



REPORT TITLE: Home to school and social care transport transformation programme

Cabinet Date	23 rd November 2022
Cabinet Member	Cllr Phil Robinson – Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Bus Transport
Key Decision	Yes
Purpose of Report	To seek Cabinet approval to reshape the management and delivery of Home to School and Adult Social Care transport service provision.
Recommendations	<p>That Cabinet:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. approves without further competition, the award of a 3 year Call-Off Contract, under an ESPO Framework Agreement, to the preferred tenderer, namely EDGE Public Solutions Ltd, under which it shall supply such management services and resources as are necessary to deliver a three-year change programme within the council’s Home to School transport and Adult Social Care (ASC) transport service areas. The award shall be made in accordance with the direct contract award criteria under the ESPO Framework Agreement;2. delegates authority to the Executive Director of Economy, Environment and Infrastructure in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Bus Transport, to:<ol style="list-style-type: none">a) conduct a competitive procurement process for a contract in respect of the supply of specialist software to support efficient route planning for Home to School transport and other services as appropriate and then to award such contract to the successful tenderer;b) undertake a comprehensive market engagement programme with transport providers to inform a phased procurement of contracted Home to School and Adult Social Care transport provision; andc) update relevant processes and Service Level Agreements between the restructured ITU and teams in the Children & Families and Adults directorates to support the new working practices with a view to ensuring effective service delivery in the long-term.

<p>Reasons for Recommendations</p>	<p>To enable the Council to deliver statutory Home to School and Adult Social Care transport services in the most cost-effective manner, whilst meeting best practice standards, and delivering a safe, reliable, quality service to mainstream and Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND) pupils and Looked After Children (LAC).</p>
<p>Resource Implications</p>	<p>The proposed contract with the external transformation and project management specialists known as Edge Public Solutions Ltd will be for three years at a total cost of £1.57m (see report for annual breakdown) and include all project resources conducting key project tasks and resourcing all peaks in workload, along with responsibility for ensuring that key project outcomes are achieved.</p> <p>The estimated value of the proposed contract for route planning software for a maximum duration of 5 years is £250,000.</p> <p>Whilst first year costs will be met from corporate transformation funds cashable savings and cost avoidance will be realised in service budgets. Delivery of savings and cost avoidance will help the council with balancing its budget and planning its Medium Term Financial Strategy. The council requires that all project and implementation costs are funded from savings generated within the three year term. The specialist partner will be required to provide a fixed fee and to be responsible for providing all resources required throughout the project, so protecting the Council from any cost implications of additional resources being required at times of peak workload.</p> <p>Based upon 2021/22 spend levels it is anticipated that the above investment could deliver net benefit (after payment of the fees and other costs) of around £3.3m over the course of the three-year project and a sustainable benefit to annual revenue costs associated with Home to school transport provision of around £2.5m per annum upon project completion. The annual revenue benefit in adult social care transport is anticipated at under £50k.</p> <p>However transport delivery costs are rising and volatile due to inflation, driver shortages and fuel cost and we know that the numbers of SEND children are continuing to rise within Gloucestershire, as well as the County also seeing overall population growth. Hence, the project will need to establish a baseline and track these elements to understand the future split between cashable savings and cost avoidance.</p> <p>Further investment includes additional staff, software and auction set-up costs to attract more transport operators to tender for council transport contracts. . These costs will continue beyond the completion of the project but will continue to be funded from the reduced revenue costs achieved.</p>

Background Documents	<p>“Home to school transport, the challenge in counties” - County Councils Network, March 2022 http://www.countycouncilsnetwork.org.uk/download/4147/</p> <p>Education and Inclusion Strategy SEND and education inclusion strategies 2022-25 - Gloucestershire County Council</p> <p>Home to School Travel Assistance Policy Home to School Transport – Mainstream School students - Gloucestershire County Council</p> <p>Transport assistance for SEN pupils Transport assistance for SEN pupils - Gloucestershire County Council</p>
Statutory Authority	<p>The council has a statutory duty under the Education Act 1996 to provide transport to school for eligible pupils. This applies to mainstream pupils and to pupils with special educational needs and disabilities.</p> <p>Under the Care Act 2014 the council has a statutory duty to assess an adult’s social care and support needs. This assessment may identify a requirement for the provision of transport or assistance with travel.</p>
Divisional Councillor(s)	<p>All</p>
Officers	<p>Philip Williams, Assistant Director Traffic & Transport Philip.williams@gloucestershire.gov.uk</p> <p>Clare Medland/ Gareth Vine, Joint Head of Commissioning for Learning, Education HOSCFL@gloucestershire.gov.uk</p>
Timeline	<p>The transformation programme will commence in January 2023 for a duration of three years, ending in December 2025. The first phase of transport re-tendering would be expected to take place in advance of the September 2023 academic year to enable savings to be realised within the 23/24 financial year. Further phases will be scheduled to enable savings and other benefits to be delivered in accordance with the profile set out in this report.</p>

