

Open Report on behalf of Debbie Barnes, Executive Director of Children's Services

Report to:	Cllr Mrs P Bradwell, Executive Councillor for Adult Care and Health Services, Children's Services
Date:	1 December 2015
Subject:	SEND Transport Procurement Review
Decision Reference:	I010050
Key decision?	Yes

Summary:

A cross-departmental Project Team was established in May 2015 to consider the procurement options for transport for children with special educational needs and disabilities to special educational schools, PRUs and Pilgrim Hospital (SEND Transport), in order to improve market sustainability, create greater efficiency and potentially to deliver financial savings. This report recommends a new procurement model for implementation in 2016/17 and 2017/18.

The recommendations follow in depth analysis of transport needs and engagement with providers and parents/carers.

Recommendation(s):

That the Executive Councillor:-

1. Notes the opportunities as outlined in 'Reasons for Recommendations.'
2. Notes the proposed changes to transport that current SEND pupils would face (see section below) and the completed Equality Impact Assessment in Appendix A.
3. Approves the procurement model as outlined in section 1.8 below for the delivery of transport for children with special educational needs and disabilities to special educational schools, PRUs and Pilgrim Hospital and authorises the commencement of a procurement exercise.
4. Approves the delegation to the Executive Director for Children's Services in consultation with the Executive Councillor for Adult Care and Health Services, Children's Services to conduct all processes, take all decisions and approve the entering into of all documentation necessary to give effect to the above decisions.

Alternatives Considered:

The following procurement options were considered:

- **Do minimum – maintain current approach.** Existing PTU organisation maintained, operations contracted out to private sector, with ongoing efficiencies and regular reviews.
- **In-house service provision – management and operation.** Develop an in-house fleet creating a new business within the Council.
- **Develop a shared services approach with other local authorities.** Engage with other local authorities to seek opportunities for sharing capacity, systems and experience.
- **Single provider contract procurement for the county.** The transfer of all transport route operations to a single provider.
- **Area based contract procurement.** Utilising the existing 9 transport tendering areas to establish 9 contracts for route operations.
- **Cluster based contract procurement.** Similar to area based contract procurement, but creating more contracts aimed at one provider for each cluster of establishments.
- **Establishment based contract procurement.** Creating one contract and one provider per establishment.

These alternatives are discussed in paragraph 1.5 below

Reasons for Recommendation:

The procurement of SEND Transport needs to be as efficient as possible. The SEND Transport Procurement Review has identified efficiencies that could be made, through changing the procurement approach in order to reduce the high number of single vehicle contracts and replace the majority of them with larger, higher value contracts potentially helping to create a more stable and sustainable market. At the same time the increasing efficiency brought about by a reduction of providers should see savings in the cost of contract management within the Council and in provider contract costs.

The advantages of the new mixed economy model are:

- Each provider has significant volumes of work guaranteed;
- Waste mileage is reduced by each provider having its own location and by avoiding all of the approved providers chasing the same transport contracts;
- It provides structure to the market enabling the council more readily to work with and support providers;
- It provides better market intelligence and the opportunity to develop capacity increasing initiatives;
- It enables more effective relationships to be built between providers and establishments.

The recommendations are the result of detailed analysis and engagement with the provider market and parents/carers of SEND pupils.

1. Background

1.1 Introduction

Lincolnshire County Council has statutory duties to enable attendance at schools. For pupils with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) this is a key element in ensuring their needs are met including providing, where appropriate, transport which meets their specific needs. The Council also has a statutory duty to provide a '*safe and reasonably stress free*' journey for SEND pupils. These duties and the Equality Impact Assessment in Appendix A have informed the recommendations detailed in this report.

Lincolnshire provides home to school transport for over 20,000 pupils and students, of which approximately 2,000 attend SEND establishments, Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) establishments and Pilgrim Hospital establishment sites.

A review of the provision of this transport was commissioned by the Children's Services Directorate and is being delivered by a project team drawn from the Passenger Transport Unit (PTU), Children's Commissioning, the SEND team and the Commercial team.

As a result of the review the recommendation is to change the procurement model for the transport provision, following a comprehensive analysis of all relevant data and information. Potential benefits include securing a more structured and sustainable market; creating circumstances to enable market development and engagement; reducing inefficiency both within the Council and in the market and potentially achieving savings..

