

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>An update on matters associated with Home to School Transport</b>		
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>13 January 2020</b>		
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Executive Director for Families, Children &amp; Learning</b>		
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Jo Lyons</b>	<b>Tel: 01273 293514</b>	
	<b>Name: Georgina Clarke-Green</b>	<b>Tel: 01273 292257</b>	
	<b>Email:</b>	<b><a href="mailto:Jo.lyons@brighton-hove.gov.uk">Jo.lyons@brighton-hove.gov.uk</a></b>	
		<b><a href="mailto:georgina.clarkegreen@brighton-hove.gov.uk">georgina.clarkegreen@brighton-hove.gov.uk</a></b>	
<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	<b>All</b>		

## **FOR GENERAL RELEASE**

### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT**

- 1.1 This report provides an overview of the on-going actions being taken to address the issues that occurred at the start of the new academic year.
- 1.2 The report also gives an update on the progress in relation to the independent review and the Member policy panel which have been established.

### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 2.1 That the committee note the progress made with addressing concerns about the operation of the home to school transport service.
- 2.2 That the committee note the progress in the establishment of the independent review and the Member policy panel.

### **3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 3.1 The council provided a report to the CYP&S committee in November 2019 that detailed the progress made in addressing specific issues that occurred at the start of the academic year.
- 3.2 The report also provided an update on the process of arranging an independent review team and policy panel.

#### **Operational Improvements**

- 3.3 The council currently has 182 routes being operated as part of its home to school transport responsibilities, including transport to post 16 establishments. In total 437 learners are being transported. All of these routes are 'permanent' arrangements after all of the previous temporary arrangements at the start of

term were re-arranged.

- 3.4 The service is now being delivered without the level of concern expressed at the start of the Autumn term.
- 3.5 The council has introduced an action plan of improvements to address the issues that had emerged and to ensure that service delivery improves. This builds on our existing service improvement plans.
- 3.6 All new transport arrangements start only on receipt of a completed Pupil Information Sheet. A new process of assessing the risk and documenting decisions is being trialled and a new application form is being developed. None of which impacts the eligibility of applicants.
- 3.7 The council continues to add all the relevant information on to its new software to ensure that it has a central record of operators, vehicles, drivers and vehicle passenger assistants.
- 3.8 Any issues that have been identified in the joint spot checks by the home to school transport team and Licensing team are dealt with and then added to the database together with any other incidents during journeys. Four spot checks have taken place this academic year and future checks will take place, the timing of which can be influenced by any intelligence received.
- 3.9 Vehicles are not able to undertake journeys until CCTV is installed. All operators have been reminded of the requirement to meet the specification of the contract and in the spring term spot checks and contract management meetings will focus on the compliance of operators with all the requirements of the service specification.
- 3.10 The current arrangements for the accompaniment of children between vehicles and the school building will continue into the spring term. Meetings are being held with the Headteachers of the special school hubs to review these and consider alternatives.
- 3.11 A transport manager has been identified on secondment from within the council and additional administrative resource has been agreed and is in place. It has been agreed to resource an additional caseworker post. This post will provide stronger links with the SEN service to support needs assessment in order to build capacity and knowledge in the team and will be recruited to in the Spring term. We have also redirected resources from other parts of FCL and the council to support the HTST service

### **3.12 Independent review**

- 3.13 Initial submissions for the independent review were reviewed in November 2019, however no bid satisfactorily met the requirements of the invitation to quote document so the formal procurement was repeated with a deadline of December 2019. The formal procurement process for the Independent Review has now been completed. One bid, from the Local Government Association, was submitted within the timescale. The bid was scored against the criteria set out in

the Invitation to Quote by the evaluation panel on the 16 December 2019 and the scores were then moderated with support from the procurement team.

