

Thurrock - An ambitious and collaborative community which is proud of its heritage and excited by its diverse opportunities and future

Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The meeting will be held at **7.00 pm** on **12 March 2024**

Committee Room 2, Civic Offices, New Road, Grays, Essex, RM17 6SL.

Membership:

Councillors Elizabeth Rigby (Chair), Sara Muldowney (Vice-Chair), Qaisar Abbas, Vikki Hartstean, Srikanth Panjala and Maureen Pearce

Kim James, Chief Operating Officer, HealthWatch Thurrock
Nicola Cranch, Parent Governor Representative

Substitutes:

Councillors Paul Arnold, Aaron Green, James Halden, Susan Little, Sue Shinnick and Cici Manwa

Agenda

Open to Public and Press

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To approve as a correct record the minutes of Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 16 January 2024.	
3 Items of Urgent Business	
To receive additional items that the Chair is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency, in accordance with Section 100B (4) (b) of the Local Government Act 1972. To agree any relevant briefing notes submitted to the Committee.	

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Queries regarding this Agenda or notification of apologies:

Please contact Rhiannon Whiteley, Senior Democratic Services Officer by sending an email to Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk

Agenda published on: **4 March 2024**

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DECLARING INTERESTS FLOWCHART – QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

Breaching those parts identified as a pecuniary interest is potentially a criminal offence

Helpful Reminders for Members

- *Is your register of interests up to date?*
- *In particular have you declared to the Monitoring Officer all disclosable pecuniary interests?*
- *Have you checked the register to ensure that they have been recorded correctly?*

When should you declare an interest at a meeting?

- **What matters are being discussed at the meeting?** (including Council, Cabinet, Committees, Subs, Joint Committees and Joint Subs); or
- If you are a Cabinet Member making decisions other than in Cabinet **what matter is before you for single member decision?**



Does the business to be transacted at the meeting

- relate to; or
- likely to affect

any of your registered interests and in particular any of your Disclosable Pecuniary Interests?

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests shall include your interests or those of:

- your spouse or civil partner's
- a person you are living with as husband/ wife
- a person you are living with as if you were civil partners

where you are aware that this other person has the interest.

A detailed description of a disclosable pecuniary interest is included in the Members Code of Conduct at Chapter 7 of the Constitution. **Please seek advice from the Monitoring Officer about disclosable pecuniary interests.**

What is a Non-Pecuniary interest? – this is an interest which is not pecuniary (as defined) but is nonetheless so significant that a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard to be so significant that it would materially impact upon your judgement of the public interest.

Pecuniary

If the interest is not already in the register you must (unless the interest has been agreed by the Monitoring Officer to be sensitive) disclose the existence and nature of the interest to the meeting

If the Interest is not entered in the register and is not the subject of a pending notification you must within 28 days notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest for inclusion in the register

Unless you have received dispensation upon previous application from the Monitoring Officer, you must:

- **Not participate or participate further in any discussion of the matter at a meeting;**
- **Not participate in any vote or further vote taken at the meeting; and**
- **leave the room while the item is being considered/voted upon**

If you are a Cabinet Member you may make arrangements for the matter to be dealt with by a third person but take no further steps

Non- pecuniary

Declare the nature and extent of your interest including enough detail to allow a member of the public to understand its nature

You may participate and vote in the usual way but you should seek advice on Predetermination and Bias from the Monitoring Officer.

Our Vision and Priorities for Thurrock

An ambitious and collaborative community which is proud of its heritage and excited by its diverse opportunities and future.

1. **People** – a borough where people of all ages are proud to work and play, live and stay
 - High quality, consistent and accessible public services which are right first time
 - Build on our partnerships with statutory, community, voluntary and faith groups to work together to improve health and wellbeing
 - Communities are empowered to make choices and be safer and stronger together

2. **Place** – a heritage-rich borough which is ambitious for its future
 - Roads, houses and public spaces that connect people and places
 - Clean environments that everyone has reason to take pride in
 - Fewer public buildings with better services

3. **Prosperity** – a borough which enables everyone to achieve their aspirations
 - Attractive opportunities for businesses and investors to enhance the local economy
 - Vocational and academic education, skills and job opportunities for all
 - Commercial, entrepreneurial and connected public services

Minutes of the Meeting of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 16 January 2024 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillors Elizabeth Rigby (Chair), Sara Muldowney (Vice-Chair), Qaisar Abbas, Vikki Hartstean and Srikanth Panjala

Parent Governor Representative Nicola Cranch

Apologies: Church of England Representative Sarah Barlow

In attendance:

Sheila Murphy, Corporate Director of Children's Services
Michele Lucas, Assistant Director of Education and Skills
Priscilla Bruce-Annan, Local Safeguarding Children's Partnership Business Manager
Keeley Donati, Acting Principal of Thurrock Adult Community College
Sarah Williams, Head of Education Support Services
Andrea Winstone, Head of School Effectiveness and SEND
Rhiannon Whiteley, Senior Democratic Services Officer
Youth Cabinet Representative
Angela Surrey, Participation and Engagement Officer

Before the start of the Meeting, all present were advised that the meeting may be filmed and was being recorded, with the audio recording to be made available on the Council's website.

29. Minutes

Councillor Muldowney raised that on page 6 of the agenda she would like it included in the minutes that Councillor Carter stated that he had not visited the school's temporary classrooms to ensure they are satisfactory. Councillor Carter stated his intention to challenge this at Full Council.

Councillor Muldowney requested that at the Youth Cabinet item it should say Vice Chair and not Chair. Councillor Muldowney also noted the spelling of St Clere's school is incorrect.

Save for the above comments, the minutes were approved.

30. Items of Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business. The Scrutiny Officer introduced herself to the Committee. Councillor Muldowney raised that she had difficulty opening the appendices embedded in the reports and she had asked officers

for information, and she had not received this. The Scrutiny Officer confirmed that she will look into this.

ACTION 1 - Support for the Overview and Scrutiny function to be reviewed with regard to timeliness of papers and accessibility of embedded reports.

31. Declaration of Interests

No interests were declared.

32. Youth Cabinet Update

The Youth Cabinet representative presented the report to the Committee.

- Members thanked the Youth Cabinet representative for the report and stated that it was always informative.
- Members also commented that it was fantastic that Thurrock's Member of Youth Parliament got to speak in the House of Commons. Members stated that despite being the 6th richest country, 8000 children are living in poverty in England and cannot access free school meals.
- Members queried how many members they are looking to sign up for Thurrock SEND Youth Voice. The Participation and Engagement Officer confirmed that 3 have signed up but they have capacity for up to 12 and there is no reason why they could not expand on this. Events will be based at Grangewaters and will take place in February half term, July and October half term.

ACTION 2 - The Head of School Effectiveness and SEND can contact the CEO's of the 5 schools that don't have a Youth Cabinet Representative to highlight this as an opportunity

33. Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RACC) Update Report

The Head of Education Support Services presented the report to the Committee.

- The Head of Education Support Services confirmed that the remedial works for East Tilbury, Arthur Bugler and Thameside Primary Schools are planned to start this term and be completed in the Summer term.
- St Clere's are waiting for the Department of Education to provide an update regarding the longer term remedial works and they are expecting a response in the next week.
- Corringham's remedial works have been completed
- Members expressed concern regarding the temporary classrooms as the temperatures have dropped
- Members queried how disruptive the temporary accommodation is
- Members expressed concern that those children affected will experience disruption for a full school year

- Members queried if there had been any drops in attendance. The Assistant Director for Education and Skills confirmed this is not something that has been flagged with her.

ACTION 3 - A further briefing note on the programme of works for the Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) will be provided to members.

RESOLVED:

- 1.1 That the Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee note the content of the report which provides an update in relation to Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RACC) within Thurrock Schools.**

The Head of Education Support Services left the meeting at 19.36

34. Educational Attainment Data 2022-2023

The Head of School Effectiveness and SEND introduced the report.

- The Head of School Effectiveness and SEND confirmed that in terms of attainment levels children are not quite back to where they were before the pandemic but Thurrock children are performing better than children nationally.
- Thurrock's Looked After Children are doing better than Looked After Children nationally.
- The Head of School Effectiveness and SEND stated that schools are working hard to catch up on attendance. Attendance levels are in line with national levels but lower than before the pandemic.
- Members queried why there is a drop in how children are achieving at Key Stage 4 compared to Key Stage 2. The Assistant Director of Education and skills responded that they are looking into the transition between year 6 and year 7. Members expressed concern that there is good work going on at a primary school level which is not been translated into GCSE results and GCSE results could affect children's life opportunities.
- Members requested the data on the difference in attainment levels for disadvantaged children (on free school meals). There is a need to look at how disadvantaged children can be supported more. The Head of School Effectiveness and SEND confirmed that schools do have to report what they are using the pupil premium money for so this can be looked at.
- The Head of School Effectiveness and SEND stated that Thurrock's virtual school provides additional tutoring and support for LAC children to support them through year 10 and 11.
- The Head of School Effectiveness and SEND confirmed that all schools have target setting to improve results. All schools have an improvement plan to improve the quality of learning. The Local

Authority monitor this via their annual conversations with the Academies.

- Members queried how school attendance could be improved. The Head of School Effectiveness and SEND confirmed that the School Attendance Team meet with the schools each term regarding persistent absences. They check the policies and work with parents to try and improve attendance. Members were advised that talking to residents about attendance could help as there is a direct correlation between attendance and attainment.
- The meeting discussed Gable Hall which is currently rated by Ofsted as Inadequate. There are also two schools rated as requires improvement. From September 2024 Mossbourne will be the Trust for Gable Hall, Hassenbrook and Corringham Primary School.

RESOLVED:

- 1.1 Children's Overview & Scrutiny receive the provisional outcomes of the summer 2023 tests and examinations and commends early years' settings, schools, pupils, and parents/carers on their achievements.**
- 1.2 Children's Overview & Scrutiny formally thank our early years, school and college settings for the work that has ensured a range of positive outcomes for our children and young people.**
- 1.3 Members requested a further piece of work is completed and a report provided regarding the drop in attainment between Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 2 and a report regarding the Pupil Premium.**

35. Thurrock Childcare Sufficiency Annual Assessment 2023

The Head of School Effectiveness and SEND presented the report to the Committee.

The following key points were highlighted: -

- The report is a statutory report to help to see where settings are needed. The Government has extended entitlement to childcare and the department need to make sure that there are enough places for the increased entitlement.
- In Thurrock there is a lack of suitable buildings.
- Complaints have not been received from parents unable to find provision.
- The 0-5 population in Thurrock is decreasing. In Tilbury it is identified in the report that there is a high need for provisions in that area.
- Members queried how confident officers were that they would be able to meet the new Government targets. Officers confirmed they have meet with

colleagues in property to ensure they are aware of the Local Authority's duty to provide spaces when disposing of assets. Colleagues in planning are also aware and are always looking for private Landlords to support private businesses.

- Members queried how families are referred to the HAF programme (Holidays Activities and Food Programme) and how they ensure vulnerable groups are not missed. The Assistant Director of Education and Skills confirmed that HAF is run by Essex Activate who have a large website. Parents are made aware via Social Media and schools disseminate the information via their Newsletters. It is for children who are eligible for free school meals and the schools are good at making referrals.
- The Parent Governor representative queried the wraparound care for specialist provision schools. The Assistant Director of Education and Skills responded that they are trying to get it onsite but are also looking at transport methods such as the schools using their own minibuses.
- The Parent Governor representative queried whether Scout Halls or Village Halls could be used for nursery provision. The Head of School Effectiveness and SEND agreed they could and confirmed that they have a provision in a pub in East Tilbury.
- The Head of School Effectiveness and SEND stated more than half of Thurrock schools have nurseries and they are looking to encourage others to open a provision or have a provider on their premises.

RESOLVED:

- 1.1 That Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee review the Annual Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2023 and offer any additional comment or feedback.**

36. Items Raised by Thurrock Local Safeguarding Children Partnership - Report to Follow

The Business Manager for the Thurrock Local Children Safeguarding Partnership presented the report to the Committee.

The following key points were highlighted: -

- Members queried what emerging risks were highlighted by the Walk Online Roadshow. The TLCSP Business Manager confirmed that children are being encouraged to engage in online pranks, taking nude pictures and divulging their address.
- The TLSCP stated that the Police have given a presentation on Right Care Right Person. The Executive Director of Children's Services confirmed that the Police remain a statutory partner in safeguarding, and they have the powers to get into a property and not social workers. They have been told if the police call-handler decides it is not something the police are going to respond to they can escalate the decision to refuse to help. The police have been asked to come back in 3-6 months to confirm the impact of this to the Health and Wellbeing Board and Safeguarding Board as the department do not want children to be falling through the net.

RESOLVED:

- 1.1 That the Committee note the update on the work of the TLSCP and the progress made on Thematic Review Action Plan to date.**

37. Update on Thurrock Adult Community College

The Acting Principal of Thurrock Adult Community College presented the report to the Committee.

The following key points were highlighted: -

- In May 2023 the College underwent an inspection from Ofsted and received an overall grading of 'requires improvement'. The Acting Principal set out the actions that they are taking to improve.

At 21.26 the Chair extended standing orders so the meeting could continue after 9.30pm

- Members queried if the Leadership were aware of the issues, why were they not addressed? The Acting Principal stated that they lost a lot of experienced staff during the pandemic and staff recruitment was very difficult. Salaries are much lower than in schools and colleges. Staff capacity did not allow the issues to be addressed all at once and certain areas were prioritised. The College is now fully staffed and they have created a new post to support the management team with the quality improvement.
- Members commended the Acting Principal for her transparency and honesty and noted how passionate she was about making the required improvements.
- Members queried if they planned to bring apprenticeships back. The Acting Principal confirmed that they probably would not apply to get back on the register to provide apprenticeships for the next couple of years but could consider this in the future.
- Members queried what drives teachers to work at the Adult Community College. The Acting Principal confirmed that many teachers are parents of school aged children. The classes run around school times to enable teachers to drop off and collect their children from schools. Unlike in schools teachers are not required to have a degree and cost is not a barrier to them getting a teacher qualification. It is possible to obtain a teaching qualification within 18 months and within a year if you have a degree.

RESOLVED:

- 1.1 Children's Overview & Scrutiny to gain an understanding of how the college's curriculum offer meets local need and priorities.**
- 1.2 Children's Overview & Scrutiny to gain an understanding of the funding streams the college uses to deliver provision to residents of Thurrock.**

- 1.3 **Children's Overview & Scrutiny to have an update on the college's actions and progress on the areas for improvement identified in the Ofsted inspection report published in June 2023.**

38. Work Programme

In relation to the March meeting the Senior Democratic Services officer confirmed the following reports would be removed.

- Update from Working Group on Mental Health, as the group is yet to meet
- Update from Working Group on Healthy Living (Childhood Obesity), as the group is yet to meet
- Items raised by Thurrock Local Safeguarding Children Partnership Board as it has been agreed these reports will be presented to the committee on alternate meetings.

Members requested in the next municipal year the following reports: -

- An update report from the Thurrock Adult Community College after the next Ofsted inspection
- A report on the drop in attainment between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4
- A report on the data regarding attainment and the pupil premium

The meeting finished at 9.51 pm

Approved as a true and correct record

CHAIR

DATE

Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact Democratic Services at Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk

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Children's Services
Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meeting
Tuesday 12 March 2024
Youth Cabinet Update



Purpose of the report: The Youth Cabinet would like to provide members with an update of their work.

1.1 Make Your Mark 2024

On Monday 29 January, the Make Your Mark 2024 campaign kicked-off with the aim of inspiring young people across the borough to take part in the UK's largest youth consultation.

Make Your Mark gives young people aged 11-18 the opportunity to vote for the topics they feel are the most important to them locally and across the UK.

To kick-off the campaign, USP College in Grays was visited by Thurrock's Member of Youth Parliament, who was on-hand to explain the importance of voting to the students. *See Appendix A images.*

A replica polling station was opened-up at the college to give students the opportunity to cast their vote and have a taste of what it will be like to participate in elections once they turn 18. For Make Your Mark, young people are asked to vote on one topic from a list of 10 themes.

Thurrock's Member of Youth Parliament said: *"It was a pleasure to visit USP College to raise awareness of the biggest youth consultation in the UK. Hopefully the campaign will inspire more young people to get involved and have a say so that we can ensure that the issues that are affecting our generation the most can be addressed in parliament."*

After the closing date on 8 March, Thurrock submitted its results to the British Youth Council which will feed into the overall national results. The winning topic will be announced at the end of March and will become one of the Youth Cabinet's campaign focuses for the next two years.

1.2 SEND Youth Voice

On Wednesday 21 February 2024, the first SEND Youth Voice Meeting took place at Grangewaters Outdoor Education Centre with the support of Thurrock Youth Cabinet.

The day saw 5 young people take part in the activities to encourage them to find their voice and develop their views and opinions. Activities on the day included, bushcraft and team building to break down barriers to communication, and to build rapport as a group.

The next meeting date is in July and the young people are looking forward to coming together as a group to continue this work.

One of the young people said, *“I have really enjoyed today, getting to know a new group of people, and taking part in the activities. I’m looking forward to the next youth voice day”*.

We are still looking for more sign ups. Please promote the opportunity within your networks and encourage eligible students to sign up. See *Appendix B image*.

Work on the horizon

1.3 2024 Work Focus

At the end of 2023, Thurrock Youth Cabinet voted on the themes they would like to focus on and work towards in 2024. The top three issues identified as the most important were:

1. Youth Crime and Safety
2. Improving Wellbeing
3. The Environment

An overarching theme this year is to increase SEND youth voice, supporting and developing a key group of young people that are representative of their peers. Together with the Youth Cabinet they will be involved in the 3 chosen areas plus the topic of the Make Your Mark outcome.

Over the course of this year, Thurrock Youth Cabinet plan to run projects, activities and campaigns that will bring awareness to these themes, and plan to involve other young people from across the borough in their work. The Youth Cabinet believes that these three issues are currently affecting young people the most in Thurrock.

If you would like to work in partnership with Thurrock Youth Cabinet on one of these themes, then please contact us at youthcabinet@thurrock.gov.uk.

The Youth Cabinet can support in many ways to ensure that you include youth voice in plans and developments that affect them. This may be in the creation and dissemination of surveys in schools and colleges, by scrutinising papers and plans to give their views and opinions, by hosting guest speakers at their monthly meetings and by attending meetings (where possible) to represent the Youth Cabinet.

1.4 **Member of Youth Parliament (MYP) Elections**

Elections for Thurrock's new Member of Youth Parliament (MYP) will take place mid-March. Thurrock has six MYP candidates. The successful candidate will be announced at the end of March alongside the Make Your Mark national result. We shall update you at the next meeting.

Appendix

Appendix A

Thurrock's MYP, Lionel, visiting USP College in Grays to launch Make Your Mark 2024





Appendix B



THURROCK
COUNCIL



YOUTH VOICE GROUP SUPPORTED BY THURROCK YOUTH CABINET

Are you 16-25 years old?

Would you like to have a say on life,
learning and living in Thurrock?

If so, Thurrock Youth Cabinet would
like to hear from you!

Do you identify
as neurodiverse,
additional needs,
special needs, SEND
(Special Educational
Needs and Disabilities) ?

Join a new Youth Voice group and turn your ideas into action.

- Attend three times a year at Grangewaters in South Ockendon
- Lunch, drinks and an activity provided
- Meet new people (16-25 olds with additional needs)
- Collaborate with Thurrock Youth Cabinet members and staff
- Have your say and be listened to!



To sign up or find
out more, email today at
youthvoice@thurrock.gov.uk

12 March 2024	ITEM: 6
Children’s Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee	
Annual Report of Portfolio Holder for Children’s Social Care and Early Help	
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: N/A
Report of: Cllr Barry Johnson, Cabinet Member for Children’s Services	
Accountable Assistant Director: Janet Simon – Assistant Director Children’s Services	
Accountable Director: Sheila Murphy – Executive Director Children’s Services	
This report is Public	
Version: Committee	

Executive Summary

This report is to update the committee on the work that has been undertaken by Children’s Social Care year to date, service priorities and to highlight the successes and challenges experienced by the service. The following sets out key highlights during the year (April – December 2023) for Children’s Social Care and Early Help, the work undertaken, priorities and challenges.

The most significant challenges for the service, and for the children, young people, and families the service work with, continues to be fostering recruitment and retention, placement sufficiency; recruitment and retention of qualified social work staff, initial health assessments for children who are looked after; and the financial pressures facing the council.

Children’s social care has continued to contribute to savings as set out in Appendix 1, but in doing so have also ensured that there is no negative impact on the effort and progress that has been made by the service over recent years. Caseloads and spans of control remain manageable. The service continues to embed the Think Family operating model and our early help offer to support statutory social work.

Children’s Social Care, Early Help and Prevention

Children’s Social Care and Early Help have a continuous Development Plan which drives consistent good practice and good outcomes for children. The Executive Director of Children Services has continued to chair a monthly Development Board which holds Heads of Service and the Assistant Director to account. I regularly attend the Board which provides me with an oversight of the services, it’s challenges and areas of improvement

and success. The Board reports on Progress and sets stretch targets and provides me the opportunity to ask questions and provide appropriate challenge to the service. I also meet regularly with the DCS and AD for Children Social Care and Early Help and am provided with updates on the services.

Key priorities for the service over the year has included:

1. Keeping children safe by responding quickly and keeping children at the centre of our thinking and actions and ensuring they receive the right service at the right time.
2. Development of a refreshed and increased focus on recruitment and retention to further reduce vacancies for qualified social workers and to achieve a permanent establishment.
3. Reducing the numbers of Care Leavers who are NEET.
4. Ensuring all Care Leavers have a Pathway Plan that makes sense to them and that they have co-produced.
5. Improvement in the numbers of Return Home Interviews which provide quality information to reduce missing episodes.
6. Increasing the numbers of CLA having a timely Initial Health Assessment.
7. Reduction of children and young people at risk of CE and CSE.
8. Increasing placement sufficiency through recruitment to expand our Thurrock based foster carers and adopters and developing local registered residential provision for Thurrock children.
9. The development of the Start for Life, Family Hubs model and embedding the Think Family approach across CSC.
10. Relaunch of the Children in Care Council and development of a Care Leavers Forum.
11. Focus on reflective supervision to promote critical thinking and a better understanding of the quality of practice and areas for practice development.
12. Preparing the service for regulatory external Ofsted inspections.

1.2 Quality Assurance

Quality Assurance is key in maintaining and improving performance and provides a range of services to support and measure quantitative and qualitative information about the services being provided to children, young people, and their families. Learning from audits links directly to training events to improve practice resulting in enhanced outcomes for children. The model of practice is strength-based Signs of Safety which is embedded in practice, processes and planning. This is set in the overarching context of Think family, where working with extended families and networks is part of practice and leads to planning with children and their families.

Child Protection Chairs ensure there are SMART and robust plans in place to safeguard children, one Chair focuses on independent chairing of Child in Need meetings, ensuring that children in need of safeguarding are identified, but also where possible we work with families as children in need.

The Independent Review Officers (IRO) oversee the plans for all children and young people who are looked after and also hear the views of children and young people about their

plans. IROs will, where necessary raise concerns with the operational teams and partner agencies when there are plans that are drifting or not meeting children and young people's needs. IROs also hold a follow on review after a young person has reached the age of 18 to support and monitor the plans during the transition to adulthood. Alongside reviews, family network meetings are encouraged to support young people make links within their network as they move into adulthood.

CLA reviews and CP conferences are nearly always held within timescales with few exceptions and are well attended by partner agencies with only occasional unforeseen situations leading to the meeting being out of timescale. The majority of records are circulated within timescale to ensure the network and the family are aware of the plan. Children young people and their families' views are always taken into account in the planning and where possible Family Network Meeting inform the planning. IROs and CP chairs ensure that advocates are engaged for children, young people and families who need them or who have requested them. This is an independent commissioned service which provides independent visitors for looked after children and young people.

Quality of practice is also monitored by audit, including multi-agency audits, performance data, service reports and feedback from complaints and compliments from partners and service users. Over 70% of Audit's are graded good or better. At least 30% of audits are moderated by senior managers. Those audits graded less than good are tracked and re-audited. A mixture of desk side compliance audits, generic audits and themed dip samples are part of the annual program. The generic audits always include attempts to talk to the child, young person or family and also the allocated worker. The generic audit covers all areas of practice including management oversight and supervision.

The Participation & Engagement Officer engages with children and young people to hear their views. There is an opportunity for participants in CP conferences and CLA reviews to give feedback. Assessments and pathway plans provide an opportunity for providing feedback too and there is also a focus on gaining feedback biannually through a feedback month.

Learning from audits and feedback is shared with relevant teams and managers, where necessary an action plan is put in place and also learning that will support good practice is commissioned and it is ensured that relevant staff attend.

The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) who co-ordinates allegations against people in a position of trust – provides a responsive and professional service to all agencies- and tracks any cases to ensure that all the necessary action is taken. The LADO also provides consultation service which is well used by partner agencies especially schools. This ensures that agencies who work with children have robust systems in place and also are clear about safer recruitment requirements.

