPs.
- Supports family integration by developing the capacity to undertake simple tasks such as visiting the local shops, hence reducing dependency on other family members.
- Provides an important 'enabler' in allowing adult clients with learning difficulties to find and retain work.

5.40 In many authorities, funding is provided for travel training. 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.

5.41 Funding of 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, although applying normal business case payback models may not work.

5.42 BCP Council does not currently offer travel training, but travel training will be a critical facilitator for any movement away from door-to-door transport, reassessment, consider those that are able to walk, move onto public transport or move from travelling alone to with a group.

5.43 Other authorities either conduct travel training with in-house resources or have an external partnership with a provider such as Mencap who provide travel training, or they have a mix of the two.

5.44 There are some key observations in respect of developing a travel training offer for BCP Council:

- I. Those capable of receiving travel training are not currently routinely identified in the application process, the EHCP or the assessment process. Travel training should be discussed and built into EHCP assessment, transport assessment and re-assessment reviews.
- II. Schools being engaged and on board is critical to success. Schools play an important role in identifying capable children, facilitating training and motivating children and parents to wanting to achieve independence. Successful travel training generally needs strategic focus, energy, resource, and engagement of schools. Schools can build travel training into their curriculum and innovatively use teaching assistants to support this.

- III. Sometimes parents refuse to allow independent travel after training was in progress or completed. It is recommended that a stance is taken to support the importance of independence for the child when parents reject new arrangements, after successful training is taken.
- 5.45 With successful school engagement, improved identification of candidates, and an enhanced training resource model then, if results are compared to other local authorities, the council could successfully support at least 30 children per year to access other travel methods.
- 5.46 To support delivery of this the following initiatives are recommended to be implemented,
- I. Enhance the current resources to focus on developing relationships with schools, with the backing of strategic support including efforts to raise the profile of travel training across all stakeholders both within the council and across schools.
 - II. Investigate and develop a business plan for engaging a support model from a training partner with clear commitments of successful outputs for fees.
 - III. It is recommended that a training support partnership model is engaged because this can be flexed up and down depending on demand and number of identified children over time, which may dwindle after a few years of identification of easy candidates. It also allows internal resource to focus on school engagement and identification of children which a support model will be dependent on to deliver training to. It is common from our experience for local authorities to engage a delivery partner for a fixed price and then not focus on identification of candidates for them to train. This is a risk to avoid.
- 5.47 At this stage, until the number of children who may respond to travel training has been evaluated, we have not generated a specific financial benefit to travel training. Although its costs have been outlined and the assumption that travel training is a key facilitator for the savings associated with re-assessment.
- 5.48 An in-house model and external model of delivery will be similar in cost. A purely in-house model of engagement, identification and delivery would cost around £90,100 per year based on
- Lead trainer – Grade G - £34,200 salary + £10,300 oncosts
 - Assistant trainer- Grade E £30,300 salary and £9,200 oncosts
- Alternatively, a lead trainer and a £40,000 per year training contract would also be worth exploring.

- 5.49 The subject of which function delivers Travel Training is often debated but it can sit in Assessment or in Transport Delivery or work across both under the guidance of the travel board.

Changes to policy to underpin transformation.

- 5.50 The current home to school transport policy is very good in terms of being robust and in line with statutory guidelines. There are plans to improve many aspects in a progressive manner in the next review.
- 5.51 In headline terms for school age and post 16 passengers the following points will re-enforce the current policy
- I. The re-enforcement of terminology from transport to travel in a consistent way to support the move away from the expectation of door-to door transport and the range of independent travel options that maybe appropriate.
 - II. The promotion of other forms of more independent modes of travel such as PTBs, travel training and group pick-up. Currently references to these are passive but they should form part of a travel hierarchy of options with door-to door transport being the last resort.
 - III. Re-enforcement of parental responsibility to accompany their child as necessary to access travel arrangements.
 - IV. Reflect a travel training offer and the importance of this in driving child independence.
 - V. Promote the importance of independence of the child and that this will underpin decisions on the most appropriate travel solutions offered.
 - VI. Making clear that travel is not for the duration of the child's education but will be reassessed regularly and that travel must be re-applied for at various stages such as transition.
 - VII. In respect of post 16 it will be useful to set out statutory obligations before considering a default PTB and introduction of annual review of charging.
- 5.52 The policy and application form are important tools in managing expectation, setting out the range of options, and managing the impact of decisions that are made. Further, the application form is key to gathering relevant data on each passenger to be able to assess which option is most appropriate and can be improved to identify.
- I. Parental appetite for a PTB

