

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Education Skills and Wellbeing Cabinet Board

25th May 2023

Report of the Head of Support Services and Transformation

Rhiannon Crowhurst

Matter for: Decision

Wards Affected: All Wards

Subject: Introduction of a Personal Travel Budget to alleviate pressures on the Home to School Travel Assistance Budget and to offer more choice to parents/carers

Purpose of the Report

1. To outline the ongoing pressures on the Council's Home to School Travel Assistance Budget (which are becoming increasingly difficult to manage within the existing budget), and the actions being taken to address this.
2. To obtain Member approval to introduce a Personal Travel Budget (PTB) as an additional means of travel assistance under the Council's Home to School Travel Policy 2017, and that the Personal Travel Budget be available for use in the new academic year 2023/2024.

Executive Summary

3. This report sets out the ongoing pressures on the Council's Home to School Travel Assistance Budget.

4. This report introduces the concept of a Personal Travel Budget as an additional means of the Council meeting its duty to provide travel assistance to those who have an entitlement under the Council's Home to School Travel Policy 2017. The Personal Travel Budget will continue to include the existing offer of a mileage allowance but will extend to also include:
 - Purchasing a travel pass for public transport (so the child may be accompanied)
 - Paying a responsible person deemed to be appropriate by the parent/carer to help the child use public transport
 - Paying a responsible person deemed as appropriate by the parent/carer to walk or cycle to school with the child
 - Paying a responsible person deemed as appropriate by the parent/carer to drive the child to school
 - Paying for fuel
 - Paying for travel by taxi
 - Paying a childminder (e.g. to look after siblings)
 - To organise travel to separate home addresses where there is split custody

By introducing a Personal Travel Budget to include these additional factors there is more choice for parents/carers to make arrangements according to their personal circumstances, and which meet the needs of their child. Following introduction, the initiative will be reviewed to monitor its relevance and suitability for service users, including the level of take-up.

Full details of the PTB can be found under Appendix A: Personal Travel Budget Information Sheet and Appendix B: Personal Travel Budget Contract

Background

5. The Council has a duty to provide free home to school travel assistance for all eligible children, which includes those living over the statutory walking distance, those that live on a route that has been classified as unsuitable, and those who are unable to walk any distance to school, even when accompanied because of an additional learning need or disability that affects the ability to walk a suitable route.
6. The Council's current Home to School Travel Policy 2017 reflects the duties and requirements that fall to the Council by virtue of the Education Act 1996; The Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008; The Learner Travel Statutory Provision and Operational Guidance 2014; The Learner Travel Information (Wales) Regulations 2009; The Safety on Learner Transport (Wales) Measure 2011: and the All Wales Travel Behaviour Code.
7. The Council's Home to School Travel Assistance Service is jointly managed by the Education and Environment Directorates. The Education Directorate

holds the budget and is responsible for the administrative elements including creating and applying the Council’s Home to School Travel Policy in line with Welsh Government legislative requirements, managing the Appeals Procedure and the Independent Travel Training Programme. The Environment Directorate is responsible for the operational elements including procuring transport operators, tendering contracts and managing routes.

- 8. As at April 2023, the Home to School Travel Assistance Service transports 4346 pupils per day. This includes 3710 mainstream pupils across 124 routes to mainstream school, and 636 pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) across 192 routes to specialist educational provision.

Factors impacting the Home to School Travel Assistance Service

- 9. The service has been impacted as a consequence of external environmental factors including the Covid 19 pandemic and more recently the war in Ukraine, this has resulted in a number of complicating issues for the service including:

- (i) Shortage of transport operators bidding on home to school travel contracts –

Since the Covid 19 pandemic a number of transport operators have ceased trading, and those that are still operating have staff shortages in terms of available drivers and passenger assistants. The cause has been reported as employees moving to other professions e.g. couriers and haulage. During the most recent re-tendering exercise it was found that there was a lack of available transport operators, and as a result some routes were for a short period uncovered at the start of the new 2022/2023 academic year.

Number of transport operators Pre-Covid	60
Number of transport operators as at April 2023	58
Number of licenced taxi drivers in NPT Pre-Covid	340
Number of licenced taxi drivers in NPT as at April 2023	284

- (ii) Fuel cost increase –

The war in Ukraine has increased the price of fuel and consequently transport operators have increased their contract bids to cover the price rise. Additionally, some are no longer viewing home to school travel contracts as profitable so are choosing not to bid for contracts.

