

North Yorkshire Council

Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee

17 September 2025

Briefing relating to the Post Implementation Review of the Home to School Travel Policy

Report of the Corporate Director Children and Young People's Service

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform the committee about the proposed Post Implementation Review to be undertaken in July 2026.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 This report provides an outline of the structure and proposed content of the Post Implementation Review (PIR). The review requires evidence of the impacts of the revised home to school travel policy (2024) and will therefore take place at the end of the school year after the initial policy implementation. Although adopted in September 2024, the change mainly affects the cohort of children starting or changing schools in September 2025. Undertaking the review at the end of the academic year 2025-26 will enable full analysis of data relating to this cohort of pupils as well as the council's arrangements for supporting travel to school, including the implementation of all elements of the policy from admissions processes to transport eligibility assessments and appeals, to the delivery and oversight of the contracted travel arrangements. It allows services to monitor and report on the assumptions used in the policy development and to report on these using a whole year data set.

3.0 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The council consulted on and subsequently adopted the current home to school travel policy in July 2024. A post implementation review of the policy was offered during the democratic decision-making process, and it was determined that this would take place one academic year after the policy was fully implemented so it could consider the whole year data relating to the 2025-26 bulk admissions round.
- 3.2 There is no duty for the council to undertake a formal PIR. However, the council does undertake PIRs following other changes where there are legal duties to undertake one, or where it would be beneficial to undertake one. PIRs are undertaken in order to ensure the principles of accountability and good governance are met and to review the impact of policy changes in order to retrospectively evaluate whether the policy development aims align with the initial cost saving assumptions, and whether there are unforeseen impacts upon the community or whether mitigations identified are working to minimise these impacts.
- 3.3 The Council does not have a standard PIR format and has utilised a template from central government whose departments are required to undertake PIRs after secondary law or regulation changes.

- 3.4 Officers involved in the policy review and delivery of the policy will work together to carry out the review. This includes colleagues in finance, integrated passenger transport, admissions and transport, inclusion, transformation, legal and democratic services and business support. The final report will be presented to the Executive Committee.
- 3.5 The Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee will also have the opportunity to review the report and any findings in autumn 2026.
- 3.6 It must be noted that the purpose of the PIR is to review the *implementation* of the 2024 policy, not the policy itself.

4.0 FORMAT OF THE POST IMPLEMENTATION REVIEW

- 4.1 The report will be arranged in six sections:
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| Section 1 | What were the objectives of the policy? |
| Section 2 | PIR methodology |
| Section 3 | What were the original assumptions and identified risks? |
| Section 4 | Has the policy met its objectives? |
| Section 5 | What can we learn from the first full year of implementation? |
| Section 6 | Are there any opportunities for the Council to improve in relation to this policy? |
- 4.2 **Section 1** will set out the legal basis for the policy and the rationale for the policy change. This includes the updated guidance from DfE, the need to address the increased costs relating to the delivery of home to school transport and the review of the discretionary provision. Within this section, we will also set out the programme of non-policy savings and efficiencies relating to the delivery of home to school transport arrangements.
- 4.3 **Section 2** will explain, through a set of performance indicators, the context of the Council's policy prior to the policy change and during the initial implementation year. This will provide comparisons of 2023-24 and 2024-25 information with 2025-26 data. In this part of the report, we will present high level 2025-26 data alongside the assumptions used in the policy development stage, including within the model used to forecast the savings potential.
- 4.4 Numerical data will be extracted from a number of sources, which include, but are not limited to:
- School census information
 - School admissions information
 - Transport eligibility assessment outcomes
 - Transport contract information
 - Financial records and forecasts
- 4.5 We will also gather and report on other quantitative and qualitative data, including relating to the impacts seen through the complaints and appeals processes.
- 4.6 In **Section 3**, we will summarise the elements of the 2024 policy which were unchanged from 2019, and we will describe some of the assumptions that underpinned the policy implementation, for example, that eligibility for transport provision under the previous policy would continue for most pupils and that the admissions process would be unchanged and would be carried out first, before eligibility for transport could be assessed.
- 4.7 Other assumptions and risks that will be reported on include, but are not limited to, possible confusion between admissions and transport policies, increased appeal rates in the first few years, the potential for uneven impact of the policy across the county, the range of savings identified in the policy proposal, and the assumption that the savings would only be realised if the reduction in the number of eligible pupils results in a reduction in the size or number of

vehicles required and the costs associated with any given route. The equalities and climate impact assessments will be reviewed as part of the PIR activity.