Background

Context

1. Gloucestershire County Council has a statutory duty to provide Home to School transport for qualifying groups of pupils by virtue of the distance to their school, them being in care or having SEND. The council also has a duty to enable core groups of Adult Social Care clients to access appropriate facilities. Last year the overall budget for these passenger transport services was £17.1m, of which £15.9m was Education Transport, £0.55m was for ASC transport and the balance was management cost.
2. In March 2022 the County Council's Network (CCN) published a report into the challenges of Home to School Transport in county council areas. This highlighted long term increases in demand for SEND transport, mostly using taxis and minibuses, a sharp rise in numbers of pupils with complex needs, and how fuel and wage inflation are all putting considerable strain on local authority budgets.
3. To help the council to manage these underlying pressures a review of passenger transport operations was carried out, identifying a range of change initiatives to reduce costs and improve service quality. It concluded that there was an opportunity to improve performance and to transform and modernise the service to provide travel solutions which will promote life-long independence to some of the county's most vulnerable children. Based upon 2021/22 data and costs it estimated that the council could potentially deliver up to £2.5m annual cost reduction.. Baseline costs have increased significantly since then.
4. The war in Ukraine, driver shortages across public transport operators, cost of living increases and rising UK inflation have all become more significant since the CCN's published report. These rises and volatility in the transport market inevitably create difficulty in establishing the level of cashable savings that the work will deliver. However, these pressures increase the need for the work irrespective of the balance between cashable savings or cost avoidance. The Project Board will establish a baseline cost against which to monitor delivery.
5. The council now seeks to procure specialist support to implement this transformation programme and deliver a step change in both performance and value for money. To make the changes sustainable this comprehensive programme will introduce cultural change, including internal re-organisation to bring all education transport commissioning and delivery within one Integrated Transport Unit (ITU) with clear lines of demarcation and handover between eligibility assessment and operational delivery of transport.
6. This also provides an opportunity to shift to a greater performance focus, including the delivery of a number of key efficiency initiatives. Customer expectations can be better managed, allowing the service to move from delivering expensive and inflexible door-to-door transport, to one which delivers bespoke travel solutions that will support life-long independence of children. All of this can be done within the parameters of current policy and statutory obligations. The programme provides additional capacity in recognition of the the importance of engaging and consulting effectively with vulnerable groups, assessing their needs and understanding their concerns.

Home to school and adult transport overview

7. The main demographic growth pressure in the county is in the over 65 age group, and this will place increasing pressure on local infrastructure, as well as the requirement for adult care services. Like other counties, Gloucestershire has seen a steady growth in the number of young people with SEND. The number of pupils coming into the education system with complex medical needs and / or behavioural issues and requiring Education, Health & Care Plans (ECHPs) is increasing rapidly, and this has direct cost implications for the council via the provision of more transport services and ones that include provision of a passenger assistant.
8. At the time of the review around 4,800 mainstream pupils were receiving Home to School transport, with around 1,300 bus passes issued for travel on local public bus services and the remainder travelling on 112 contracted bus routes. There were around 1400 SEND pupils receiving transport on approximately 550 separate routes, of which 153 had a passenger assistant. Home to School transport contracts are exclusively provided by external contractors. In addition some 350 Personal Transport Allowances (PTA) are provided to parents and carers to arrange their own transport. These figures have increased over the last 12 months and are anticipated to continue to increase over the term of the proposed consultancy work.
9. Adult social care transport is on a much smaller scale. Pre-Covid this was provided to 146 clients on 22 contracted transport routes, supported by some internal adapted vehicles based at 8 day centres.
10. Transport operations for education are managed across three teams located in Children & Families (Education) and Economy, Environment & Infrastructure, as follows:
 - I. The Admissions and Transport team manages eligibility for mainstream transport.
 - II. The Special Educational Needs & Disabilities Transport (SENDT) Team manages transport provision for SEND pupils.
 - III. The Integrated Transport Unit (ITU) undertake procurement and management of all contracted transport.
11. In respect of Adult Social Care (ASC), the ITU manages a small number of contracted transport routes, with some additional transport provided directly by adult day centres on an internally managed basis.
12. Key transport management functions are split across two teams (SENDT team and ITU) with the ITU only being responsible for procurement of a pre-determined route. This hampers their ability to challenge and achieve efficiencies as the ITU staff do not have visibility of all routes to be able to identify better value solutions.
13. The initial review therefore recommended that key roles within the current SENDT team are brought within the ITU management structure to create a single team with full responsibility for all aspects of the transport services once eligibility has been established, generating clear lines of accountability for cost and performance. This team should be supported with specialist systems and potentially additional staff, to allow service provision to be optimised.