(iii) Increase in contract costs –

The retendering exercise in 2022 resulted in increased contract costs:

	Pre-Tender contract price (2022)	Post-Tender contract price (2023)	% increase*
ALN Transport	£1,854,636	£2,233,659	20% (£379,023)
Mainstream Transport	£1,860,290	£2,403,880	29% (£543,590)
Totals	£3,714,926	£4,637,539	£922,613

*based on an academic year which is 190 school days and on retendered routes only

Other additional costs to the 2022/2023 budget include:

Fuel supplement	£ 189,013
Annual indexation on existing contracts	£ 257,581
Refugee transportation from accommodation centres	£95,000
Welsh immersion centre opening	£5,000

(iv) Increased cross-border competition –

It is not only NPTCBC who are experiencing the adverse impact on Home to School Travel Assistance Services, as transport operator resources have decreased across the whole of Wales. This has created a climate of competition between bordering authorities as each one seeks to ensure sufficient numbers of transport operators to cover all routes. The effect is transport operators significantly increasing their contract prices because of the current conditions of supply and demand.

(v) Additional Learning Needs (ALN) transport –

Many children with ALN require specialist educational provision outside their catchment or nearest school. It is not always possible for all children to be accommodated in specialist provision within their own community, therefore, children often need to be transported some distance from their home address. Consequently, because of the distance travelled the transport operator bids are expensive, and the more cost effective option of multiple pupils travelling in a shared vehicle is not always possible.

(vi) Late applications –

- Applications for travel assistance must be submitted by 30th June each year, however, for the academic year 2022/2023 there were 200 late applications (submitted between July and the beginning of September) for mainstream transport, and 56 applications submitted during the same late period for ALN transport. Additionally, there were a number of application across both mainstream and ALN which were received after the first day of the new academic year. Late applications mean that some previously procured transport routes need to be re-tendered and consequently the contract price escalates.

Financial Impact

10. Financial Information 2022/2023 - Home to School Travel costs

2022-23 Financial Year	Actual Expenditure
Primary Education - In County	£1,042,274
Primary Education - Out of County	£87,939
Secondary Education - In County	£1,576,693
Secondary Education - Out of County	£274,164
Special Educational Needs - In County	£2,774,992
SEN – Maes Y Coed	£804,489
Middle Schools	£923,199
Special Educational Needs - Out of County	£169,689
Special Educational Needs Post 16 - In County	£462,825
Special Educational Needs Post 16 - Out of County	£18,336
Post 16 – In County	£1,012
Transport Delivery	£65,094
TOTAL COST	£8,200,705

11. Comparing costs over a 3 year period shows:

	Budget	Actual Spend	(Under)/Overspend	%
*2020/2021	£6,131,337	£5,697,529	(£433,808)	-8
2021/2022	£6,815,742	£6,780,050	(£35,692)	-0.5
2022/2023	£7,454,930	£8,200,705	£745,775	10

**comparison is not like for like as these costs relate to transport during the pandemic for 2020/2021 includes a 75% retainer to operators which is 25% less than usual annual budget*

12. Over the years the Home to School Travel Assistance Service across Education and Environment Directorate teams have successfully managed to minimise any overspend by means of transport route management and ensuring effective use of available resources. However, the opportunity to protect the budget from continuing pressures is becoming increasingly difficult, for the reasons set out above.
13. Ways of mitigating the impact on the Home to School Travel Assistance Service and the budget have been considered:
 - (i) an additional temporary post has been added to the Education Transport Team, this new post is Teaching Assistant Level 4 – Behaviour Support Travel Training. The post will intervene to support pupils who are required to be removed from home to school travel vehicles because of the pupil exhibiting challenging behaviour. Previously there has been an expectation that the only solution to manage the situation is for the pupil to travel in their own home to school vehicle. The cost of a single-occupancy vehicle is extremely high with a current average cost of £23,290 per annum. The new Behaviour Support Travel Trainer will work with the pupil, their family, school and other professionals to safeguard the pupil being able to continue to share transport vehicles with other pupils and thereby managing to prevent adding more financial pressure on the budget, particularly if new contracts are at inflated prices arising from supply and demand influences.
 - (ii) Promoting the Independent Travel Training Programme to provide the opportunity for pupils to gain an important life skill by becoming independent travellers and either walking a route to school/college or using a bus pass to access public transport as a means to get from home to school/college. If a pupil becomes a competent independent traveller they no longer require support from the Council's Home to School Travel Assistance Service. It is hoped that additional promotion of the Independent Travel Training Programme will assist in a move towards greater independence for some secondary aged children with eligibility for free home to school travel assistance through increased take up of the programme.
 - (iii) Introducing a Personal Travel Budget (PTB) will enable parents/carers to have more choice and flexibility around travel arrangements that meet both their personal circumstances and the needs of their child. The Council already provides mileage reimbursement, however, the PTB takes this offer further as the PTB will be available for additional