- 4.8 In **Section 4**, the success of the policy against its original objectives will be considered. The report will set out whether, since the adoption of the policy, there have been any national changes to law, and we will report on compliance using the checklist in annex 5 of the DfE's 'travel to school for children of compulsory school age - statutory guidance for local authorities' document.
- 4.9 In this section, in order to understand the savings benefits of the policy change we will provide cohort information, transport operation information and budget information and comparing the previous, current and forecast information. We will look at each discretionary element of the policy and report on the differences seen since the 2024 policy implementation. This will include a detailed analysis of the effect of the removal of the discretionary catchment eligibility criterion.
- 4.10 **Section 4** will also include performance information relating to some of the non-policy related savings for example, contract savings such as the use of solo travel arrangements, the use of passenger assistants, and the use of small vehicles with <8 seats.
- 4.11 **Section 5** will describe the aspects of policy implementation that have led to learning for the Council over the implementation year. This section will describe, for example, any unintended consequences arising in the first year. We will report on the administration of the new policy including a summary of the enquiries, complaints, appeals and the Council's responses to these. We aim to estimate the resources used in this aspect of the policy implementation. We will highlight the main issues occurring in media and describe how these have changed over time, reflecting stages in the policy implementation cycle.
- 4.12 To conclude, in **Section 6** the report will reflect on the learning in **Section 5** and propose areas of further analysis or potential policy revision that the Council may wish to take forward into future revisions of the policy, subject to the requirements of the annual policy cycle. There are three parts to this section:
1. Potential recommendations for clarification of the policy – without changing the policy intent
 2. Potential recommendations for the practical implementation of this policy – specifically in the administration and delivery of the policy
 3. Potential for any costed recommendations for future policy change – for example changes to the eligibility criteria

5.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 The policy implementation review process is not mandatory, but the Council has asked for this to be undertaken to support transparent monitoring of the policy change.

6.0 IMPACT ON OTHER SERVICES/ORGANISATIONS

- 6.1 The review activity will be undertaken alongside normal business operations and, wherever possible, using internal resources. This will require capacity from within the teams listed in section 3.4.

7.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. As described in this report, the PIR will include an assessment of the savings achieved from the implementation of the policy during one school year. This assessment will consider the performance indicators

and savings attributable to the policy. This will also inform any potential changes to the budgeted assumptions within the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for consideration by Full Council in February 2027, noting that the financial impact of the policy was anticipated to accrue over seven academic years.

8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no direct legal implications from this report. The Council is not under a mandatory legal duty to undertake a PIR in respect of home to school travel policy. The Council was satisfied that the policy is legally compliant during the policy development, decision making and implementation stages. The Council remains satisfied that the policy is legally compliant. If the PIR identifies any proposed changes to the policy, the Council would need to undertake further consultation and decision making in order to change the policy.

9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Equalities impacts will be considered as part of the PIR activity.

10.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Climate change impacts will be considered as part of the PIR activity.

11.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

11.1 Any recommendations resulting from the post implementation review will need to be fully costed and presented to the Executive for consideration in line with the policy review cycle. This requires that changes are determined by 31st July, prior to implementation from September of any year.

11.2 Depending on the nature of any recommendations, it is too early to say whether a consultation would be required. However a consultation period would need to be taken into account in the development of a timeline should changes to the policy be required.

11.3 Indicative timeline for next steps

September 2025	Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny
Spring 2026	Members' seminar
July 2026	Final data extract for PIR
September 2026	Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny
Oct/Nov 2026	Executive Committee
Spring 2027	Consultation, if required
Summer 2027 (by 31 st July)	Executive and Full Council, if policy revision is required
September 2027	Revised policy, if required

12.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

12.1 This report is to inform the committee about the proposed Post Implementation Review to be undertaken in July 2026 and provides an outline of the content that will be covered in the PIR.

13.0 RECOMMENDATION(S)

i) The committee are asked to note and comment on the outline structure and content for the post implementation review of the home to school travel policy.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

Executive Committee item 499a

[Agenda for Executive on Tuesday, 16 July 2024, 11.00 am | North Yorkshire Council](#)

Full Council item 101

[Agenda for Full Council on Wednesday, 24 July 2024, 10.30 am | North Yorkshire Council](#)

DfE guidance

[Travel to school for children of compulsory school age](#)

Sir Stuart Carlton

Corporate Director – Children and Young People’s Services

County Hall

Northallerton

8th September 2025

Report Author – Amanda Fielding, AD Inclusion

Presenter of Report – Amanda Fielding, AD Inclusion

Note: Members are invited to contact the author in advance of the meeting with any detailed queries or questions.