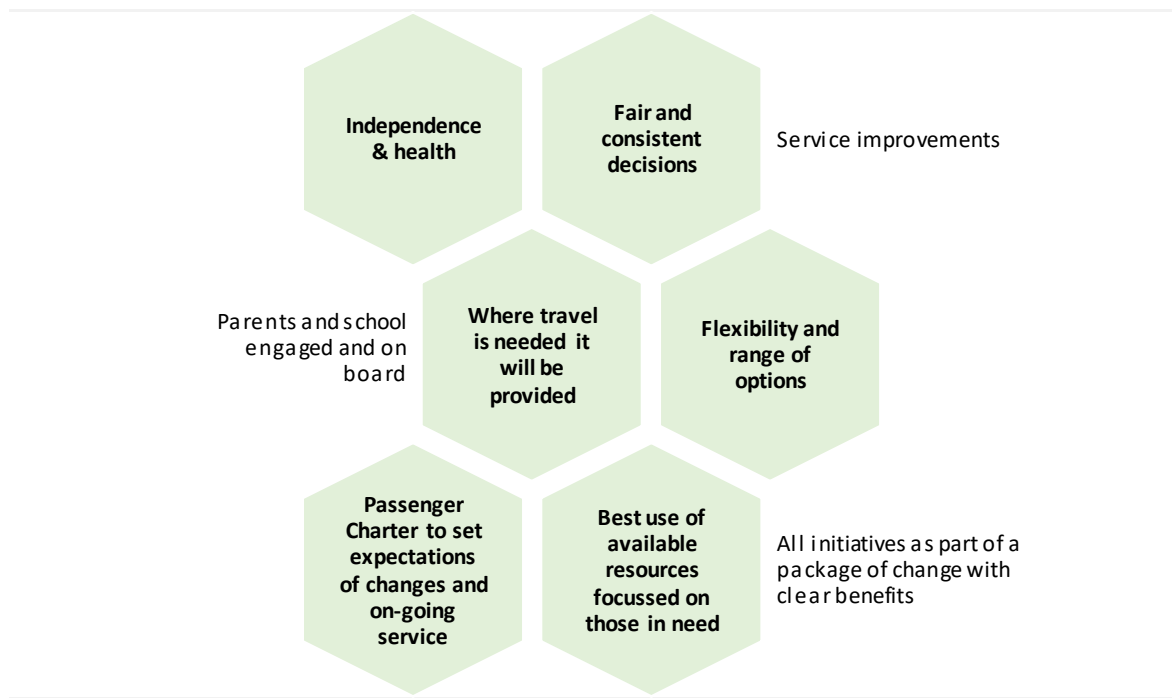
- II. Information to help assess capability for responding to travel training.

6.0 IMPLEMENTATION

Overview

- 6.1 The opportunities outlined in this report are significant and will require a coordinated three-year program of transformation to deliver all proposed initiatives.
- 6.2 It is critical to secure the necessary expertise, resources, and leadership to drive these changes. Such investments should be considered on an 'invest-to-save' basis. Resources will not only offer expertise and leadership but also supplement resource-intensive activities such as:
- Engaging, influencing, coaching, and developing the supply market.
 - Developing tenders and managing complex re-procurement exercises in alignment with route overhauls.
 - Reassessing passengers to encourage the uptake of Personal Transport Budgets (PTB), travel training, and alternative travel options.
 - Facilitating the identification of more suitable, nearby placements and their impact on transport arrangements.
 - Building internal team capacity to sustain activities long-term, including recruitment for new roles, establishing a Travel Board, and implementing governance and performance frameworks.
 - Conducting appraisals, cost analyses, impact assessments, benefit evaluations, business cases, and consultations to support policy changes, including the potential removal of discretionary transport services.
 - Managing program delivery, including user expectations, supplier communications, and securing political and senior stakeholder approvals.
 - Leading governance, fostering close collaboration across teams, and ensuring robust progress measurement.
- 6.3 The transformation must be underpinned by effective communication and proactive management of expectations among users, parents, and schools. Sharing, collaborating and coproducing a clear rationale for the changes is essential, as adjustments in this complex service area may lead to feelings of uncertainty and could require additional reassurance and support.

- 6.4 Placing children and young people at the heart alongside Consistency and adherence to agreed policies is critical to delivering a clear message and managing expectations. At the same time, decision-making must remain firmly child-centred, ensuring that arrangements reflect the individual needs and circumstances of each child. This balance is particularly important in the appeals process, where fairness and transparency must be underpinned by a commitment to the child's best interests.
- 6.5. To support this process, it is crucial to convey positive messages to suppliers, parents, and headteachers. This can be achieved by focusing on the strategic benefits and key messages outlined in the plan.



- 6.6 It is recommended that a Passenger Charter between service and customer is developed to re-set expectation of the service in particular reference to when changes are made. Improved communications on strategic matters were reflected in Headteacher feedback. A passenger charter will,
- ✓ Set expectation of service and changes to expect with a clear focus on prompting independence.
 - ✓ Provide clear contact details and times users can make contact, publish complaints procedure, clarify website links and routes of communication.
 - ✓ Introduce a 'child passport' a profile which can be shared with suppliers and support the understanding of each child.

- ✓ Introduce 'meet and greet' aspiration and measurement in the lead up to a new arrangement – this will result in reduced anxiety.
 - ✓ Outline a protocol/notice period in respect of route changes and when change is likely to take place. The need to outline contract end dates and rationale for changes.
 - ✓ Expectations and timing on letters outlining new arrangements.
- 6.6 Every month of delay represents lost efficiency opportunity of around £237,000 so it is imperative now to take some critical next steps including,
- Agreeing the need to transform and accepting that improvements can be made.
 - Developing all initiatives as part of a holistic programme and strategy, baselining current costs, and putting in place measurement of progress in terms of demand and detailing key financial benefits over each of the next 3 years and beyond.
 - Considering and deciding on the options to provide/secure delivery/leadership resources.
 - Commencing in readiness for first tranche of re-procurement and re-routing by September 2026, in the knowledge that it will take around 6 months to prepare to deliver this effectively which means commencement of the programme latest April 2026.
- 6.7 A headline implementation plan covering the big-ticket items in the first 2 years is shown below. Whilst there are many small initiatives and recommendations it will be beneficial to focus on the delivery and decisions necessary to deliver these big-ticket items. Some important considerations include,
- 1- That many key activities will need to be completed in the lead up to September 2026 (first tranche of delivery) which include.
 - Implementing a new routing system and begin rerouting in time for tranches of re-procurement.
 - Engaging the supply market and supporting a new DPS which will also consider future dynamic market legislation.
 - Coaching/training/ educating suppliers in reverse auction.
 - Developing reverse auction system/ 'Proactis'
 - Developing team to run reverse auction.
 - Managing the process of onboarding new supplier/ building tenders/ running reverse auction and managing fall-out
 - Managing communications to collaborate and coproduce but also to manage expectations of parents/ schools/ suppliers through whole process.