Transport Operations

14. Mainstream Home to School travel is provided by bus passes for use on public transport and seats on coaches procured by the ITU. The average annual cost per pupil of 'bus pass' travel is £714, which is relatively high when compared to other local authorities, but still less than the cost of directly contracted coaches which average £1,032 per pupil and so still represents the cheapest option for mainstream travel. Bus pass costs are more difficult to influence given the links between school transport and the wider public bus network in the county.
15. SEND contracted transport constitutes by far the largest portion of Home to School expenditure with costs of around £10.4M per annum. This is also where the most acute cost pressure is being seen and further increases can be expected in future years as SEND numbers increase. Average cost per pupil for SEND transport in Gloucestershire is around £9,944 p.a. which is at the higher end compared with other county councils.

County / Item	County A	County B	GCC	County C	County D	County	County F	County Average
Total SEN direct route cost £m/yr	£10.800	£13.105	£10.461	£21.418	£8.979	£13.400	£10.700	£9.461
SEN cost per child / yr	£7,327	£3,743	£9,944	£7,598	£9,665	£4,084	£9,745	£5,073

Table 1. Comparative Cost per Head of Taxi and Minibus Travel for SEND Students (2020-2021)

16. Along with other data such as relatively high numbers of single person journeys and low average passengers per transport route, this suggests that there is the potential to reduce costs in the medium to long term. Key areas for improvement in cost fall into two main areas; route optimisation (planning routes efficiently, using the right size vehicles) and improved market engagement to stimulate competition, along with a phased re-tender programme.
17. Since SEND travel costs comprise the major variable and challenge in respect of Home to School and wider passenger transport costs, effective route planning and procurement in this area is critical to delivering effective revenue cost reductions and to controlling costs (cost avoidance) in future years where increasing demand is anticipated.
18. Improvements in market engagement will come through a pro-active Strategic Sourcing (SS) process, working directly with contractors to promote competition, widen contractor participation and encourage new contractors onto the current Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS). Since the current DPS was put in place, there has been limited market engagement and only a modest increase in the number of contractors.
19. There is also a relatively heavy utilisation of a small number of transport contractors which creates an operational vulnerability and implies that greater competition would be

beneficial. Effective market engagement and mobilisation of other operators will be important in addressing this situation, across both Gloucestershire and relevant areas of bordering councils.

20. The above initiatives should be supplemented by a re-tender process based on a clear price per route and exploring the use of a reverse auction processes and a better understanding of how the current Dynamic Purchasing System can be adapted. Optimisation of routes together with electronic tendering can provide the most effective way of managing operational costs, with one complementing the other.
21. Some financial improvements should also be possible in respect of the provision of transport for adult clients (Older People and adults with Learning Disabilities) via similar initiatives in routing and re-tender to those outlined above, although the scale of the operation is significantly more modest than Home to School transport and hence savings will be correspondingly lower.

Change Programme Summary

22. The SENDT and ITU teams are at full capacity and are unlikely to gain traction in key transformation activities alongside their business-as-usual responsibilities. Over time efficiencies made in this area in isolation tend to be eroded as new demand for travel comes in, unless sustainable cultural, organisational and process changes underpin the improvements made.
23. There will be a lost opportunity amounting to an estimated average of around £100K per month if no action is taken however this figure will grow over time as additional demand and population growth will only make the cost position worse.
24. The proposed recommendations and strategy required to achieve this transformation programme have the support of the senior management with the proposed transformation programme delivering the following critical themes:
 - I. Creating a Home to School operation that delivers a joined-up travel offer, with a clear strategic direction, which performs effectively and has clear accountability for costs and service levels.
 - II. Overhauled and effective routes that best consider the individual needs of passengers, best use of suppliers, and benefits from newly developed routing software. Flexibility to amend routes as required in relation to changing operational circumstances and pressures.
 - III. A better developed supply market with improved competition and effective procurement to maximise value for money.
 - IV. An effective Home to School operation with resources focused on the right activities benefitting from an enhanced performance culture supported by improved reporting and measurement.
 - V. A shift of the travel offer to one which better manages the expectations of parents, schools and users so that the county's offer moves to the provision of 'travel support' in the most cost-effective way, and in a manner that promotes life-long independence, through better use of personal travel budgets and supported by policy re-branding.