The Quality Assurance service work in partnership with the Local Safeguarding Children's Partnership (LSCP) and the corporate Organisational Learning and Development Directorate to ensure that the training and seminar events are provided as required and coordinated and partners and council employees are kept up to date with safeguarding requirements. The LSCP runs a number of events to raise awareness about safeguarding children including the Walk online Road show which shines a spotlight and focus at on-line risks to children. All children in school years 5, 6 and 7 are invited

Children Social Care welcomes external review of the quality of services and since January 2023 there have been 3 such reviews. These reviews lead to action plans to develop and improve practice where necessary but also provide assurance about the quality of social work practice already occurring. The Directorate also takes opportunity to learn from individual cases and from national safeguarding reviews.

1.3 Child Protection / Child in Need

MASH

The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) has continued to maintain a consistent application of threshold whilst offering support and challenge to partners to promote best outcomes for children. The service continues to ensure relationships within the multi-agency group are strengthened through the sharing of knowledge and skills. Multi-Agency audits remain a system for reviewing and improving practice, and this well embedded across the multi-agency group, ensuring a good understanding and sharing of threshold across the multi-agency. The Audits show that the service is working with the right families at the right time and at the right level. The re-referral rate year to date 23/24 (YTD) is 18.4% which is below Statistical Neighbours (21%) average YTD and the national average of 22% which is an indication that threshold is being appropriately applied.

Children in Need (CIN) and Children subject to a Child Protection (CP) Plan:

Thurrock has seen a small reduction in contacts and referrals, and we continue to work closely with partners to ensure that children are not receiving a statutory service where it is not required, and where Universal or Early Help services are better placed to support children and their families. We are confident in the threshold decisions being made which are reviewed through audit process and backed up by the rereferral rate of 18.4% against the national average of 22%.

Thurrock's CIN cohort has seen a reduction to end of the third quarter which is indicative of the work done to date to provide services much earlier. The cohort was 333 per 10,000 of the childhood population in 2021/22 and 314 per 10,000 in 2022/23 which was below statistical neighbours at 331, YTD at the end of quarter 3 for 2023/24 per 10,000 children we have a rate of 253.

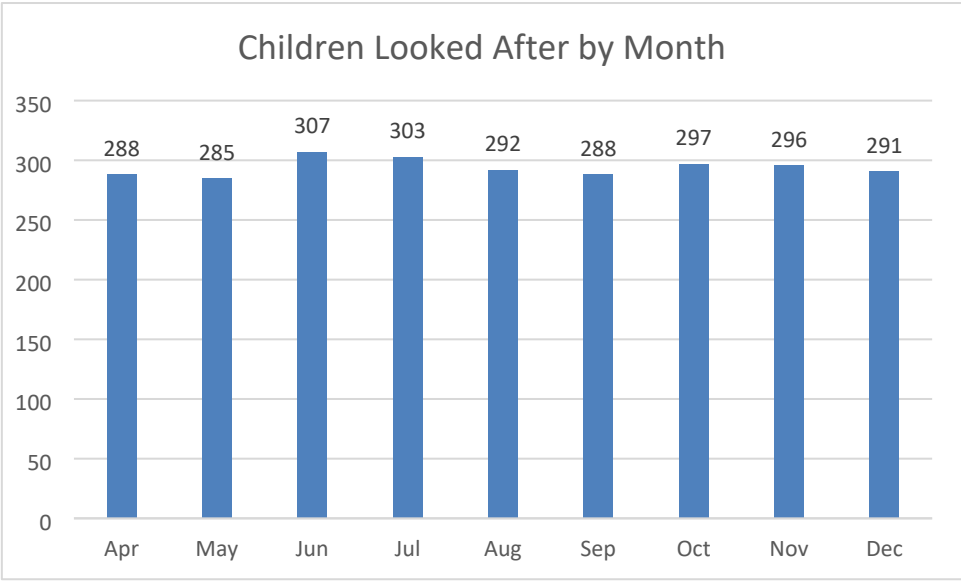
The number of children subject to Child Protection (CP) has seen a small and steady incremental rise YTD and 135 children were subject to a Child Protection Plan at the end of quarter 3 (30 per 10,000). Thurrock's CP cohort was 25 per 10,000 in 2021/22 and 24 per 10,000 in 2022/23. Whilst this is an increase performance remains below statistical neighbour averages of 39 per 10,000 and National averages of 53 per 10,000.

1.4 Children Looked After

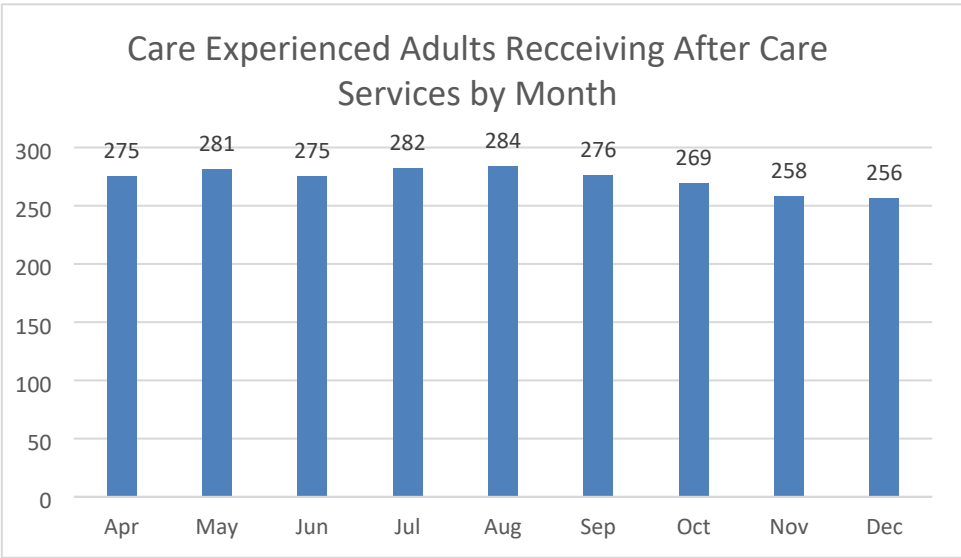
All members and officers, regardless of their role are corporate parents to our looked after children and care experienced young people and I take this responsibility very seriously. Corporate Parenting refers to the collective responsibility of public bodies to act as a parent for children in care, ensuring their well-being and future prospects. The

concept gained prominence with the Children and Families Act 2014, aiming to improve outcomes for children in the care system. Local authorities, health services, schools, and other institutions are designated as "corporate parents" tasked with safeguarding and promoting the welfare of these vulnerable individuals.

The principles of Corporate Parenting underscore the need for collaborative efforts to address the complex challenges faced by children in care. It emphasises the importance of consistency in support, equal opportunities, and a holistic approach to their development. Corporate parents are expected to prioritize the educational, emotional, and physical needs of these children, mirroring the responsibilities of parents. The follow graph sets out the number of children Thurrock Council has been responsible for YTD:



Thurrock Council continues to meet its statutory responsibilities to Care Experienced Young People up to the age of 25; the following graph sets out the number of young adults that have been supported by the After Care Service YTD:



The number of children in the care of Thurrock Council is relatively stable overall. Children enter care for a range of reasons, most commonly due to the need to safeguard their welfare in line with Thurrock Council's statutory duties. Others enter care by voluntary agreement due to a breakdown in relationships with their family, their status as UASC or due to the impact of their disability needs.

Plans for all children are reviewed to ensure the correct children come into care. Application of thresholds for Children Looked After (CLA) are consistently applied, and court proceedings are only issued where necessary. This oversight of care entry has been effective in supporting timely removal in the best interests of a child and ensuring all options within the family network are fully explored.

Where children remain in the care of Thurrock Council long term, planning for adulthood begins just before the 16th birthday and continues up to the age of 21 years old. Care experienced young people are entitled to an after care services up to the age of 25 years old. The After Care service has been reviewed in the last year to develop the capacity of the team and a new local offer has been launched¹. The aim for the After Care service is to provide a clear pathway for young people to transition safely and in a planned way to adulthood.

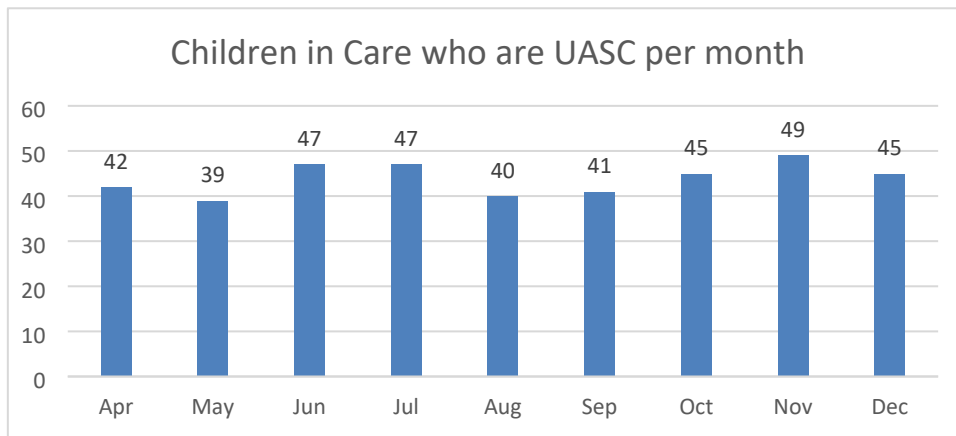
Thurrock Council and Partners provide tailored assistance to young people in education, employment, emotional well-being and developing self-sufficiency. Services ensure a continuum of care offering guidance on housing, mental health, adult social care needs and financial well-being. Over half of our care experienced young people are in education, employment and training, with 23 young people attending University. Young people are offered support to get ready to live independently via Head start Housing, Staying Put (living with their foster carers after 18) and other schemes. Twenty young people moved on to social housing in 2023.

Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children

Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) are separated migrant minors seeking asylum without a present parent or legal guardian. Often fleeing conflict or persecution, they face unique vulnerabilities. Thurrock remains a point of arrival for UASC and has developed expertise in supporting these young people. All local authorities are required to support a quota of UASC determined by Central Government at 0.1% of their childhood population to ensure a fair distribution nationally of UASC responsibility. For Thurrock this number is 44. Thurrock has been consistently at or slightly over this quota for much of this year. When Thurrock is over its quota, young people are transferred to another local authority who has not reached 0.1% via the National Transfer Scheme.

The below graphs show the number of UASC that were looked after at the end of each month:

¹ <https://www.thurrock.gov.uk/sites/default/files/assets/documents/care-leavers-localoffer-2023-v02.pdf>



Fostering, Special Guardianship and Adoption

In line with statutory duties² the Council's Sufficiency Strategy³ has been updated in respect of placements for children who cannot live at with their parents. Children and Young People's views have contributed to the development of this strategy and their key messages are set out below:



Services continue to focus on the development of local placements for children in line with these themes;

² Under Section 22 of the Children Act 1989 (amended by the Children and Young Persons Act 2008)

³ <https://democracy.thurrock.gov.uk/documents/s41889/Appendix%201%20-%20Children%20Looked%20After%20and%20Care%20Leaver%20Sufficiency%20Strategy%20Update.pdf>

- Recruitment of Prospective Adopters is positive, with recruitment in line with regional needs
- The number of children's homes within Thurrock has increased and we engage with providers at the earliest stage to use those homes for local children where possible
- The majority of children in foster care are placed with Foster Carers approved by Thurrock Council and there has been a small increase in the number of approved fostering household this year
- The Think Family approach informs our placement decisions ensuring that parents, grandparents and other people close to a child are supported to care for them where possible. This may be as approved foster carers, under an agreement to place with parents or under a court order (Special Guardianship/Child Arrangement Order)

Children with Disabilities and Special Educational Needs receiving support from Children's Social Care

Children's Social Care supports 287 children with an identified disability or Education and Health care Plan across a range of teams. This is in addition to the support provided by Family Hubs, Early Help Services and the Short Break and Outreach Service. Whilst all teams across the service support children with disabilities and their families, the Children with Disabilities Team support children where the impact of the disability is severe or profound. Close links are maintained between social care, education and health to join up services and the service is working towards a one plan approach

A focus this year has been to ensure 'Think Family' is embedded across CWD, offering parenting courses aimed at families who have children with severe and profound needs, increasing the use of family network meetings and reviewing our carers assessments and EHCPs to ensure that they are good quality and helping us to accurately identify and assess need. There is a recognised need to increase the capacity of community and residential short breaks providers, and this will be retendered in early 2024 with the aim of securing greater options for families.

1.5 Youth Service and Prevention and Support

Early Help and Intervention:

Our Prevention and Support Service (PASS) undertakes time-limited bespoke work with families who do not require statutory intervention. There is strong partnership working between the PASS Service, statutory teams, and partner agencies. Early Help Services continue to provide whole family intervention to families at the right time to prevent escalation into statutory services and supporting children to remain at home with their families. Allocations of children into PASS have decreased in line with

the increased capacity and additional resources available through the Family Hub Start for Life Programme.

Family Hubs

In April 2022 we became one of 75 local authorities eligible to join the Department for Education and the Department of Health and Social Care's grant funded Start for Life, Family Hub programme Early Help Services are integral to the Start for Life, Family Hubs Programme. This programme also reflects our Think Family approach.

We opened 8 Family Hubs between April and July 2023. These Hubs and their network provides services for Children and Families aged 0-18, or up to 25 with SEND.

Family Hubs in Thurrock are delivering:

- support to parents and carers in partnership with the Voluntary Service, NELFT, Local Authority Services and Commissioned services, so they are able to nurture their babies and children, improving health and education outcomes for all in the 3 localities.
- contribute to a reduction in inequalities in health and education outcomes for babies, children and families across Thurrock, by ensuring that support provided is communicated to all parents and carers via a dedicated website, including those who are hardest to reach and/or most in need of it
- building the evidence base for what works when it comes to improving health and education outcomes for babies, children and families in different delivery contexts.

There has been a significant increase in Family Hub registrations and the engagement of parents and carers following new services being provided from the Family Hubs. 3 of the 8 Family Hubs were officially opened by the Mayor in October half term.

Think Family Practice approach

We adopted a Think Family approach as our operating model in April 2022, building on the effective and long established 'whole family' approach used by our Early Help services. Feedback from parents and professionals has helped shape this way of working. The approach is strengths and relationship-based and compliments Signs of Safety and our other existing practice models. Regular Family Network Meetings starting from the initial assessment is helping families to develop family plans which underpin their child's local authority plan, and importantly, give young people and families more agency in problem solving in a way that will continue to support them when our involvement ends.

By adopting this approach, we have increased the number of children who can remain living safely within their connected family networks, contributing to the diversion of children from becoming looked after or entering court proceedings. Parenting assessments and Parenting Programmes previously commissioned continue to be undertaken in-house. This has led to tailored interventions with families with the most complex needs, including successful reunification and placement stability work.

There continues to be a focus on engaging with fathers / males, children on the edge of care, and families before they enter pre-proceedings Public Law Outline (PLO).

Youth Justice Service (formerly Youth Offending Service)

The Youth Justice Service changed its name from the Youth Offending Service in January 2024.

The change of name is part of the National Youth Justice Boards emphasis on putting Children first.

A Child First approach in Thurrock means putting our children at the heart of service provision and seeing the whole child, and not just the offending behaviours. This is done by identifying and tackling the influences on offending, and identifying and promoting the influences that will help our children and young people to move to pro-social, positive behaviour. The Multi- Agency Board, chaired by the Executive Director of Children's Services and also attended by myself has also changed it's name and is now the Thurrock Youth Justice Governance Board, in line with the change in emphasis.

Thurrock's Youth Justice (YJS) Service supervises 10-18 year olds who have been sentenced by a court, or who have come to the attention of the police because of their offending behaviour but have not been charged – instead, they are dealt with out of court. YJS's are statutory partnerships , and they are multi-disciplinary, to deal with the needs of the whole child. The service is staffed from local authority social care and education, the police, the National Probation Service and local health services. YJS work is governed and shaped by a range of legislation and guidance specific to the youth justice sector (such as the National Standards for Youth Justice) or else applicable across the criminal justice sector (for example Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements guidance). Some funding is provided by the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales (YJB) which also monitors our performance and issues guidance about how things are to be done.

The number of young people sentenced by the courts has reduced during and since Covid 19. YJS do a wide range of things to support young people under supervision. For example, restorative justice schemes, focused on repairing the harm caused by the offender, and we operate a referral order panel, where members of the local community meet with individual offenders to reduce their risk of reoffending. The characteristics of young people under YJS supervision vary considerably, with some offending being transient and unlikely to cause harm to others. However, a minority have committed serious offences or are showing warning signs that they might. We ensure that each young person is assessed by YJS, to judge the extent to which they pose a risk of harm to others in their family or the community. The YJS uses AssetPlus, developed by the YJB, to assess young people and make plans with them. YJS works with young people to reduce the risk of harm, and serious harm, as well as reducing the risk of reoffending. Serious harm is defined by YJB guidance as 'death or serious personal injury whether physical or psychological'. Risk of serious harm is the imminence of this happening, and the impact if it did.

Reoffending rates

	Thurrock	Region	Essex	Family	England
Quarterly (<u>3</u> month cohort)	42.9%	33.6%	34.7%	29.5%	30.4%
Aggregated yearly (<u>12</u> month cohort)	36.4%	31%	25.7%	30.3%	30.5%

The latest MOJ reoffending data published (YDS 115) indicates that Thurrock's annual aggregated reoffending figure is 36.4%. This has reduced since the last quarter but still sits above our recognised comparators. There is no evidence to suggest this is the start of a trend or any obvious rationale as to the increase. The low numbers in the cohort ensures volatility in this figure.

The Ministry of Justice launched the Turnaround Programme in January 2023 which has secured additional funding to deliver a new preventative services. The service aims to divert more young people away from the criminal justice system by offering early intervention. We have an overall target to be met by the end of the programme in March 2025. We are currently on track to meet this target of 58 closed cases. The current figure is 30. A qualified Probation Officer has been recruited on a fixed term contract funded by the Turnaround grant to lead on this area and drive prevention.

Statutory Interventions

A statutory intervention is undertaken when a child has been convicted by the courts or made subject to a Youth Caution or Youth Conditional Caution and consequently has YJS intervention.

As at the third quarter of 2023/24 there were 31 children recorded as having statutory outcomes with Thurrock YJS and 6 of these children were looked after. The 6 looked after children represented 19% of the young people completing statutory interventions. This is in line with the trend for the last five years.

Youth Detention Accommodation

Under the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012, any child that is made subject to a Youth Detention Accommodation Order (remand in custody) by the Courts automatically becomes looked after by the local authority.

No new children were made subject to Youth Detention Accommodation during the third quarter of 2023/24. We currently have 3 children under the age of 18 in custody, 2 are serving custodial sentences and one is on remand and therefore a Child Looked After due to their remand in custody.

Out of court disposal panel

As at the third quarter of the 2023/24 financial year the Out of Court Disposal Panel dealt with 45 offences relating to 44 Thurrock children, of which one child had looked

after status. Thurrock YJS and Essex Police are committed to the national protocol¹ aimed at reducing the criminalisation of Children Looked After. This approach will be supported with a local pan-Essex protocol to ensure there is a focus on diverting any child (where possible) who is Looked After from the Criminal Justice System.

Appendix 1

Children Social Care Budget

Children Portfolio	2023/24 Indicative Budget £'000	2024/25 Indicative Budget £'000
Children and Family Services	35,615	38,335
Children Portfolio Total	35,615	38,335

In determining the Children Portfolio budget, the following levels of growth and savings have been applied, as reflected in the MTFS.

Growth

Children Portfolio Growth	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000
Children's Placements	1,432	2,446
Children's Legal Proceedings	450	0
Children with Disabilities - Short Breaks	0	650
Additional Social Care Grant	0	1,363
Total	1,882	4,459
Additional Social Care Grant funding	0	(1,363)
Total MTFS Growth	1,882	3,096

Childrens Placements

The placements budget continues to experience increased cost and complexity of need. Significant cost pressures are generated by moves within care. Children with the most complex needs are experiencing a high level of placement instability driven by both providers giving notice on their placement and by intervention by the regulator. Thurrock is reliant on external providers for residential and complex care including SEN placements.

Childrens with Disabilities

Demand for short breaks and direct payments to support young people remaining in their home. This is essential early intervention that supports the child to remain with parents.

Savings

The following savings have been identified within Children Social Care for the period 2022/23 to 2024/25:

Savings Narrative	2022/23 £'000	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000	Total £'000
Review of Children's Social Care operating model.	1,337	78	233	1,648
Out of Hours Duty Team - Revised operating model		255		255
Increase the number of Internal Foster Carers	300			300
Review of children with Continuing Health Care to secure appropriate Health contribution		200	250	450
Cross Cutting			390	390
Children Portfolio Total	1,637	533	873	3,043

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12 March 2024	ITEM: 7
Children’s Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee	
Childhood Obesity in Thurrock	
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Not applicable
Report of: Sareena Gill (Senior Public Health Programme Manager)	
Accountable Assistant Director: Sara Godward (Assistant Director and Consultant in Public Health)	
Accountable Director: Jo Broadbent (Director of Public Health)	
This report is Public	
Version: Committee	

Executive Summary

During the Children’s Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 16 November 2023 concern was raised on the local rates of childhood obesity in Thurrock. Members requested that a report was tabled for the meeting on 12 March 2024. This report sets out to provide Members with the local picture for overweight and obesity in children and update on the measures in place to tackle to issue.

Obesity is a complex problem with multiple causes and significant implications for health, as well as a wide range of socio-and economic impacts. Thurrock has concerning rates of overweight and obesity amongst children and adults. Tackling this issue is a priority for the Council, as reflected in the Thurrock Health and Wellbeing Strategy goal to ‘*Work with communities to reduce obesity in Thurrock*’.

Thurrock has adopted a ‘whole systems’ approach to tackling obesity. A whole systems approach refers to the network of broad and interlinking factors that contribute to a solution or problem. Traditional approaches that focus on single interventions have been shown to be ineffectual at reducing the prevalence of obesity at a population level. Conversely, collaboration across stakeholders to deliver coordinated action and multiple initiatives is vital to success. Multiple sectors including health, social care, planning, housing, transport and environment all have a role to play, as do our local businesses, workplaces and the wider community themselves all by jointly making better use of resources and working towards a vision of better health and wellbeing. Public Health lead and coordinate the implementation of the Whole Systems Obesity Strategy and other strategic and operational actions to prevent and address overweight and obesity locally. An update on this programme, with a particular focus on children and young people is detailed within the report.

Commissioner Comment:

Not applicable.

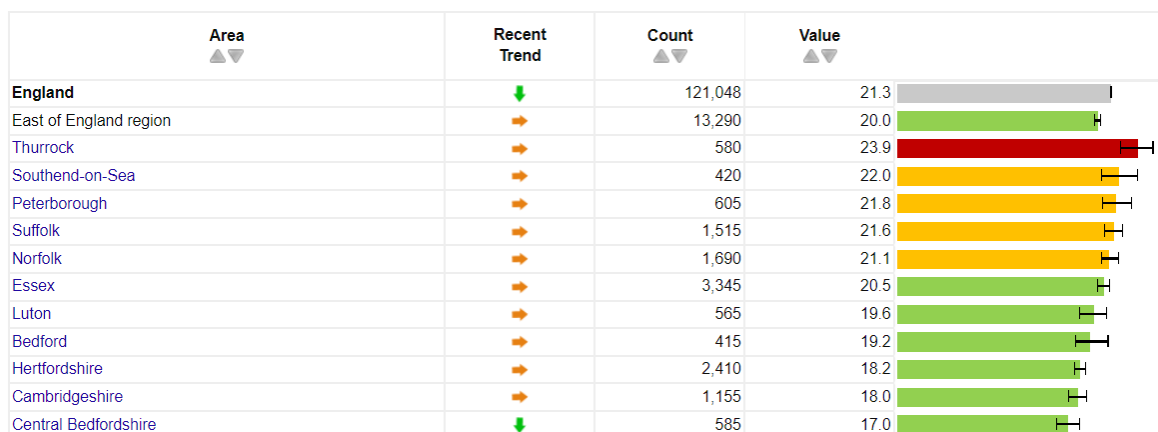
1. Recommendation(s)

Version Committee – Draft ready for submission to public committee

- 1.1 **Members are asked to note the current rates and distribution of childhood obesity in Thurrock and actions taken in support of addressing this issue.**
- 1.2 **Members are asked to raise awareness of local opportunities to support the Whole Systems Obesity Strategy and its associated deliverables.**

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 Thurrock Council's [Whole Systems Obesity \(WSO\) Strategy](#) was developed as the key driver for preventing and reducing obesity in Thurrock. The strategy outlines 5 goals highlighting areas within the system where there is scope to influence and promote healthier lifestyles leading to healthier weights in the local population:
- Goal A – Enabling settings, schools and services to contribute to children and young people achieving a healthy weight.
 - Goal B – Increasing Positive Community Influences.
 - Goal C – Improving the food environment and making healthier choices easier.
 - Goal D – Improving the built environment and getting the physically inactive active.
 - Goal E – Improving the identification and management of obesity.
- 2.2 The WSO Strategy is based on the evidence of the [Whole Systems Obesity Joint Strategic Needs Assessment](#) published in 2017 by the Public Health Team. Although the strategy was initially set to run from 2018-2021 the ambition and deliverables are still relevant and inform both strategic and operational delivery at present. The strategy will be refreshed in the future if required.
- 2.3 During 2023/24, 2 separate strategic groups were set up to support the delivery of the WSO Strategy and ensure a system-led approach to addressing overweight and obesity locally is implemented. Each group brings together relevant personnel from public sector services, private sector and voluntary sectors.
- 2.4 The 'Thurrock All Age Healthy Weight Strategic Partnership' drives strategic transformation and system improvements across the weight management agenda. This includes but is not limited to; increasing successful referrals into weight management services, improving workforce training and development for obesity outcomes, increased use of communications, improved utilisation of health intelligence to inform commissioning and improving health outcomes for the most vulnerable related to obesity through a focus on reducing health inequities.
- 2.5 The Child Weight Management Taskforce was set up to primarily focus on embedding the learnings from the pilot year of the Tier 2 Child Weight Management Service (provided by BeeZee Bodies) into the subsequent year and rapidly increase referrals to and uptake of the programme. The group recently expanded its focus to other strategic and operational tasks, including but not limited to; increasing uptake of the Healthy Start Scheme and the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme, supporting schools to offer healthier options, and supporting the training and development of staff to address healthy weight matters.
- 2.6 The 2022/23 National Childhood Measurement Programme (NCMP) data shows that 23.9% of Reception Year children in Thurrock were overweight or obese. This is the worst rate in the East of England, where the average is 20% and significantly higher than the England rate of 21.3% (see Figure 1).