arrangements the parent/carer may wish to make. Whilst offering flexibility for the parent/carer the PTB also is a cost-effective solution for the Council. Calculations for the level of cost-effectiveness will be dependent on the level of take-up for the PTB, however, the most impact will be seen in cases of a parent/carer taking up a PTB rather than the Council needing to procure a single occupancy vehicle. PTB's also have the opportunity to benefit the freeing up of seats on shared vehicles, in place of the Council being required to procure an additional vehicle on an existing route. To ensure effective use of public resources a PTB will not be offered if it is found to be more expensive than alternative travel assistance options.

The introduction of Personal Travel Budgets is not in the first instance intended to be a mechanism for reducing the cost of Home to School Transport. The initiative is primarily a means of ensuring the Council meets its statutory duty to provide travel assistance to those who have an entitlement. The focus is to provide pupils and their families with an alternative travel assistance offer which is capable of reducing barriers which inhibit pupils travelling to their place of education or training. However, there is the potential to make savings as the introduction of Personal Travel Budgets provides for the opportunity to alleviate pressures in the marketplace, and this should inevitably lead to savings being made if the complications associated with the difficulties in procuring sufficient and cost effective transport contracts can be eased.

- (iv) Future options may include additional in-house transport fleet. Currently there are a few in-house vehicles which have been procured under Social Services that the Home to School Travel Assistance Service is able to make use of where there is opportunity to do so, however, there remains the difficulty of recruiting drivers and passenger assistants because of the shortages of this type of personnel across Wales.

Equality Impact Assessment

14. The Equality Act 2010 requires public bodies to pay due regard to the need to:
- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act;
 - Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and

- Foster good relations between persons who share relevant protected characteristics and persons who do not share it.”

15. An Integrated Impact Assessment is provided at Appendix C

Valleys Communities Impacts

16. The impact on Neath Port Talbot’s valley communities will be the same as all other areas of the County Borough as the external environmental impacts are negatively impacting travel routes across the whole of the county borough.

Workforce Impacts

17. There are no workforce impacts associated with this report.

Legal Impacts

18. Section 3 of the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 imposes a duty on local authorities to provide transport arrangements for learners of compulsory school age who attend their nearest suitable school and meet the relevant criteria. Transport arrangements made in accordance with section 3 may include the payment of the whole, but not part, of a child’s transport expenses (section 3(4)). Under section 4, a local authority may make travel arrangements for children of compulsory school age who do not fall within the section 3 criteria. Section 1(2) of the Measure defines travel arrangements as including “the payment of the whole or any part of any person’s reasonable travel expenses, and the payment of allowances in respect of the use of particular modes of transport”
19. The Council’s Home to School Travel Policy 2017 (the Policy) sets out how the Council will discharge its duty and the Council must comply with its Policy. The Policy sets out that travel provision may be provided by way of a parental allowance or the provision of the whole of reasonable travel expenses. The intended use of personal travel budgets, as set out in this report, concerns the provision of transport and not the issue of eligibility and is in line with the Policy. The personal travel budgets are designed to reimburse parents/carers for the costs incurred in providing the home to school transport
20. The Public Contract Regulations 2015 and the Council’s Contract Procedure Rules apply to the procurement of home to school transport contracts by the Council. The Council’s Home to School Travel Assistance Service is finding it increasingly difficult to procure sufficient cost effective home to school transport contracts, meaning there will be legal risk if the Council is not able

to fulfil its legal duty to provide free home to school travel assistance for those pupils who are eligible. The personal travel budgets will provide an alternative means of fulfilling the Council's legal duty for transport provision