- 3.14 An evaluation report produced by the procurement team was sent to the Lead Member, Chair of the Audit and Standards committee, the Council's Leaders Group and the Parent and Carers Council (PaCC) for their information and for any observations they wished to make to the Chief Executive before he made the decision.
- 3.15 The Chief Executive made the decision on the 17 December to award the contract to the LGA and signed the relevant documentation.
- 3.16 The Contract that includes the Data Protection Schedule was sent to the LGA for sign off on the 19 December 2019.
- 3.17 The contract will begin on the 13 January 2020 and the following timescale will apply:

<b>Phase</b>	<b>Date</b>
Pre-onsite preparation	13 – 24 January 2020
Onsite at the Council	28, 29 and 30 January 2020
Draft feedback report finalised	28 February 2020

The draft report will be shared with the Members Policy Panel (details given below) by the end of Feb for their consideration. The intention is that the final report will be shared at committee alongside the recommendations from the Member Policy Panel.

### **Member Policy Panel**

- 3.18 Following approval of the proposed Member Policy Panel terms of reference at the CYPS meeting in November 2019, the first meeting of the Members' policy panel was held on 18<sup>th</sup> December.
- 3.19 The Policy Panel is made up of 2 councillors from each party with relevant officers also attending representing Strategy, Governance and Law and Families, Children & Learning.
- 3.20 At the first meeting the following was discussed and agreed;
  - Cllr Hannah Clare was appointed as the panel chair
  - The scope of the Panel which is to consider current issues and to examine the findings of the independent review
  - Meetings will be held at least monthly and will be open to the public and press. In addition an agreed list of key stakeholders (Parent and Carer Council representative, special schools and vehicle operators) will receive direct invites to attend
  - The panel agreed the ambition to report back to June CYPS committee
- 3.21 The panel agreed a comprehensive list of issues which it will consider over forthcoming months. This list includes:
  - The impact on stakeholders
  - How route allocations are determined

- Training and health and safety considerations on service delivery
- Impact on the year end budget

#### **4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 4.1 The council is undertaking an independent review and holding a policy panel to review matters associated with the introduction of transport arrangements from September 2019.
- 4.2 This report provides an update on the actions being undertaken to address the operational concerns that are known to the council.

#### **5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION**

- 5.1 The council continues to engage with the PaCC steering group and Amaze about the issues identified and actions to review them.

#### **6. CONCLUSION**

- 6.1 The report details the progress in addressing specific issues that occurred at the start of the academic year and the progress in introducing improvements as part of the modernisation of the service.
- 6.2 The report also provides an update on the independent review and policy panel that have been instigated to review the delivery of the council's home to school transport function. These processes are part of our commitment to be transparent and accountable.

#### **7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

##### Financial Implications:

7.1 The financial position of the Home to school Transport budget and the impact of the actions taken to address the specific issues that occurred in September and October has been reported within the month 7 Targeted Budget Monitoring report. This position may worsen following some ongoing discussions relating to other additional costs being incurred by providers.

7.2 Funding has been identified and allocated to cover the costs of the independent review from within the Families, Children & Learning budget.

*Finance Officer Consulted: David Ellis*

*Date: 19/12/19*

##### Legal Implications:

7.3 The report sets out how the Council is addressing obligations to provide home to school transport for eligible young people, and address the need for review and future recommendations regarding the service.

*Lawyer Consulted:*

*Natasha Watson*

*Date: 02/01/2020*

##### Equalities Implications:

7.4 There are no equalities implications associated with this report which is a update on actions being undertaken in the home to school transport function.

Sustainability Implications:

7.5 There are no sustainability implications as a result of the proposals in this report.

Any Other Significant Implications:

7.6 None

## **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

### **Appendices:**

1. Terms of reference for Member Policy Panel

### **Documents in Members' Rooms**

None

### **Background Documents**

None

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 1.1 None

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 1.2 None

Public Health Implications:

- 1.3 None

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 1.4 The finding of the independent review and Member policy panel will ensure that lessons can be learnt so that future changes to the home to school transport function do not have such a widespread and negative impact on families of disabled children.

