Newcastle City Council

Integrated Impact Assessment 2027-28

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IIA review checklist

For internal use only

Review or approval required	Officer	Date
Lead officer	Samantha Clayton	03/11/2026
Business Management Partner review of IIA overall	Chris Caush	03/11/2026
Finance Partner review of revenue and capital information	Stephen Liddle	03/11/2026
Operational HR – Lead Specialist review of workforce implications	Helen Purdon	03/11/2026
DLT	Children and Families Newcastle	03/11/2026
Director	Cath McEvoy-Carr	04/11/2026
Cabinet Portfolio Holder	Cllr Christine Morrissey	06/11/2026

IIA quality assurance checklist

Quality assurance required	Officer	Date
Louise Crosby: Equality and Wellbeing Hayley Hoben-Blight: Equality and Wellbeing	Hayley Hoben-Blight	10/11/2026
Robin Beveridge: Inclusive Economy	Robin Beveridge	06/11/2026
Joan Flood: Community Safety	Joan Flood	09/11/2026
Adrian McLoughlin: Climate Change	Adrian McLoughlin	06/11/2026
Louise Reeve: Consultation	Louise Reeve	09/11/2026
Bryan Bradley: Carers	Bryan Bradley	06/11/2026
Jessica Hamilton: Public Health	Anna-Marie Marshall	04/11/2026

Informing our approach to fairness

Proposal name

Newcastle Children's Transport Offer

Date of assessment

November 2026

Lead officer

Samantha Clayton

Assessment team

Paul Shadforth
Stephen Liddle

Portfolio area

Children's Service Transformation Programme

Version number

One

Planned review date

January 2027

Section A: Current service

What does the service, policy or function do?

We provide transport to and from school, including for learners with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

We arrange transport through providers, offer Personal Travel Budgets to help families organise journeys, and provide Independent Travel Training to help young people learn to travel safely and confidently on their own.

SEND, Children's Social Care and Adult Social Care currently organise transport separately. We are looking at how these services could work together more effectively.

Currently, 1,336 students have applied and are eligible for SEND transport: 1,086 pre-16 students and 250 post-16 students. We offer transport during term time only, with a journey at the start and end of the school day.

Who do we deliver this service, policy or function for?

We provide this service for children and young people who need help travelling to education, particularly those with SEND.

We also consider how travel arrangements affect parents and carers, and how we could work more closely with children's and adults' social care transport services.

We particularly want to help young people with SEND aged 16 and over prepare for adult life by learning to travel independently, where this is suitable and safe.

Why do we deliver this service, function or policy?

We provide transport so children and young people can get to education. Any improvements to the service must continue to meet our legal duties.

We also help young people become more independent so they can access education, training, work and activities in their community.

We are not proposing immediate policy changes through this programme. We will first understand the problems, check the evidence and explore practical improvements.

How much do we spend on the service, function or policy?

Gross expenditure: £10,376,210.74
Gross income: £90,000

Net budget: £10,286,210

How many people do we employ to deliver the service, function or policy?

Number of posts: 17
Number of full-time equivalent officers: 11.94

Comments: 1 x travel trainer being recruited
1 x Senior SEND Transport Assistant vacancy

Section B: Proposals for the future service

How we are proposing to change the service, function or policy

We propose to develop a more coordinated and sustainable transport offer for children and young people. We want to manage rising demand and costs while supporting independence and continuing to meet our statutory duties.
We will first check the evidence, understand the causes of current pressures and explore options with the people and organisations involved. We are not proposing immediate policy changes.

Our programme has seven workstreams:

- **Commissioning and Provider Market Engagement:** review tendering and contract arrangements, engage providers, and explore opportunities to improve vehicle availability and use.
- **Independent Travel Training Expansion:** expand training capacity, link training with school and transition planning, and strengthen support for young people aged 16 and over.
- **Integration with Social Care:** assess the needs, opportunities and implications of closer working between transport and social care services.
- **Operational structure:** review the current use of escorts on transport routes.
- **Personal Travel Budget Promotion:** improve awareness and understanding of the offer, involve families and schools in developing information, and assess the capacity needed to support demand.
- **Post-16 offer review:** review the current transport offer for young people aged 16 and over through a separate consultation. We will consider how proposed changes could affect young people and their families before making decisions.
- **Special Schools Transport Work Stream:** explore whether special schools could deliver their own transport, including shared vehicles and wider use of school fleets.