- VI. A positive impact on the council's environmental improvement and social value targets, with reduced carbon emissions, reduced congestion and investment in the community.

25. The programme will be intensive and complex and is likely to take 3 years to fully deliver. Change will require robust planning supported by effective stakeholder communications. Successful implementation will be dependent on significant additional resources, strong leadership, and governance.

EDGE Public Solutions

26. EDGE Public Solutions specialise in supporting Local Authorities to deliver passenger transport and cross departmental solutions and have worked closely with the Council previously and in supporting the scoping of this work; They have been the key delivery partner in a number of similar passenger transport reviews with councils such as Doncaster, Cumbria, Lincolnshire, Leicestershire and Durham. EDGE have capacity available at present to allow them to commence work immediately and their previous work with us will allow a streamlined mobilisation of the project.
27. EDGE can be procured through the ESPO Framework that the Council have access to and senior officers including those from legal and procurement are comfortable that this represents a legal route to award and is the most advantageous approach for the Council. The value of the contract does require Cabinet Authority to award to EDGE Public Solutions and is therefore covered as in this report's recommendations.

Financial benefits

28. Based on the full implementation of the recommendations in this report and 2021/22 spend levels the projected financial improvements are estimated to be in the region of:
- I. A cumulative net project benefit over three years, net of implementation costs, of approx. **£3.3M**.
 - II. A sustainable ongoing benefit to net annual transport revenue costs of approx. **£2.5M** at completion of the change programme once all transformations costs have ceased.
29. It is important to note that some investment will be required in the early stages of the project to enable key changes, this will include the costs of change management resource and investment in systems and reverse auction set-up. These investments will be required in part prior to any financial improvements being delivered. These will be funded from the corporate transformation budget.
30. It will also be important to carefully track baseline costs to measure the success of the work given the current market volatility, increases in costs that are currently being seen, increases in service demand and overall population growth. The project will therefore need to establish and agree a baseline financial position so that financial benefits (as either savings outcomes and/or cost avoidance) can be monitored within this changing

environment. Whilst these factors create challenges in assigning value to either cost savings or cost avoidance, they remain key drivers further supporting the need for the work to progress.

Non-Financial benefits

31. In addition to the financial benefits outlined above, it must be recognised that the proposals will also deliver significant improvements in service and operational control. These non-financial improvements can be summarised as follows:

- I. More robust management.
- II. Improved environmental performance.
- III. Reduced congestion, particularly at special schools.
- IV. Opportunity to take back control of the marketplace.
- V. More varied and targeted Travel Support offer, promoting independence.
- VI. More integrated transport service across the county.
- VII. Active promotion of independence in education.

Options

32. The following options have been considered:

Option 1 – Do Nothing

33. Take no action in respect of the current structure and procurement approach and maintain the current fragmented management of passenger transport. In this situation the Council would continue to endure:

- I. Higher than necessary revenue costs, with increasing pressure from rising SEND numbers
- II. Restricted procurement ability and continued reliance on a small number of key contractors
- III. Sub-optimal environmental performance resulting from too many vehicles used and more miles travelled than necessary
- IV. Reduced service quality and below-par support for travel independence

34. Given the growing pressures on local authority finances and expectations of value for money from public services this is not a viable option. The council needs to take action to reduce costs now and to ensure best value transport delivery in the future as cost pressures increase.

Option 2 – Implement a Change Programme Using Internal and / or Interim Resource

35. A change project of this size and complexity requires resources with very specialist change management skills as well as an in-depth understanding of the sensitive transport services that are the subject of the change program. Flexible resourcing to address peaks in workload will also be required.