- Cleansing the database so it can be used to accurately route, produce metrics of performance that are trusted and be used as data source for new tender development.

2- Other important activities in the first year include.

- Working with children and young people and their parents and carers to understand their lived experience and ensure changes are carefully planned and well managed.
- Setting up new Transport Governance, ensuring clear reporting, robust key decision making particularly in relation to control, tackling discretionary spend and strategic momentum/ transformation.
- Developing further options papers on discretionary transport
- Delivery momentum behind re-assessment, PTBs and travel training.

Resources and Expertise Required

6.8 The proposed recommendations and strategy outline a complex transformation process expected to take a minimum of three years to complete.

6.9 Successful implementation will require:

- **Strong leadership** to drive progress,
- **Clear governance** to ensure accountability,
- **Additional permanent team resources**, and
- **Temporary fixed-term support** to manage and execute key initiatives beyond daily operations.

6.10 Adequate resources and expertise are critical to ensuring the sustainable delivery of resource-intensive initiatives. These efforts aim to achieve annual efficiencies and cost reductions totalling at least £2 million by the third year.

6.11 Additional support will establish the foundational elements for successful service transformation, including:

- Building a performance-driven culture,
- Strengthening governance frameworks,
- Refining strategic priorities,
- Enhancing communication,
- Managing customer expectations, and
- Supporting team development.

Resources

- 6.12 While precise resource requirements are challenging to predict, experience suggests the following full-time equivalent (FTE) resource levels over the three-year transformation period:

Year Resources (FTE)

1	3–5
2	3–5
3	1–3

- 6.13 Resource demands will fluctuate, with peaks during procurement events and quieter periods thereafter.
- 6.14 The estimated internal investment to support this resource level is £1,200,000 over three years. The table below compares the challenges of maintaining a flexible, skilled internal resource base versus partnering with an external provider specializing in this niche field.

Key Resource Expertise

- 6.15 Critical expertise required for success includes:
- **Leadership:** Program and transformation leadership, with hands-on change management and planning capabilities.
 - **Influence and communication:** Inspiring confidence among internal stakeholders and managing user expectations.
 - **Operational experience:** Knowledge in areas such as transport tenders, e-auctions, and procurement processes.
 - **Community engagement:** Engaging with parents and schools, leveraging local knowledge.
 - **Cultural change:** Driving performance culture improvements and implementing robust performance frameworks.
 - **Technical expertise:** Developing and optimizing transport databases and systems for end-users.
 - **Policy development:** Assessing children's travel needs using care plans and crafting

Comparison of Delivery Models

Criteria	Support Partnership	In-House Team	Rationale
Cost (3 years)	£1.2m	£0.75m	External partnerships can provide better value due to expertise and efficiency.
Flexibility of resources	Yes	No	External teams can scale resources according to demand.
Fixed costs	Yes	No	Fixed costs minimize financial risk during peak demands.
Downsize implications	No	Yes	Internal teams require redeployment at project end.
Knowledge & expertise	Yes	Possible	External teams bring specialized knowledge critical to success.
Guarantee of delivery	Yes	No	External providers can be held contractually accountable for outcomes.
Leadership	Yes	Yes	Both models can provide effective leadership.
Independence & best practices	Yes	No	Independent external partners offer insights into industry standards.
Mobilization time	Immediate	Unknown	Timely mobilization is essential to meet the April 2026 deadline for commencement

Headline timeline

- 6.16 The headline timeline of key activity over the next 2 years is shown below with the red blocks indicating an initiative is in place or a phase is complete.
- 6.17. The table below outlines the pros and cons, including and outline cost comparison of resourcing the programme using internal resources or external partnership

[illegible]

Initiative	User risk	Spectrum v other local authorities	Comments and rationale for implementation
Igniting the market and re-procurement of supply		Most are now routinely overhauling re-procurement on a periodic basis.	Few issues likely, there may be frustration at change of driver or PA but this can be mitigated by good up-front communication of rationale and setting of expectations.
Re-routing overhaul		Many are now periodically overhauling routing plans and using software	Good communications of changes will mitigate user dissatisfaction. Sharing rationale and managing user expectation ahead of changes and planning a defined period of stability after overhaul is good practice.
Group pick-up		Some councils are examining this opportunity with great success for example Hillingdon and Bolton.	Good communication of the benefits to child independence and the rationale for this initiative which is to reduce journey times and better use resources. Also, key to re-set the obligations of parents in the transport process. Consultation with schools and lots of dialogue with parents sharing detailed plans needed.
Providing PA's in mixed model of internal and externally		Most councils have moved to contracted supply	Good communication and risk assessment for the change. There will be a need for clear compliance checks.
Focus on Personal Travel Budgets		Most local authorities are now focussing on PTB	PTBs are not enforced. However, they will not also be an option for all to choose. Therefore, it is key to ensure that PTB offers are at the discretion of the council.
Introducing travel training		Most local authorities have a travel training regime. Some local authorities make travel training the only offer for those that are assessed as candidates	Will most likely be viewed as positive.
Applying safe walking routes		Most local authorities have a robust regime of assessing and applying safe walking routes as per their policy. CEC made decision to remove transport to 75 children in Dec 2023.	This must be communicated in the context of applying consistent policy, supporting independence and best use of scarce resources so that the most in need can receive support.