Source: OHID, using National Child Measurement Programme, NHS England

Figure 1: Rates of overweight and obesity in Thurrock amongst Reception Year children in comparison to Local Authorities in the East of England

2.7 The prevalence of excess weight increases with age. In Thurrock, 38.7% of Year 6 children were recorded as overweight or obese. This rate is significantly higher than the regional and England rates of 34.2% and 36.6% respectively (see Figure 2).

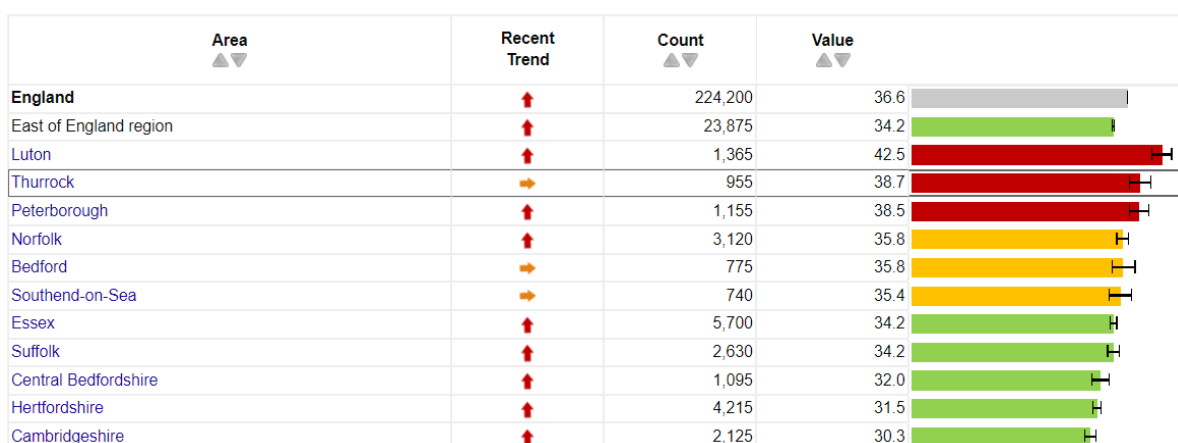


Figure 2: Rates of overweight and obesity in Thurrock amongst Year 6 children in comparison to Local Authorities in the East of England

2.8 In Thurrock there are more boys than girls who are classed as overweight or obese, particularly in Year 6 (34% vs 31%).

2.9 Excess weight amongst children in Thurrock does not affect ethnic groups equally, with those from Black, Asian and mixed ethnic groups experiencing the highest rates. Amongst Year 6 children 40% of mixed ethnicity children are overweight/obese, compared to 38% of the Black ethnic group; 34% of the Asian ethnic group; 33% of the Chinese Ethnic group and 29% of the White ethnic group children.

2.10 The problem of excess weight spans across all wards within Thurrock and as such requires a borough wide response. However, in Thurrock there is a strong link between obesity and socio-economic deprivation, with rates 3 times higher in the most deprived quintile compared to the least deprived quintile. This trend is observed in both Reception Year and Year 6 children and is higher than the national trend where rates are twice as high in the most deprived quintile vs the least deprived. The Year 6 obesity variance by ward is illustrated in Figure 3 below.

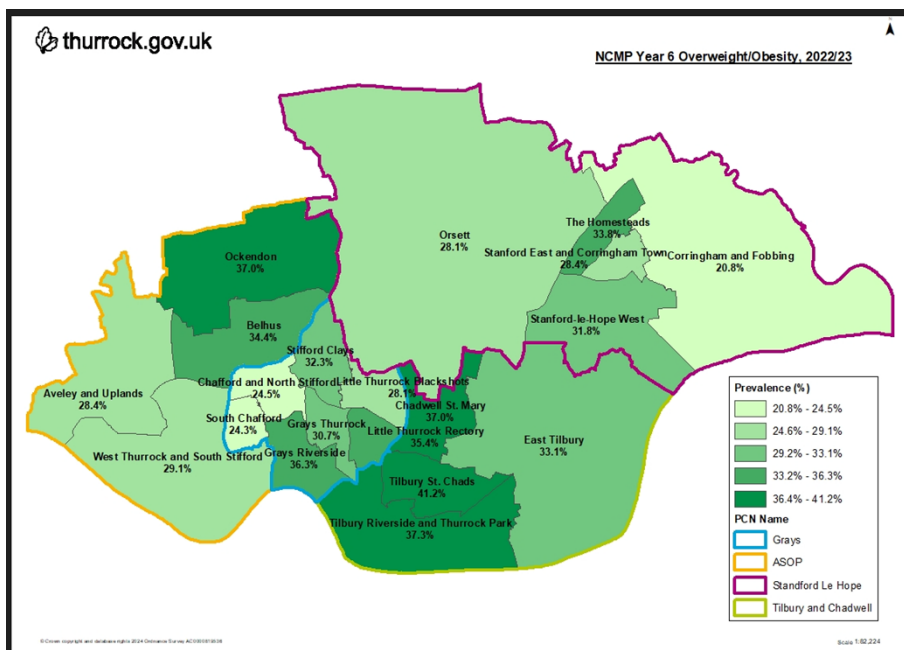


Figure 3: Year 7 rates of overweight and obesity in Thurrock, by ward

- 2.11 Obesity in childhood is linked to many health complications and tends to indicate the child will be obese as an adult. Data based on the Active Lives Adult Survey 2021/22 shows Thurrock has a high percentage of adults classified as overweight or obese, at 69.7%. This is higher than the regional and national averages of 63.9% and 63.9% respectively.
- 2.12 Between 1 February 2022 and 31 January 2023, Thurrock Public Health team put in place a grant arrangement with BeeZee Bodies to deliver a Tier 2 Weight Management Service for children and young people in Thurrock. This was a one-year grant funded arrangement with Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF) monies, following the disruption to services caused by services being redirected to support COVID and school closures. Prior to this, the delivery in schools was primarily focussed on prevention and not delivering weight management interventions.
- 2.13 Disappointingly, the uptake of the service during this pilot year was lower than expected, particularly considering the high rates of overweight and obesity locally. Collectively, several learnings were identified from the pilot with BeeZee Bodies and documented within an Insights Report.
- 2.14 There was a brief pause between February 2023 and September 2023 to take stock of the learning from the pilot year and to bridge the gap until integration of child weight management service provision within our new 0-19 Healthy Families contract that is due to commence in September 2024.
- 2.15 The recommendations set out below were developed following the Insight Report, and more importantly, the service provider and grant managers (past and present) agreed what had worked well and what changes were needed during year 2:
1. Referral pathways need to be established before the start of another programme so that the service can 'hit the ground running'. Groundwork is required to ensure stakeholders work collaboratively and 'pump prime' the main referral routes.

2. More on-the-ground in person promotion / presence by the provider is required in Thurrock.
3. Build referrals into the new 0-19 Healthy Families contract (i.e., School Nursing, Health Visiting and the NCMP).
4. Ensure a robust approach to Council and wider partner communications to enable ongoing promotion of the service offer.
5. Any future Tier 2 programme needs to sit within a wider context to be most effective. The pilot years' service provision was unanchored and floating on its own rather than being integrated into a wider system. It needs to be more 'self-sustaining' and less reliant on the individual grant manager driving action.
6. Build relationships with partners (particularly GPs) to get them to accept training offered for having conversations about child weight.

2.16 The second grant arrangement commenced 23 September 2023 and will end 31 August 2024. This grant has built on the learnings from the previous pilot, addressing the points above. Commissioned activity includes:

- **BeeZee Live** – a 12-week programme of weekly webinars for children and the family (aged 5-8 and 9-12), 'drop in' clinics for parents/carers and follow-up 1:1 calls for those requiring extra support.
- **BeeZee Academy** - offering short video content, with information, challenges and behaviour change opportunities for local people who are either (a) not ready to access a full, weekly weight management service, or (b) do not meet the traditional thresholds for Tier 2 weight management.
- **B-Youth** - a locally appointed B Youth Officer will work with schools and colleges to deliver engaging, evidence-based sessions, which were originally coproduced with young people, for those aged 13-18 years. Due to the length of grant, this will be delivered in a pilot form to demonstrate a model that has worked elsewhere, but alongside this providing an example of other models that may be used given more time and a larger infrastructure for family and young person weight management support.
- **Insights Report** - work within local infrastructure to make connections and capture insights from professionals (from public sector, private sector and VCSE) and from the public. This will be used to generate an in-depth report and inform the real-time development of locally relevant deliverable material and signposting. Where possible, we will conduct insights gathering with young people to ensure that we continue to learn from, and coproduce with, young people in Thurrock, and this will be represented in our service report following the completion of the grant period.
- **HENRY 'Train the Trainer' Training** – HENRY (Health Exercise Nutrition in the Really Young) is a licensed programme that was developed in response to an identified gap in delivering child weight management through the Healthy Child Programme. The programme is designed for 0–2-year-olds and brings together other protective factors that support a healthy start and meet the outcomes of the Family Hub Delivery Plan. This includes effective support for parents, breastfeeding, parenting efficacy, family lifestyle habits, emotional wellbeing, nutrition, physical activity, sleep and healthy weight.

2.17 Uptake of the BeeZee Live service offer has been encouraging, with over 40 children/ families starting the first cohort of the programme in January 2024. A subsequent Insights Report will be captured for this second year of the grant, to further develop future service provision.

2.18 From September 2024 a Tier 2 child weight management service will sit within the 0-19 Healthy Families contract to allow greater synergy and integration with key services including School Nursing, Health Visiting and the National Child Measurement Programme.

2.19 Through the Family Hubs offer HENRY has been launched in Thurrock. Delivery will include the 8-week 'Healthy Families Right from the Start' programme for families during pregnancy or with children aged 0-2. There will be 9 programmes delivered across the 3 Family Hub localities offering a total of 108 spaces. There will also be a series of standalone 1-day workshops provided in the Family Hubs offering places to 144 families. To date, 14 practitioners have received HENRY training, with future training commissioned in the future to further expand delivery of the programme.

2.20 Public Health are also leading strategic work to encourage uptake of the Healthy Start Scheme in Thurrock. Healthy Start is a UK-wide scheme providing a nutritional safety net to those who are 10+ weeks pregnant or for children under 4 in low-income families in receipt of qualifying income-related benefits. Recipients receive between £4.25 and £8.50 per week which can be spent on fruit and vegetables, pulses, milk and baby formula. The scheme also provides vitamins for during pregnancy and breastfeeding and vitamin drops, suitable from birth to 4 years old. Public Health has driven promotion of the Healthy Start scheme across the Borough since April 2022. Since then, uptake amongst eligible families has increased from 49% to 71% as of the end of January 2024. There are still 537 families who are eligible but not currently accessing the scheme. There is great variation in uptake across the Borough. The most recently published data showing uptake rates by ward is from July 2023. Figure 4 shows the uptake rates between January and July 2023 ranged from 35% in Little Thurrock Rectory to 88% in Belhus. Anecdotal intelligence suggests that the primary reason for low uptake amongst eligible families is a lack of awareness of the scheme and their eligibility. They charity Sustain have estimated that the value of unclaimed vouchers in Thurrock during 2023 was equivalent to a £208K cash shortfall. As well as supporting families during the cost-of-living crisis, this funding would have also benefitted the local economy. Work continues to identify these families and encourage uptake of the scheme.

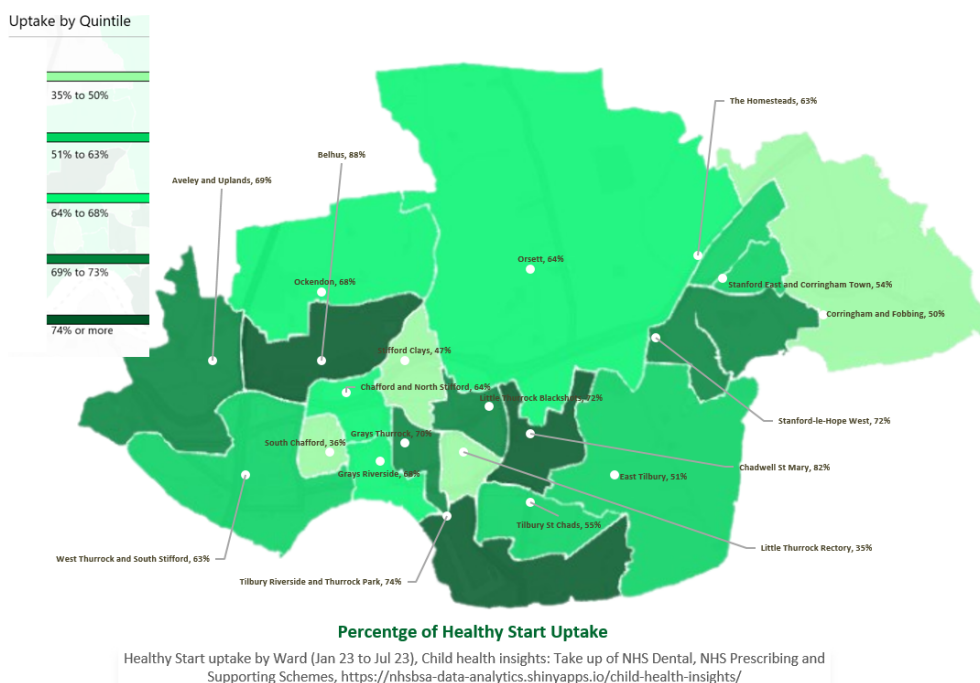


Figure 4: Percentage uptake of the Healthy Start Scheme in Thurrock between January – July 2023

2.21 More recently, Public Health have established and coordinate a multi-agency communications group that brings together communications leads from across the sector. It is recognised that these stakeholders play a key part in sharing health promotion messages and can assist in

targeting those who may require access to local services. The focus of this group is linking into the NHS Better Health campaign, which focuses on losing weight, promoting mental health, quitting smoking, getting active, drinking less and every mind matters.

- 2.22 It was previously agreed that a Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee Task and Finish group for Members would be stood up to engage Members in local action to address obesity. Currently the administrative support for this group for this group has not been identified and has delayed the set-up of this group. Given the imminent commencement of a pre-election period, it is recommended this group should pause commencement until after the elections have taken place.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

- 3.1 In 2024/25 Public Health will undertake a deep dive into the scale and prevalence of obesity locally and the weight management offer locally. The review will inform future strategic activity and commissioning to address this matter, with a particular focus on reducing health inequalities and levelling the playing field.
- 3.2 These actions are being taken forward by a range of partners that make up the Thurrock All Age Healthy Weight Strategic Partnership and its sub-groups. This list is not exclusive and does not detail the comprehensive list of actions that are underway to tackle obesity in Thurrock. It does however highlight the priorities that are dependent on partnership working across the system.
- 3.3 A guidance document has been published titled 'A Healthy in All Policies' approach to placeshaping. This guide aims to influence how we can shape places to support and improve health and wellbeing, acknowledging that where we live, work and socialise plays an important role in our health. This guidance will assist in driving forward the ambitions of the WSO strategy as it seeks to support the accessibility and affordability of healthy sustainable foods as well as how our environments can assist in keeping people active. It does this through a framework for creating change, highlighting five key areas for action: transportation networks, neighbourhood design, housing, natural environments and food systems.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 To update members of the Children's Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the latest data on childhood obesity in Thurrock and actions taken in support of addressing childhood obesity locally.

5. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

- 5.1 Not applicable.

6. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact

- 6.1 Not applicable.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **David May**
Head of Financial Management

13 February 2024

Projects identified are prioritised within Public Health and Family Hub grant funding.

7.2 **Legal**

Implications verified by: **Judith Knight**
Interim Deputy Head of Legal (Social Care and Education)

19 February 2024

The Council has a duty under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 section 116 to prepare a joint strategic needs assessment and under the same act section 116A to prepare a Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy. The Council's current Joint Health and Wellbeing strategy 2022-2026 was approved by the Health and Wellbeing Board in June 2022. The Whole Systems Obesity Strategy sits beneath the overarching Health and Wellbeing strategy, which anticipates that the Whole System Obesity Strategy will be refreshed.

7.3 **Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: **Roxanne Scanlon**
Community Engagement and Project Monitoring Officer

14 February 2024

All information regarding Community Equality Impact Assessments can be found here:
<https://intranet.thurrock.gov.uk/services/diversity-and-equality/ceia/>

There are no direct diversity implications contained in this update report. However, this report does highlight that there are differences in rate of obesity according to age, gender, ethnicity and location. The Whole Systems Obesity Strategy and commissioned child weight management service seeks to reduce obesity rates across all these characteristics.

7.4 **Risks**

None.

7.5 **Other implications** (where significant) – i.e., Staff, Health Inequalities, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder, or Impact on Looked After Children

None.

8. **Background papers used in preparing the report** (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

Version Committee – Draft ready for submission to public committee

- [Thurrock Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022-2026](#)
- [Thurrock Whole Systems Obesity Strategy](#)
- [Thurrock Whole Systems Obesity Joint Strategic Needs Assessment](#)

9. Appendices to the report

None.

Report Author:

Sareena Gill

Senior Public Health Programme Manager

Public Health

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12 March 2024	ITEM: 9
Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee	
Home to School Travel and Transport Policy 2024-25	
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Key
Report of: Councillor Adam Carter, Cabinet Member for Education	
Accountable Assistant Director: Michele Lucas, Assistant Director Education and Skills	
Accountable Director: Sheila Murphy, Executive Director – Children’s Services	
This report is Public	
Version: Committee	

Executive Summary

The Department for Education published revised Statutory Guidance in June 2023. The Travel to School for Children of Compulsory School Age statutory guidance 2023 replaces the 2014 statutory guidance.

Parents and carers are responsible for ensuring their child attends school and must take all the action necessary to enable their child to attend school. The Council has a statutory duty to make home to school travel arrangements, free of charge, for eligible children. The Council is responsible for the design and adoption of the policy ensuring that it complies with the law.

As a result of the proposed changes, approval by Cabinet is required. The updated policy will be referred to as the Home to School Travel and Transport Policy “the 2024-25 Policy”. This policy replaces the Home to School Travel and Transport Policy 2021.

The proposed policy looks to introduce the following changes:

1. Publish separate policies for mainstream and SEND transport.
2. Include a Travel Assistance Budget within each policy.
3. Remove the requirement for parents to apply for the three nearest primary schools and six nearest secondary schools to the home address for mainstream pupils and replace with the ‘nearest school’ to the home address.
4. Include a parent contribution towards SEND Post 16 travel which will be detailed within the Post 16 statement published annually.

The Home to School Travel Policy was last updated in 2020 and a report was presented to Cabinet on 22nd July 2020. Cabinet approved the revised policy along with a recommendation to introduce a contribution towards SEND Post 16 transport.

Commissioner Comment:

Commissioners have been consulted on the content of this report and agree with the recommendations made.

Recommendation(s)

The proposed recommendations below to commence from 1st April 2024 for the start of the academic year 2024/25 for new families applying for travel assistance.

1.1 Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommends that Cabinet agrees and adopts the new individual SEND and Mainstream Home to School Travel and Transport Policies 2024-2025 for statutory school age pupils aged 5 to 16 years.

1.2 Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommends that Cabinet agrees to implement a weekly parent contribution towards SEND Post 16 travel assistance each year of £23.69, this is reduced to £11.85 for low-income families.

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 The guidance states that we must publish our policy on our website for compulsory school aged children and ensure paper copies are available if requested. The policy should be easy for parents to read and understand. The policy should be regularly reviewed to ensure it continues to meet local needs and comply with statutory requirements. Information about the policy should be included within the school's admissions booklets to enable families to be fully informed when applying for schools. We must ensure the policy includes information for parents on how to appeal decisions in relation to travel to school for their child.

2.2 The revised guidance states that families must apply for their nearest school to the home address measured using the Council's 'Datamap' system which measures shortest walking distance. This measurement is different to how the nearest school is measured for school admissions. If a place cannot be offered, then we would offer the next nearest school with spaces and families may become eligible for transport if the eligibility criteria is met. If a closer school becomes available later, the Council should not withdraw the child's home to school travel, because moving to the nearer school would be likely to cause significant disruption to their education. This would therefore potentially financially impact the Council. Within the current policy parents must apply to their three nearest primary school or six nearest secondary schools and remain on the waiting list for closer schools. This would be removed from the new policy based on the statutory guidance as the Council cannot expect children to move if offered a closer school.

2.3 The 2024 Guidance stipulates that Local authorities should consult widely on any proposed changes to their local policies on school travel arrangements with all interested stakeholders to include Parents, Schools and Local Family Forum. Consultations should last for at least 28 working days during term time. Officers organised a public engagement via Council's online 'Have my Say' portal. The consultation was run for a total of 28 term days. The consultation opened on 29th November 2023 and closed on 19th January 2024. A summary of the consultation and the responses to it have been included in Appendix 1a and 1b.

- 2.4 Officers propose that the 2021 Policy be updated in line with the revised statutory guidance. This will include creating two policies, one for mainstream eligibility and one for SEND eligibility with links to each other in both policies. This proposal is presented following feedback from the consultation where a total of 124 respondents across both consultations felt there should be separate policies for SEND and mainstream travel assistance. Across both consultations 144 respondents also felt there should be an easy read version of each policy for parents. We believe that by having separate policies it will support families to find the information relevant to them. The details within both policies will be clear and easy for parents to understand and the criteria used to assess whether a child is eligible for free transport. This will include examples of any evidence required to support the application, for example medical evidence.
- 2.5 The Council is responsible for promoting sustainable travel to school and deciding what travel arrangements to make, provided they are suitable for the needs of the children. The council propose to include along with current travel arrangement options, a travel assistance budget available to parents with their consent which provides free travel. This budget would be paid to a parent upfront. A Travel Assistance Budget gives families the freedom to make decisions and arrangements about how their child/young person will get to and from school or college each day. The travel budget is calculated by the number of miles from the home address to school x 45p (HMRC mileage rate) and is paid for a total of 4 trips per day covering school drop off and pick up. Of the 106 responses to this question, 78 respondents said this should be included.

The travel assistance budget could be used in several ways, such as:

- Pay towards the running costs of the parents own vehicle.
- Enables the parent to arrange their own locally sourced transport.
- Allows the parent to pay friends/family to take their child to school.
- Can be used to pay towards childcare for a younger sibling allowing the parent to take their other child/ren to school.

2.6 SEND Post 16 Travel Assistance proposed contribution.

- 2.7 There have been no changes to the statutory guidance published in January 2019 relating to SEND Post 16.
- 2.8 The duty placed on the Council in respect of the provision of travel assistance to post 16 students requires a transport policy statement to be prepared and published in each year, by 31 May, detailing the provision being offered to SEND Post 16 young people.
- 2.9 Local authorities have discretionary powers under Section 508C of the Education Act 1996 to make arrangements for those children not covered by Section 508B. A local authority has discretion to provide transport for children who are outside of the statutory eligibility criteria and where such transport is provided the Council can charge a contribution or full cost for the transport. There is no requirement for these discretionary arrangements to be provided for free. The council is seeking a contribution not a full cost recovery.
- 2.10 In July 2020, a report was presented to the Council's Cabinet. At that meeting Cabinet approved the introduction of a contribution towards Post 16 transport. However, given the time that has lapsed, officers felt this should be re-consulted on with stakeholders. Of the 56 responses, 43 responders felt that they should not contribute towards their child's transport costs.

2.11 Financial Support for Families – The 16-19 bursary fund

The Department for Education has made funding available to educational institutions to support the most financially disadvantaged 16 to 19 year olds and those young people who most need help with the costs of staying in education. Parents must apply directly to the academy, school, college, or other training provider. The bursary is available to help with the cost of travelling to school or college. Funding is available for low income families up to a total of £1,200 per academic year. This funding can be applied for which can be used towards the parents contribution towards transport.

2.12 Independent Travel Training

The council wants to support and encourage independence for as many SEND young people as possible, depending on their level of need and support required. We recognise that travelling independently will not be suitable for all young people and therefore every SEND Post16 young person will be assessed individually.

2.13 The Council is experiencing increased pressure on the budget available for Home to School Transport. Currently the Council has funded all SEND Post 16 transport. However, given the increase in children with Education and Health Care Plans (EHCP) and an increase in the number of eligible children requiring travel support that are of statutory school age, the Council must remain within its allocated budget and is therefore proposing parents contribute towards their young person's travel at Post 16 as the Council does not have a statutory duty to provide free travel for young people between the age of 16 to 19 years. From the age of 19 to 25, the Council has a responsibility to provide free travel if the young person has an Education and Health Care Plan and is continuing a course started before their 19th birthday.