The purpose of reviewing SEND transport is not simply to reduce expenditure. It is to ensure Newcastle can continue to provide safe and appropriate travel support to children and young people who need it, while responding to increasing demand and making the best use of the Council's available resources. The review provides evidence that opportunities exist to improve eligibility decision-making, route planning, Passenger Assistant arrangements, Personal Travel Budgets, travel training and the way transport is commissioned.

What evidence did you use to inform this proposal?

The proposal is informed by an external consultancy's independent review of Newcastle City Council's passenger transport arrangements, including consultation. The review covered SEND transport demand, expenditure, eligibility, journey arrangements, Passenger Assistant provision, Personal Travel Budgets, travel training, route planning and procurement.

A work plan was developed to address the review's findings and recommendations. An internal team, the Children's Service Transport Board, was established to oversee its delivery and provide governance as the Council explored transport improvements and developed proposals for change.

The review found that Newcastle's SEND transport service is generally well run, uses technology effectively and has relatively few single-passenger journeys. It also identified opportunities to improve the service and maintain its sustainability as demand grows.

The proposal draws on the following evidence:

- **Increasing demand and costs**. The review identified continued growth in Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) and forecast further demand for SEND transport. Its modelling suggested that, without further intervention, expenditure could exceed £15 million by 2031/32, before inflation.
- **Eligibility for transport**. The review reported that 58% of children and young people with an EHCP receive transport, compared with its benchmark of 38%. It recommended examining how eligibility decisions are made.
- **Passenger Assistant provision**. The review found that 83% of SEND routes have a Passenger Assistant, compared with its benchmark of 62%. It recommended reviewing how this support is allocated.
- **Journey and route planning**. The review identified scope to improve route planning, increase vehicle occupancy and use larger vehicles where appropriate.
- **Alternative forms of travel support**. The review recommended exploring Personal Travel Budgets and Independent Travel Training where suitable for the individual child or young person.
- **Long-term sustainability**. The evidence indicated that costs are likely to rise with demand if no action is taken. The proposals therefore explore how the Council can continue to meet eligible children's and young people's transport needs while improving sustainability and making the best use of available resources.

The consultancy report provides evidence to inform potential changes to transport arrangements. The Children's Service Transport Board has overseen the response to its findings. Where necessary, we will gather views and experiences from children and young people, parents and carers, schools and other stakeholders before decisions are made.

What are the financial impacts of the proposal?

Net revenue savings: 26/27 – £584,000
27/28 – £385,000
28/29 – £285,000

Net income: £0

Comments: We are exploring ways to reduce commissioned transport costs, avoid future costs and use vehicles more effectively.

What will be the impact of the proposal on employees?

Reduction in full-time equivalent posts: 0

% of workforce: 0

Comments:

The programme includes an objective to recruit one additional Independent Travel Training trainers using Public Health funding.

Other workstreams may affect staffing arrangements, training needs and responsibilities. These include school-led transport, closer working with social care and the review of escort use. There are currently no confirmed changes to the current workforce.

Section C: Consultation

Engagement to help develop the proposal

Who we have engaged with to develop this proposal

The proposals draw on an external consultancy's independent review of Newcastle City Council's passenger transport arrangements, including consultation with workforce teams, commissioning, finance and transport providers. The review provided evidence to inform potential changes to the service.

The review identified opportunities to improve route planning, Passenger Assistant provision, Personal Travel Budgets, Independent Travel Training and procurement.

When and how we engaged

The independent review combined discussions with our passenger transport delivery, commissioning and procurement teams with analysis of service, spending, demand, route and procurement data. It examined how SEND, Children's Social Care and Adult Social Care organise transport and where improvements could be made.

For SEND transport, the review covered eligibility, Passenger Assistant support, Personal Travel Budgets, Independent Travel Training, route planning, suppliers and procurement. It used existing route data and the QRoutes, a transport route-planning and optimisation system, to explore more efficient journey arrangements, including improved routing and use of available vehicles.

The review took place in 2025, with draft findings and recommendations reported in September 2025. It used information available at the time, including SEND transport data from June 2025 and Children's Social Care transport data from May 2025.