Re-assessment of passengers		Most local authorities conduct periodic re-assessment of transport needs.	Passenger needs change and the independence journey is important to child development into adulthood. Re-assessment will be supported by Travel training and a range of travel alternatives.
Increasing charging contribution for post 16 and use PTB as default offer		Some local authorities have stopped post 16 provision save for exceptional circumstances, Leicestershire for example only offer PTBs. Many have increased charges to meet at least the bus pass rate and 45 councils in the Thurrock survey have exceeded £700 per year contribution.	BCP Council offers greater service than it is statutorily required to do for post 16 children. It still offers a full range of door-to-door transport whereas it can offer PTBs or alternatives. It has also not raised its passenger contribution for many years.

7.0 SUMMARY RECOMMENDATIONS

Headline strategy

S1	Agree a strategy of key initiatives and embark on a 3year transformation programme to deliver recommendations in this report.
S2	Identify additional capacity and capability required to lead and support the high resource and expertise requirements of implementation.
S3	Implement proposed Governance structure including a Travel Board to ensure a simple, clear and 'joined up' strategy, accountability for performance
S4	Provide communications and engagement with schools, parents and users making clear the rationale for change, re-setting expectations and outlining the importance of the changes required. Introduce a passenger charter to support this.
S5	Support the transport team to recruit and develop additional permanent resource requirements
S6	Baseline current costs and demand and track progress through implementation
S7	Ensure robust growth forecasts in parallel to the savings of this programme being reflected in future years budgets

Specific efficiency and operational initiatives

E1	Immediately embark on a comprehensive supply market engagement exercise to understand the market and identify, develop, coach, and support all suppliers to access a new DPS and bid effectively. Deliver careful communications programme to suppliers to aid understanding and rationale. Give notice on current arrangements and move to DPS.
E2	Develop and train team in use of 'Proactis' software and put into place a system of reverse auctioning and develop suppliers to be able to effectively use it.
E3	Re-procure all contracts using reverse auction scheduling the exercise in tranches from a commencement date of September 2026. In the lead up to this provide coaching and support to suppliers to bid effectively. Focus on communications to schools and users.
E4	Engage routing software. Develop performance metrics and reporting for Travel Board.
E5	Re-route, using newly procured software each school, prioritising large route schools. Schedule in parallel with re-procurement tranches.
E6	Assess full opportunity for group/safe pick up. Adapt policy to support expectation and gain agreements and conduct any necessary consultation to implement the initiative.

E7	Develop and implement programme of transition of PAs to mixed model of provision
E8	Consider system for Assessment to allow seamless database and communications from SEND through to transport delivery

Effective application of current policy and the offer

P1	Develop model and provision of resources to promote and deliver travel training across all schools and secure engagement and school resources. Develop the process of identification of those passengers who will respond to travel training through assessment and re-assessment processes
P2	Re-appraise all single passenger journeys for alternative solutions including group travel or PTBs. Directly approach and prioritise likely candidates
P3	Focus resource on PTBs, developing an effective and appealing offer, prioritising and targeting single person journeys and Post 16 students.
P4	Develop protocol and promote PTBs at council's discretion
P5	Develop Travel Training proposition and implement

Changing current policy

CP1	Update policy and re-enforce language to support shift away from door-to-door transport including PTB, Travel Training, Re-assessment, and parent obligations.
CP2	Consider charging review for all post 16 students
CP3	Make PTB the default post 16 offer when appropriate to do so.

8.0 FINANCIAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

			Potential annual returns versus start point		
	Efficiencies	Rationale	26/27	27/28	28/29
1	Igniting the market and re-procurement of supply	Saving 7.5% from current spend level of 12.9million budget for 25/26. Implement in 3 tranches Sept 26, Jan 27, April 27	241,975	967,500	967,500
2	Re-routing overhaul	Re-route all routes going to schools with 5 or more routes and save 7.5%. That is 75% of all routes that can be impacted by 7.5%....or roughly 60 routes in line with re-procurement tranches. Impacting 10.35m	194,062	776,250	776,250
3	Group pick up points	Challenging to quantify without in depth analysis.....supports re-route benefits until this work is done. The example assumes all can be picked up and without individual assessment this is hard to quantify	0	0	0
4	Single person route reduction supported by reassessment	Reducing the current levels towards the norm of 37% (target conservatively 40%) = saving 20% of 293 single journeys (c60 jouneys) and saving difference between 16,150 average single journey cost and 9,810 average cost per passenger	63,400	253,600	380,400
5	PA model, move towards mixed model	Saving £2 per hour by moving PA to contractor supplied model. Commence with 30 PA's per year on basis of 15 hour average per week over 38 weeks. This saving could be significantly more if the reduction in route mileage is reflected in new prices from contractors.	17,100	68,400	102,600
6	Focus on Personal Travel Budgets supported by reassessment	Increase by 15 PTBs per year focussing on converting single person routes which cost 16,150 p.a. and replacing with PTB which is currently 5,271 average p.a.	40,796	244,777	411,960
TOTAL			557,333	2,310,527	2,638,710
	Application of current policy	Rationale	26/27	27/28	28/29
7	Re-assessment of passengers supported by travel training	Re-assess and travel train at least 2% of all passengers (30) each year onto other travel options which assumed as costing 50% of current average cost per passenger of 9,800 to account for those coming off group transport not saving and scholar bus pass £640 per annum.	18,375	147,000	220,500
8	Post 16 adapted offer to PTB where single person (default)	This option would save 42 passengers at 11,905 each and cost average PTB of £5,111 (Sept 27 implementation)	0	142,674	285,348
9	Re-assess post 16-18 charging	£530- £750 per year and inflation increase from then on. 168 passengers at £525 asuming 60% ca afford to pay. (Sept 27 implementation)	0	11,088	22,176
TOTAL			18,375	300,762	528,024