2.14 A benchmarking exercise has been undertaken to identify how many local authorities obtain a contribution and how much parent contribute for the academic year. There are six of the ten eastern region statistical neighbours that responded to our benchmarking survey who charge a parent contribution for SEND post 16 transport. The contribution rates range between £594 and £1554 for the academic year per child.

2.15 As part of the feedback from the consultation 19 of the 56 responders said there should be a means-tested system where the contribution is based on the family's income.

2.16 The Council is proposing a weekly contribution of £23.69 per child, reduced to £11.85 for low-income families. Families will have several payment options available which will include monthly, termly or annually. For example, a parent contributing the full rate equates to £81.83 per month paid over 11 months. A parent on low income equates to £40.93 per month paid over 11 months. There are 65 days per term, 38 weeks across an academic year, a total of 190 school days in the academic year.

2.17 There are currently 101 Post 16 students that are transported to their place of education. There is a 2024/25 budget saving of £37,000 on Post 16 transport which will be implemented from September 2024. There are currently 32 families that are assessed as low income and would be required to contribute a reduced amount of £11.85 per week. There are 69 families not on low income that would be required to contribute the higher weekly amount of £23.69. The number of Post 16 students is likely to change from the current 101 once the new academic year start in September 2024. The savings target is forecast to be achieved based on the current numbers of post 16 students receiving transport.

2.18 The current average cost per student each academic year is £6,631 for students attending local Post 16 provision. For students attending out of borough Post 16 provision, the average cost per student is £16,015 per academic year. This proposed change to the policy will affect all applications for travel assistance to Post 16 provision from 1st April 2024.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

3.1 **OPTION 1** - Do nothing. This is not an option. The revised statutory guidance means that we must update our policy. The Home to School Transport budget spend is increasing as more children of compulsory school age and those children with Education and Healthcare Plans move into Thurrock are eligible for travel assistance.

3.2 **OPTION 2** – Accept the proposed changes outlined in section 2.15 and introduce a contribution towards SEND Post 16 travel.

3.3 The council does not have a statutory duty to provide free Post 16 transport for students aged 16-19.

3.4 Nine of the ten eastern region statistical neighbours that responded to our benchmarking survey include a parent contribution within their SEND Post 16 policy statement. The contribution rates range between £445 and £1554 for the academic year per child. For low-income families the contribution rate is reduced.

3.5 Families on low income can apply for financial support, known as the 16-19 bursary fund. Families apply directly to colleges for this support.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

4.1 Option 2 is the recommended option. This recommendation would bring Thurrock in line with other council's that have already introduced a contribution towards SEND Post 16 transport.

4.2 Any contributions would support financial pressures each year as we see an increase in eligible children of compulsory school age requiring travel assistance.

5. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

5.1 A full stakeholder engagement started on 29th October 2023 and closed on 19th January 2024.

5.2 There was a total of 56 responses to the consultation for SEND Post 16 travel assistance and a total of 106 response to the Home to School Travel for 5-16 years consultation. The table below shows a breakdown of positive and negative responses to the proposed policy changes:

Proposed change	Category	Number of Responses
	Positive	87

	Ensure policy is clear in relation to nearest school to home address	Negative	18
5.3	Separate Policies for mainstream and SEN travel assistance	Positive	80
		Negative	10
		Not sure	16
	Include a travel assistance budget within the policy	Positive	78
		Negative	28
	Should families contribute towards SEND Post 16 travel	Positive	13
Negative		43	

Analysis of the comments provided show that families are mostly concerned about the financial impact this will have on them given the cost of living at the present time. Respondents also feel that there should be means testing of income. This is mitigated by including a lower contribution for families that are on low income.

5.4 A report is being presented to Cabinet on 13th March 2024.

5.5 A benchmarking exercise was undertaken with Eastern Region Local Authorities in relation to SEND Post 16 contribution towards travel to school/college.

6. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact

6.1 This report impacts on the following corporate priorities:

- People: a place where people of all ages are proud to work and play, live and stay.
- Place: a heritage rich Borough which is ambitious for its future.
- Prosperity: a Borough which enables everyone to achieve their aspirations.

6.2 There will be a financial impact on families with SEND Post 16 children who would not have been required to contribute to their child's travel to school/college in previous years.

6.3 The proposed contribution will impact 101 Post 16 students currently receiving transport, however this number fluctuates over the year. Of the 101 students, 32 are from a low income family.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Joanne Freeman**
Head of Finance

1st March 2024

Current primary pupil growth is causing pressure on the statutory element of the Home to School Transport budget. This is due to the fact that the Council is at times unable to place a pupil in a school within a three mile radius. In such cases, the Council has a statutory duty to transport the pupils involved and to bear the cost of the transport until they complete their primary or secondary education.

Home to school transport costs have increased from £3.8m in 2020/21 to a projected cost of £5.5m in 2023/24. The policy reflects the statutory requirements that will support the management of costs within the funding envelope available.

There is not a statutory duty on the Council to financially support post 16 SEN transport. The assumed level of income has been modelled on the current number of pupils in scope (as set out in paragraph 2.17) and adjusted to allow for pupil movement between settings at the start of the academic year. The full year effect of the expected level of income is expected to be £0.063m and will be realised across two financial years; Implement charge in September 2024 and generate £0.037m in financial year 2024/25 and remaining £0.026m in 2025/26.

This proposal has been included in the 2024/25 revenue budget, agreed at Full Council on 28th Feb 2024.

The contribution will need to reviewed each year to ensure it takes account of any inflationary changes.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Daniel Longe**
Principal Solicitor on behalf Thurrock Council
13th January 2024

This legal implication has been prepared without sight of the proposed new policies to which they relate (the 2021 policy on the LA website has been seen), owing very understandably to the urgency to which this report must be submitted and the limited time available to consider the same.

Section 508 of the Education Act 1996 sets out mandatory duties imposed on local authorities to make arrangements for home to school transport for eligible children in their area. It also allows for the local authority to make provision on a discretionary basis to children who may not otherwise be eligible for home to school transportation.

I note that the local authority plan is to prepare 2 separate policies for home to school transportation, one for SEND and one for mainstream children.

The council must provide a policy setting out in very clear and simple terms what its policies are on home to school transport and it must be easily available to access by parents on the local authority's website.

The key points that should be taken into account in respect of the legality of the policy is set out within the recent government guidance called "Travel to school for children of compulsory school age Statutory guidance for local authorities June 2023". The key points can be summarised as follows:

A child is eligible if they are:

- of compulsory school age,
- attend their nearest suitable school (i.e. suitable for the child's age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have) and:
- live more than the statutory walking distance (i.e. a child under the age of 8 is eligible for free travel to their nearest suitable school if it is more than 2 miles from their home. A child aged 8 years or over is eligible for free travel to their nearest suitable school if it is more than 3 miles from their home).

Most eligible children would fall into the above category, but there are other special circumstances where they would be eligible for free transport even if the above criteria are not met namely where the child:

- could not reasonably be expected to walk to that school because of their special educational needs, disability or mobility problem, even if they were accompanied by their parent (i.e. a child with autism and sensitivity to noise could not reasonably be expected to travel on a road without pedestrian walking, even with a parent) or
- would not be able to walk to that school in reasonable safety, even if they were accompanied by their parent (i.e. motorway route with no pedestrian walk).

There are many other factors that must be taken into account within the policy including:

- discretionary power to provide travel for ineligible children. Where the local authority decides not to exercise their discretion, they should not have a blanket policy of never providing discretionary travel and should be prepared to consider cases where the parent says there are reasons why their child needs free travel to school and make decisions on a case-by-case basis and the policy should make provision for this otherwise it becomes susceptible to challenge by way of judicial review. In this report discretionary payment is proposed in respect of post 16 SEND children and this is a very appropriate use of the local authority's discretionary power. It is of note that eligibility is based on income level of parents and once again this is also an appropriate use of the discretionary power.
- The policy must not infringe the parental right to consent to or refuse alternative travel arrangements such as travel expenses, escort or independent travel and must provide the travel arrangements to eligible children in those circumstances.
- The policy must set out a complaints and appeals procedure.

Provided the terms of the policy adhere to the statutory guidance and the matters set out above then it is right for such policy to be duly recommended for approval.

Following issue by the Council of a s114 notice, the Council must ensure that its resources are not used for non-essential spending. The contracts at issue here are all essential and the provision of them a statutory duty. In procuring the services outlined, the Council must observe the obligations upon it outlined in national legislation and in its internal procurement rules. Officers will need to ensure Legal Services are kept fully informed as they progress through the procurements referred to above to ensure compliance.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Roxanne Scanlon**
Community Engagement and Project Monitoring Officer

12th January 2024

A public consultation has been held around the changes to the proposed changes to the 2024 Policy. It enabled all stakeholders to engage in dialogue with Thurrock Council regarding a range of Education Transport issues. The consultation was held from 29th November 2023 until 19th January 2024 which met the timeframe recommended by the DfE. The consultation also provided the evidence required by Council officers to seek Cabinet approval of the proposed update of the 2024 Policy. A Community Impact and Equality Assessment has also been carried out in order to ensure that proposed changes to the 2024 policy have an overall positive equality impact as all children will be treated equally regardless of any protected characteristics as defined by the Equalities Act 2010 e.g. their religion, belief, or their ability.

7.4 Risks

- There is a risk that our policy will not be in line with statutory guidance which could lead to Local Government Ombudsman complaints.
- There is a risk that the current Home to School Travel budget envelope will be exceeded with the additional demand on transport for eligible pupils.
- The level of income realised may be affected by the financial assessment made on the families particularly if there are more families at the start of the academic year that meet the low income eligibility criteria that would pay the lower rate of contribution. There may also be more families that apply that pay the higher contribution rate, which would increase income.

7.5 Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health Inequalities, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder, or Impact on Looked After Children

None.

8. Background papers used in preparing the report (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

- Thurrock Home to School Transport Policy 2020 and Post 16 statement (<https://www.thurrock.gov.uk/home-to-school-or-college-travel-support/policies-and-useful-information>)
- Department for Education statutory guidance January 2024 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/home-to-school-travel-and-transport-guidance>)
- Cabinet report dated 22 July 2020 <https://democracy.thurrock.gov.uk/documents/s27926/Thurrock%20Council%20Home%20to%20School%20Travel%20and%20Transport%20Policy%20Update.pdf>

9. Appendices to the report

- Appendix 1 – Consultation responses Special Education Needs Disabilities Post 16 Travel
- Appendix 2 – Consultation responses Home to School Travel for Children aged 5 years to 16
- Appendix 3 - SEND Home to School Travel and Transport Policy 2024-2025 for statutory school age pupils aged 5 to 16 years.

- Appendix 4 – Mainstream Home to School and transport policy- 2024-2025 for statutory school age pupils aged 5 to 16 years.
- Appendix 5 - Post 16 SEND Transport Policy Statement 2024-2025.

Report Author:

Sarah Williams

Head of Education Support Service

Childrens Services

Special Education Needs And Disabilities Post 16 Travel

SURVEY RESPONSE REPORT

29 November 2023 - 21 January 2024

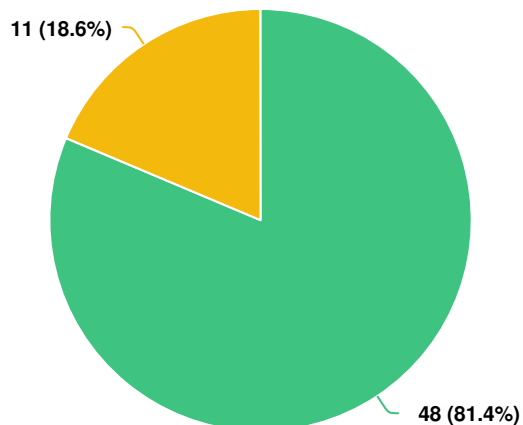
PROJECT NAME:

Home to School Travel Consultation 2023



SURVEY QUESTIONS

Q1 Does your child currently receive home to school transport assistance from the council?

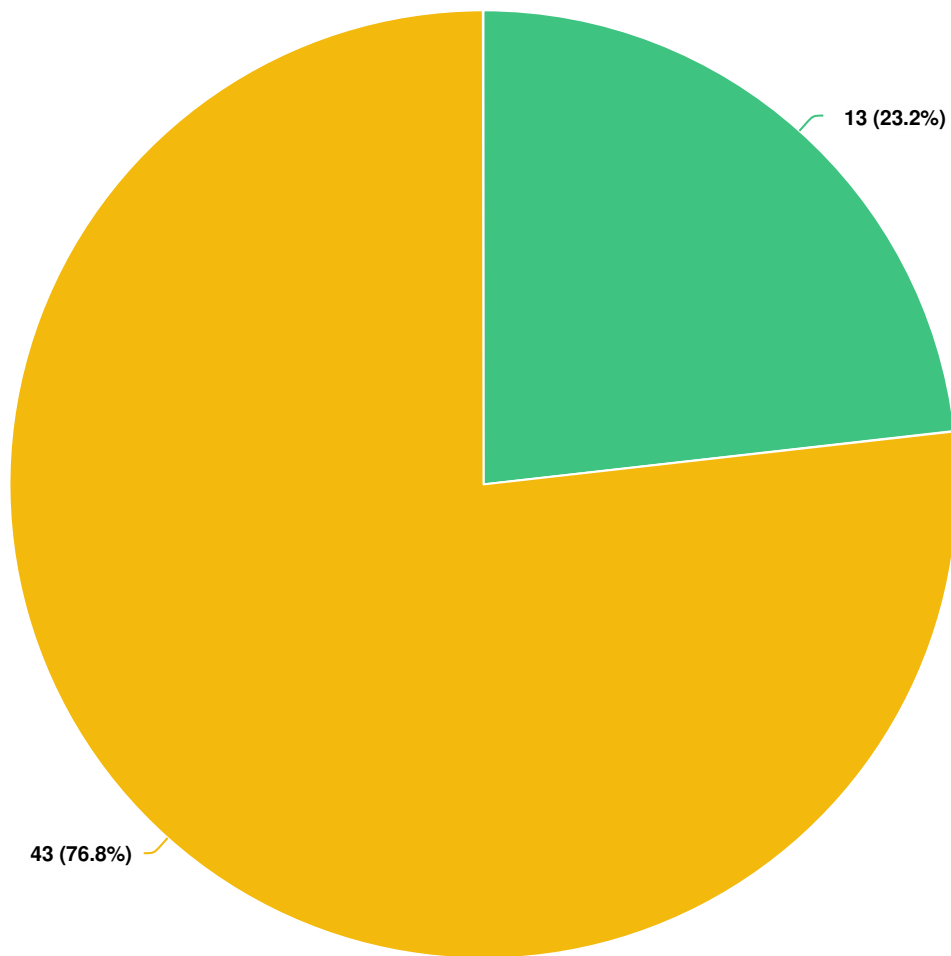


Question options

- Yes
- No

Optional question (59 response(s), 0 skipped)
Question type: Radio Button Question

Q2 | Do you think you should contribute towards the cost of your child's transport to their college or other post 16 facility?



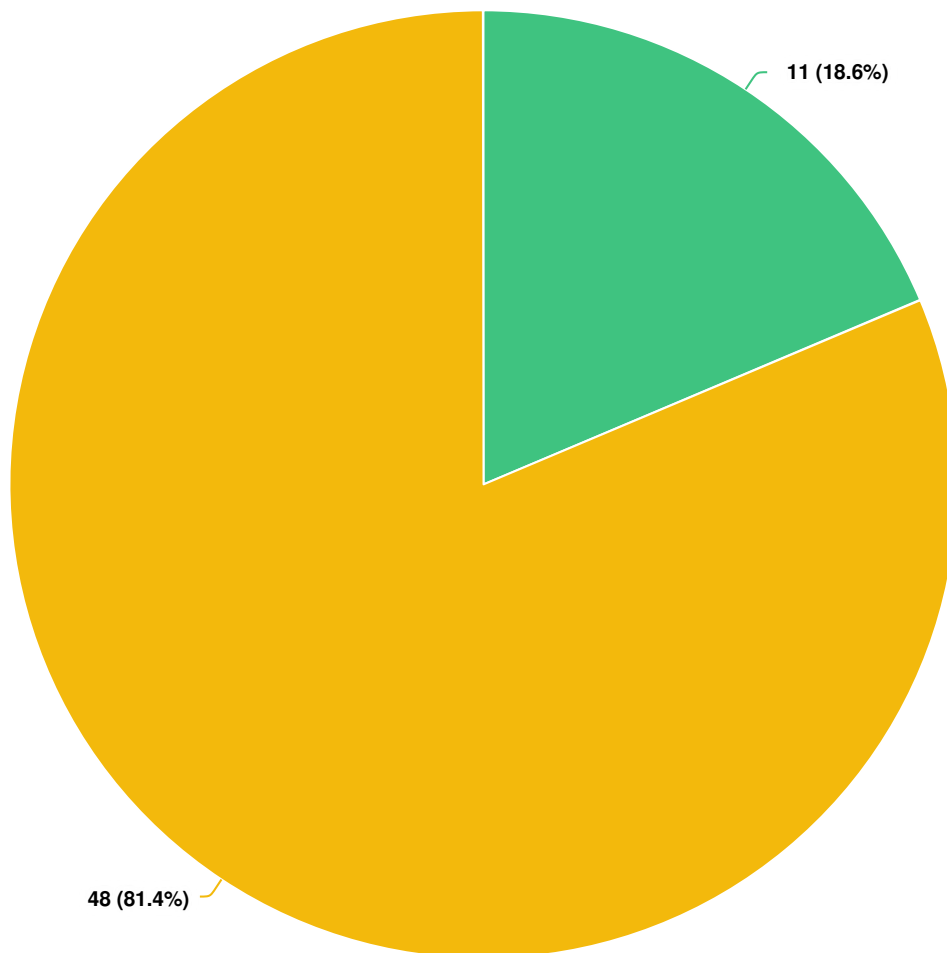
Question options

- Yes
- No (please say why you do not think you should contribute)

Optional question (56 response(s), 3 skipped)

Question type: Radio Button Question

Q3 | Do you feel that Personal Independence Payment (PIP) or Disability Allowance should be used to contribute to your child's transport?



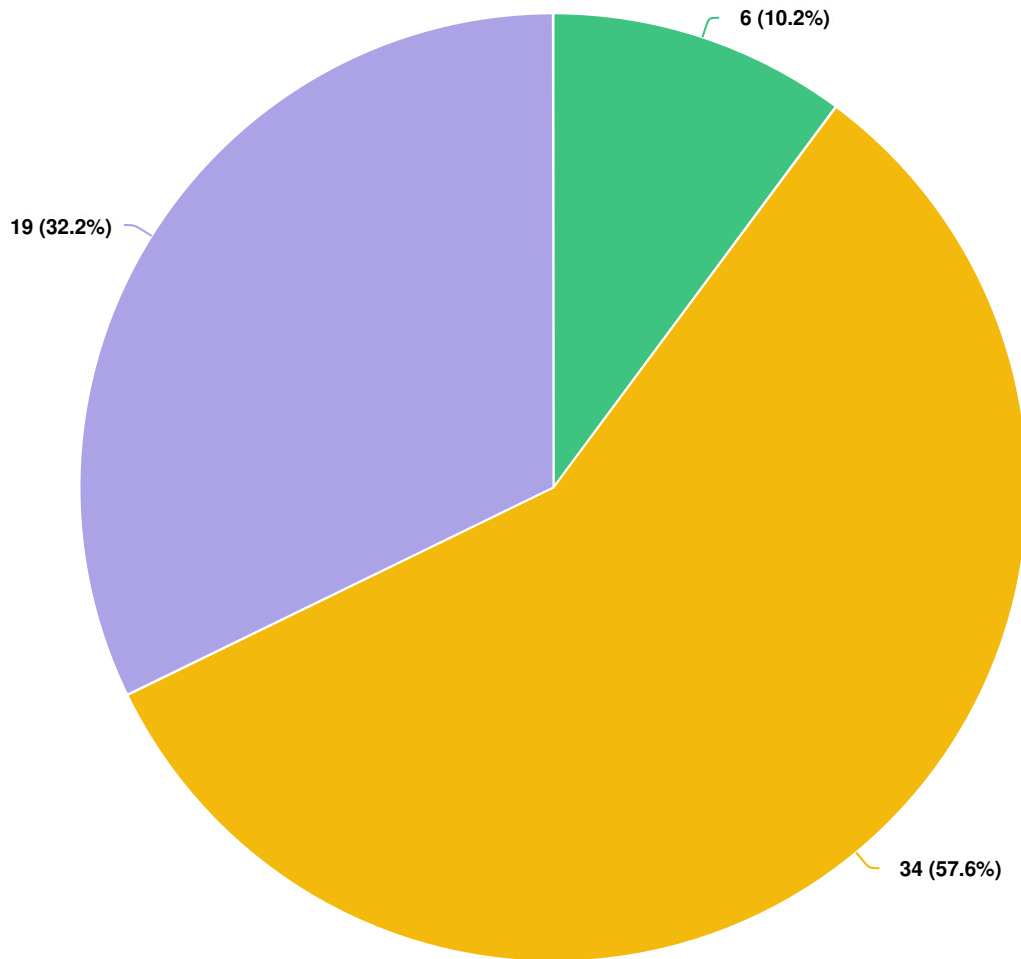
Question options

- Yes
- No (please explain why)

Optional question (59 response(s), 0 skipped)

Question type: Radio Button Question

Q4 | Would the option of a personal travel assistance budget help your child travel independently?

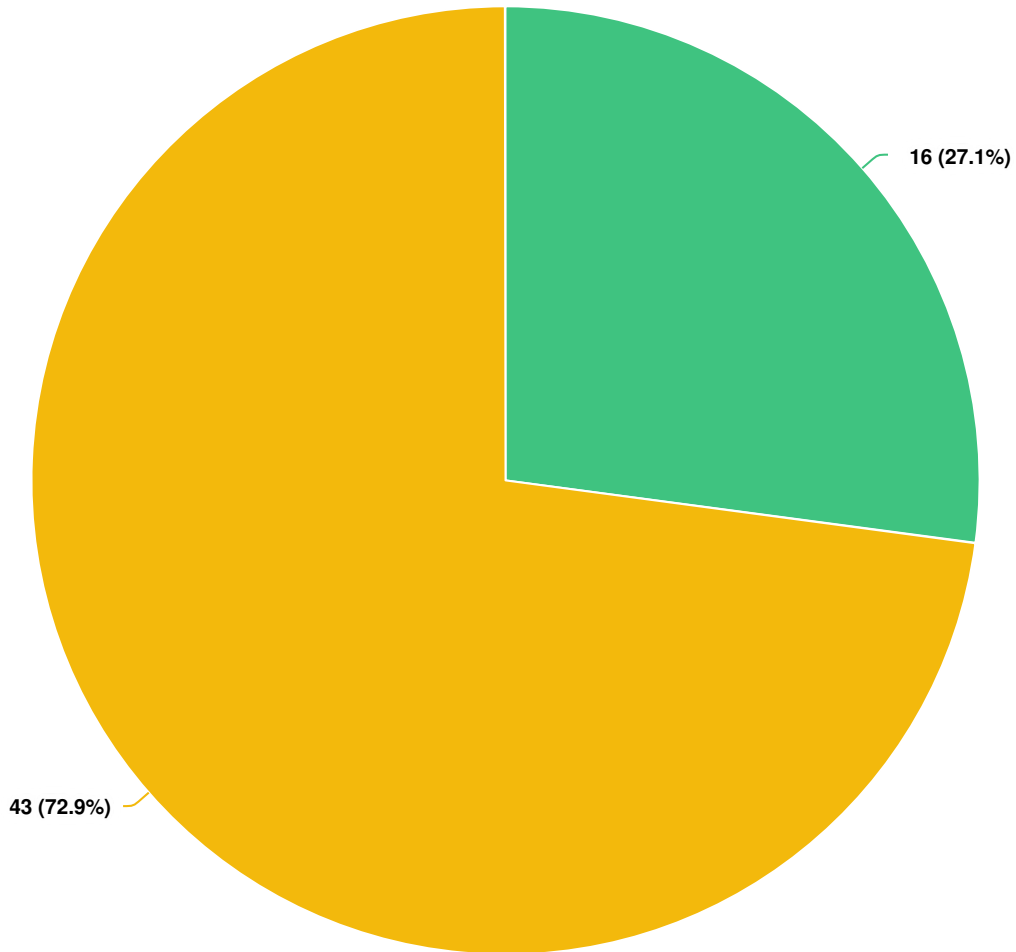


Question options

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

Optional question (59 response(s), 0 skipped)
Question type: Radio Button Question

Q5 Do you feel there are medical conditions such as physical needs which should make someone exempt from making a contribution towards transport?