Risk Management

21. The risks to be taken into consideration are:

- The Council has a statutory duty to provide home to school travel assistance to those pupils who are eligible to receive it
- The Home to School Travel Assistance Budget is increasingly coming under pressure and there is a current overspend as at April 2023 in the sum of £745,775
- To manage both the financial pressures and increased demands on the service, alternative ways to discharge the Council's statutory duty must be considered, including the introduction of a Personal Travel Budget
- Other Welsh Local Authorities, including Monmouthshire, Newport, Torfaen and Rhondda Cynon Taf have been making use of Personal Travel Budgets as part of their home to school travel assistance options for the past couple of years.

Consultation

22. There is no requirement for consultation.

Recommendation

23. That Members note the scale of the budget pressures together with the remedial actions taken through the combined efforts of the Education Transport Service and Environment Passenger Transport Section in order to contain overall budget costs.
24. Having due regard to the Integrated Impact Assessment it is recommended that Members approve the introduction of a Personal Travel Budget as an additional means of travel assistance under the Council's Home to School Travel Policy 2017, and that it be made available for use in the new academic year 2023/2024.

Reasons for Proposed Decision

25. The Education Transport Service together with Environment's Passenger Transport Section will continue to attempt to manage the budget pressures,

however, in order to do so alternative options must be made available, including a Personal Travel Budget.

Implementation of Decision

26. The decision is proposed for implementation following the three day call in period.

Appendices

Appendix A - Personal Travel Budget Information Sheet

Appendix B - Personal Travel Budget Contract

Appendix C - Integrated Impact Assessment

List of Background Papers

NPTCBC Home to School Travel Policy 2017

The Education Act 1996

The Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008

The Learner Travel Statutory Provision and Operational Guidance 2014

The Learner Travel Information (Wales) Regulations 2009

Officer Contact

Rhiannon Crowhurst, Head of Support Services and Transformation

✉ r.crowhurst@npt.gov.uk

Debora Holder-Phillips, Education Transport Manager

✉ d.holder@npt.gov.uk

Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)

This Integrated Impact Assessment considers the duties and requirements of the following legislation in order to inform and ensure effective decision making and compliance:

- Equality Act 2010
- Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015
- Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
- Environment (Wales) Act 2016

Version Control

Version	Author	Job title	Date
Version 1	Debora Holder-Phillips	Education Transport Manager	April 2023

1. Details of the initiative

	Title of the Initiative: Introduction of Personal Travel Budgets (PTB) as an additional form of home to school travel assistance offered by the Council
1a	Service Area: Home to School Travel Assistance Service – Education Transport
1b	Directorate: Education Leisure Lifelong Learning
1c	Summary of the initiative: The Home to School Travel Assistance Service (Education Transport) is seeking to introduce Personal Travel Budgets (PTB) as an additional form of travel assistance under the Council’s Home to School Transport Policy 2017. The Personal Travel Budget will offer families of those pupils who are entitled to home to school travel assistance more choice and flexibility in making their own arrangements for getting their child to school. The Personal Travel Budget extends the current offer of a mileage allowance to additional ways of spending a payment awarded under a Personal Travel Budget. Introducing Personal Travel Budgets as an additional means of travel assistance will also assist the Council to manage escalating costs against the Home to School Transport Budget and ensure that the Council meets its legal duty to provide travel assistance to all those who are found to have an entitlement
1d	Is this a ‘strategic decision’? Yes
1e	Who will be directly affected by this initiative? Children, young people and their families who have an entitlement to home to school travel assistance provided by the Council

1f	When and how were people consulted? N/A
1g	What were the outcomes of the consultation? N/A

2. Evidence

What evidence was used in assessing the initiative?

Financial data for 2022/2023 and home to school travel statistical information for 2022/2023
 NPTCBC Home to School Travel Policy 2017
 The Education Act 1996
 The Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008
 The Learner Travel Statutory Provision and Operational Guidance 2014
 The Learner Travel Information (Wales) Regulations 2009

3. Equalities

a) How does the initiative impact on people who share a **protected characteristic**?