	Investment	Rationale	26/27	27/28	28/29
10	Partnership to lead and resource transformation	3 year partnership to provide all resources and leadership	-558,000	-372,000	-279,000
11	Travel Training resources	Addition of 1 GRADE G and 1 GRADE E and consumable budget or GRADE G and a c40 training contract	0	-90,000	-90,000
12	Travel Team Resources	Addition of 2 officers (Grade F) to transport team to focus on re-assessment, compliance, PTB	0	-35,000	-70,000
TOTAL			- 558,000	- 497,000	- 439,000

NET TOTAL

17,708 2,114,289 2,727,734

	Cost avoidance	Rationale	26/27	27/28	28/29
13	Cost avoidance relating to projected new SEND volume	Efficiencies each year as a % of total contracted spend (in the first section of this plan) are 4.3% in Y1, 17.9% in Y2 and 20% in Y3. These have been applied to additional growth expenditure projected of Y1 3,693,000, Y2 4,393,000 and Y3 4,996,000	158,799	786,347	999,200
TOTAL			176,507	2,900,636	3,726,934

Based on April 2026 commencement

APPENDIX A – Growth estimates

	EHCP's	Transported	% EHCP Transported	Cost	Cost per child p.a.	Cost with 3% inflation
2025/26	5,215	1,665	33%	16,334	9,810	16,334
2026/27	6,006	1,982	33%	19,443	9,810	20,027
2027/28	6,216	2,051	33%	20,123	9,810	20,727
2028/29	6,367	2,101	33%	20,612	9,810	21,230

Assumptions

- Agreed EHCP growth from the service.
- Consistent number of these transported at 33%
- Consistent cost per child as per current
- Inflation added at 3% per annum.

APPENDIX B – Headline capability gaps

Headline capability.... identifying gaps & opportunities



Organisation	
Clear accountabilities	
Joined up strategic approach to change	
Robust Governance	
Expertise in transport & admission teams	
Policy and offer	
Periodically updated policy	
Policy compliance/consistent decisions	
Robust eligibility assessment process	
Moving from D2D expectation to travel support	
Independence at core of travel offer	
Travel training offer	
Flexible PTB offer promoted and targeted	

Policy and offer continued	
Robust re-assessment process	
Supply and service operations	
Proactively developed supply	
Healthy framework using a DPS	
Competitive procurement – innovation	
Good value prices	
Effective routing supported by software	
Control of PA allocation	
Control of single person journeys	
Reliable systems and data	
Resource levels to deliver change	
Service levels to customer	

APPENDIX C – ITU Resource Comparison

Councils	SEND passengers	ITU Team FTE	Average passengers per head	Direct PA management	Assessment	Travel Training
A	582	10	58	x	x	yes
B	1598	15	107	x	x	x
C	511	6	85	x	x	yes
D	686	7	98	x	x	yes
E	770	9	86	x	x	yes
F	309	4	77	x	x	yes
G	1284	10	128	x	x	x
Average			91			
BCP current	1,400	10.5	133	yes	x	x
BCP suggested	1,400	13	107			

NB most councils also manage mainstream with these teams – as do BCP Council (c500 passengers)

PT manager	0.5
ITU manager	1
supervisor	2
coordinators	7
BCP Council	10.5

[illegible]

APPENDIX E – Suppliers identified and not used.

