

Report to: People Scrutiny Committee

Date: 12 March 2026

By: Chair of the Review Board

Title: Scrutiny Review of Personal Travel Budgets and Independent Travel Training in School Transport

Purpose: To present the outcomes of the Scrutiny Review and make recommendations

RECOMMENDATION:

The Committee is recommended to consider and comment on the report of the Review Board.

1. Background

1.1 The People Scrutiny Committee, in response to increasing demand in Home to School Transport, undertook two scoping exercises in 2025 to better understand the issues impacting on the service, consider work underway to address these, and explore if scrutiny could add value by undertaking a review into this area. The Board explored the growing pressures on the Home to School Transport system, driven by rising demand; policy uncertainty, particularly around SEND reforms; current system challenges, including legal constraints; and measures being taken to ensure best value for money in delivering statutory school transport.

1.2 The Board considered that whilst there were statutory duties around Home to School Transport and that many of the cost drivers were outside the control of the Council, initiatives such as Personal Travel Budgets and Independent Travel Training could provide benefits for some families and achieve cost savings. Members therefore agreed that these initiatives should undergo further scrutiny through a review aimed at identifying ways to increase their uptake.

1.3 The Scoping Board agreed to focus on the following areas, which were subsequently agreed by the committee as the basis for the scrutiny review:

- The effectiveness of current Personal Travel Budget and Independent Travel Training policies;
- Barriers to uptake and how these can be addressed; and
- How to effectively promote the availability and benefits of Personal Travel Budgets and Independent Travel Training with parents, pupils and schools.

2. Supporting information

2.1 The Scrutiny Review Board was comprised of Councillors Belsey, Howell and Webb and John Hayling (Parent Governor Representative). John Hayling was appointed Chair of the Review Board.

2.2 The attached report (Appendix 1) contains the findings and recommendations of the Review Board. Copies of evidence papers listed in the report and other support documentation are available on request from the contact officer.

3. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

3.1 The Committee is recommended to consider and comment on the Review Board's report. In light of the timing of the election, the incoming committee will have the opportunity to consider the report and recommendations ahead of reporting to Cabinet and Council.

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Chair of the Review Board

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