For the purpose of this report, the term SEND Transport is used to mean transport of pupils and students with special educational needs and disabilities to SEND establishments, Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) establishments and Pilgrim Hospital establishment sites, which are all within the scope of this review. Analysis was undertaken to establish whether to change the procurement approach for home to **mainstream** school and college transport for pupils and students with special educational needs or disabilities who are educated within a mainstream school. The analysis showed that efficiencies would be difficult to achieve due to the low number of passengers and transport contracts involved.

1.2 Context

To assess the current and future provision of the transport within the scope of this project requires a clear understanding of the background and context. This report considers the legislative framework that establishes the County Council's duties and responsibilities, the current management systems, as well as the operations and funding required to meet pupils' travel needs across Lincolnshire.

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 gives the County Council the responsibility to assist pupils with transport to enable attendance at school where they are eligible on the grounds of distance, safety of route or disability.

The SEND code of practice maintains the definition of special educational need that was first described and defined in the 2001 Code of Practice and is as follows: a child or young person has SEND if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her. A child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she:

- Has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age, or*
- Has a disability which prevents or hinders him or her from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 institutions.*

Special educational needs are described by the Special Education Needs Code of Practice as falling into four areas. These are:

- Communication and interaction*
- Cognition and learning*
- Behavioural, emotional and social development*
- Sensory and/or physical.*

The Equality Act 2010 also provides a statutory framework with duties and responsibilities to be observed by the Council. It defines disability as having a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on someone's ability to do normal daily activities.

A key issue is that since September 2014, Statements of SEN have been replaced by Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans. This change, under the Children & Families Act 2014, is having a significant impact on the processes involved in establishing transport need, especially for new pupils coming into the system. In the longer term, the impact should be a positive one, but currently there is difficulty getting all of the right information regarding passengers' needs to the right decision makers and to therefore determine the appropriate form of transport. This is particularly acute in September when a new cohort of pupils is admitted and the procurement timetable reflects this. Of further note is that in Lincolnshire, the overall proportion of children with Statements of SEN is higher than the national and regional averages.

The Council's Passenger Transport Unit (the PTU) currently organises SEND transport for three teams: The SEND team, the Children's Commissioning transport team and the PRU team. The PTU carry out any risk assessments and decide appropriate transport solution for the pupil, discuss transport arrangements with the pupil, parent and school, plan and schedule transport for child, including route planning, procuring and managing the transport contracts and manage incidents on transport, which include safeguarding issues (reporting and investigation).

Expenditure on home to school transport to SEND schools was £10.1m in 2014/15, which was an overspend of £228,000. The current annual spend on SEND transport is approximately £10m per year. Between 2010/11 and 2014/15, pupil numbers have increased by 23% and expenditure has increased by 29%. The projected outcome for 2015/16 at October 2015 is an estimated overspend of £330,000. Reasons for cost increases include increased complexity of needs and parental expectations; fuel prices; wages and vehicle spare part cost pressures.

However, this does not allow for any ad hoc decisions being taken to make discretionary exceptions to the current transport entitlement policy, which would increase expenditure. Discretionary exceptions can and currently do include continuity of a specific provider, lone transport, transport for exams.

As at 22 May 2015, there are currently over 554 separate contracts/routes in place to 82 SEND schools, the Pupil Referral Unit and Pilgrim Hospital for the provision of the SEND transport service within the scope of this project.

1.3 Benchmarking

Comparison with other local authorities indicates that Lincolnshire's costs of SEND transport in comparison to its nearest neighbour authorities show the average cost per pupil is approximately 12.5% lower than the average of these authorities. Results range from £3,815 per pupil per year in Suffolk to £5,490 in Norfolk, with an average of £4,664. The figure for Lincolnshire is £4,087. These figures are from 2013, which is the most recently available data. The benchmarking data therefore indicates that for a rural county Lincolnshire is performing reasonably well on cost.