Supplier	Town	PostCode	Operator Type
"CWRC Taxis" Colehill & Wimborne	WIMBORNE	BH21 2AU	TAXI
1st Choice Private Hire	NEW MILTON	BH25 5NF	TAXI
A.L.BENNETTS TRANSPORT LTD	BOURNEMOUTH	BH3 7ND	PSV
A P Swanage Taxi's	SWANAGE	BH19	TAXI
A2B Taxis	POOLE	BH15 1LS	TAXI
AB Airport Runs	BOURNEMOUTH	BH9 1EB	TAXI
Abacus Cars & Radio Cabs	NEW MILTON	BH25 6HR	TAXI
Ace Taxis	BOURNEMOUTH	BH2 5PS	TAXI
Acorn Taxi	POOLE	BH16 6DT	TAXI
Airport Cars	BOURNEMOUTH	BH8 0BG	TAXI
AIRPORT TAXIS BOURNEMOUTH	BOURNEMOUTH	BH4 9BG	PSV
Airport Taxis Bournemouth	BOURNEMOUTH	BH4 9BY	TAXI
AM Taxis	SWANAGE	BH19 2JS	TAXI
AM Transfer	POOLE	BH14 9BQ	TAXI
AMBERLEY MINIBUSES LIMITED	CHRISTCHURCH	BH23 8NF	PSV
Amerc Cars Ltd	BOURNEMOUTH	BH7 6SP	TAXI
Amey Executive Travel	FERNDOWN	BH22 8ST	TAXI
Andrew's Taxi	WIMBORNE	BH21 1TR	TAXI
Angel Cars	NEW MILTON	BH25 5DP	TAXI
Ariel Taxis	POOLE	BH14 9BY	TAXI
Ashley Cars	NEW MILTON	BH25 5YD	TAXI
ATH Dorset	CHRISTCHURCH	BH23 6NX	TAXI
Atlas Cabs	WAREHAM	BH20 4EL	TAXI
BENNETTS MINI COACHES LIMITED	POOLE	BH16 6JG	PSV
BH20taxi	POOLE	BH16 6JY	TAXI
Billis Taxis	SWANAGE	BH19 1JU	TAXI
BOURNEMOUTH COLLEGIATE SCHOOL	BOURNEMOUTH	BH5 2DY	PSV
BRITANNIA PARKING GROUP LIMITED	POOLE	BH12 1AZ	PSV
Broadmead Cars & Taxis Ltd	WIMBORNE	BH21 2AY	TAXI
C M C Taxis	FERNDOWN	BH22 9QT	TAXI
C U Travel	WIMBORNE	BH21 2NL	TAXI
Call a Car	RINGWOOD	BH24 1AY	TAXI
Capital Cars	WAREHAM	BH20 5AJ	TAXI
Car Link Air	FERNDOWN	BH22 8EW	TAXI
Charlie Browns Buses	BOURNEMOUTH	BH1 4RS	PSV
Chau4You	VERWOOD	BH31 6PS	TAXI
Chris's Taxi Poole	BOURNEMOUTH	BH9 1LN	TAXI
Christchurch Cabs Ltd	CHRISTCHURCH	BH23 6SE	TAXI
Coastal Cabs	WIMBORNE	BH21 7BG	TAXI
Coastal Private Hire	NEW MILTON	BH25 6NG	TAXI
COLTEN CARE LIMITED	POOLE	BH12 5BN	PSV
Compass Cars Ltd	POOLE	BH17 0GD	TAXI
Corfe Castle Taxis	WAREHAM	BH20 4BG	TAXI
County Taxis	WAREHAM	BH20 6NF	TAXI
Cove Cabsaxi	WAREHAM	BH20 5FD	TAXI
CPE Taxis	RINGWOOD	BH24 2NJ	TAXI
Crown Cars & Taxis	FERNDOWN	BH22 0DU	TAXI
DAISH'S COACHES LIMITED	BOURNEMOUTH	BH2 5HR	PSV
David Alexander Travel	FERNDOWN	BH22 8JA	TAXI
Devine Cars	SWANAGE	BH19 2NS	TAXI
Dial-a-Cab	POOLE	BH15 2BU	TAXI
Disabled Transport Services Ltd	BOURNEMOUTH	BH1	TAXI
DISCOVER DORSET LTD	BOURNEMOUTH	BH1 4LE	PSV
Dolphin Radio Taxis	BROADSTONE	BH18 8AZ	TAXI
Dorset Airport Taxi	BOURNEMOUTH	BH10 6HH	TAXI
Dorset Airport Taxis	CHRISTCHURCH	BH23 2SH	TAXI
Dorset Road Runner	WAREHAM	BH20 7BA	TAXI
Durdle Door Cabs	WAREHAM	BH20	TAXI
Eagle Flyer	POOLE	BH13 7RD	TAXI
Easy Cabs Co	BOURNEMOUTH	BH8 8UU	TAXI
Eazycabs	CHRISTCHURCH	BH23 3QP	TAXI
Elite EV Travel	POOLE	BH14 8PG	TAXI
Elite Private Hire & Chauffeur Serv	FERNDOWN	BH22 9QU	TAXI
Everest Taxis	POOLE	BH16 6JW	TAXI
Excel Taxis Wareham	WAREHAM	BH20 4BG	TAXI
First Class Private Hire	FERNDOWN	BH22	TAXI
First Class Transfers	CHRISTCHURCH	BH23 4TX	TAXI
Forest Taxis of Ringwood	POOLE	BH12 1DB	TAXI
FREEDOM TRANSPORT	POOLE	BH15 4GJ	PSV
Galleon Taxis Ltd	NEW MILTON	BH25 6JS	TAXI
Garrison Cars	WAREHAM	BH20 6ER	TAXI
Goodoaks Homecare	POOLE	BH12 1DZ	TAXI
HEATHSIDE TRAVEL LTD	FERNDOWN	BH22 8XN	PSV
HIGHCLIFFE COACH HOLIDAYS	CHRISTCHURCH	BH23 5ET	PSV