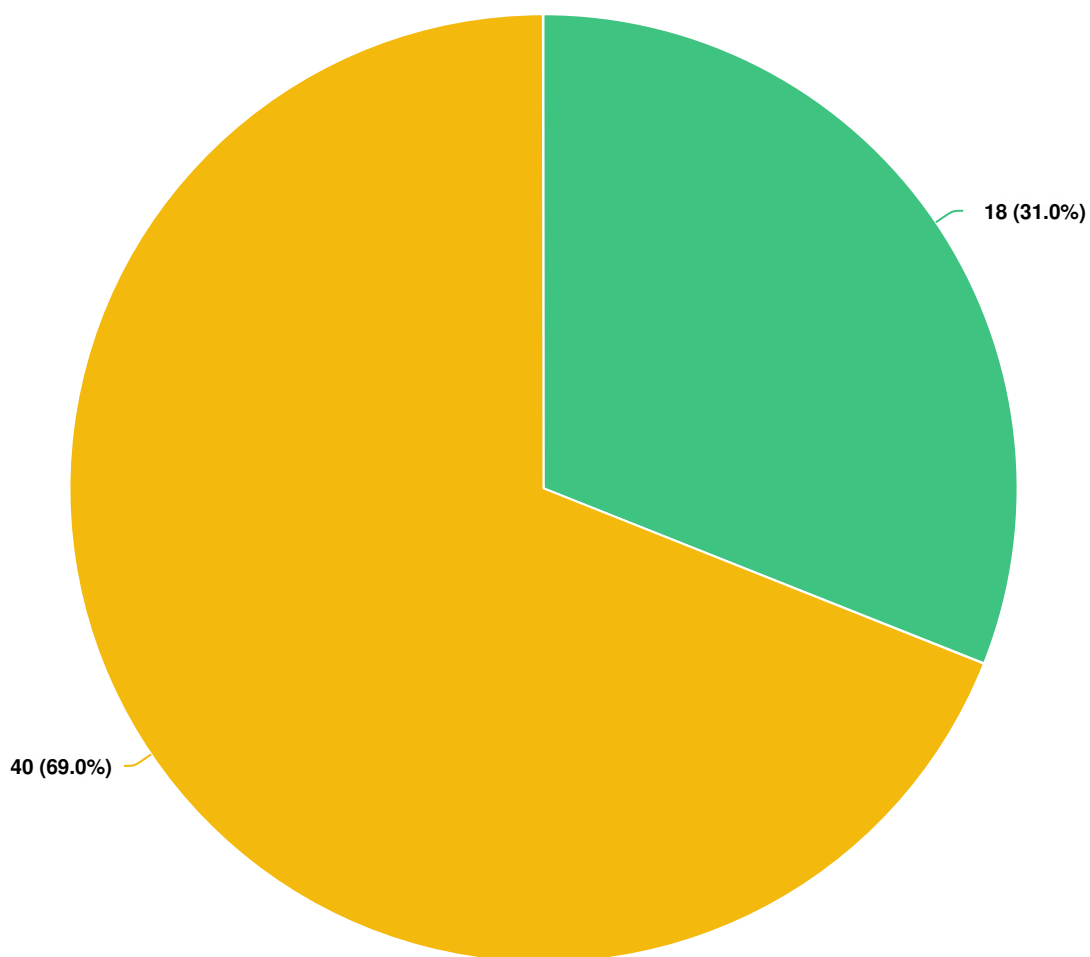
Question options

- No
- Yes (please explain)

Optional question (59 response(s), 0 skipped)

Question type: Radio Button Question

Q6 Does your child have a disabled bus pass?

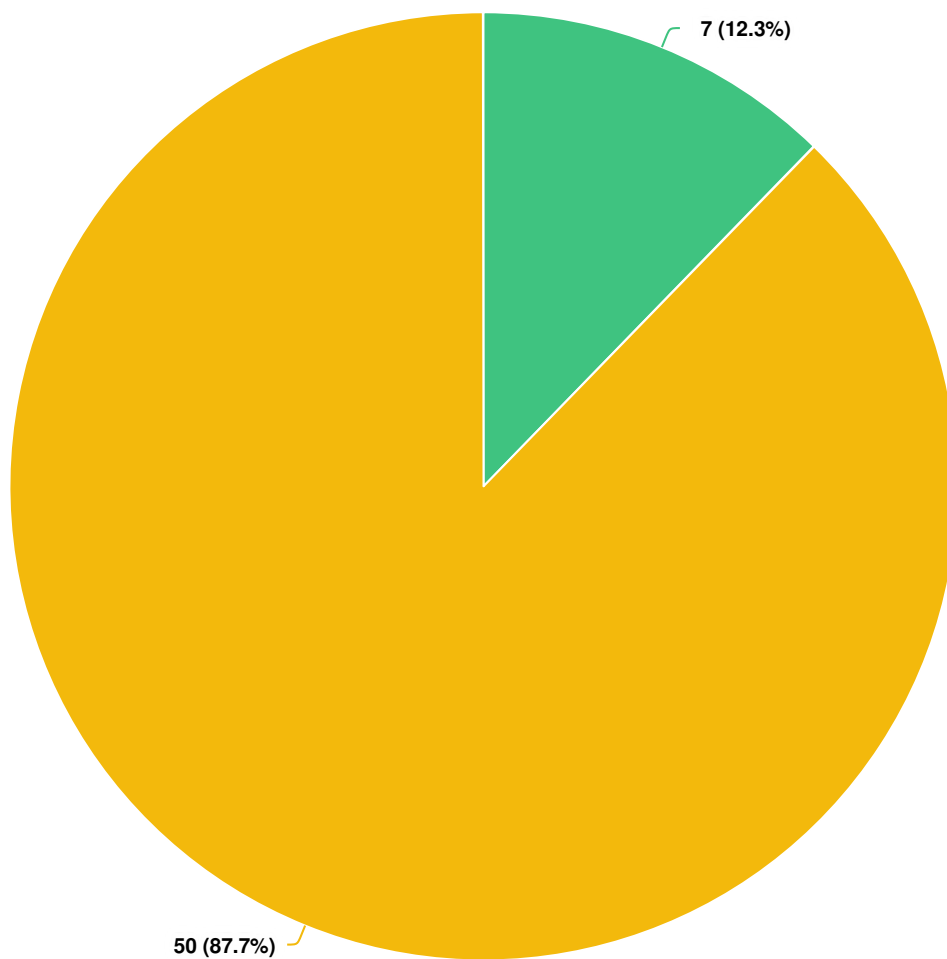


Question options

- Yes
- No

Optional question (58 response(s), 1 skipped)
Question type: Radio Button Question

Q7 Does your child use public transport?

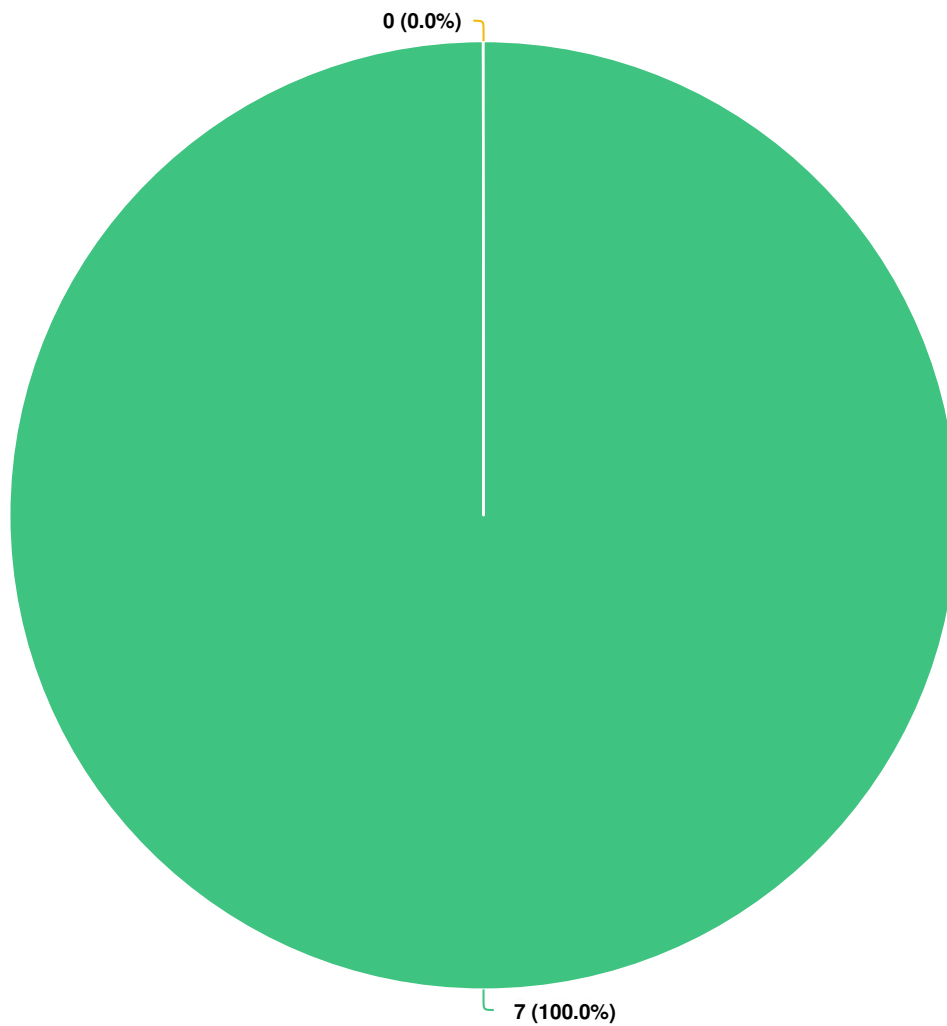


Question options

- Yes
- No

*Optional question (57 response(s), 2 skipped)
Question type: Radio Button Question*

Q8 Does your child travel

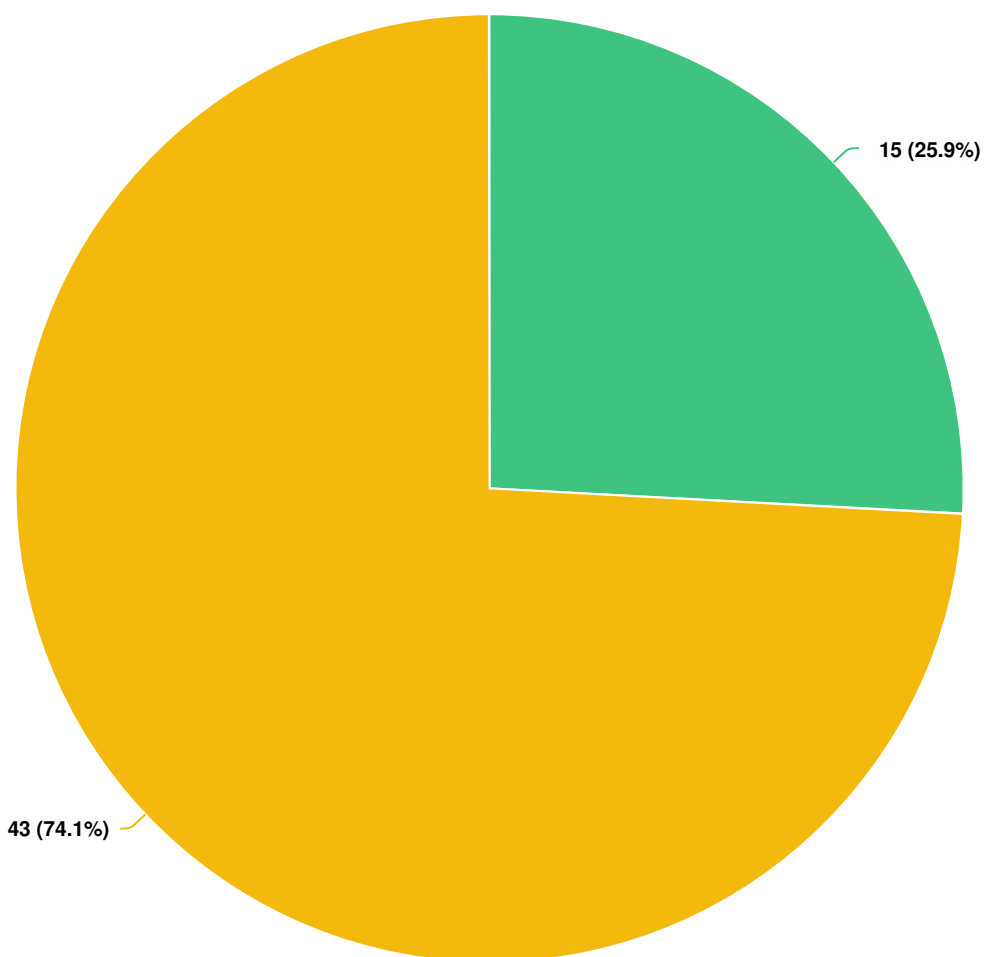


Question options

- With support
- Independently

Optional question (7 response(s), 52 skipped)
Question type: Radio Button Question

Q10 | Would you like your child to be considered for Travel Assistance Training?

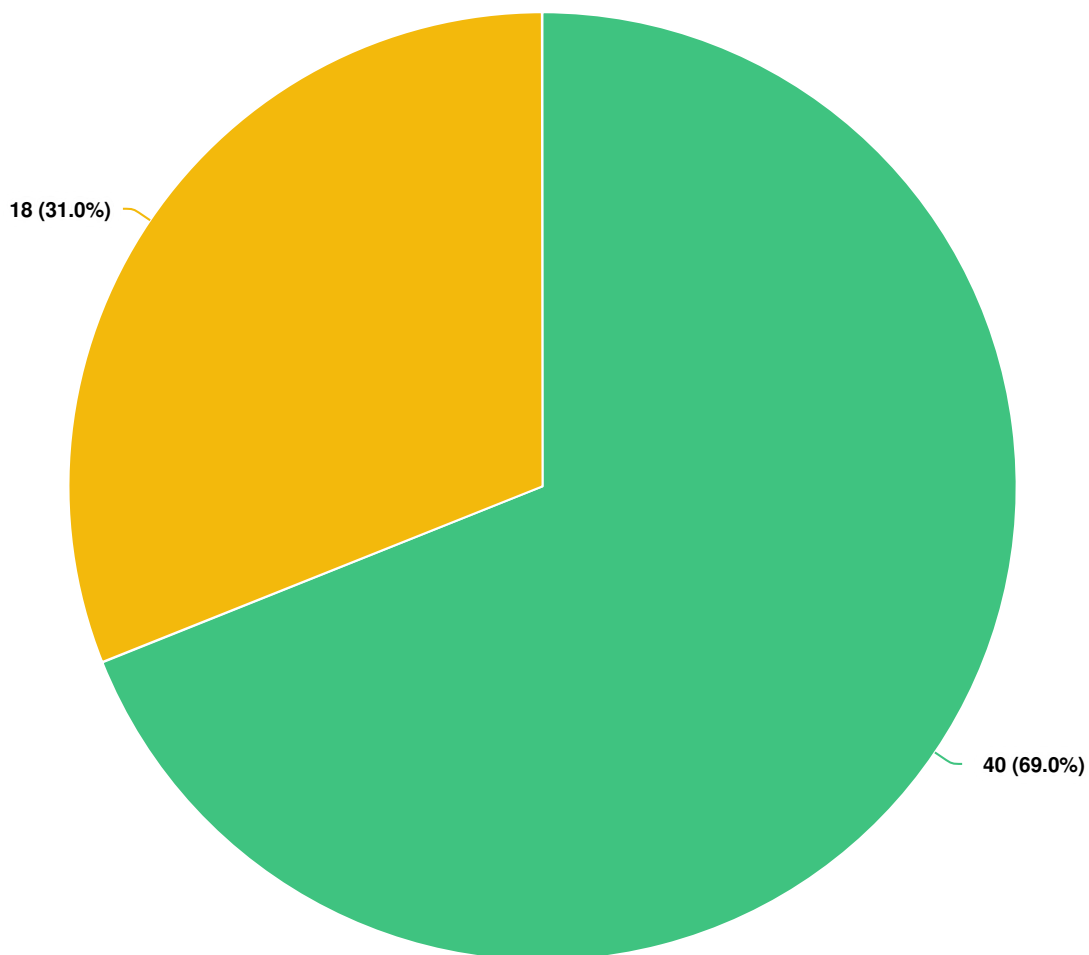


Question options

- Yes
- No (Please explain why)

*Optional question (58 response(s), 1 skipped)
Question type: Radio Button Question*

Q11 | Do you think it would be helpful if we created an easy read version of the policy?

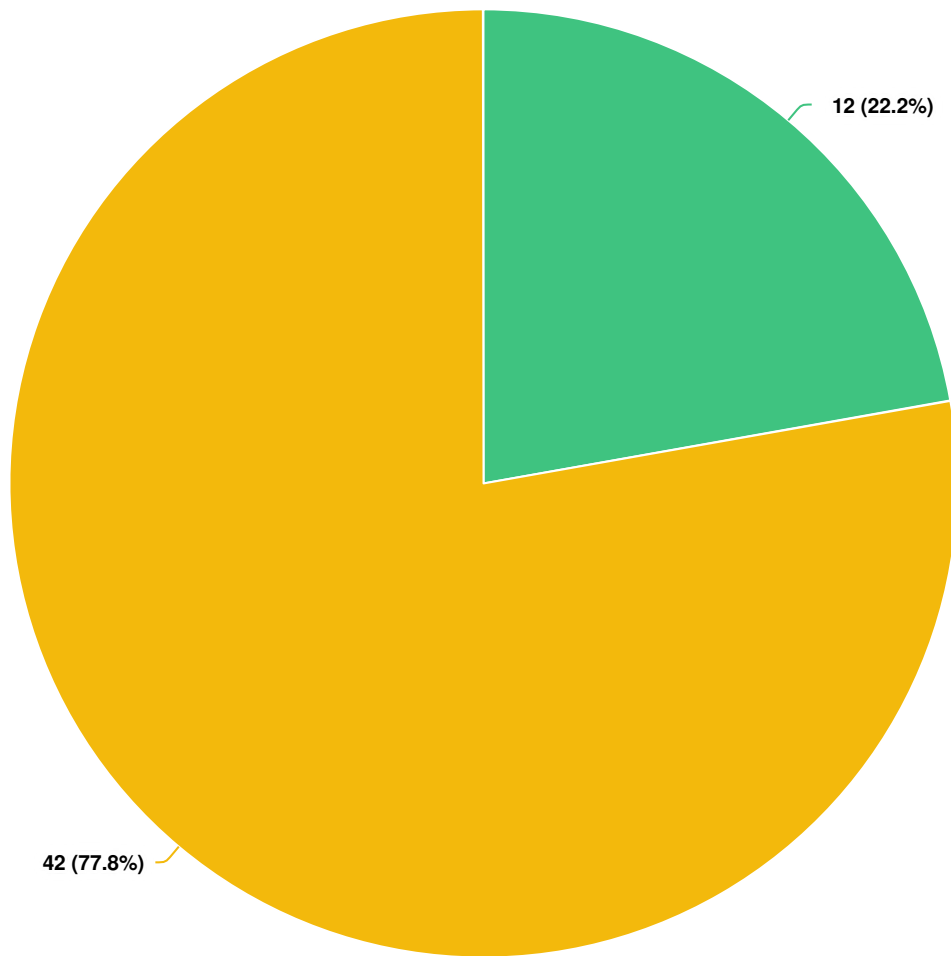


Question options

- Yes
- No

Optional question (58 response(s), 1 skipped)
Question type: Radio Button Question

Q12 | Should the families of students aged 16 – 19 with special education needs and disabilities that have a need for transport to and from college or other post 16 facility contribute towards their transport?



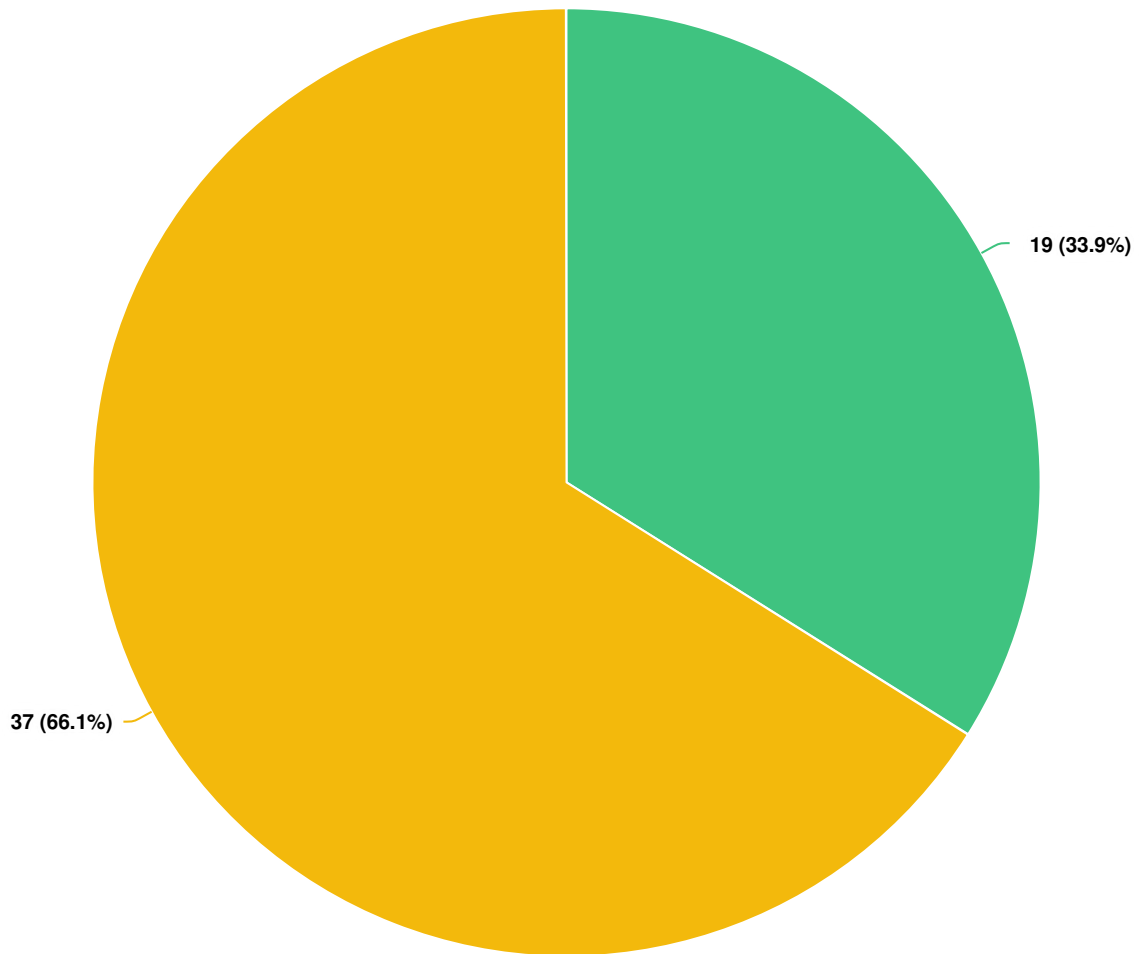
Question options

- Yes
- No (please explain)

Optional question (54 response(s), 5 skipped)

Question type: Radio Button Question

Q13 | Do you think there should be a means-tested system, where charges are based on the family's income?



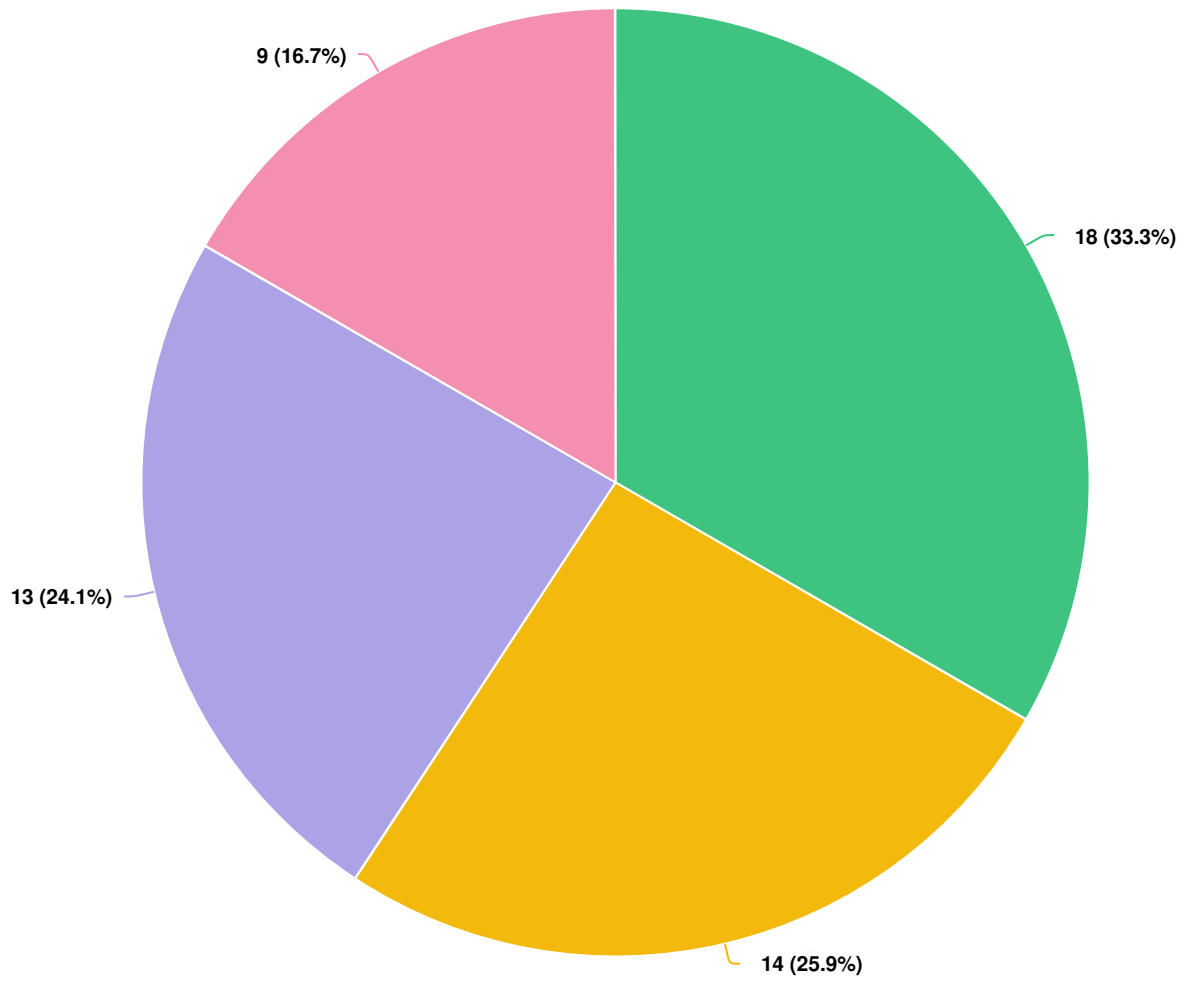
Question options

- Yes
- No (please explain)

Optional question (56 response(s), 3 skipped)

Question type: Radio Button Question

Q14 | How often should we review and assess the impact of the charging policy and make any necessary changes?