36. The relevant specialist skills do not exist within the council in sufficient numbers to deliver the scale of change required. Nor is the council in a position to flex the level of resources to address peaks in workload.
37. Interim resource with the appropriate skillset and availability would be difficult and expensive to secure for a programme of this duration and may not be available in appropriate numbers. Further, using interim resources may make it difficult to build an effective team to deliver a programme of this complexity and sensitivity and would offer no guarantee of the delivery of key benefits.
38. Therefore, this is not a viable option.

Option 3 – Implement a Change Programme in partnership with external support on the basis set out in this report’s recommendations.

39. Under this option the council would utilise specialist external resource to deliver the change programme, ensuring adequate and flexible resourcing and drive programme management and delivery of all key financial and service outcomes.
40. This external team/resource supervised by ITU would work alongside council staff to implement key changes whilst the council staff would be supported in continuing to deliver services to critical client groups.
41. This change programme will only operate effectively if pro-active coaching and mentoring exists to ensure effective knowledge transfer during the project and hence to deliver a fully effective centre of excellence in passenger transport management embedded within GCC for the long-term.
42. This represents a viable option as it provides the Council with guaranteed specialist resources to ensure major changes can be implemented successfully. It also has the advantages that an appropriate EU compliant route will be followed to procure the appropriately skilled professionals, utilising the ESPO Framework Agreement.
43. The ESPO Framework Agreement provides a compliant route to make a direct contract award to the specialist provider that is best placed to carry out this project and to minimise further costs. EDGE Public Solutions Ltd satisfies the direct contract award criteria under the said framework agreement. Such an approach provides the council with a route to select a supplier that has a proven track record of delivery, to retain knowledge of Council operations and to minimise the timescales and costs of commencing the proposed change programme.
44. Details of the contract for the award of specialist routing software for Home to School Transport will be confirmed during the course of the project. The procurement of this contract will be by the Executive Director of Economy, Environment & Economy under the council’s scheme of delegations and contract procurement rules and will be subject to a separate officer decision

Risks

45. Financial pressures anticipated in the delivery of a passenger transport service for Home to School and ASC; with particular emphasis on the volume of SEND travel, where if no

action is taken the risk of spiralling transport costs that cannot be effectively managed or controlled becomes significant.

46. Skills requirements for the delivery of a large and complex change programme in a field as potentially sensitive as Home to School and ASC passenger transport; the approach to the change project must be carefully managed, in particular the selection of the implementation partner, their track record of delivery and ability to provide the right resources
47. Adequate bedding in of key changes to become 'business as usual'; provision of adequate time and support for GCC staff will feature within the programme to transfer knowledge and skills and ensure that changes fully bed in and become the normal mode of operation, rather than drifting back to previous practice and undermining outcomes.
48. Non-delivery of key financial and operational outcomes; the approach taken to the delivery of a change programme must provide assurances that these critical changes will be delivered, and the financial improvements become available as scheduled. The chosen approach / effective selection of an implementation partner will be critical in this regard as will use of Programme management and governance. Should savings fall short of the targets, a rebate mechanism will be explored at the procurement stage to provide for the refund of the fees paid to the project management specialists in proportion to any under-delivery of savings.
49. Financial savings are difficult to track over time within a rising and volatile transport market – the project will need to establish and agree baseline figures against which performance can be monitored. Assessing ongoing changes within the market will help to determine the level of cashable savings vs cost avoidance and will be a key task for the Project Board.
50. Adverse reaction within the contracted transport marketplace and / or from parents and carers to changes in transport arrangements; again the choice of implementation approach and partner will be critical, with the skills and experience to engage with contractors, parents / carers and other key stakeholders.
51. Procurement challenge; this risk is considered low since the ESPO Framework provides a valid procurement route compliant with current legislation and is frequently used by UK local authorities to select partners for key tasks quickly and with certainty.

Financial implications

52. The proposed engagement of the external transformation and project management specialists will be for up to three years at a cost of £1.57M, to include all project resources conducting key project tasks and resourcing all peaks in workload, along with responsibility for key project outcomes.
53. All project and implementation costs will be funded from savings throughout, as illustrated in Table 2, with fees ceasing at the end of the project (year three). The Project Board will need to establish over the course of the project any additional internal resources that might be needed to sustain the savings after the project ends
54. The above investment could deliver net cumulative benefit after payment of the fees and other costs (and based on 2021/22 spend levels) of around £3.3M over the course of the three-year project and a sustainable benefit to annual revenue costs associated with

2021/22 Home to School transport provision of around £2.5M per annum upon project completion.

