

## **DRAFT Equality impact assessment (EIA) form: evidencing paying due regard to protected characteristics**

(Form updated May 2015)

### Home to School Travel Review

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যদি আপনি এই ডকুমেন্ট অন্য ভাষায় বা ফরমেটে চান, তাহলে দয়া করে আমাদেরকে বলুন।

如欲索取以另一語文印製或另一格式製作的資料，請與我們聯絡。

اگر آپ کو معلومات کسی دیگر زبان یا دیگر شکل میں درکار ہوں تو برائے مہربانی ہم سے پوچھئے۔

**Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) are public documents. EIAs accompanying reports going to Councillors for decisions are published with the committee papers on our website and are available in hard copy at the relevant meeting. To help people to find completed EIAs we also publish them in the Equality and Diversity section of our website. This will help people to see for themselves how we have paid due regard in order to meet statutory requirements.**

Name of Directorate and Service Area	Education and Inclusion
Lead Officer and contact details	Amanda Fielding, AD Education and Inclusion
Names and roles of other people involved in carrying out the EIA	Jon Holden – Head of Strategic Planning Chris Reynolds – Head of SEND Strategic Planning
How will you pay due regard? e.g. working group, individual officer	The EIA was updated as part of the budget. It will also be reviewed again as part of the post implementation review of the home to school travel policy in summer 2026
When did the due regard process start?	The original project initially started in September 2023 following revised DfE guidance.

	<p>The policy implementation stage commenced in Sept 2024</p> <p>The post implementation review will take place in summer 2026 and will be reported in autumn 2026</p>
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**Section 1. Please describe briefly what this EIA is about.** (e.g. are you starting a new service, changing how you do something, stopping doing something?)

This EIA is about the changes to the current Home to School Transport Policy following the changes to statutory guidance.

The Council has a statutory duty to provide home to school travel for eligible children of compulsory school age in accordance with statutory guidance issued by the Department for Education (DfE).

The aim of the changes was to ensure the proposed home to school travel policy is compliant with the guidance.

The policy change saw removal and amendment to discretionary arrangements which the previous policy made provision.

**Section 2. Why is this being proposed? What are the aims? What does the authority hope to achieve by it?** (e.g. to save money, meet increased demand, do things in a better way.)

The changes were due to the previous home to school transport policy not meeting the requirement of the checklist produced in the revised statutory guidance.

The overall cost to the Council of the provision of home to school travel is significant and has been rising at pace. The previous policy made provision for eligibility above and beyond statutory requirements that had associated costs, and the 2024 consultation provided an opportunity to review these discretionary elements.

The home to school travel policy publication is linked to the school admissions round, therefore any changes to the travel policy applied to new admissions and/or travel applications received on or after 1 September 2024 and affected new entrants to schools (REC and Y7) with effect from September 2025.

Pupils who applied for a school place prior to September 2024 were not impacted. Transport eligibility awarded prior to September 2024 continues to be under the previous policy, unless there is a material change of circumstance (e.g. of school, or of address that changed eligibility) for a pupil which required a reassessment of eligibility.

**Section 3. What will change? What will be different for customers and/or staff?**

The EIA now relates to the implementation of the council's 2024 Home to School Travel Policy.

**Section 4. Involvement and consultation** (What involvement and consultation has been done regarding the proposal and what are the results? What consultation will be needed and how will it be done?)

The consultation took place Feb to April 2024 details were published on the council's website.

**Section 5. What impact will this proposal have on council budgets? Will it be cost neutral, have increased cost, or reduce costs?**

The current financial projection for Home to School Transport is demonstrating a continuous growth which is applying budgetary pressures on the Council to meet its statutory duties.

Through the policy implementation the Council is meeting its statutory duties. The 2024 policy requirements in the guidance are expected to increase the number of pupils with medical and mobility needs who meet eligibility criteria and could potentially lead to increased expenditure.

Whilst the 2024 policy has reduced discretionary travel provision – the financial benefits of this proposal will not be fully achieved for a seven-year period. Analysis undertaken in 2024 on a large sample of eligible travellers at that time, suggested that the annual saving at the end of the transition period (when the new policy applies to all) on a like for like basis could be up to £4.2m. This figure was based on a number of assumptions, and much will depend on the extent to which the change in the transport arrangements influences future parental preference for schools, and that is difficult to predict with any certainty.

<b>Section 6. How will this proposal affect people with protected characteristics?</b>	<b>No impact</b>	<b>Make things better</b>	<b>Make things worse</b>	<b>Why will it have this effect? Provide evidence from engagement, consultation and/or service user data or demographic information etc.</b>
Age	✓			It is anticipated there would be no identifiable impact on pupils attending mainstream or specialist provision because of their age.
Disability		✓		The requirement for individual assessment under SEN may increase the number of pupil eligible for assistance Individual assessment will ensure children with disability needs are met on transport
Sex	✓			It is anticipated there would be no identifiable impact on pupils attending mainstream or specialist provision because of their sex.
Race	✓			It is anticipated there would be no identifiable impact on specific ethnic groups because of the proposals.
Gender reassignment	✓			It is anticipated there would be no identifiable impact on specific groups in relation to gender reassignment as a result of the proposals.
Sexual orientation	✓			It is anticipated there would be no identifiable impact on specific groups in relation to sexual orientation as a result of the proposals.
Religion or belief			✓	The removal of denominational transport for primary age pupils will have an adverse impact, it is anticipated these number are less

				than 0.01% of the population and the requests are minimal each year.
Pregnancy or maternity	✓			It is anticipated there would be no identifiable impact on specific groups in relation to pregnancy or maternity as a result of the proposals.
Marriage or civil partnership	✓			It is anticipated there would be no identifiable impact on specific groups in relation to marriage or civil partnership as a result of the proposals.