Main issues raised

The independent passenger transport review identified a number of issues and opportunities for improvement within SEND transport. These included:

- **Growing demand and financial pressure**, with increasing numbers of EHCPs expected to create additional demand for transport and increase future costs.
- **Eligibility for SEND transport**, with the review finding that the proportion of children and young people with an EHCP receiving transport was higher than the benchmark used within the review.
- **Passenger Assistant provision**, which was identified as higher than the benchmark used by the review and an area where individual arrangements and decision-making could be reviewed.

Route planning and vehicle utilisation, including opportunities to increase vehicle occupancy, use larger vehicles where appropriate and improve route optimisation.

Alternative travel support, including opportunities to increase the appropriate use of Personal Travel Budgets and Independent Travel Training to support greater choice and independence.

Procurement and the transport provider market, including limited competition between suppliers and opportunities to improve how transport is commissioned and procured.

Long-term sustainability, recognising the need to manage increasing demand while continuing to provide safe and appropriate transport support for eligible children and young people.

Who will we engage with during the consultation

Who will we engage with during the consultation

We propose to seek views from:

We intend to consult:

young people currently receiving post-16 SEND travel support;

young people who may apply in future;

parents, carers, foster carers and advocates;

Newcastle Parent Carer Forum and other SEND groups;

special schools, mainstream schools with sixth forms, colleges and specialist education providers;

SEND, social care, transition, education, transport, finance and public health teams;

commissioned transport providers, drivers and passenger escorts;

voluntary, community and disability organisations;

Northumbria Police;

organisations representing care-experienced young people and young carers;

groups representing people with protected characteristics;

Public Health

councillors and relevant decisionmakers; and

Newcastle residents.

We will identify organisations that can help us reach people who may face barriers to taking part. We will assess whose views are needed for each proposed change rather than rely only on general consultation. We are also open to feedback from the public.

When and how we will engage

We propose to use discussions, accessible questionnaires and opportunities for individual feedback. We will provide alternatives to online participation and identify communication, and accessibility needs so people can take part.

We will explain the options in Plain English and give children, young people, parents and carers opportunities to describe how each option could affect them. We propose to offer information in alternative formats, such as Easy Read, and arrange communication support where needed.

Feedback from the consultation process

Who provided feedback during the consultation

No consultation has taken place yet.

When and how did we engage

No consultation has taken place yet.

Main issues raised

No consultation has taken place yet.

Section D: Impact assessment

In this section you will find details of any actual or potential negative impacts and benefits we have identified for this proposal. You will also find information about actions we will take to mitigate any potential disadvantage.

We have assessed the impact of this proposal for people with characteristics protected by the Equality Act 2010 and other areas where there could be an impact

Age

Type of impact

Potential benefit and potential disadvantage.

Impact

Expanding Independent Travel Training could help young people aged 16 and over develop confidence and skills to access education, training, employment and community opportunities where independent travel is appropriate and safe.

Separately, proposed changes to the current post-16 transport offer will be subject to their own consultation. Depending on the options considered, these changes could affect young people's access to education, travel costs and reliance on parents or carers. These potential disadvantages require assessment through that consultation; they are not confirmed outcomes.

Young people could experience the combined effects of changes to the post-16 offer and wider transport improvements. Expectations about independence must reflect individual development and support needs, rather than age alone.

How we will remove or reduce the impact

We propose to assess suitability for independent travel individually and involve young people, parents, carers and education settings.
We will use the separate post-16 consultation to understand the effects of each proposed option before decisions are made. We propose to review its findings alongside this assessment so that combined impacts are considered and relevant actions are coordinated.

Disability

Type of impact

Potential benefit and potential disadvantage.

Impact

A wider choice of travel support and better coordination with social care could support independence and more consistent arrangements for young people with SEND. However, changes to vehicles, routes, escorts or familiar arrangements could create accessibility barriers, anxiety or safety concerns for some disabled children and young people.

How we will remove or reduce the impact

We propose to assess individual access, communication, sensory, medical and support needs before any change. We would agree transition arrangements with the young person, their family and relevant professionals, and monitor accessibility, attendance and concerns.

Gender reassignment

Type of impact

Not yet determined.