Protected Characteristic	+	-	+/-	Why will it have this impact?
Age			√	The introduction of Personal Travel Budgets as an additional means of travel assistance will impact NPT pupils of all ages. Those with entitlement to home to school travel assistance may be offered a Personal Travel Budget if it was considered suitable to do so, and it was established to be the most cost effective solution for the Council when meeting its duty to provide travel assistance for a pupil who is deemed entitled. It is considered that the impact will be neutral as the introduction of Personal Travel Budgets is an extension of the options of travel assistance available to the Council. The initiative is not age specific and Personal

			Travel Budgets could be offered to pupils of all ages who have an entitlement under the Council's Home to School Travel Policy.
Disability	√		<p>The Council's arrangements for home to school travel assistance includes pupils with additional learning needs and/or disability. The introduction of Personal Travel Budgets as an additional means of travel assistance would impact NPT pupils with additional learning need and/or disability as those with entitlement to home to school travel assistance may be offered a Personal Travel Budget if it was considered suitable to do so, and it was established to be the most cost effective solution for the Council meeting its duty to provide travel assistance for a pupil who was deemed entitled.</p> <p>The offer of a Personal Travel Budget allows families of pupils with an entitlement to home to school travel assistance, including those with an additional learning need and/or disability more choice and flexibility around making their own arrangements for getting their child to school which also meets the needs of the individual child and the family's circumstances.</p> <p>It is likely that the impact will be positive as the introduction of Personal Travel Budgets as an extension of the options of travel assistance available to the Council, allows families of children with additional learning needs and/or disability to make their own travel arrangements which fit the family circumstances as well as the child's needs.</p>
Gender reassignment		√	<p>The introduction of Personal Travel Budgets as an additional means of travel assistance would impact all NPT pupils who have an entitlement to home to school travel assistance, including gender reassignment pupils.</p> <p>It is considered that the impact will be neutral as the Personal Travel Budget would be available to all pupils who have an entitlement under the Council's Home to School Travel Policy including gender reassignment pupils.</p>
Marriage & civil partnership		√	It is considered that there will be a neutral impact on this protected group as the introduction of Personal Travel Budgets as an additional means of travel assistance would be available to all pupils who are deemed to have an entitlement, however, it is likely pupils accessing home to school travel assistance will be below the legal marriage age.
Pregnancy and maternity		√	It is considered that there will be a neutral impact on pupils in this protected group as the introduction of Personal Travel Budgets as an additional means of travel

			assistance would be available to all pupils including those in this group if it was deemed appropriate for such an offer to be made and that the travel arrangements made as a result of the Personal Travel Budget were safe and suitable for the pupil.
Race		√	It is considered that there will be a neutral impact on pupils in this protected group as the introduction of Personal Travel Budgets as an additional means of travel assistance would be available to all pupils including those in this group if it was deemed there was an entitlement under the Council's Home to School Travel Policy.
Religion or belief		√	It is considered that there will be a neutral impact on pupils in this protected group as the Council's arrangements for home to school travel assistance includes travel assistance for those pupils attending Faith schools as well as pupils from all religions and beliefs attending non-Faith schools. The introduction of Personal Travel Budgets as an additional means of travel assistance would be available to all pupils including those in this group if it was deemed there was an entitlement under the Council's Home to School Travel Policy.
Sex		√	It is considered that the impact on this protected group will be neutral as the Council's arrangements for home to school travel assistance includes pupils of all gender. The introduction of Personal Travel Budgets as an additional means of travel assistance would impact NPT pupils of all gender as those with entitlement to home to school travel assistance may be offered a Personal Travel Budget if it was considered suitable to do so, and it was established to be the most cost effective solution for the Council meeting its duty to provide travel assistance for pupils deemed to have an entitlement.
Sexual orientation		√	It is considered that there will be a neutral impact on this protected group as the introduction of Personal Travel Budgets as an extension of the travel assistance options available to the Council would be available to pupils whatsoever their sexual orientation who are deemed to have an entitlement to home to school travel assistance under the Council's Policy.

What action will be taken to improve positive or mitigate negative impacts?

The initiative will improve positive impacts as it allows the Council to offer additional travel options in order to meet its duty to provide home to school travel assistance to all those with an entitlement, and it provided pupils and their families additional choice and flexibility around travel arrangements which meet both the family circumstances and the needs of the child.

b) How will the initiative assist or inhibit the ability to meet the **Public Sector Equality Duty**?

Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)	+	-	+/-	Why will it have this impact?
To eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation	x			Personal Travel Budgets offer pupils and their families more choice and flexibility around making travel arrangements which suit the needs of the family and the needs of the child. This provides opportunities to eliminate discrimination, harassment, and victimisation.
To advance equality of opportunity between different groups	x			The opportunity to be awarded a Personal Travel Budget will be available to all the different groups of pupils who are deemed to have entitlement under the Council's Policy and where it is shown that a Personal Travel Budget is the most cost effective solution to be offered as a means of travel assistance. This therefore ensures equality of opportunity for all groups of pupils and so will have a positive impact.
To foster good relations between different groups	x			Personal Travel Budgets offer pupils and their families more choice and flexibility to make travel arrangements which suit the family circumstances and meet the needs of the child. This has the opportunity to have a positive impact on pupil attendance at school meaning the child is regularly learning alongside other pupils which provides the opportunity to build positive relationships with their peers and others in their community.

What action will be taken to improve positive or mitigate negative impacts?

The introduction of an additional form of travel assistance is likely to improve positive outcomes as Personal Travel Budgets provide more choice and flexibility for pupils and their families in terms of arranging safe and suitable travel arrangements. This has the opportunity to improve equality of opportunities for pupils in terms of their school attendance and educational engagement in order to reach their full potential.

4. Socio Economic Duty

Impact	Details of the impact/advantage/disadvantage
Positive/Advantage	Personal Travel Budgets offer pupils and their families more choice. This provides opportunities to have a positive impact on socio economic duty by offering more choice and flexibility for pupils and their families to make travel arrangements which suit the family circumstances and meet the needs of the child. This has the opportunity to have a positive impact on pupil attendance at school meaning positive outcomes for the child as they have opportunity to reach their full potential
Negative/Disadvantage	N/A
Neutral	N/A

What action will be taken to reduce inequality of outcome

The introduction of an additional form of travel assistance is likely to reduce inequality of outcome as Personal Travel Budgets provide more choice and flexibility for pupils and their families in terms of arranging safe and suitable travel arrangements. This has the opportunity to have positive impact on pupils reaching their full potential.

5. Community Cohesion/Social Exclusion/Poverty

	+	-	+/-	Why will it have this impact?
Community Cohesion	x			Personal Travel Budgets offer pupils and their families more choice and flexibility to make travel arrangements which suit the family circumstances and meet the needs of the child. This has the opportunity to have a positive impact on pupil attendance at school meaning the child is regularly learning alongside which provides the opportunity to build positive relationships with their peers and others in their community.
Social Exclusion	x			Personal Travel Budgets offer pupils and their families more choice and flexibility around making travel arrangements which suit the needs of the family and the needs of the child. This provides opportunities to have a positive impact on social exclusion by ensuring the Council meets its duty to provide travel assistance to those pupils who have an entitlement and also provides opportunity to ensure travel arrangements meet the needs of the pupil to encourage regular attendance at school. Additionally, it offers opportunity to ensure travel arrangements meet the needs of the pupil so that they arrive at school by safe and suitable means which has a positive impact on their ability to learn.
Poverty	x			Although home to school travel assistance eligibility is not based on financial means testing, the introduction of Personal Travel Budgets allows the Council to be able to offer an additional form of travel assistance to ensure those that are entitled to home to school travel assistance are provided for. This provides opportunities to have a positive impact on poverty by ensuring the Council meets its duty to provide travel assistance to those pupils who have an entitlement. It also provides travel arrangements that meet the needs of the pupil which has the ability to encourage regular attendance at school, meaning pupils have the opportunity to reach their full potential.

What action will be taken to improve positive or mitigate negative impacts?

The introduction of an additional form of travel assistance is likely to improve positive outcomes in terms of available travel assistance for the Council to offer which provides more choice and flexibility for pupils and their families. This has the opportunity to have positive impact on pupils reaching their full potential.

6. Welsh

	+	-	+/-	Why will it have this effect?
What effect does the initiative have on: – people’s opportunities to use the Welsh language	x			The Council’s Home to School Travel Policy includes travel assistance for those pupils accessing Welsh-medium education. Therefore the initiative should impact positively on people’s opportunities to use the Welsh language as it is intended that Personal Travel Budgets are an additional form of travel assistance available to pupils who have an entitlement under the Council’s Policy
– treating the Welsh and English languages equally	x			It is intended that Personal Travel Budgets will be an additional form of travel assistance that the Council is able to offer and it will be available to pupils who attend both Welsh-medium and English-medium schools

What action will be taken to improve positive or mitigate negative impacts?

