

Thurrock Council

Community Equality Impact Assessment

Service area and lead officer

Name of service	Children's Services
CEIA Lead Officer	Michele Lucas
CEIA Lead Officer job title	Assistant Director – Education and Skills
CEIA Lead Officer email address	mlucas@thurrock.gov.uk

Subject of this assessment

What specific policy, strategy, function or service is the subject of this assessment?
Home to School Transport Policy Update – Post 16 SEND Transport Statement and Review of taxi/minibus spend
Borough-wide or location-specific?
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Borough-wide <input type="checkbox"/> Location-specific – please state locations below.
Why is this policy, strategy, function or service development or review needed?

SEND home to school transport is a statutory duty on the Local Authority, we have further duties where we place a primary child two miles from the school and secondary pupil three miles from the school. The LA does not have a statutory duty to transport post 16 SEND students however it must ensure that young people can access an educational offer. The SEND home to school transport has seen a significant increase due to the increase in demand for Education Health Care Plans (EHCPs). The current policy needs a complete review, in line with the changes to the home to school transport policy nationally and the proposed changes to the current offer for post 16 SEND students.

We have recently undertaken a benchmarking exercise across the eastern region to gain a better understanding of which authorities have introduced changes which may include a charging system to post 16 students.

The current Home to School transport budget was realigned as part the 2023/24 estimates. This baselined and reflected the year on year overspend due to the continual increase in demand and our statutory duty to provide transport. We have, over the past two years, introduced a range of options for parents which has led to some reductions in the overspends reported. An example is offering fuel reimbursement or bus/train tickets rather than contracted vehicles. In addition to this travel assistance already offered, we will also be considering an option to include a travel assistance budget provided to the parent where this is more cost effective.

Alongside the policy, there will be a supporting review of taxi/mini-bus spend to secure better value for money and greater consistency of spend per pupil (home to school transport).

1. Engagement, consultation and supporting information.

- 1.1. What steps you have taken, or do you plan to take, to engage or consult (where applicable) the whole community or specific groups affected by this development or review? **This is a vital step.**

Steps you have taken, or plan to take, to engage or consult

An engagement exercise is required when any changes are made to a home to school transport policy. We will undertake an engagement exercise and ensure that factors in the policy changes. We have already started consultation with our parent carer forum and are working closely with them on the proposed changes.

Negotiations will take place with operators with a view to reducing spend on taxi/mini-bus services related to home to school transport.

1.2. What data or intelligence sources have you used to inform your assessment of the impact? How have these helped you understand who will be affected by the development or review?

Sources of data or intelligence, and how they have been used

Benchmarking has been undertaken with other Local Authorities around the policy and post 16 statements that they have and the options that have been included around the post 16 transport offer.

2. Community and workforce impact

2.1. What impacts will this development or review have on communities, workforce and the health and wellbeing of local residents?

Communities and groups	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Summary of positive and negative impacts	How will positives be maximised, and negatives minimised or eliminated?
Local communities in general	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Any change to a home to school transport policy is likely to be viewed negatively particularly as we engage around options that may include a contribution from parents around post 16 SEND transport.	Our commitment to work at an early stage with our parent carer forum and the consultation exercise we will undertake will enable the voice of the community to be heard.

Communities and groups	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Summary of positive and negative impacts	How will positives be maximised, and negatives minimised or eliminated?
Age	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	There is likely to be a disproportionate direct impact on 16–18-year-old SEND learners.	We are working at key transitions points in schools yr. 9 and yr11 to discuss and consider how we can support independent travel training to support young people with SEND into adulthood.
Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The likely changes to post 16 learners will have a disproportionate direct impact anticipated on the basis of disability.	We are working at key transitions points in schools yr. 9 and yr11 to discuss and consider how we can support independent travel training to support young people with SEND into adulthood.
Gender reassignment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No disproportionate direct impact anticipated on the basis of gender reassignment.	N/A
Marriage and civil partnership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No disproportionate direct impact anticipated on the basis of marriage and civil partnership.	N/A
Pregnancy and maternity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No disproportionate direct impact anticipated on the basis of pregnancy and maternity.	N/A
Race	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No disproportionate direct impact anticipated on the basis of race.	N/A
Religion or belief	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No disproportionate direct impact anticipated on the basis of religion or belief.	N/A

Communities and groups	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Summary of positive and negative impacts	How will positives be maximised, and negatives minimised or eliminated?
Sex	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No disproportionate direct impact anticipated on the basis of sex.	N/A
Sexual orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No disproportionate direct impact anticipated on the basis of sexual orientation.	N/A
Location-specific impact, if any	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	This proposal has the potential to cause parents of post 16 learners' frustration and concern.	We will work closely with the parent/carer forum to ensure we are communicating well any changes to the offer around SEND post 16 students.
Workforce	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No disproportionate direct impact anticipated for the council's workforce.	N/A
Health and wellbeing of residents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The potential changes to the policy are likely to led to concern for residents with post 16 SEND students.	Clear communication plans will be put in place to ensure parents can comment on as part of the consultation around the proposed policy changes.
Socio-economic outcomes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	This proposal will potentially impact transport operators as we look at a range of options as to how to support post 16 SEND learners to access education.	Regular meetings are held with transport operators, and we will ensure any proposed changes that subsequently implemented will communicated at the earliest opportunity.
Veterans and serving members of the armed forces	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No disproportionate direct impact anticipated for veterans and serving members of the armed forces.	N/A

3. Monitoring and review

3.1. How will you review community and equality impact once the policy, strategy, function or service has been implemented? These actions should be developed using the information gathered in sections 1 and 2 and included in your service area's business plans.

Action	By when	By whom
Review any additional feedback from engagement and update this CEIA accordingly	January 2024	Michele Lucas
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

4. Next steps

4.1. The information gathered must be used to inform reports presented to Cabinet or overview and scrutiny committees. This will give members a necessary understanding of the impact their decisions will have on different groups and the whole community.

Summarise the implications and customer impact below. This summary should be added to the committee reports template in the Diversity and Equality Implications section for review and sign-off at the consultation stage of the report preparation cycle.

Summary of implications and customer impact
An initial consideration of impacts for communities and protected groups is set out in section 2 of this CEIA. An engagement exercise will inform an updated Community Equality Impact Assessment related to the Home to School Transport Policy – Post 16 SEND Transport Statement and the outcomes from a review of taxi/minibus spend.

5. Sign off.

5.1. This Community Equality Impact Assessment must be authorised by the relevant project sponsor, strategic lead, or assistant director. This should not be the CEIA Lead Officer. Officers authorising this assessment are responsible for:

- the accuracy of the information
- making sure actions are undertaken.

Name	Role	Date
Mark Bradbury	Director Place	16 October 2023
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.