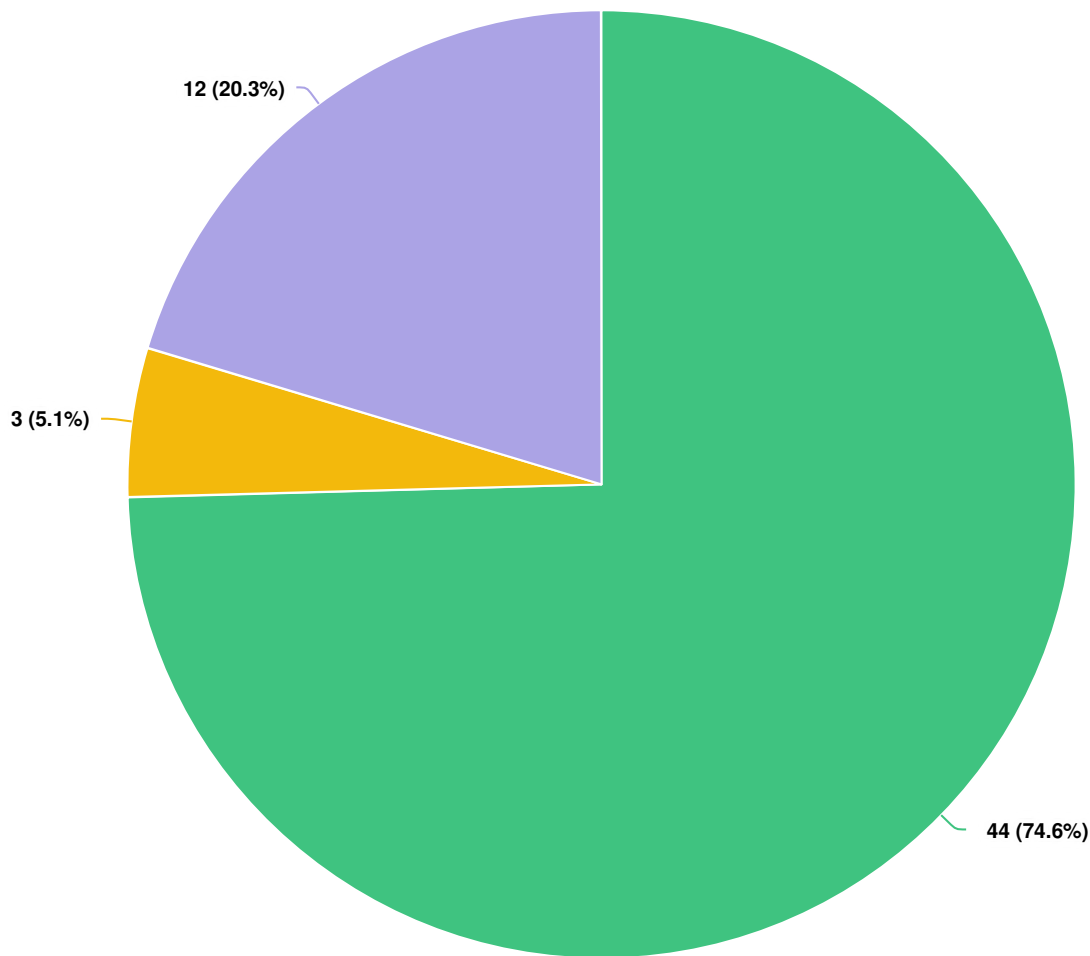


Question options

- Yearly
- Every two years
- Every three years
- Other (please explain)

Optional question (54 response(s), 5 skipped)
Question type: Radio Button Question

Q15 | Do you think there should be a specific special education needs and disabilities transport policy?



Question options

- Yes
- No
- I am not sure

Optional question (59 response(s), 0 skipped)

Question type: Radio Button Question

Home to School Travel for Children aged 5 years to 16 years

SURVEY RESPONSE REPORT

29 November 2023 - 21 January 2024

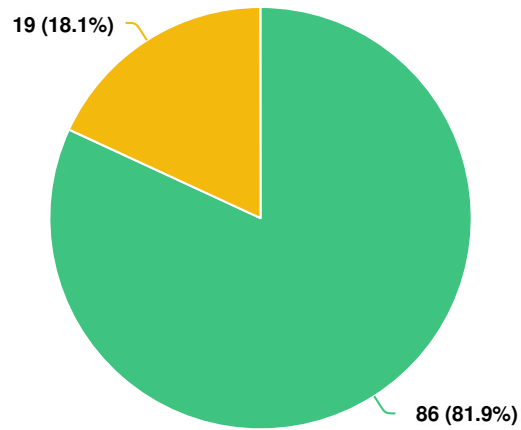
PROJECT NAME:

Home to School Travel Consultation 2023



SURVEY QUESTIONS

Q1 | Do you feel the policy is clear, easy to read and provides enough information?

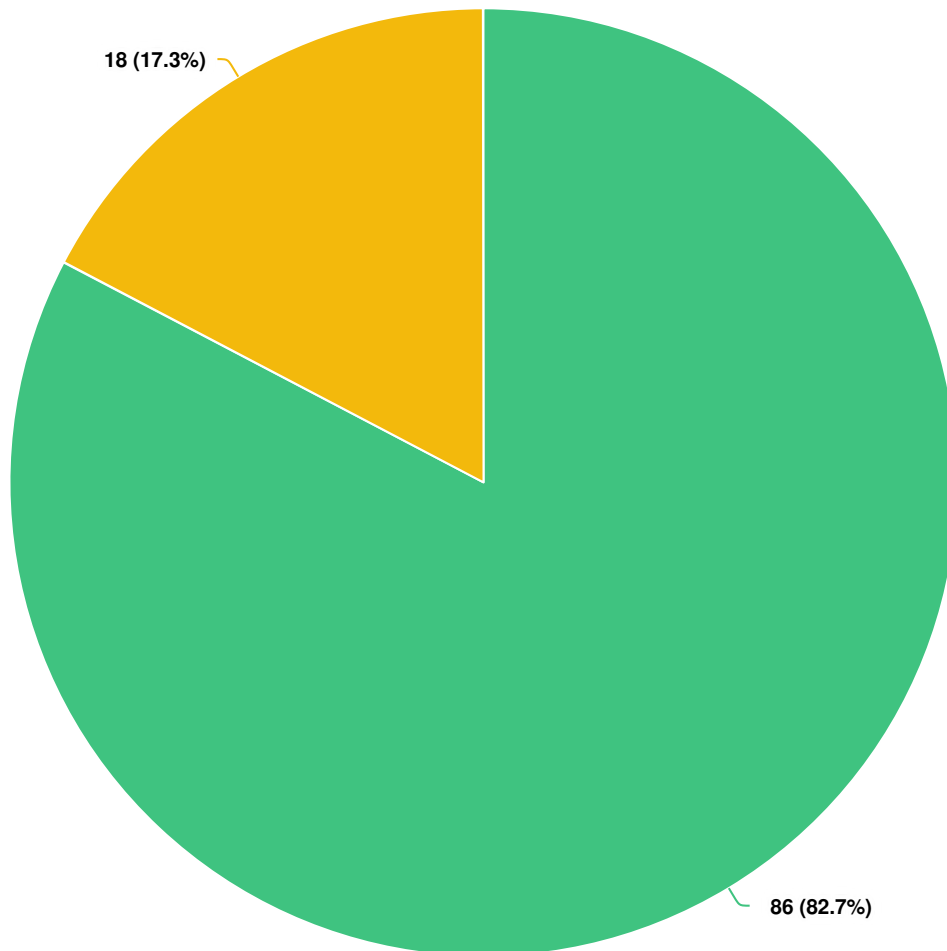


Question options

- Yes
- No (please explain)

Optional question (105 response(s), 1 skipped)
Question type: Radio Button Question

Q2 | Do you consider the travel assistance eligibility criteria at the point of applying for a school place?

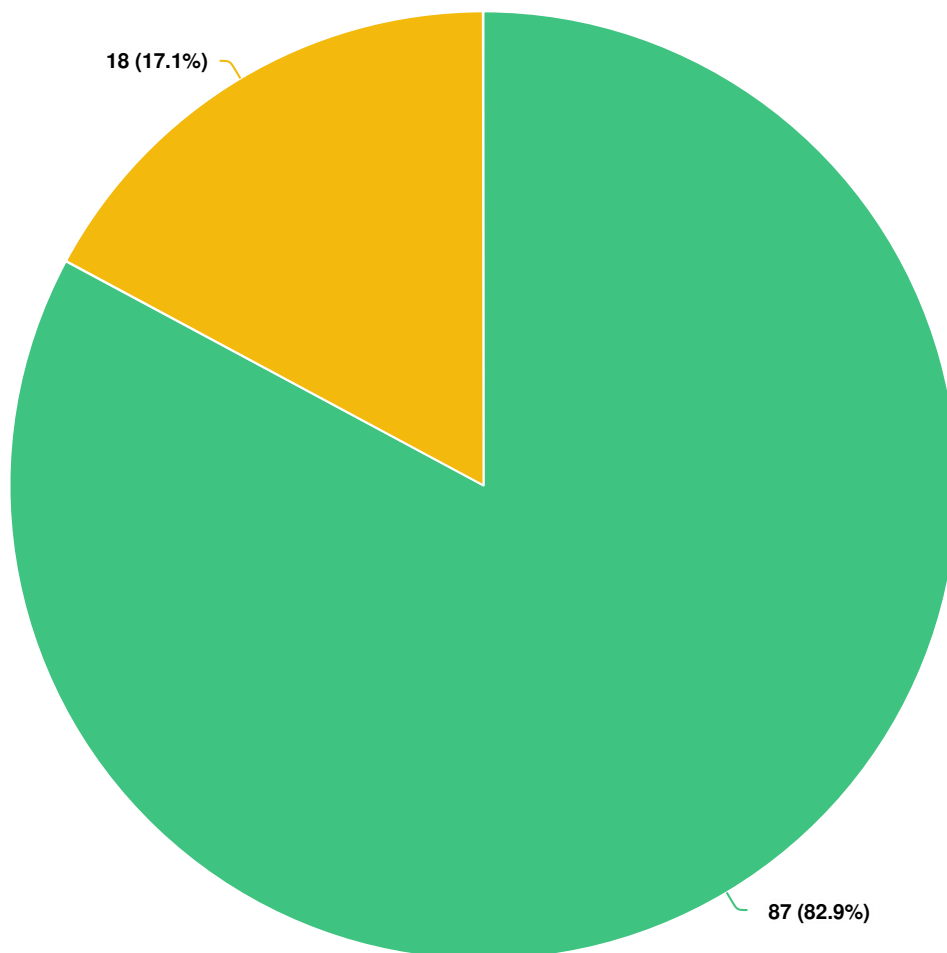


Question options

- Yes
- No (please provide further information)

*Optional question (104 response(s), 2 skipped)
Question type: Radio Button Question*

Q3 | Should the council make it clearer to parents that travel assistance will only be provided where the parent has applied for their nearest school to the home address and meets the distance criteria?

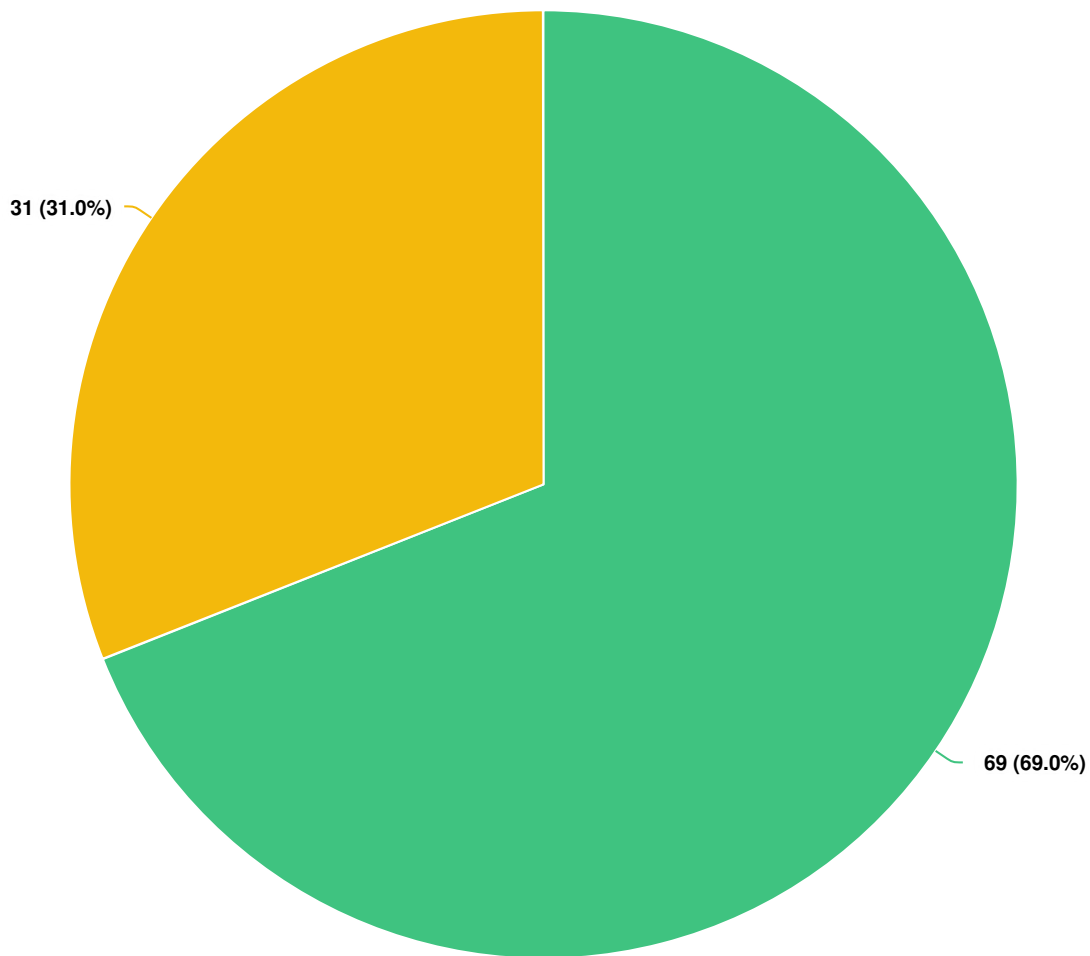


Question options

- Yes
- No

Optional question (105 response(s), 1 skipped)
Question type: Radio Button Question

Q4 | Do you feel that the policy provides clear information on the transport appeal process if your transport application is refused?



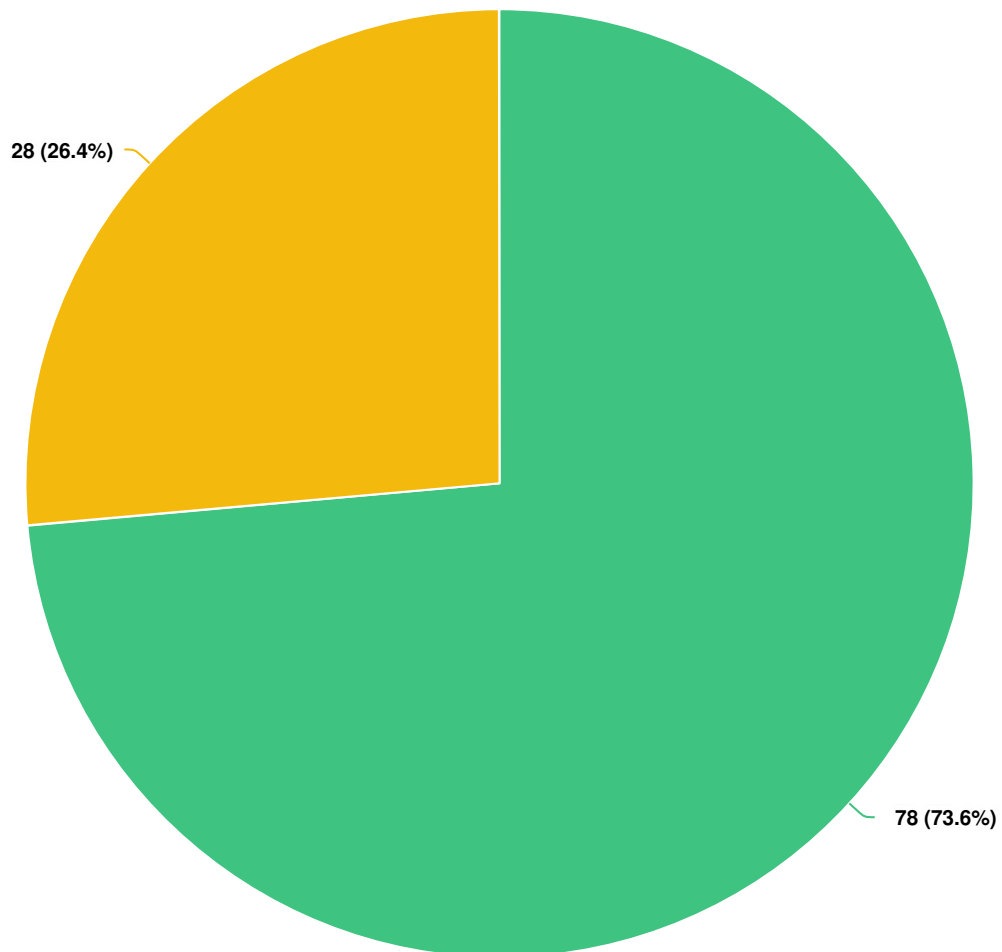
Question options

- Yes
- No (please explain)

Optional question (100 response(s), 6 skipped)

Question type: Radio Button Question

Q5 | Should the option of a personal travel budget be included within the policy?

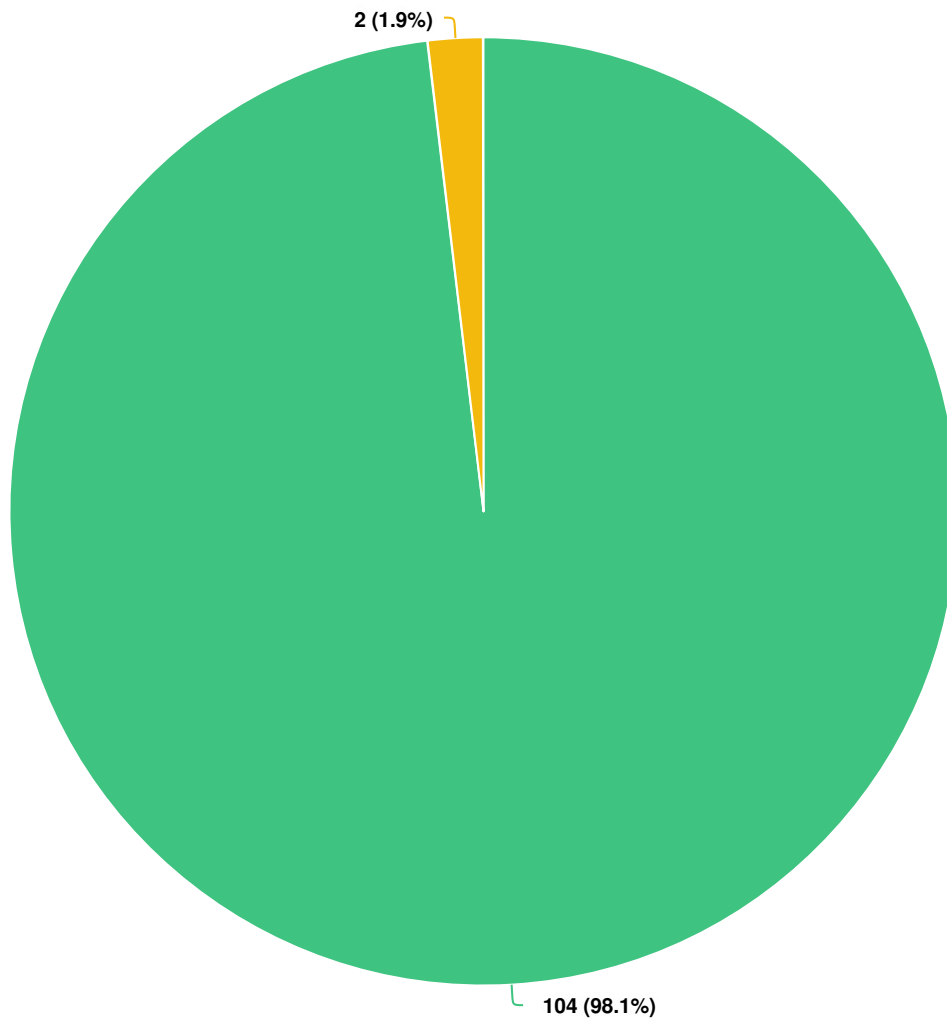


Question options

- Yes
- No

Optional question (106 response(s), 0 skipped)
Question type: Radio Button Question

Q6 | Do you think it would be helpful if we created an easy read version of the policy for parents?

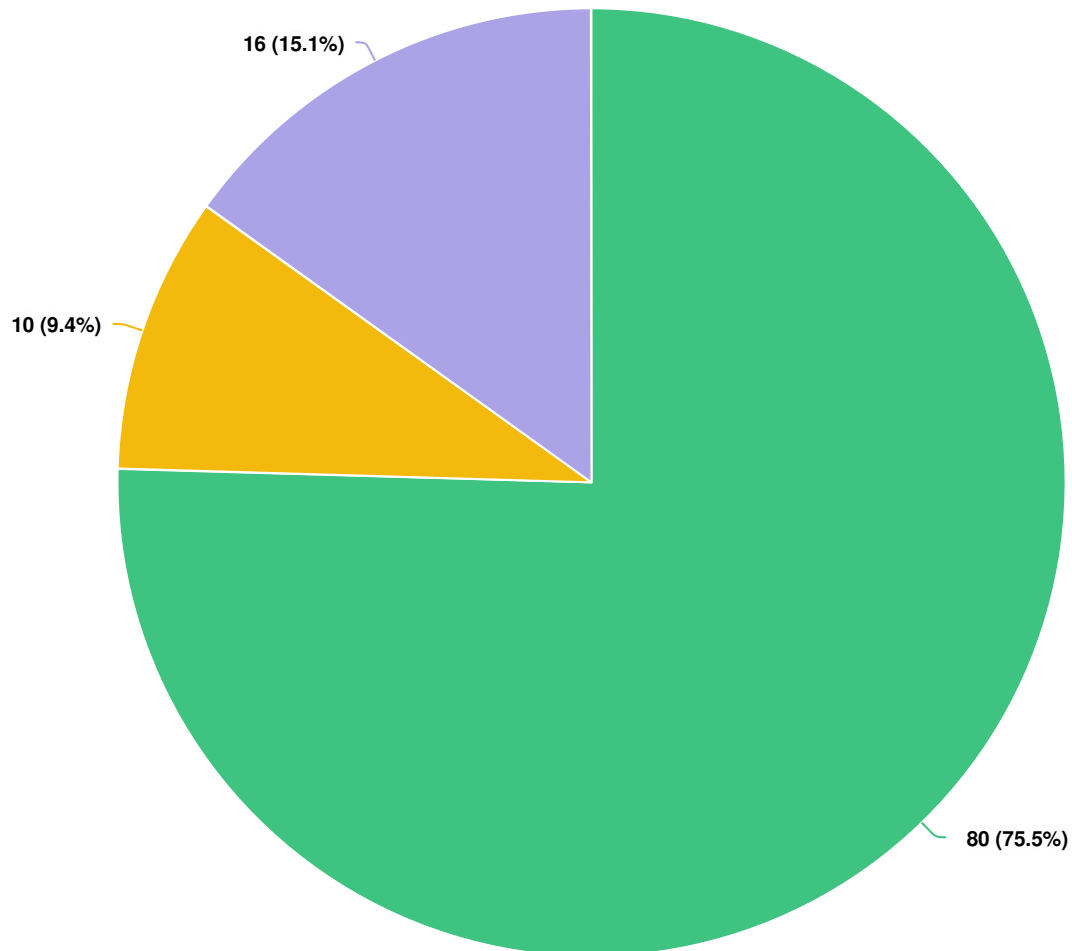


Question options

- Yes
- No

Optional question (106 response(s), 0 skipped)
Question type: Radio Button Question

Q7 | Do you think it would be helpful if the council had separate transport policies for mainstream and special education needs and disabilities?