Personal Travel Budgets will be available to pupils across all schools who meet the eligibility criteria. The introduction of an additional form of travel assistance is likely to improve positive outcomes in terms of available travel assistance for the Council to offer which provides more choice and flexibility for pupils and their families.

7. Biodiversity

How will the initiative assist or inhibit the ability to meet the **Biodiversity Duty**?

Biodiversity Duty	+	-	+/-	Why will it have this impact?
To maintain and enhance biodiversity				This initiative is intended to have a neutral impact on the resilience of ecosystems as the offer of Personal Travel Budgets will only be made when it is deemed that it is the most cost effective travel assistance solution. The initiative is not intended to increase the number of families transporting their own child to and from school as a Personal Travel Budget would not be considered if the option of a shared home to school vehicle is available. It is not intended the initiative will lead to increased numbers of families opting to take their child to school over the child travelling in a vehicle shared with others.
To promote the resilience of ecosystems, i.e. supporting protection of the wider environment, such as air quality, flood alleviation, etc.				

What action will be taken to improve positive or mitigate negative impacts?
Monitoring by the Home to School Travel Assistance Service will ensure Personal Travel Budgets are not offered if there is a shared home to school transport vehicle available.

8. Well-being of Future Generations

How have the five ways of working been applied in the development of the initiative?

Ways of Working	Details
i. Long term – looking at least 10 years (and up to 25 years) ahead	If the initiative goes ahead it will form part of the Council's current Home to School Travel Policy 2017 and is likely to continue to be part of any new Home to School Travel Assistance Policy in the future.
ii. Prevention – preventing problems occurring or getting worse	This initiative has the ability to offer pupils and their families more flexibility around the arrangements made for getting a child to school. The Personal Travel Budget also allows the Council to be able to offer additional forms of travel assistance in order to ensure it meets its duty to provide home to school travel assistance to those who are entitled as well as ensuring the best use of public resources.

<p>iii. Collaboration – working with other services internal or external</p>	<p>Other Welsh Local Authorities already use Personal Travel Budgets as an option of travel assistance under their home to school travel arrangements, and this initiative was created following discussion with other Welsh authorities in relation to their schemes.</p> <p>The Council’s Home to School Travel Assistance Service is jointly managed between Education Transport and Environment’s Passenger Transport Section. The administration of Personal Travel Budgets would be a joint responsibility between both Education Transport and Passenger Transport.</p>
<p>iv. Involvement – involving people, ensuring they reflect the diversity of the population</p>	<p>The Council’s Home to School Travel Policy 2017 ensures there is universal access for pupils from across the whole of the county borough to apply for home to school travel assistance. This initiative aims to provide opportunities for more choice and flexibility for pupils and their families in terms of travel arrangements that meet the family circumstances as well as pupil need.</p>
<p>v. Integration – making connections to maximise contribution to:</p>	
<p>Council’s well-being objectives</p>	<p>This initiative directly contributes to wellbeing objective 1 – ‘to improve the wellbeing of children and young people’ through ensuring they can access transport assistance to attend school where there is eligibility to do so. It also has opportunity to support wellbeing objective 2 –‘to improve the wellbeing of all adults who live in the county borough’ and wellbeing objective 3 ‘to develop the local economy and environment so that the wellbeing of people can be improved’, through the greater choice and flexibility this initiative offers eligible families.</p>
<p>Other public bodies objectives</p>	<p>This initiative has the opportunity to support the Public Services Board’s wellbeing objectives.</p>

9. Monitoring Arrangements

Provide information on the monitoring arrangements to:

Monitor the impact of the initiative on Equalities, Community Cohesion, the Welsh Measure, Biodiversity Duty and the Wellbeing Objectives.

If the initiative goes ahead it will be monitored for suitability as an option of travel assistance under the Council's Home to School Travel Policy 2017. Monitoring by the Home to School Travel Assistance Service will aid updating this Integrated Impact Assessment, and will identify any change on the impact in any of the categories evaluated as part of this Integrated Impact Assessment.