In 2014, external consultants JMP undertook a review was to provide a comprehensive, credible and independent analysis of the procurement of Home to School Transport services in Lincolnshire, including the effectiveness of the Council's current approach to achieving value for money in the procurement of its Home to School Transport services and any possible options to deliver savings through the procurement processes. In summary, the findings were:

- Current planning and provision of home to school transport was effective
- On the commissioning and assessment side, greater emphasis is being placed on more stringent assessment of needs.
- When measured against the Department for Transport's good practice guidance, Lincolnshire demonstrates many of the good characteristics.
- Compared with other authorities, Lincolnshire performs well in terms of average transport costs per mainstream and SEND pupil, particularly given its rural nature.
- In respect of the processes and practices, there appeared to be a lot of instability, with a large number of contractual changes each month. This tended to occur due to changing circumstances, early termination of contracts and short term planning. Transport providers indicated that in some cases this leads to higher pricing, to take account of the risk.
- We don't consider there are any significant efficiencies waiting to be uncovered.
- There would be benefits in creating more stability in the marketplace, reducing the number of contract changes and early terminations. This might mean using more resource tendering and flexible arrangements, longer term contracts and single provider contracts, with more responsibility given to providers for service planning, allocating pupils and liaising with schools, parents and pupils.

Further work was carried out to understand the potential for savings through a report commissioned from Peter Brett Associates (PBA), who are specialists in home to school transport reviews. A Theoretical Consolidated Network Review was completed by PBA to look at the cost of reorganising transport by transferring all

trips to minibus provision to understand the greatest possible potential savings that could conceivably be made based on the maximum number of pupils that can be carried on each type of vehicle using optimum loading of vehicles and extensions to many current passengers' journey times. The Theoretical Consolidated Network Review indicates that the current 554 contracts held by the PTU could be reduced to 270 under a system maximising the use of minibuses delivering a saving of 28% when compared to the existing daily prices. These 270 contracts would still be single vehicle contracts.

In practice, savings are likely to be much less because of a number of important factors including:

- Pupils' individual needs must be taken into account decreasing the average occupancy of vehicles for example wheelchair users;
- It does not take into account those passengers unable to travel with other specific passengers;
- Assumes the suitability and availability of minibuses
- Does not take into account one to one passenger assistant requirements.

However the Theoretical Consolidated Network Review does point to the inefficiencies present in the current arrangements and furthermore indicates that a whole system approach is more likely to secure savings than the current piecemeal practice where individual contracts are let.

1.4 Key issues

A number of issues which have been identified with the current procurement, management and operational approach including:

- Monitoring of 554 individual contracts for quality, audit and budgetary purposes is problematic with constant changes in routes, service users, service providers and costs.
- Difficulties in arranging cost effective cover for certain areas of the county and in meeting specific requirements because of a lack of capacity.
- Many different providers operating routes to the same establishments.
- All service issues raised by any party (provider, school, service user or parent) are put through the PTU rather than the provider.
- Currently several discretionary elements of transport provision are provided increasing flexibility but adding to cost and complexity.
- The PTU is undergoing a restructure with a planned implementation in April 2016 which is likely to result in a reduction in capacity impacting on the Council's ability to continue to manage the existing model.

1.5 Procurement option development and analysis

Following the completion of a Theoretical Consolidated Network Review the key options were analysed as follows;

- Option A – Do Minimum - maintain current procurement approach
- Option B – In-house service provision - management and operation
- Option C – Develop a shared services approach with other local authorities
- Option D – Single Provider Contract for the County
- Option E – Area based contract procurement

- Option F – Cluster based contract procurement
- Option G – Establishment based contract procurement

The non-procurement options are:

Option B – In-house service provision. Preliminary analysis by the PTU based on the cost of wheelchair accessible transport indicates that in-house provision would only be efficient and cost effective if in-house vehicles used on school transport provided additional services throughout the day. This approach could be feasible as a whole county solution within an integrated, Total Transport approach and, as such, will continue to be explored in the longer term as part of this work stream. It is however a significant and complex piece of work because of;

- The scale of the capital investment required
- The regulated nature of the sector
- The need to collaborate across the Council
- The need to accurately anticipate the Council's future need for transport
- Appraisal of the different implementation options available
- The need to explore the benefits to be had from engaging with health colleagues

As a result large scale in-house provision will not come to fruition in the short to medium term and may not survive the rigorous business cases necessary to justify the significant expenditure required. As a consequence other options are required for the short to medium term.

Option C – Develop a shared services approach with other local authorities. Research has shown that there could be some scope for shared services, but as a county wide solution it would need to be fully integrated as with the in-house service provision approach. As such, this approach could be feasible within an integrated, Total Transport approach and will therefore continue to be explored in the longer term. It will however rely very heavily on collaboration and common mutual interest making progress challenging even over the longer term.