Question options

- Yes
- No
- Not sure / I don't know

Optional question (106 response(s), 0 skipped)
Question type: Radio Button Question

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12 March 2024	ITEM: 10
Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee	
Overview of Responsibilities of Portfolio holder for Education report	
Report of: Cllr Adam Carter, Cabinet Member for Education	
This report is: Public	

Overview

This report gives an overview of the work that has been undertaken within the municipal year within education and skills which is part of children's services.

EDUCATION & SKILLS – Supporting our children, young people and adults to achieve positive learning and skills outcomes.

School Effectiveness Team

There are over 30,000 school-aged children living in Thurrock. They are served well by the 39 Primary Schools, 13 Secondary Schools, 1 Alternative Provision and 3 Special Schools that operate across the borough.

Orsett Heath Academy is due to open in its new purpose-built premises in September 2024, providing secondary school places and ensuring we are meeting our statutory duty to ensure all children have a school place.

90% of schools in Thurrock are judged by Ofsted to be good or better, (95% of Primary Schools & 76% of secondary schools).

There were 20 Ofsted inspections of schools in the last calendar year, 2 schools were inspected for the first time, and both achieved a good Ofsted rating, 2 further schools retained their outstanding judgement, the remaining schools also retained their previous judgement.

Two of the secondary schools that are Requires Improvement/ inadequate will be joining a new multi-academy trust in April 2024, as a result of the Regional Director's brokerage. It is hoped that the new multi-academy trust, will have the capacity to rapidly improve both schools.

In 2023 43% of young people achieved 9-5 English and Maths GCSEs compared to 45% nationally and 63% achieved 9-4 GCSE compared to 65% nationally.

In Year 6, end of Key Stage 2 62% achieved the expected standard in reading, writing and maths combined, compared to 60% nationally.

At the end of reception, 70% of children achieved a good level of development compared to 67% nationally.

It should also be noted that a significantly higher proportion of Children in Thurrock with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, and those who are Looked After by Thurrock, achieved the expected standard than their peers nationally.

Holiday, Activity & Food (HAF) Programme

HAF clubs were delivered throughout Easter, summer and Christmas holidays for school-aged children who are eligible for free school meals through means tested benefits. On average, 20 clubs were held over each holiday period offering a vast range of activities for children to take part in; e.g art, drama, music, sports of all types, wellbeing, Special needs etc. They delivered healthy meals and activities, family information and advice and signposting to other services. Over 2000 family packs were distributed to help families stay active and receive support. The places are funded by grants from DfE.

Early Years

The School Effectiveness Early Years Team is working closely to deliver training to all Early Years Providers to support them to further develop their knowledge and skills around addressing speech, language and communications difficulties and delay. The team, funded by the Family Hubs Home Learning Environment, is directly working with practitioners, families and children to improve speech and language development outcomes for children identified as having a need.

The latest published data (2022) shows that 74% of our most vulnerable two-year-olds benefitted from funded early education and childcare, which is in line with national data. The data also shows that 87% of our three and four-year-olds benefitted from funded early education and childcare.

92% of our Early Years Providers are judged to be good or outstanding by Ofsted. The settings that are not good have not engaged with our School Effectiveness Team who deliver the statutory responsibility of the council around delivering support and advice to settings to improve. As a result, we are offering settings where Ofsted ratings have dropped further advice and support.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

In December 2023 Thurrock maintained 2294 Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) for children and young people with SEND. These plans set out what the children's needs, aspirations and intended outcomes are and what provision must be in place to meet them.

In line with legislation, EHCPs must be issued within 20 weeks. The latest available published data shows that in 2021 in England, 59.9% of EHCPs were issued on time. However, in 2023, Thurrock issued 89% of EHCPs were issued within 20 weeks.

SEND Post 16 service is enhancing its post 16 provision by working with training providers to deliver the best possible offer to our SEND young people and its quality assurance – the service is actively working with the young people to enable provision to meet the young people's needs.

The SEND Service is in the process of reviewing and updating its strategy in coproduction with health, social care, college, schools and settings, children and young people and their families as well as a range of other professionals. This should be ready in draft form in Spring 2024 and will align with the SEND and Alternative Provision Green Paper as well as the revised Joint Area Inspection Ofsted and Care Quality Commission Framework for Inspection.

The Assistant Director for Education and Skills, SEND Heads of Service, Finance Head of Service and PQBI Head of Service have been working with DfE and their partners Newtons to participate in the Delivering Better Value Programme. This work has been ongoing since August and aims to identify the causes for the demands on the High Needs Block (HNB) of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). Once identified the service is able to bid for a grant to help to reduce the demand on the HNB DSG. The grant application is in process, and we are hopeful it will be successful. The grant will be used to support the schools in Thurrock to be even more inclusive.

School Attendance Support Team (SAST) (previously known as Education Welfare Service)

In May 2022 the Government published new guidance for Councils, *Working together to improve school attendance*. This guidance came into effect from September 2022 and sets out clearly the expectations and responsibilities of parents, schools, governing bodies and the local authority and partners to increase levels of school attendance. The guidance requires all Local Authorities to rigorously track local attendance data, have a SAST which provides expert advice in respect of attendance matters, share good practice, hold termly conversations with all schools in respect of pupils identified as persistent or severely absent. The service has set out clear attendance management processes for schools to follow to ensure that barriers to good attendance are identified, explore multi-disciplinary support for families and monitor and improve the attendance of children with a social worker.

In addition to the attendance advisory work the SAST fulfil the local authority's statutory duties in respect of Elective Home Education (EHE). Contact is made with each new EHE case to establish the reasons for EHE and to ensure that a plan for a suitable education is in place. Cases found to be suitable are reviewed every 12 months. Cases are reviewed sooner if there is a need. Cases known to social care or those with an EHCP are given

highest priority. Statutory action such as School Attendance Orders are used if there is a need to return a child to school.

In this current academic year there are currently 345 children or young people recorded as EHE. This academic year alone a further 66 children have been returned to school.

The service also issues child performance licenses, chaperone licenses and child employment licenses on behalf of the Council.

1199 Penalty notices were issued in 2023 to parents of children with poor attendance or those who took term time holidays. These are as a result of a referral from schools to issue a penalty notice. 108 cases went further to prosecution because the penalty notices went unpaid.

The Virtual School

The Virtual School continues to monitor and support the educational progress and outcomes for Children/Young People Looked After (C/YP LA) irrespective of where they are placed, in or out of borough. The responsibility covers pupils aged between 3 years and 18 years and this includes those who have left care during an academic year. It is also required to provide information, advice and guidance to Previously Looked After Children (PLAC) and their families when requested.

At the end of the academic year 22/23, there was 322 pupils aged 3-18 years in the Virtual School. This was more than in the previous year. During the academic year, 37 pupils left care and 83 entered care. 39 Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) entered care during this academic year and in total there were 66 UASC. This equates to 20% of the cohort, which was an increase of 9% from the previous year.

In June 2021 the Department for Education published non-statutory guidance which extends the role of the Virtual School Head to promote improved educational outcomes for Children with a social worker aged 0-18 years. Grant funding of £100,000 per year has been provided to support these extra duties and this has been committed by the Department for Education until 2025. The bulk of this funding is used for 1.5 extra staff members who are leading on the implementation of supporting and challenging schools and social care to improve the educational outcomes for this group. A variety of data is now being collected and analysed which looks at areas for improvement for this cohort of children and young people. We have maintained our commitment to the provision of training and inclusion resources for those schools requesting it as well as providing social care with training and advice to promote better educational outcomes.

Inspire Employability & Skills

Inspire Employability & Skills Services are enhancing the work with young people by focusing on developing the skills young people needed to progress into the world of work.

Employability and Skills team have successfully delivered on the ONTRACK and CLLD ESF funded programmes by delivering bespoke and one to one support for those young people and adults who are furthest removed from employment. Both programmes were part funded through the European Social Fund and managed by the Department for Work and Pensions. ONTRACK was a 2.5-year programme worth £3.7m to Thurrock which engaged with 815 young people aged 15-25 who were able to benefit from the range of support on offer. CLLD programme was specifically designed to deliver similar work to 203 adults in Tilbury area.

In partnership with Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC) Employability and Skills Team are engaging with Career Coordinators in schools and Employability Advisers (EAs) from industry to improve delivery of careers strategy to the schools, i.e., bringing the world of education closer to the world of work. 18 secondary schools and colleges in Thurrock are engaging in the project.

Successful partnership with Make Happen is providing valuable resource to work with the most vulnerable young people to progress them to Higher Education (HE), focusing on Care Leavers.

Inspire Employability and Skills Team are further developing partnerships with Thurrock secondary schools by providing Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance in 9 out of the 15 schools.

September Guarantee 2023 stands at 100% ensuring that every 16-year-old had a place of learning reserved for them in September 2022. September Guarantee 2024 is on the same trajectory.

Grangewaters – the team have enhanced our SEND offer at Grangewaters: young people with SEND access Grangewaters for a range of training sessions getting them ready for the world of work and preparing them for adulthood. New SEND schools have come on board, whilst one to one tuition has been explored and enhanced.

Thurrock Adult Community College

Thurrock Council's Adult Learning Service, Thurrock Adult Community College, provides learning opportunities that improve people's lives and outcomes, enable people to participate in their communities and support growth and prosperity in Thurrock.

The college reaches approximately 1400 adults across Thurrock each academic year.

Leaders and managers have designed and planned a broad curriculum offer with the intent to develop the knowledge, skills and behaviors that learners need to take advantage of the considerable opportunities for employment both within Thurrock and in the surrounding areas. The offer includes maths, English and ESOL from complete beginners to level 2, vocational qualifications plus workshops and short courses to support with wellbeing, confidence building and engagement back in to learning.

The work of the college remains key to meeting elements of key council strategies including the Backing Thurrock Skills Plan, the Brighter Futures strategy, Think Family and the Health and Wellbeing Strategy. The skills agenda remains a key focus.

In May this year the college underwent a full Ofsted inspection which resulted in a grading of “Requires Improvement”. Inspectors recognised that leaders and managers were aware of the areas for improvement, had plans in place to address these but had insufficient time to demonstrate impact.

As a result of inspection feedback, leaders and Governors made the strategic decision to cease apprenticeship training provision for the Council’s Business Administration Level 3 apprentices. Apprentices were transferred to South Essex College from 1 September 2023 and the college continued to support 5 apprentices who were close to their End Point Assessment.

In the summer the college moved from its temporary location in South Essex College to a new home in the Old Court House. This has resulted in positive feedback from both learners and staff.

Home to School Travel Assistance

Restructure of Children’s Home to School Travel Service

Further to the restructure of Home to School Travel Service the assessment of mainstream transport eligibility is in the process of moving to Children’s Services as this will allow complete oversight of budgets.

Home to School Travel Policy Update

The policy and Post 16 statement is in the process of being reviewed and will be updated to reflect changes to the Department for Education Statutory Guidance published in June 2023.

A consultation on the proposed changes commenced on 29th October 2023 and closes on 19th January 2024, this allows for a full 28-day statutory consultation to be adhered to as required by law.

A report will be presented to Children’s Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet in March 2024 for decision. It is proposed that parents will be required to contribute towards the cost of SEN Post 16 transport as there is no statutory duty to provide this free of charge.

Home to School Travel Contract

On 15th March 2023, Cabinet approved a one-year extension to the current framework which ends on 31st July 2024. Following this decision work has taken place between the

service and procurement to look at all options for a new contract to commence early in 2024. On 13th December 2023, Cabinet approved for the Council to collaborate with Essex County Council (ECC) on a procurement exercise for a Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) and to undertake further competition via the DPS to award contracts for Children's home to school transport. The DPS will allow for new operators to join the contract as any point during its lifecycle, therefore providing capacity to deliver transport contracts whilst obtaining best value.

Free School Programme and School Expansion

The Council has a statutory duty to ensure that every child in Thurrock has a school place. We continue to achieve this with strong working relationships with our schools.

Orsett Health Academy is on track to open in their permanent location for September 2024. The school will be opening their full pupil admission number of 240 places in year 7.

The new Harrier Primary School, part of the REACh2 Academy Trust has been delayed due to the main contractor delivering the school on behalf of the Department for Education (DfE) went into administration. The DfE are in the process of procuring a new main contractor with a view to the school opening for September 2025.

In relation to pupil place planning, we are in the process of compiling the next pupil place plan which will include forecasts from 2024-2028.

SEN Provision in Thurrock

This year we have developed a further primary resource base for 10 pupils with Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC) at Deneholm Primary with a further primary resource base for 10 pupils due to open at Arthur Bugler Primary in September 2024. These additional resource bases follow the additional 10 places developed at Stifford Clays Primary School and 10 places at Aveley Primary school both of which became fully operational last academic year. The development of mainstream resource bases is part of our SEND strategy of ensuring that children with SEND have excellent opportunities to have their needs met within high quality school provision within the borough. These resource bases have been developed to meet the significantly increasing population of children with complex needs resulting from SEND.

Following on from the increasing demand for specialist places in the Primary phase, there is a subsequent need for additional specialist places for pupils with complex needs places in the Secondary phase of education. We are in the process of consulting with secondary schools to create a Secondary Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC) to enable the pupils from the primary bases to continue their education within Thurrock.

We have worked alongside Olive Academies Trust to support the application for a new Free School Alternative Provision Academy in Thurrock for pupils with Social Emotional and Mental Health Needs who require specialist provision to enable them to access a full curriculum offer and maintain opportunities to access mainstream schooling. We are currently awaiting the outcome of this process.

The Local Authority has in place 233 Specialist Mainstream Resource Bases for pupils with SEND in 2023/24 and this will rise to 253 places in 2024/25 with the development of further Primary and Secondary provision for pupils with Autism Spectrum Condition.

The Local Authority has 540 school places across our three special schools in Thurrock meeting the needs of pupils with highly complex special educational and disability needs.

Access and Inclusion

We have continued the process of holding 3 weekly Primary and Secondary Inclusion Panels for all schools within the Local Authority. These panels ensure that the Fair Access Protocols are appropriately implemented ensuring that pupils who come under this, who are often particularly vulnerable, get access to a school placement in a timely manner with a fair distribution of these pupils across all schools in Thurrock. All schools in Thurrock have continued to engage positively in this process.

The Inclusion Panels also facilitate the process of managed moves for pupils at risk of permanent exclusion to avoid where possible the need for this and enable a fresh start at a new school. The Panels also oversee the reintegration of pupils who have been previously excluded back into mainstream provision from our Alternative Provision.

There have been 42 permanent exclusions from Thurrock Schools during the academic year 2022/23. In addition, there have been 2 Thurrock pupils permanently excluded from out of borough schools. Exclusions from schools outside Thurrock attended by pupils living in Thurrock do not appear in these statistics however it is Thurrock's responsibility to provide full-time suitable education for these pupils.

Thurrock has 16 places for Primary aged children who are at risk of or who have been permanently excluded from school provided by Osborne Academy Trust via two inclusion bases at two separate primary schools.

Thurrock has 85 places for Secondary aged children who are at risk of or who have been permanently excluded from school provided by Olive Academy Trust at the Olive AP Academy in Thurrock.

Dedicated Schools Grant

Nationally, all local authorities and the education system have struggled to meet the additional demand for payments in support of children with Education Health and Care plans (EHCP); for out of borough placements, independent special school residential placements and for special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) top up payments.

The high needs block remained a significant issue for Thurrock, with year-on-year increase in EHCP's. This has required both additional top up funding to be paid to Schools and Academies and an increase in demand for specialist placements.

The DSG has a carried forward deficit into 2023/24 of £0.534m. This is a decrease of £3.512m from 2018/19. Increasing the Page 86

are seen as the key areas to deliver a sustainable budget. This is supported by work with the DfE in the SEND Delivering Better Value programme.

Conclusion

This report highlights the work that has been undertaken over the past year, relating to education and skills. The teams have worked hard to ensure that all children young people and adults can access good quality teaching opportunities which lead to sustainable pathways.

Appendix:

Education Portfolio Budget

Education Portfolio	2023/24 Indicative Budget £'000	2024/25 Indicative Budget £'000
Dedicated Schools Budget	51,754	61,696
Education and Skills	5,215	4,503
School Transport	4,336	4,702
Education Total	61,305	70,901
Dedicated Schools Grant	(51,754)	(61,696)
Education Portfolio Total	9,551	9,205

In determining the Education budget, the following levels of growth and savings have been applied, as reflected in the MTFS.

Growth

Education Portfolio Growth	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000
DSG – CSSB 20% Reduction	135	105
Home to School Transport	1,243	799
Total	1,378	904

Home to School Transport

Thurrock continues to experience yearly increase in pupil numbers and Education Health and Care Plans. The increase to the Local Offer for pupil with Special Education Needs, places additional demands on the Home to School Transport budget. This is a recognised national issue.

The element of funding received for historic commitments made prior to 2013/14 is subject to a 20% year-on- year reduction. Funding is provided to minimise the impact of this reduction in funding. This allows Education budgets to be reviewed as part of the Council’s budget reduction proposals.

Savings

The following savings have been identified within Education for the period 2022/23 to 2025/26:

Savings Narrative	2022/23 £'000	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000	2025/26 £'000	Total £'000
Review of Education Services	1,010	126	599		1,735
Cessation of Council provided Nursery Provision	64	46			110
Cross Cutting			145		145
Review of Home to School Transport	146		432	132	710
	1,220	172	1,175	132	2,699

12 March 2024	ITEM: 11
Children’s Overview & Scrutiny Committee	
School Capital Programme Update 2023/24	
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Key
Report of: Councillor Adam Carter, Cabinet Member for Education	
Accountable Assistant Director: Michele Lucas, Assistant Director Education and Skills	
Accountable Director: Sheila Murphy, Executive Director – Children’s Services	
This report is Public	
Version: Committee	

Executive Summary

Cabinet approval will be sought on one of the options proposed within this report including the approval of additional spend that is required for the expansion of Tilbury Pioneer Academy.

On 15th March 2023, Cabinet approved a budget of £3M along with the procurement process to appoint a design and multi-disciplinary project team to undertake required surveys and develop a detailed cost plan for the refurbishment of the part of the old block that was on the Tilbury Pioneer site and was due to be demolished. Following this detailed work and the increase in cost it is clear that Cabinet needs to reconsider whether new build is more feasible than refurbishment.

The expansion works for Tilbury Pioneer Academy will be funded from the DfE basic need grant (not Council general fund), which has sufficient funds available to cover either option presented within the report.

Cabinet approval will be also be sought for the approval of £1M to proceed with works to convert a council owned building in Northview Avenue , Tilbury to a secondary SEMH (Social, Emotional, Mental Health provision, which will be run by Olive Academy. The works will be funded from the DfE SEN Capital Grant (not Council general fund), which has sufficient funds available.

Additionally, this report provides an update on current capital projects managed by Thurrock Council which form part of the current school capital programme outlining the progress that has been achieved since the last report to Cabinet in March 2023.

The current programme aims to deliver sufficient pupil places for 2024/25 academic years in mainstream and SEN provision.

Commissioner Comment:

Commissioners have been consulted on the content of this report and agree with the recommendations made.

Recommendation(s)

That the Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee consider and recommend the following decisions to Cabinet.

Cabinet to approve recommendation 1.1 or 1.2 set out below:

- 1.1 To approve a £3.85M budget for refurbishment works to allow for the expansion of Tilbury Pioneer Academy to be funded from the School's Basic Need capital funding 2023/24.**
- 1.2 To approve a budget of £4.75M budget for the new build works to allow for the expansion of Tilbury Pioneer Academy to be funded from the School's Basic Need capital funding 2023/24.**
- 1.3 To approve the commencement of the procurement process in accordance with Council & UK procurement procedures to vary the appointment and scope of works to be undertaken by the Multi Discipline design team for the Tilbury Pioneer Expansion Project and appoint the Principal Contractors to take forward the proposed desired scheme.**
- 1.3 That authority be delegated to the Director of Children's Services, in consultation with the Education Portfolio Holder, to enter into any form of agreement following the award of the agreements arising from 1.1 or 1.2 above in compliance with the Council's procurement regulations.**
- 1.4 To approve a £1M budget for alternation works at Northview Avenue , Tilbury to allow for a secondary SEMH provision to be funded from SEN Capital government grant 2023/24.**
- 1.5 Note the recent in-year accommodation works that have commenced and completed in order to ensure sufficient pupil places for 2023/2024.**

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 The Council has a statutory responsibility to ensure that suitable and sufficient places are available in Thurrock for every child of school age whose parents wish them to take up a school place.
- 2.2 The 2023/24 school capital programme has progressed well and incorporated innovative partnership working, as well as utilising modern methods of construction to deliver the identified additional pupil places needed.
- 2.3 The demand for pupil places has increased significantly, over the last few years we have seen a large increase in 'in year' admissions from families moving into the Authority. In 2022/23, we received 647 applications for children that moved into Thurrock from outside of the UK, and 1005 applications for pupils from elsewhere within the UK. For the first 2 months of this academic year, we have had 213 applications for children who have moved into Thurrock from outside of the UK, and there have been 338 applications for new arrivals from elsewhere within the UK. We are currently not seeing a decrease in the demand; the level of demand has and continues to be unprecedented. To be able to accommodate this demand, we are building

in additional places to support in-year growth across a number of year groups where it has been identified that we do not have sufficient school places.

PROGRESS UPDATE ON EXISTING PROJECTS

Abbots Hall Primary Expansion

- 2.4 Works started in March 2022, with the first 2 phases complete and fully operational.
- 2.5 The final phase of the project which includes a new 2-storey teaching block extension was due to be handed over in August 2023, however, the principal contractor (Lengard Ltd.) ceased trading in June 23, and went into receivership. New contracts have therefore needed to be procured in order to complete all outstanding works along with pre-existing defects meaning that completion of the scheme will now be by March 2024. The additional works are being funded from remaining funds held within the budget along with retentions that were held from the Lengard contract.

Temporary Classrooms

- 2.6 A single demountable classroom was installed in August 2023 to create additional capacity in year 3 at Somers Heath Primary. This has provided an additional 30 primary school places. The temporary classroom will remain onsite until the bulge year ends in four years. In addition, by creating these additional places, this prevents pupils being transported to the next nearest school with available places at the cost to the council.
- 2.7 A single demountable classroom has also been installed for one year to provide additional places in year 7 at Grays Convent. The demountable will be removed in the summer of 2024 when additional space will come available within the main school building when a previous bulge class completes its secondary education.

Tilbury Pioneer Primary Academy Expansion

- 2.8 On 15th March 2023, Cabinet agreed an estimated budget allocation of £3m to cover both an architect led multi-disciplinary design team responsible for providing specialist services needed to oversee the detailed and technical design for the expansion project, and a Principal Building Contractor for its construction phase.
- 2.9 Following completion of scoping and feasibility studies, the proposal for Tilbury Pioneer Primary Academy was to firstly apply to planning to retain the west wing of the old 'Tilbury Manor' building, then if successful, undertake a full internal & external refurbishment of this structure in order to provide the required accommodation. Upon completion, Tilbury Pioneer will have capacity to increase its pupil admission number (PAN) from 420 to 630 making this a 3-form entry primary School with an integral special needs Autism base.
- 2.10 The procurement and appointment of the multi-disciplinary design team was formalised on 20th June 2023, and works began to undertake more extensive surveys and develop a detailed cost plan which is appended to this report Ref: A3408_Cost Plan_Refurbishment.
- 2.11 This cost plan illustrates that the extent of works needed to bring the Tilbury Pioneer building up to modern standards significantly exceeds original expectations, this is compounded by the

revision in June 2022 to Part L of the building regulations which places an increased requirement on developers with respect to improving thermal insulation in older buildings. In addition, the highways planning consultee response requires the provision of a 'one way' on site vehicular pupil drop off. The conclusion of the cost plan illustrates that the original budget allocation of £3m is short of what would be needed to complete the refurbishment works.

2.12 As a result of the work undertaken around the refurbishment and the significant increase in the potential costs related to the project the decision was taken to pause the project and identify other potential solutions. This has led to further investigations being undertaken to evaluate whether a new building would provide better value for money and building longevity. A developed cost plan is appended to this report ref: A3408_Cost Plan_New Build illustrating the anticipated costs of the new build option along with refurbishment cost option.

2.13 Given that both expansion options will require an increased budget allocation, an outline plan has been developed to visualise what could be achievable for a greater increase in financial commitment. Floorplan drawing, elevations drawing, a site plan as well as a 3d render are appended to this report to assist with consideration ref:

A3408_901_A_PROPOSED FLOOR PLANS,
A3408_902_A_PROPOSED ELEVATIONS,
A3408_903_A_PROPOSED SITE LAYOUT
A3408_904_PROPOSED RENDERS

2.14 The below table provides a summary of the like for like relative advantages and disadvantages of each option (new build versus refurbishment) the key deliverables are in bold text:

<u>Item/Element</u>	<u>New Build</u>	<u>Refurbishment</u>
Hall / Studio	2 no.	1 no.
Classrooms	9 no.	9 no.
SEN Resource Bases	4 no.	2 no.
SEN Breakout Space	2 no.	0
WC's	6 no	5 no.
Accessible WC's	2 no.	2 no.
PPA/Breakout space	2 no.	1 no.
Staff Room	1 no.	1 no.
Storerooms	7 no.	4 no.
Location (relative to main school block)	Connected at Ground and 1 st floor levels	56 Metres via external footpath
Expected Building Lifespan	70 years	20 years

Estimated Cost per Sqm.	£3,300.19	£3,142.18
-------------------------	-----------	-----------

- 2.15 The contracts, will be below the UK government's Find a Tender Service (FTS) thresholds, and are therefore not subject to a fully published procurement process.
- 2.16 If approved, it will be possible for the commencement of a sub-FTS single stage procurement.