<b>Section 7. How will this proposal affect people who...</b>	<b>No impact</b>	<b>Make things better</b>	<b>Make things worse</b>	<b>Why will it have this effect? Provide evidence from engagement, consultation and/or service user data or demographic information etc.</b>
Live in a rural area?		✓	✓	The proposals may reduce travel eligibility to the catchment school in rural communities in which the catchment school is not the nearest school, however eligibility to the nearest school, when distances are over the minimum threshold will remain in place. Additional provision was included in the 2024 policy, after consultation, for low-income families where distance to school can be much further.
...have a low income?	✓			There remains statutory provision for low-income families for children aged 8 and above

<p><b>Section 8. Will the proposal affect anyone more because of a combination of protected characteristics? (e.g. older women or young gay men) State what you think the effect may be and why, providing evidence from engagement, consultation and/or service user data or demographic information etc.</b></p> <p>No</p>
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<b>Section 9. Next steps to address the anticipated impact. Select one of the following options and explain why this has been chosen. (Remember: we have an anticipatory duty to make reasonable adjustments so that disabled people can access services and work for us)</b>	<b>Tick option chosen</b>
<b>1. No adverse impact - no major change needed to the proposal.</b> There is no potential for discrimination or adverse impact identified.	<b>x</b>
<b>2. Adverse impact - adjust the proposal</b> - The EIA identifies potential problems or missed opportunities. We will change our proposal to reduce or remove these adverse impacts, or we will achieve our aim in another way which will not make things worse for people.	
<b>3. Adverse impact - continue the proposal</b> - The EIA identifies potential problems or missed opportunities. We cannot change our proposal to reduce or remove these adverse impacts, nor can we achieve our aim in another way which will not make things worse for people. (There must be compelling reasons for continuing with proposals which will have the most adverse impacts. Get advice from Legal Services)	

<p><b>4. Actual or potential unlawful discrimination - stop and remove the proposal</b>          – The EIA identifies actual or potential unlawful discrimination. It must be stopped.</p>	
<p><b>Explanation of why option has been chosen.</b> (Include any advice given by Legal Services.)</p> <p>The policy has been adopted and we will continue to monitor impact. A review of impacts of the policy implemented has been agreed for summer 2026 and will be published in autumn 2026.</p>	

<p><b>Section 10. If the proposal is to be implemented, how will you find out how it is really affecting people?</b> (How will you monitor and review the changes?)</p> <p>Following implementation there will be a 24-month Post Implementation Review.</p>
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**Section 11. Action plan.** List any actions you need to take which have been identified in this EIA, including post implementation review to find out how the outcomes have been achieved in practice and what impacts there have actually been on people with protected characteristics.

Action	Lead	By when	Progress	Monitoring arrangements
28-day public consultation to commence	Amanda Newbold	5 February		
Public events to be held across localities	Andrew Dixon / Chris Reynolds	Throughout February and March 2024		Public events and feedback from these events will be monitored through a working group
28-day public consultation to end.	Amanda Newbold	12 April 2024		
All responses and feedback to be collated and reviewed following consultation.	Jon Holden /Chris Reynolds	13 March to mid May 2024		Reviewed by lead officers
Options to be revised (if required), EIA to be revised and Policy to be updated.	Amanda Newbold	May 2024		
Sign-off of revised proposals and updated Home to School Travel Policy	Amanda Newbold	18 June 2024 (Executive Committee)		
Adoption of Home to School Transport Policy	Amanda Newbold	24 July 2024 (Full Council)		

Publish updated Home to School Transport policy	Amanda Newbold	31 <sup>st</sup> July 2024		
Development and sign-off of implementation and transition plan	Amanda Newbold	1 <sup>st</sup> August – 31 <sup>st</sup> August 2024		
Implementation and transition arrangements commence	Amanda Fielding	1 <sup>st</sup> September 2024 onwards for up to seven years.		CYPLT  The PIR will be presented to Children and Families' Overview and Scrutiny Committee in September 2026 and then to the Executive as required.

**Section 12. Summary** (Summarise the findings of your EIA, including impacts, recommendation in relation to addressing impacts, including any legal advice, and next steps. This summary should be used as part of the report to the decision maker.)

This EIA is an update of earlier versions linked to the H2ST policy review and implementation, and to the 2025-26 budget.

**Section 13. Sign off section**

This revised EIA was completed by: Jon Holden

Name: Jon Holden  
 Job title: Head of Strategic Planning  
 Directorate: Children and Young People's Services  
 Signature: J Holden

Completion date: 22/12/25

Authorised by relevant Assistant Director (signature): A Fielding  
 Date: 22/12/25