Table 2. Summary of Programme Savings and Net Benefits

Financial Year:	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	Project Total:	Ongoing Annual:
Projected Savings:	£ -	£1,124,881	£1,930,514	£2,642,552	£8,092,702	£2,642,550
Projected Costs:	£135,500	£552,000	£587,000	£471,500	£2,865,000	£80,000
Net Saving:	-£135,500	£572,881	£1,343,514	£2,171,052	£5,227,702	£2,562,550
Financial Year Totals:	-£135,500	£572,881	£1,343,514	£2,171,052	N/A	£2,562,550

Climate change implications

55. In May 2019 all Gloucestershire councils declared a Climate Emergency and the Council included commitments to be a carbon neutral county by 2050 and a carbon neutral council by 2030, with at least an 80% reduction in carbon emissions.

56. By reducing the number of vehicles and length of routes used in passenger transport, and via the promotion of the use of ULEV and electric vehicles wherever possible, it is estimated that contractor CO₂ emissions can be reduced significantly. The programme will include provision for mileage to be tracked and emissions calculated and reported as Scope 3 emissions (not directly emitted by the council's assets but indirect emissions from its supply chain).

Equality implications

Has an Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) been completed? Yes

57. In the development of this programme approach 'due regard' has been given to the aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equalities Act 2010; it is concluded that there will be no change to the key policies which govern assessed eligibility of clients as a result of the change programme as no core service levels or eligibility criteria will change and hence the programme overall will have no implications for those with 'protected characteristics'. However it is acknowledged that changes which affect vulnerable groups, children and adults with disabilities, must be managed sensitively and involve users, parents or carers early on in the change process. Should further work identify a requirement to change council policy then such changes, which may require a separate decision, would also require appropriate engagement and consultation with service users.

Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) implications

58. Upon completion of the DPIA checklist, there is no requirement to complete a DPIA for this programme.

Social value implications

59. There are positive implications in respect of social value from the proposed programme, which comprise:

- I. Improved distribution of Council contracted work amongst transport contractors across the county, further distributing support for the local economy and SME's
- II. The opportunity to extend and improve inspection and quality management processes, so improving vehicle safety and safeguarding
- III. Expanded training opportunities for transport contractors and their staff, improving knowledge and understanding of SEND issues and hence service quality
- IV. Improved general service quality for a vulnerable section of the local community, along with their parents / carers, contributing to wider wellbeing
- V. Greater focus on the use of travel training and other innovative travel options to promote travel independence, in particular for pupils with SEND.

When procuring this external resource, social value contribution will be part of the deliverables of the contract, in accordance with adopted Council policy.

Consultation & Engagement

60. Transport policy and eligibility rules will not change, only the mechanics of how the service is delivered. This means no-one who currently has transport will have it taken away. Nevertheless, changes which involve vulnerable groups of children and adults with disabilities must be managed sensitively and involve users, parents and carers from the outset. Engagement and good communications can harness user insight to shape and improve transport provision, help to manage expectations and mitigate potential risks including equalities impacts.

61. Changes in the approach to transport provision will only be introduced after direct engagement with key stakeholders, including parents, carers, schools and support groups. This will enable the need for change and the change process to be clearly explained in advance. For example, this may involve gathering better information through the application process, working more closely with parents/carers and school SEN coordinators to develop changes to transport provision, follow up communications to outline how we have listened and amended plans, and monitoring of service provision to ensure that it is meeting our requirements.

62. Where contractors change due to the re-tender or re-routing process, appropriate training of staff will be undertaken and introductions to the new transport team arranged before the change is implemented. Follow-up monitoring of the service after changes will provide for subsequent adjustment should problems be encountered.

Officer recommendations

63. Option 3 is recommended as the benefits of this option, principally speed and reliability of delivery as detailed above, provides the best value option for the Council, with the potential to support the council with fulfilling its statutory duties and managing its cost pressure at a time when demand is increasing and it faces significant budgetary pressures.

Performance management/follow-up

64. The change programme will be monitored throughout by a dedicated Project Board with a senior council chair person, that will provide regular monitoring of costs and delivery of outcomes in line with the council's contract management processes.

65. It is anticipated that the Steering Group will meet monthly and be presented with detailed reports on financial and operational improvement initiatives, enabling a clear senior management focus to be maintained and any obstacles to progress to be addressed quickly and effectively.

66. Performance will be reported to the council's executive, leadership team and elected members through existing performance reporting mechanisms.