Consequently for the foreseeable future the Council continues to require one of the procurement options listed above-Options A, D-G

In order to establish the preferred options for procurement across Lincolnshire, the following analysis was completed. These were considered in the context of the stakeholder engagement feedback from providers and parents/carers, and an External Impact Assessment (see Appendix A):

- Identification of which establishments currently require numerous transport contracts and therefore where the transport network could benefit from implementing establishment based contract procurement.
- Identification of any cluster based contract procurement opportunities.
- Identification of which transport contracts may not benefit from being grouped, due to the geographic location of the passengers and/or the establishment.

Following engagement with potential providers, engagement with parents/carers, research into successful practice within other local authorities and analysis on the

delivery issues across establishments, a mixed approach is recommended, utilising a combination of the following options:

- **Option G – Establishment based contract procurement for the majority of transport provision.** This option received the most positive feedback from the provider market and therefore has the greatest chance of generating competition and successful awards county wide; it enables the development of a relationship between the organisation and the provider consistent with the extended provider role discussed below at paragraph 1.8; it guarantees each provider significant volumes of work; provides structure to develop and support the market; significantly reduces the inefficiency of there being multiple providers travelling to the same establishments; reduces the number of contracts to manage; there are currently two successful example contracts in operation to build on;
- **Option F – Cluster based contract procurement where the opportunities are identified.** A 'cluster' would involve a group of establishments and all of the transport involved would be contracted to one provider. This approach would benefit transport arrangements where greater flexibility is required and where there is insufficient demand to justify an establishment based contract. The benefits are similar to the ones referred to above but scaled down.
- **Option A – Maintain current single vehicle contract procurement approach where alternative options would not be feasible.** There are establishments which have one vehicle serving them, or the geographical location of pupils would not lend itself to a natural grouping for one contract.
- **Option D – Single provider contract procurement for the county.** This approach was deemed to have the potential for exposing the Council to significant risk levels, there was active market resistance to it and no confidence in any event that the current providers in Lincolnshire could properly manage a contract of this size, further there has been no interest from a new provider large enough to deliver such a contract.
- **Option E – Area based contract procurement.** Analysis demonstrated that neither the provider market nor the establishments are structured geographically, and therefore this approach did not offer sufficient opportunity for success

1.6 Provider market engagement

To assess the provider interest and ability to deliver one or more of the options, a series of workshop events were held in August 2015. The key points that emerged were:

- The current market is immature with a limited number of large providers
- There was no enthusiasm for a single solution across the county-making Option D unviable.
- Providers were the most positive about Option G – one provider/one establishment model.
- There was little enthusiasm for subcontracting arrangements limiting the size of contracts which could be offered making Option E unattractive.
- There was some interest shown for Options E and F – Area and Cluster based Contracts, but not as much as the one provider/one establishment model and it was deemed suitable for contracts which require more flexibility.
- Little interest has been shown from new providers coming into the market.

1.7 Parent/carer Engagement

To assess the feedback from parent/carers, the following activity was proposed, in partnership with the Lincolnshire Parent Carer Forum (LPCF):

- Eight engagement events around the county in September 2015 – due to very low levels of interest, these events were cancelled
- Online survey
- Two LPCF organised events in October 2015.

During the engagement events and with the online survey, the following potential changes were highlighted to parents/carers who were asked what the potential impacts of these changes were:

- The transport provider, Passenger Assistant and/or driver.
- The home pick up and drop off time.
- The type of vehicle.
- The role of the Council - parents may liaise directly with the transport provider instead of the Council.

The key points arising were as follows:

- Parents/carers have high expectation of the level of service and quality including continuity and significantly higher levels of training/understanding.
- The majority of points raised were regarding the performance of current providers, in the context of the point made above.
- Parents/carers were unconcerned about the manner in which LCC procures transport as long as their expectations are met.

1.8 Procurement Approach Contract Design

Further work analysed levels of demand across the county and concluded that the demand justified 16 one provider/one establishment contracts, and 2 cluster contracts – a total of 18 contracts. This would leave approximately 100 single vehicle contracts, and would reduce the overall number of contracts by more than 400. This results in fewer contracts than the Theoretical Consolidated Network Review suggested as this review did not consolidate the number of contracts, it retained single vehicle contracts.