Hinton Cars Taxi Service	RINGWOOD	BH24 1DZ	TAXI
HOMeward BOUND TRAVEL LIMITED	WIMBORNE	BH21 1UU	PSV
Hughes International Ltd	POOLE	BH12 4BQ	TAXI
Imperial Cabs	POOLE	BH14 9HR	TAXI
Iroberts Cars	NEW MILTON	BH25 6BN	TAXI
ISLE OF PURBECK MINICOACHES	SWANAGE	BH19 2QR	PSV
J D S TRAVEL	POOLE	BH14 0RY	PSV
Jai's Taxi	POOLE	BH15 2LB	TAXI
James the chauffeur	CHRISTCHURCH	BH23 7HN	TAXI
Jurassic Cabs Ltd	WAREHAM	BH20 4HH	TAXI
KBay Taxi	WAREHAM	BH20 5PE	TAXI
KINGFISHER EDUCATION GROUP LIMITED	BOURNEMOUTH	BH24 2SJ	PSV
Kings Kabs	WAREHAM	BH20 4HH	TAXI
LA Taxi	SWANAGE	BH19 2RX	TAXI
LAGUNA TRAVEL LIMITED	BOURNEMOUTH	BH2 6AZ	PSV
LAND AND WAVE LTD	SWANAGE	BH19 1EJ	PSV
LB Taxi & Private Hire	CHRISTCHURCH	BH23 1JE	TAXI
Liberty Cars Poole	BOURNEMOUTH	BH14 9JX	TAXI
LINKRIDER COACHES	SWANAGE	BH19 3EB	PSV
LUCKETTS TRAVEL	BOURNEMOUTH	BH8 0BQ	PSV
Mar Cars Private Hire	BOURNEMOUTH	BH11 9QH	TAXI
Miah & Son Cars	RINGWOOD	BH24 2PD	TAXI
Mike's Taxis	WAREHAM	BH20 6AT	TAXI
MINIBUSING LTD	BOURNEMOUTH	BH10 4HZ	PSV
Mir Cab Taxi Service	BOURNEMOUTH	BH11 8LE	TAXI
Mobile Radio Cars	BOURNEMOUTH	BH9 1BB	TAXI
MOYLES COURT SCHOOL LIMITED	RINGWOOD	BH24 3NF	PSV
New Forest Taxis	NEW MILTON	BH25 7DT	TAXI
NEW FOREST TRAVEL	RINGWOOD	BH24 4HN	PSV
New Milton Cars	NEW MILTON	BH25 6NF	TAXI
New Milton private hire	NEW MILTON	BH25	TAXI
NORTH DORSET TRAVEL LTD	POOLE	BH16 6JW	PSV
P R C Streamline	BOURNEMOUTH	BH2 5RY	TAXI
P.H Taxi Services	POOLE	BH15 2BQ	TAXI
Paragon Travel	WIMBORNE	BH21 7QN	TAXI
PARAGON TRAVEL PHC LTD	WIMBORNE	BH21 3RD	PSV
PARAGON TRAVEL PRIVATE HIRE LTD	FERNDOWN	BH22 8XA	PSV
PARK SCHOOL (BOURNEMOUTH) LTD	BOURNEMOUTH	BH8 9BJ	PSV
Parkstone Cars	POOLE	BH14 9NY	TAXI
Phil's Cabs	WAREHAM	BH20 4HJ	TAXI
Poole Friendly Cabs	BOURNEMOUTH	BH2 6BT	TAXI
Priority Cars	BOURNEMOUTH	BH2 6LA	TAXI
Purbeck Cabs	POOLE	BH16 5PT	TAXI
Purbeck Taxi Centre & Private Hire	WAREHAM	BH20 4LT	TAXI
Radio Cabs	CHRISTCHURCH	BH23 1QH	TAXI
READYBUS (HARROW) LIMITED	FERNDOWN	BH22 0BH	PSV
Red Express Taxis	RINGWOOD	BH24 1EL	TAXI
Richard's Taxis	BOURNEMOUTH	BH6 3AS	TAXI
Ride Out Cabs	WAREHAM	BH20 6DT	TAXI
Ringo Taxis	RINGWOOD	BH24 1UP	TAXI
Ringwood Taxis	RINGWOOD	BH24 1AB	TAXI
ROMEROUND	BOURNEMOUTH	BH11 9AX	PSV
ROUTE 24	BOURNEMOUTH	BH9 2NS	PSV
Rowland Cars	NEW MILTON	BH25 7PG	TAXI
SCHOOL TOURS	BOURNEMOUTH	BH1 4RR	PSV
Scotts Private Hire	WIMBORNE	BH21 4EP	TAXI
Smooth Cabs Ltd	POOLE	BH15 3QD	TAXI
South Coast Community Cars	CHRISTCHURCH	BH23 5ET	TAXI
South Express Cabs	POOLE	BH12 1DH	TAXI
SOUTHBOURNE SCHOOL OF ENGLISH	BOURNEMOUTH	BH6 5AL	PSV
Star Radio Cars	BOURNEMOUTH	BH1 4BE	TAXI
Sunrise Taxis	FERNDOWN	BH22 8UY	TAXI
Sunset Cars	BOURNEMOUTH	BH11 9PN	TAXI
Swanage & Purbeck Taxi	SWANAGE	BH19 1RB	TAXI
Swanage Taxis	SWANAGE	BH19 1HB	TAXI
TALBOT HOUSE PREPARATORY SCHOOL	BOURNEMOUTH	BH9 2LR	PSV
The Wool Taxi Company	WAREHAM	BH20 6EX	TAXI
TOMORROWS TRAVEL LIMITED	POOLE	BH16 6JL	PSV
Toms Car Service	FERNDOWN	BH22 0BP	TAXI
Travelrunners Ltd	VERWOOD	BH31 6YQ	TAXI
Turn Around	VERWOOD	BH31 6UP	TAXI
United Taxis Ltd	BOURNEMOUTH	BH8 8AS	TAXI
Upton & Lytchett Taxis	POOLE	BH16 5RU	TAXI
Wareham Forest Taxis	WAREHAM	BH20	TAXI
Wareham Taxi	WAREHAM	BH20 4LT	TAXI
Wimborne Executive Taxi	WIMBORNE	BH21 1AB	TAXI
Wimborne Taxi	WIMBORNE	BH21 1JG	TAXI
Wool & Durdle Door Taxis	WAREHAM	BH20	TAXI
X-Ways Cars Ltd	WAREHAM	BH20 4AD	TAXI
Zaza express	BOURNEMOUTH	BH1 1PE	PSV

APPENDIX F – Potential supplier survey**What do potential suppliers say?**

“They make it too difficult to get drivers licensed.”