10. Assessment Conclusions

Please provide details of the conclusions reached in relation to each element of the assessment:

	Conclusion
Equalities	The initiative will have a positive impact across all protected groups. There is no risk of direct or indirect discrimination as the initiative is intended to enhance the type of travel assistance options available to be offered to those children who have an entitlement to home to school travel assistance
Socio Economic Disadvantage	The initiative does not alter the ability to access home to school travel assistance. All pupils across the county borough have the opportunity to apply for home to school travel assistance and entitlement will be granted if the relevant qualifying criteria is met. The greater choice and flexibility that this initiative offers families could provide a positive impact on socio economic disadvantage.
Community Cohesion/ Social Exclusion/Poverty	The initiative does not alter the ability to access home to school travel assistance. All pupils across the county borough have the opportunity to apply for home to school travel assistance and entitlement will be granted if the relevant qualifying criteria is met It is likely to improve positive outcomes in terms of available travel assistance for the Council to offer which provides more choice and flexibility for pupils and their families. This has the opportunity to have positive impact on pupils reaching their full potential.
Welsh	The initiative does not alter the Council's Home to School Travel Policy 2017 which enable pupils attending all categories of school, including Welsh-medium education the opportunity to apply for home to school travel assistance and entitlement will be granted if the relevant qualifying criteria is met. This initiative should impact positively on people's opportunities to use the Welsh language as it is intended that Personal Travel Budgets are an additional form of travel assistance available to pupils who have an entitlement under the Council's Policy, including those who chose Welsh-medium education.
Biodiversity	This initiative is intended to have a neutral impact on biodiversity. Monitoring by the Home to School Travel Assistance Service will ensure Personal Travel Budgets are not offered if there is a shared home to school transport vehicle available.

Well-being of Future Generations	The initiative does not alter the ability to access home to school travel assistance. All pupils across the county borough have the opportunity to apply for home to school travel assistance and entitlement will be granted if the relevant qualifying criteria is met. The initiative enhances the type of travel assistance options available and will create more choice and flexibility for families which fits with the family personal circumstances as well as meeting the needs of the child
-----------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Overall Conclusion

Please indicate the conclusion reached:

- **Continue** - as planned as no problems and all opportunities have been maximised
- **Make adjustments** - as potential problems/missed opportunities/negative impacts have been identified along with mitigating actions
- **Justification** - for continuing with the initiative even though there is a potential for negative impacts or missed opportunities
- **STOP** - redraft the initiative as actual or potential unlawful discrimination has been identified

Please provide details of the overall conclusion reached in relation to the initiative

Introducing Personal Travel Budgets as an additional means of travel assistance under the Council's Home to School Travel Policy 2017 will create more choice and flexibility for families which fits with the family personal circumstances as well as meeting the needs of the child.

This initiative increases the opportunity for positive impact on children from all protected groups. The introduction of a Personal Travel Budget has the opportunity to enhance the health and wellbeing of children as it allows for a more flexible approach for families to make arrangements for their child's travel to school which meets the individual needs of the child.

Introducing Personal Travel Budgets as an additional option that the Council is able to offer will ensure the Council meets its duty to provide home to school travel assistance for those pupils who have an entitlement.

11. Actions

What actions are required in relation to obtaining further data/information, to reduce or remove negative impacts or improve positive impacts?

Action	Who will be responsible for seeing it is done?	When will it be done by?	How will we know we have achieved our objective?
Engagement with pupils and their families to monitor the take-up of the Personal Travel Budget	Home to School Travel Assistance Service (jointly via Education Transport and Passenger Transport)	End of one academic year	Take-up of the Personal Travel Budget will increase termly across the academic year
Engagement with pupils and their families to determine the suitability of the Personal Travel Budget in meeting the needs of service users	Home to School Travel Assistance Service (jointly via Education Transport and Passenger Transport)	End of one academic year	Pupils and their families will respond positively having identified the benefits of a Personal Travel Budget fitting their personal circumstances and meeting the needs of pupils including those with additional learning need and/or a disability

12. Sign off

	Name	Position	Signature	Date
Completed by	Debora Holder-Phillips	Education Transport Manager	<i>D Holder-Phillips</i>	April 2023
Signed off by	Rhiannon Crowhurst	Head of Support Services and Transformation	<i>R.R. Crowhurst</i>	April 2023