Olive Secondary SEMH Provision (Northview Avenue , Tilbury)

- 2.17 The proposal is to convert the decommissioned building into a temporary specialist Secondary SEMH (Social, Emotional Mental Health) base which would be run by the Olive AP Academy. The provision would be for an initial period of up to five years. The Olive AP Academy is awaiting the outcome of their free school bid.
- 2.18 Sketch designs, and a desktop costing study have already completed with initial indications showing that this project will have an estimated provisional total value of up to £1M, which would be funded from a government SEN capital grant, therefore at no cost to the council's general fund.
- 2.18 The building is currently decommissioned and is not being considered by Education for any other purpose.
- 2.19 There are no other alternatives buildings available in the Tilbury area that could accommodate this temporary provision. The provision needs to be located close to the Olive Academy to ensure sufficient resources (staffing) are available to support the new provision. The Olive Academy site has been considered, however if the free school bid is successful the new school will be built within the site, therefore leaving no available space to erect temporary provision.
- 2.20 A business case was presented to the Councils Strategic Property Board on 25th January 2024, where the proposed change of use was approved.
- 2.21 It is envisaged this provision will deliver significant savings to the Council over the next five years for pupils who would otherwise be placed in provision outside of the borough with high placement and transport costs.
- 2.22 There are 12 pupils placed in a SEMH secondary provision outside of the borough that could be educated locally if provision was available. The placement and transport costs over a 5 year period equates to £3,349,325.00. It is felt the £1M one off capital grant investment significantly outweighs the placement and transport costs over the same period.
- 2.23 There are currently 29 pupils receiving tuition where we are unable to secure a special school place, tuition is offered. The current cost of tuition per pupil is £30,400 for 38 weeks. This would equate to £912,000 per year for 30 pupils that could be placed in the new provision locally and receive intense therapeutic work as this would enable those pupils to be reintegrated back into mainstream settings over time and receive a full education.
- 2.24 A report will be presented to Cabinet in June 2024 to seek approval to re-tender Tuition Support Services. The anticipated total cost for this re-tender is estimated to be up to £3.4 million over a three-year period.

- 2.25 In addition to the 30 pupils receiving tuition, there are 405 pupils with and Education Health Care Plan, with SEMH identified as their main need within their plan. Of those 405, 308 are of statutory school age. Those pupils are currently attending mainstream school, however schools are finding it extremely difficult to continue to meet their needs.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

Tilbury Pioneer Academy

3.1 Option 1: Do nothing.

This option will not address the demand for school places, either mainstream primary, or SEND provision and will potentially lead to either consequential expense being drawn as a result of the Council funding home to school transport to either the next nearest school with available places, or out of borough schools that are in a position to accommodate pupils with SEND. Additionally, there is a high risk to the Council that it will fail to comply with its statutory duties under both Section 13 of the Education Act 1996, as well as Section 88 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

3.2 Option 2: Continue with refurbishment.

This would mean cabinet agreeing an uplift in the total budget allocation to £3.85m to allow for the original refurbishment plan to proceed. This option only provides a lifespan of 20 years therefore there is no longevity in this option and does not provide best value. In addition, significant works will be required to ensure the required thermal properties are met in line with updated building regulations. It is also felt that this option does not provide best value.

The additional cost would be funded from the DfE basic need grant, which has sufficient funds available.

3.3 Option 3: New build (this option is recommended)

Agree an uplift in the total budget allocation to £4.75m and pursue the delivery of a new-build teaching block. This is the recommended option as it will deliver the best value in terms of achieving the key deliverables: DfE standard classrooms, hall space with secondary studio, SEN resource bases, and an increased longevity in terms of building lifespan of 70 years, this is 50 years longer than the refurbishment option 2. This option will also allow for nursery provision to be created to support the New Childcare Entitlement 2023 that was announced in the Spring budget as the school would then have space to relocate a KS1 class to the new building and provide nursery provision.

The additional cost would be funded from the DfE basic need grant, which has sufficient funds available.

Olive Secondary SEMH Provision (Northview Avenue, Tilbury)

3.4 Option 1: Do nothing

This option will not address the need for local SEMH provision and will potentially lead to either consequential expense being drawn as a result of the Council funding home to school transport to either the next nearest school with available places, or out of borough schools that are in a position to accommodate pupils with SEND. Additionally, there is a high risk to the Council that it will fail to comply with its statutory duties under both Section 13 of the Education Act 1996, as well as Section 88 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

There is also a risk of increase in the number of independent non-maintained special school places being sought. These are usually very high cost.

3.5 Option 2: Re-purpose the building in Northview Avenue, Tilbury (recommended option)

This would require Cabinet to approve the expenditure required which would be funded from the SEN Capital grant. The provision would create places locally for pupils with SEMH needs identified within their Education and Health Care Plan. There would be a reduction on spend for out of borough placements along with the associated transport costs. The new facility would also support pupils who are currently receiving tuition which would also reduce tuition costs.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

4.1 Tilbury Pioneer Academy Expansion

The preferred option is option 3. If approved option 3 will:

- Ensure that the recommended minimum DfE classroom size is met.
- Provide 70 years lifespan for the new building.
- Provide additional hall space with studio.
- Enable a total of 4 SEND resource bases.
- Provide space to include nursery provision alongside their reception classes.
- Reduce spend on tuition costs.

4.2 Olive Secondary SEMH Provision (Northview Avenue , Tilbury)

The preferred option is option 2. If approved option 2 will:

- Provide local provision for pupils with SEMH needs.
- Reduce spend on placements and transport.
- Enable some pupils to be re-integrated back into their mainstream school.
- Enable pupils to work towards attending school full time.

5. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

This report is being presented to Cabinet on 13th March 2024.

6. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact

6.1 The award of these JCT Construction and design contracts will enable the Council to continue to meet its statutory duty under the Education Act 2006.

6.2 The improvement of the educational assets is linked to key corporate priorities:

Priority	Delivered by
People	Improve health and wellbeing through improvements in the quality of the learning environment and opportunities provided

Place	Creating a great place for learning and opportunity by improving the education assets within the borough.
Prosperity	Encourage and promote job creation and economic prosperity through the provision of local employment and training opportunities.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Mark Terry**
Senior Financial Accountant

4th January 2024

Additional accommodation which is needed to meet the statutory requirement to provide places for the increasing pupil numbers, will be funded from a combination of the DfE capital basic needs grant and Section 106 monies held for Education provision. Once in-depth feasibility and design studies have been completed, funding requirements will be quantified and confirmed.

At its meeting on the 15th of March 2023, Cabinet agreed an original budget allocation of £3m for the Tilbury Pioneer Academy expansion. Should Cabinet agree on option 2, the current agreed budget will increase by an additional £0.850m. If option 3 is agreed, a further £1.75m will be added to the budget. There are sufficient funds available within the schools DfE basic need grant, to fund these additional costs at Tilbury Pioneer Academy.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Kevin Molloy**
Principal Contract Lawyer

4th January 2024

Section 13 of the Education Act 1996 imposes a specific duty on local authorities to secure within their area that there is efficient primary education, secondary education and further education available to meet the needs of the population of their area. This is an absolute duty that is imposed by statute.

There are additional duties that flow from this such as duties under section 88 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, which imposes the duty to set school admissions numbers for each school year as well as Regulation 4 of the School Admissions (Infant Class Sizes) (England) Regulations 2012 which sets a limit of 30 pupils to one teacher in all infant classes. These duties mean that local authorities must take care to ensure that there are adequate school provisions within their area to meet these duties.

Therefore, Thurrock Council is under an obligation to ensure that there are available school places for children that live in its area and wish to access education in the area. Accordingly, the proposal set out herein is in line with the positive statutory duty to ensure that the demand for school places is met on an ongoing basis.

The Council, in accordance with section 19 of the Education Act 1996, bears the statutory duty for ensuring that all children aged 5-16 receive an education. In cases where a child of compulsory school age cannot attend school due to reasons such as illness or exclusion, the local authority is obligated to make arrangements for 'suitable education,' either at a school or an alternative venue.

Following issue by the Council of a s114 notice, the Council must ensure that its resources are not used for non-essential spending. The contract at issue here is essential and the provision of it a statutory duty under legislation. In procuring the services outlined, the Council must observe the obligations upon it outlined in national legislation and in its internal procurement rules. Officers should ensure Legal Services are kept informed as they progress through the procurement.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Roxanne Scanlon**
Community Engagement and Project Monitoring Officer
12th January 2024

Whilst there are no direct diversity and equality implications, the provision of these services will help to tackle inequality and social exclusion. The procurement process will follow responsibilities as set out within The Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty, with due regard to advancing equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The procurement approach set out in this report will enable the Council to continue to meet its statutory duty under the Education Act 2006, to ensure that suitable and sufficient places are available in Thurrock for every child of school age whose parents wish them to have one, whilst ensuring value for money.

7.4 Risks

Please refer to options detailed in section 3 of the report. In addition, consideration has been given to a number of risks identified within the table below which relate to option 1.

Strategic	There is a risk that the council will not be able to meet its statutory duty to provide sufficient school places.
Operational	The school admissions team will not be able to offer school places where they are required within the borough, this would have negative impact on families as they would be required to travel to the nearest school with places. As schools are academies the council is unable to direct schools to open bulge classes.

	The council will not be able to reduce its cost for pupils who require specialist SEMH provision.
Financial and Legal	<p>There is a financial risk to the council's revenue budget where children's travel to next nearest schools with spaces exceeds the distance criteria for free travel assistance, statutory guidance places a duty on the council to fund such transport free of charge.</p> <p>There is a financial risk where current tuition providers take a long time to source a face-to-face tutor to provide education for SEMH children missing education where the local government ombudsman (LGO) can order the council to pay £2400 per term per child for loss of education.</p>
Contractual	There is contractual risk whereby the council will need to terminate the existing contract for the multi-disciplinary design team and agree final payment for completed design works.
Reputational	<p>There is a reputational risk where the council is unable to offer places within a reasonable distance to the family home address, which often results in a high number of complaints.</p> <p>Parents also have the right to complain to a first-tier tribunal for a school of their choice, the first-tier tribunal can order the council to place children in out of borough schools where there is no local provision. The Council is required to comply.</p>

7.5 **Other implications** (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health Inequalities, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder, or Impact on Looked After Children

None.

8. **Background papers used in preparing the report** (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

- Cabinet report 15 March 2023 – School Capital Programme Update 2022/23

9. **Appendices to the report**
Tilbury Pioneer Expansion

- Appendix 1 - Alderton Associates Cost Plan ref: A3408_Cost Plan_Refurbishment
- Appendix 2 - Alderton Associates Cost Plan ref: A3408_Cost Plan_New Build
- Appendix 3 - A3408_901_A_PROPOSED FLOOR PLANS
- Appendix 4 - A3408_902_A_PROPOSED ELEVATIONS

- Appendix 5 - A3408_903_A_PROPOSED SITE LAYOUT
- Appendix 6 - A3408_904_PROPOSED RENDERS

Olive SEMH Base (Northview Avenue, Tilbury)

- Appendix 7 - A2877_201_A_PROPOSED PLAN
- Appendix 8 - A2877_202_PROPOSED SITE PLAN

Report Author:

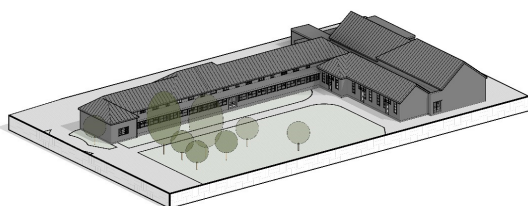
Sarah Williams

Head of Education Support Service

Childrens Services

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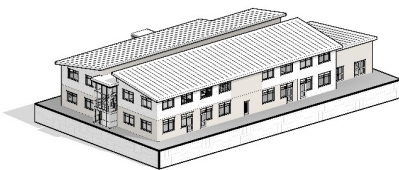
	Unit	Rate	Qty	Total
Aluminium roofing; standing seam				
Kalzip standard natural aluminium; 0.9 mm thick; 180 mm glass fibre insulation; vapour control layer; liner sheets; (U-value = 0.25 W/m2K)	m2	410.00	1050	430,500.00
Flat roofing systems				
Includes insulation and vapour control barrier; excludes decking (U-value = 0.25 W/m)	m2	225.00	259	58,275.00
Rooflights/Patent Glazing and Glazed Roofs				
individual polycarbonate rooflights; rectangular; fixed light m	m2	760.00	3	2,280.00
Stairs and Ramps				
Mass concrete ramp construction n/e 300mm high	m2	400.00	70	28,000.00
Stainless steel balustrade and handrail	m	700.00	32	22,400.00
External Walls				
P61 Insulated System; natural grey finish; 12 mm self-finished plasterboard lining (U-value = 0.30 W/m2K)	m2	140.00	632	88,480.00
Windows				
New uPVC windows double-glazed: 30 db acoustic rating; PPC cill; EPDM membrane; DPM; insulation; teleflex openers to opening lights	m2	450.00	90	40,500.00
External Doors				
Glazed single personnel door; stainless steel ironmongery;	nr.	2,925.00	13	38,025.00
Glazed double personnel door; stainless steel ironmongery;	nr.	4,525.00	4	18,100.00
Demolition / Strip Out				
Strip out existing windows, internal finishes and services	m2	75.00	1141	85,575.00
Asbestos removal	it	35,000.00	1	35,000.00
Superstructure				
Internal alterations	it	35,000.00	1	35,000.00
Timber Repairs	it	125,000.00	1	125,000.00
Internal Doors				
Standard fire doors; cellular core; softwood lining; softwood architrave; aluminium ironmongery (lockable, self-closure); painting or polishing; single leaf; Oak veneered; 30 min fire resistance; polished	nr	820.00	37	30,340.00
Ironmongery sets + OH closers + finger guards	nr	1,075.00	37	39,775.00
Internal Walls				
Plasterboard wall linings (fire rated/impact resistant where required)	m2	32.00	3422	109,504.00
Floor Finishes				
Carpet	m2	190.00	607	115,330.00
Vinyl sheet safety flooring	m2	220.00	316	69,520.00
Refinish timber floor	m2	50.00	163	8,150.00
Ceiling Finishes				
Suspended ceilings 600 x 600; suspension grid; insulation	m2	47.00	768	36,096.00
Plasterboard ceiling	m2	25.00	250	6,250.00
Mechanical and Electrical Services				
Space heating and cooling	it	320,000.00	1	320,000.00
Electrical installations	it	295,000.00	1	295,000.00
Sanitary installations and drainage	it	22,000.00	1	22,000.00
Fire safety system	it	70,000.00	1	70,000.00
ICT Infrastructure	it	45,000.00	1	45,000.00
Ventilation	it	80,000.00	1	80,000.00
Buliders works	it	75,000.00	1	75,000.00
FF & E				
Permanent installation	m2	60.00	1141	68,460.00
Decoration				
Emulsion all internal walls	m2	12.00	3422	41,064.00
Emulsion to all plasterboard ceilings	m2	10.00	250	2,500.00
Splashbacks and wall linings	m2	120.00	30	3,600.00
External Works				
Macadam repairs and drainage	m2	350.00	600	210,000.00
Fencing and gates	it	35,000.00	1	35,000.00
Hard Landscaping	it	225,000.00	1	225,000.00



Sub-Total	2,914,724.00
Preliminaries	349,766.88
Provisional Sums and Contingencies	175,000.00
Contractor OH & P	145,736.20
Total Works Cost	3,585,227.08
GIFA	1,141
£ / m2	3,142.18

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	Total
Pitched Roof	
Metal deck single ply roof - PPC aluminium RWGs	310,000.00
Flat Roof	
Single ply to corridor areas	38,000.00
Stairs and Ramps	
Internal staircases (2nr) with balustrading and enclosures	45,500.00
External Walls	
SFS external walls with brick and render façade	304,000.00
Windows	
Aluminium PPC windows	295,000.00
External Doors	
Aluminium PPC doors	55,000.00
Substructure	
Deep strip foundations	188,500.00
Superstructure	
Steel frame	180,000.00
PCC Ground Floor with composite metal deck First Floor inc. screeds	146,500.00
Internal Doors	
Internal timber flush doors	73,500.00
Internal Walls	
Drylined metal stud partitions	170,500.00
Floor Finishes	
Carpet	66,500.00
Ceiling Finishes	
Suspended ceilings 600 x 600; suspension grid	79,500.00
Mechanical Services	
Air Source Heat Pump - UF Heating and NVHR	650,000.00
Electrical Services	
Mains, power, LED lighting, alarm systems, PVs	550,000.00
FF & E	
Permanent installation	110,000.00
External Works	
Hard landscaping	275,000.00
Soft Landscaping	24,000.00
Fencing and gates	26,500.00
Services / trenching	41,500.00
Drainage / Attenuation	73,000.00
Site clearance / trees etc	



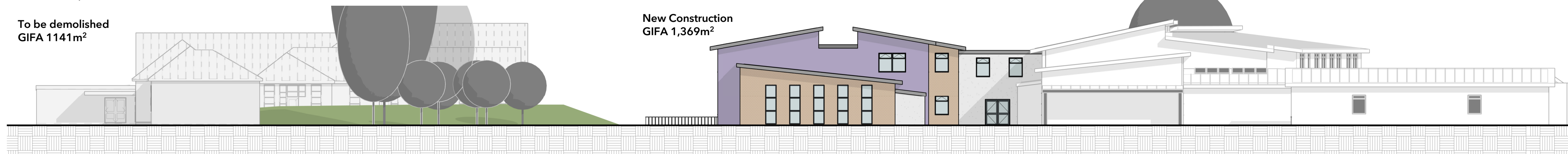
Sub-Total	3,702,500.00
Preliminaries	370,250.00
D&B Contractor design & OH&P	296,200.00
Provisional Sums and Contingencies	150,000.00
Total Works Cost	4,518,950.00
GIFA	1,369
£ / m2	3,300.91

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A3408 / 901 : PROPOSED FLOOR PLANS

To be demolished
GIFA 1141m²

New Construction
GIFA 1,369m²



PROPOSED GROUND FLOOR PLAN

1 : 100



PROPOSED FIRST FLOOR PLAN

1 : 100

NOTES

All dimensions to be verified on site before work commences
All discrepancies to be notified to the Contract Administrator.

ROOM LEGEND

- CIRCULATION
- HALL
- KS1 / KS2 CLASSROOM
- PLANT
- SEN RESOURCE
- STAFF ROOM
- STORE
- STUDIO
- UNISEX WC

GROSS INTERNAL FLOOR AREA

GROUND FLOOR	762m ²
FIRST FLOOR	607m ²
TOTAL GIFA	1,369m²

Rev	Date	Description
A	16/10/23	Classroom Layout

Drawing Status: **FEASIBILITY** Sheet Size: **A1**



3 Brassie Wood
Chelmsford
CM3 3FP
01245 460 222
aldertonassociates.co.uk



Client: Thurrock Council

Site: Tilbury Pioneer Academy

Project: New Build Extension

Date	Scale	Drawn	Checked
22/09/23	As indicated	MC	DA

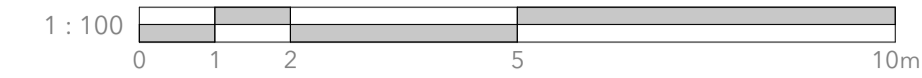
Title: **PROPOSED FLOOR PLANS**

DWG No: **A3408 / 901** Rev: **A**



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A3408 / 902 : PROPOSED ELEVATIONS



NOTES
 All dimensions to be verified on site before work commences
 All discrepancies to be notified to the Contract Administrator.



PROPOSED FRONT ELEVATION
 1:100



PROPOSED REAR ELEVATION
 1:100



PROPOSED SIDE ELEVATION
 1:100



PROPOSED SIDE ELEVATION
 1:100

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Rev	Date	Description
A	16/10/23	Classroom Layout

Drawing Status: **FEASIBILITY** Sheet Size: **A1**



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 CM3 3FP
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Client
 Thurrock Council

Site
 Tilbury Pioneer Academy

Project
 New Build Extension

Date	Scale	Drawn	Checked
22/09/23	1:100	MC	DA

Title:
PROPOSED ELEVATIONS

DWG No: **A3408 / 902** Rev: **A**

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A3408 / 904 : PROPOSED RENDERS

NOTES
 All dimensions to be verified on site before work commences
 All discrepancies to be notified to the Contract Administrator.



Rev	Date	Description
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Drawing Status: **FEASIBILITY** Sheet Size: **A1**

Alderton Associates
 CHARTERED BUILDING SURVEYORS

3 Brassie Wood
 Chelmsford
 CM3 3FP
 01245 460 222
 aldertonassociates.co.uk



Client
 Thurrock Council

Site
 Tilbury Pioneer Academy

Project
 New Build Extension

Date	Scale	Drawn	Checked
20/10/23		MC	JS

Title:
PROPOSED RENDERS

DWG No:
A3408 / 904

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A3408 / 903 : PROPOSED SITE LAYOUT



NOTES
 All dimensions to be verified on site before work commences
 All discrepancies to be notified to the Contract Administrator.



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PROPOSED SITE LAYOUT
 1 : 500

Rev	Date	Description
A	16/10/23	Classroom Layout

Drawing Status: **FEASIBILITY** Sheet Size: **A1**



3 Brassie Wood
 Chelmsford
 CM3 3FP
 01245 460 222
 aldertonassociates.co.uk

Client
 Thurrock Council

Site
 Tilbury Pioneer Academy

Project
 New Build Extension

Date	Scale	Drawn	Checked
22/09/23	1 : 500	MC	DA

Title:
PROPOSED SITE LAYOUT

DWG No: **A3408 / 903** Rev: **A**

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**Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Work Programme 2023/24**

Dates of Meetings: 15 June 2023, 12 September 2023, 16 November 2023, 16 January 2024, 12 March 2024

Topic	Lead Officer	Requested by Officer/Member	Description of Report
15 June 2023			
Terms of Reference	Democratic Services	Officers	
Youth Cabinet Update	Angela Surrey	Standing Item	
Items Raised by Thurrock Local Safeguarding Partnership Board: Progress Update on Peer Review and Case Review – Action Plans	Priscilla Bruce-Annan	Standing Item/ Members	
Statutory Duties Report - Children's Social Care	Janet Simon	Officers	
Statutory Duties Report – Education	Michele Lucas	Officers	

Children's Social Care Performance – Quarter 4 2022-23	Janet Simon	Chair	
Fees and Charges Report			
Work Programme	Democratic Services	Standing item	
12 September 2023			
Youth Cabinet Update	Angela Surrey	Standing Item	
2022/23 Annual Complaints and Representations Report – Children's Social Care	Lee Henley	Officers	
Fostering Recruitment Update	Janet Simon	Members	
Family Hubs / Start for Life Update	Clare Moore	Officers	
Items Raised by Thurrock Local Safeguarding Partnership Board: Progress Update on Peer Review and Case Review – Action Plans	Priscilla Bruce-Annan	Standing Item	

Work Programme	Democratic Services	Standing item	
16 November 2023			
Youth Cabinet Update	Angela Surrey	Standing Item	
Children's Social Care Performance Quarter 1	Janet Simon	Officers	
Fees and Charges Pricing Strategy 2023-24	Kelly McMillan	Officer	
Update on Aveley & Orsett Heath Schools	Michele Lucas		
Update on Adult Community College			
Update on Stable Homes Built on Love			
Items Raised by Thurrock Local Safeguarding Partnership Board	Priscilla Bruce-Annan	Standing Item	
Childrens Transport contract re-procurement 2024	Sarah Williams		

Work Programme	Democratic Services	Standing Item	
16 January 2024			
Youth Cabinet Update	Angela Surrey	Standing Item	
RAAC Update	Sarah Williams		
Educational Attainment Data 2022/23	Michele Lucas		
Thurrock Childcare Sufficiency Annual Assessment Report 2023	Michele Lucas		
Items Raised by Thurrock Local Safeguarding Partnership Board	Priscilla Bruce-Annan	Standing Item	
Work Programme	Democratic Services	Standing item	
12 March 2024			
Youth Cabinet Update Report	Angela Surrey	Standing Item	
Overview of Responsibilities of			

Portfolio holder for Education			
Overview of Responsibilities of Portfolio holder for Children's Services			
Children's Obesity report	Public Health team		
School Capital Programme Update	Sarah Williams		
Home to School Transport Policy 24/25	Sarah Williams		
Presentation on Designated Schools Grant	David May Finance		
Work Programme	Democratic Services	Standing Item	

2024/25 reports

- Update from Adult Community College after Ofsted inspection – Keeley Donati
- Pupil Premium report (Michele Lucas)

Updated: Jan 2024

Clerk: Rhiannon Whiteley

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