“Too tricky to bid on.”

“No idea what is available and how to apply.”

“The council favours the same suppliers.”

“Have to jump through hoops to win work.”

“I would be interested but how do I find out more.”

“Not enough money, takes too much time out of the day”

APPENDIX G – Examples of re-procurement activity elsewhere

	Engagement	Annual Saving	Saving %	year
Cheshire East	2 year	3.5m	20%	2025
Hillingdon	7year	£1.8m	18%	2025
Lincolnshire	18 months	£4m	18%	2023
Cornwall	3 year	£4m	22%	2025
Gloucestershire	3 year	£2m	14%	2025
Southampton	2 year	3.5m	30%	2025

APPENDIX H – Detailed re-route solution.

	Total Route Miles (excluding PA pick up/drop)	Total Route Time (excluding PA)	PA Miles	PA Time	Passengers	PA's required	Routes	Route saving %	PA saving %
Original - 85 Rts	941	64:33	342	20:30	339	52	85		
Average per route	11	00:45	4	00:14	3.99				
Solution with 16seats with MTAs - 54 Rts	391	35:29	342	20:30	339	27	54	36%	40%
Average per route	7	00:39	4	00:14	5.78				
Solution with MTA's and Stops - 52 Rts	294	27:05	342	20:30	339	27	52	39%	40%
Average per route	7	00:41	4	00:14	6.52				

APPENDIX I – Headteacher summary feedback

Here is a summary of **positive** and **improvement points** from the school transport feedback provided by the headteachers and school leaders:

Positive Points:**1. Relationships and Communication (with some exceptions):**

- Some schools reported a good working relationship with the transport team, describing them as responsive and approachable.
- Telephone communication was generally reported as positive.
- Email communication was praised in some instances.

2. On-site Operations:

- All schools reported closed sites with staff available to assist during drop-offs and pick-ups.
- Pupil demeanour on arrival was generally described as positive.

3. Vehicle and Driver Standards:

- Vehicles were reported as clean and well-presented.
- Timekeeping is generally good, and consistency of drivers is appreciated where it occurs.

4. Site Engagement:

- At least one school reported recent site visits and scheduled operational meetings with the transport team.
-

Improvement areas:**1. Passenger Assistant (PA) Concerns:**

- Occasional issues with PA conduct and professionalism, including inappropriate language and refusal to transport certain pupils.
- Lack of formal training for PAs; schools have had to step in to provide support.
- Awareness of key policies (e.g. safeguarding, “no lifting”) is inconsistent among PAs.

2. Communication and Feedback Failures:

- Schools noted a lack of proactive engagement from the transport team in understanding pupil needs, particularly for pupils with SEND or behavioural challenges.
- Issues raised by parents are often not passed on to schools.
- Operational contact between the transport team and schools is infrequent or absent.

3. Transport Routing and Timings:

- Routing decisions are sometimes confusing or inefficient, leading to late arrivals at school sites.
- Double runs may contribute to early or delayed arrivals, with limited explanation provided to schools.
- Application processes for new transport arrangements are slow (over 6 weeks reported), with no clear policy or service level agreement (SLA) in place.

4. Safety and Compliance:

- Safety concerns raised, including children dropped on the wrong side of the road or left unsupervised at drop-off.
- Drivers reportedly making decisions for convenience rather than in line with school start times.
- No site audits or Licensing visits reported at most schools.
- No dedicated compliance officer in place, and lack of routine monitoring or checks.

5. Policy and Process Gaps:

- No visible training records for PAs.
 - No formal process for regular operational meetings or feedback between schools and the transport team.
 - Limited evidence of understanding around complex pupil needs and lack of tailored solutions.
-

Suggested Improvements:

- **Routing and Timing:** Reduce unnecessary early arrivals and optimise routes to prevent delays.
- **Enhance Communication:** Establish regular meetings and clearer feedback mechanisms between schools and the transport team.
- **Strengthen Compliance:** Conduct routine site audits and checks.
- **Improve Training:** Ensure all PAs and drivers receive appropriate training, especially on safeguarding and working with pupils with SEND.
- **Clarify Processes:** Develop and publish clear SLAs for application processing and issue resolution.

APPENDIX J – Recommended Compliance check regime

Check Area	Frequency	How
Licensing (Drivers/Vehicles)	Annually (minimum)	Licence check spreadsheet; manual records or supplier confirmation via operational information
PA Compliance (Schools)	Spot checks – 4 times/year (key schools)	Site visits, checklists, school feedback. Particularly useful to use feedback when a native PA is on a supplier route
Quality of Supply	6-monthly reviews (larger suppliers)	Performance matrix/Transport management system records - review of incidents, complaints, breaches etc. To be used in conjunction with supplier compliance meetings, frequencies of which are determined on risk level (volume of work and total contract values)
Breaches / Incident Log	As they occur	Logged in MTC system by supplier/internal/staff
Framework Onboarding	At contract award	DPS Quality Evaluation spreadsheet for scoring/compliance documentation
Fleet Safety & Operations	Ad hoc / as arranged	Operator Licence / Section 19 & Large Bus Permit reviews, maintenance checks