Such an approach addresses some of the issues raised in section 1.4 above by:

- significantly reducing the numbers of contracts to be managed by the PTU reflecting the PTU's reduced capacity and potentially enabling some time to be spent on market development;
- requires providers to cover all transport requirements for their establishment/cluster preventing "cherry picking" and avoiding the current difficulties in arranging cover for particular areas/requirements;
- removes the complexity of many different providers operating routes to the same establishments.

At the same time it:

- reduces the number of contracted providers making meaningful engagement between the Council and the market more deliverable

- has a tendency to promote stability increasing the chances of continuity of service/driver for pupils
- provides the opportunity to pass additional activity in a managed way to the large providers when there are 18 contracts in place, reducing the total number of contracts from 558 to 112

In order to achieve maximum savings the providers must be able to explore efficiencies within their area of operation so that they are able to pass on cost savings to the Council. The greater the scope of the activity, the greater the potential for savings. With this in mind the proposal is that the contractors for the 18 large contracts will be responsible for route planning and that they will also be responsible for managing transport incidents and being the liaison point between the schools and parents regarding transport issues.

1.9 Procurement Process

The key recommendations for the implementation of this procurement project are as follows:

- Procurement to be phased;
- The procurement process to be a two stage process, including a Pre-Qualification Questionnaire to ensure that only bidders with the appropriate financial standing and experience are able to bid
- A Dynamic Purchasing System to be implemented to serve as an online platform through which providers submit bids;

1.10 Commercial Basis of the Contract

- Route planning will become the responsibility of providers (for one provider/one establishment contracts and cluster contracts)
- Contracts will be awarded for a longer period to encourage investment possibly for 5 years with 2 single year extensions
- Providers will be paid a lump sum (divided into monthly instalments) fixed by reference to the number of pupils they transport. The price will vary up and down as the pupil numbers change (subject to a cap and collar arrangement) but not as the routes change
- Much as they are now, providers will be subject to proportionate price deductions if they fail to meet key performance indicators for example fail to collect pupils but the intention is not to unreasonably penalise providers.

1.11 Equality Act 2010

The Council's duty under the Equality Act 2010 needs to be taken into account by the Executive when coming to a decision.

The Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it: [Equality Act 2010 section](#)

[149\(1\)](#). The relevant protected characteristics are age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation: section 149(7)

Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:

- Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it
- Encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low

The steps involved in meeting the needs of disabled persons that are different from the needs of persons who are not disabled include, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities

Having due regard to the need to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to tackle prejudice, and promote understanding

Compliance with the duties in this section may involve treating some persons more favourably than others

A reference to conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act includes a reference to:

- ❖ A breach of an equality clause or rule
- ❖ A breach of a non-discrimination rule

It is important that the Executive Councillor is aware of the special duties the Council owes to persons who have a protected characteristic as the duty cannot be delegated and must be discharged by the Executive Councillor. The duty applies to all decisions taken by public bodies including policy decisions and decisions on individual cases and includes this decision.

To discharge the statutory duty the Executive Councillor must analyse all the relevant material with the specific statutory obligations in mind. If a risk of adverse impact is identified consideration must be given to measures to avoid that impact as part of the decision making process.

It is important to note that whilst there will be some impact through changes to arrangements, which are set out in section 1.7 above, the point of the service is to give SEND pupils and students access to educational establishments and opportunities through travel arrangements that meet their specific needs. This will continue to be the case whatever the procurement approaches are that are used to secure the necessary transport.

Individuals who have protected characteristics will continue to experience an accessible service regardless. Accessibility means that first and foremost they have easy access to the service and that the service offered meets their individual

needs. The collaborative partners and service providers will be required to have policies and procedures in place and have staff sufficiently trained in their responsibilities in regard to the Equality Act. An integral part of the monitoring of the arrangements will be to look at where individuals have experienced negative outcomes, looks at trends and whether there is any association with protected characteristics. As a result policies and procedures must be changed and regularly reviewed to minimise any negative impact.

1.12 *Child Poverty Strategy*

The Council is under a duty in the exercise of its functions to have regard to its Child Poverty Strategy. Child poverty is one of the key risk factors that can negatively influence a child's life chances. Children that live in poverty are at greater risk of social exclusion which, in turn, can lead to poor outcomes for the individual and for society as a whole.

In Lincolnshire we consider that poverty is not only a matter of having limited financial resources but that it is also about the ability of families to access the means of lifting themselves out of poverty and of having the aspiration to do so. The following four key strategic themes form the basis of Lincolnshire's Child Poverty strategy: Economic Poverty, Poverty of Access, Poverty of Aspiration and Best Use of Resources.

The Strategy has been taken into account in this instance and the following comments are made:

Economic Poverty

Improved sustainability of school transport will help ensure regular attendance which in turn will enhance pupil's educational performance and attainment, providing improved chances of access to further education and well paid employment.

Poverty of Access

Lack of qualifications and skills are a key barrier in accessing employment opportunities and the ability to earn at least a living wage. Maintaining access to schools through effective transport will maintain pupils performance and access to employment opportunities.

Poverty of Aspiration

A key part of the strategic priorities for 16-18 year olds for education and training is to close the gap of attainment between those vulnerable groups and their peers. Effective transport arrangements will help support vulnerable learners to achieve their aspirations and fulfil their potential.

Best use of Resources

Best use of Resources aims to ensure that all key stakeholders contribute to improving the life chances of children and young people in a coordinated way. The priority on reducing inefficiency and saving costs within this paper support that.

1.13 Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)

The Lincolnshire JSNA identifies a number of needs that directly relate to young people, with a specific focus on Educational Attainment. This service by maintaining access to education supports the maintenance and improvement in:

- Outcomes for pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
- Reducing the gap in achievement between “key vulnerable groups” and their peers

1.14 Health & Well Being Strategy

The Lincolnshire Health & Well Being Strategy includes five main themes. This service specifically supports:

Improving health and social outcomes and reducing inequalities for children through contributing to ensuring children and young people feel happy, stay safe from harm and make good choices about their lives, particularly children who are vulnerable or disadvantaged.

2. Conclusion

The recommendations detailed in this report aim to create greater efficiency in how home to school transport to SEND schools is procured, including improving long term market sustainability and potentially delivering financial savings. This report recommends a new procurement model for implementation in 2016/17 and 2017/18.

The reaction from the provider market is unpredictable and, as such, if the procurement exercise is unsuccessful in whole or in part, the Total Transport approaches regarding in-house fleet provision and shared services with other local authorities would need to be scoped and timetabled if necessary they could be reviewed on a smaller scale against any gaps in market provision. If required, interim arrangements would involve remaining with the current procurement approach in the very short term.

3. Legal Comments:

Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities are eligible children for the purposes of section 508B of the Education Act 1996. The Council must therefore make such travel arrangements as it considers necessary in order to secure that suitable home to school travel arrangements, for the purpose of facilitating the child's attendance at the relevant educational establishment in relation to the child, are made and provided free of charge.

The Report makes proposals for a contracting approach to ensuring compliance with that duty.

The decision is consistent with the policy framework and within the remit of the Executive Councillor if it is within the budget.

4. Resource Comments:

The current operating model meets service user requirements, however the review outlines the opportunities to develop a more co-ordinated and structured operating model(s) that will look to achieve a more efficient delivery and cost model. There are many variables facing the delivery of SEND transport, therefore these need to be fully understood before engaging with providers in the procurement cycle.

With the continuing cost pressures identified in delivering SEND transport and the Local Authority's requirements to meet its future financial challenges, such work streams need to be pursued to seek to achieve more effective use of resources for the Council.

5. Consultation

a) Has Local Member Been Consulted?

Yes

b) Has Executive Councillor Been Consulted?

Yes

c) Scrutiny Comments

The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee will consider this report at its meeting on 27 November 2015. Comments from this meeting will be presented to the Executive Councillor on 1 December 2015.

d) Policy Proofing Actions Required

Not applicable

6. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Equality Impact Assessment
Appendix B	Theoretical Network Review

7. Background Papers

The background papers included as Appendices, within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972, were used in the preparation of this report.

This report was written by Anita Ruffle, Passenger Transport Unit Group Manager who can be contacted on 01522 553147 or by email at anita.ruffle@lincolnshire.gov.uk and by Sophie Reeve who can be contacted on 01522 552578 or by email at Sophie.reeve@lincolnshire.gov.uk.