Impact

We have not yet established any specific benefit or disadvantage relating to gender reassignment. Further consideration should be given to confidentiality safeguards, trust in disclosure, privacy when using shared transport, and ensuring dignity, personal safety and respectful treatment. An absence of evidence does not establish that there is no impact.

How we will remove or reduce the impact

We propose to provide confidential opportunities to raise concerns and review any identified barriers before agreeing changes.

Marriage and civil partnerships

Type of impact

Not yet determined.

Impact

We have not yet established any specific benefit or disadvantage relating to marriage or civil partnership. Any resulting employment changes would need assessment to identify whether employees are affected differently.

How we will remove or reduce the impact

We propose that the Operational HR Lead assesses any proposed workforce changes and records the findings before implementation.

Pregnancy and maternity

Type of impact

Potential disadvantage; no specific benefit established.

Impact

Travel options that require parents or carers to undertake more journeys could be difficult for someone who is pregnant or caring for a baby. We also need to assess any implications of workforce changes. No specific benefit relating to pregnancy and maternity has yet been established.

How we will remove or reduce the impact

We propose to discuss practical circumstances with affected families rather than assume they can provide transport. The Operational HR Lead would assess any employment implications before changes are agreed.

Race and ethnicity

Type of impact

Potential disadvantage; no specific benefit established.

Impact

People could miss information about travel options or consultation if communication does not meet their language and accessibility needs. We have not yet established any specific benefit or the extent of any different impact between ethnic groups.

How we will remove or reduce the impact

We propose to identify communication needs, arrange appropriate translation or interpreting support, and offer alternatives to online participation. We would review participation and feedback to identify groups whose views are missing.

Religion or belief

Type of impact

Not yet determined.

Impact

We have not yet established any specific benefit or disadvantage relating to religion or belief, including lack of religion or belief. We need to understand whether proposed travel or consultation arrangements create barriers for affected people.

How we will remove or reduce the impact

We propose to ask individuals about relevant requirements without making assumptions about their beliefs or practices, and address identified barriers before agreeing changes.

Sex

Type of impact

Potential disadvantage; no specific benefit established.

Impact

Options that change the amount of travel undertaken by families could affect caring responsibilities and access to work differently. We have not yet established how these effects are distributed between women and men or identified a specific benefit relating to sex.

How we will remove or reduce the impact

We propose to assess who would undertake additional journeys, the time involved and effects on employment and caring responsibilities. We would review differences in participation and reported outcomes

Sexual orientation

Type of impact

Not yet determined.

Impact

We have not yet established any specific benefit or disadvantage relating to sexual orientation. We need to understand whether communication, family involvement or travel arrangements could create barriers or concerns about privacy and treatment.

How we will remove or reduce the impact

We propose to use inclusive language, respect different family structures and provide confidential opportunities to raise concerns. We would review identified barriers before agreeing changes.

Other potential impacts

We believe that it is important to consider whether changes to our policies, services or functions could have other impacts on people that are not covered by the Equality Act.

A part of our assessments we also consider whether proposed changes could have actual or potential impacts relating to socio-economic issues, businesses, geography, community cohesion, community safety, the environment and health and wellbeing.

Carers

Type of impact

Potential benefit and potential disadvantage.

Impact

Clearer information and support for Personal Travel Budgets could help families understand their options and identify arrangements that suit their circumstances. However, arrangements that depend on carers providing transport could increase their time commitments, costs or pressure and affect employment or other caring responsibilities.

How we will remove or reduce the impact

We propose to assess carers' capacity, practical costs and other responsibilities before agreeing arrangements. We would monitor satisfaction and review whether arrangements remain workable.

Care-experienced people

Type of impact

Potential disadvantage; no specific benefit established.

Impact

Travel options that rely on family support could be less accessible to young people who do not have consistent practical support or whose living arrangements change. We have not yet established a specific benefit for care experienced people.

How we will remove or reduce the impact

We propose to involve the young person and relevant support professionals when assessing options. We would review continuity of transport when placements or living arrangements change.

Socio-economic impacts

Type of impact

Potential benefit and potential disadvantage.

Impact

Developing safe independent travel skills could support access to education, training and employment opportunities. However, families could face barriers if an option requires access to a vehicle, payment of costs in advance or time away from paid work.

How we will remove or reduce the impact

We propose to assess affordability and practical feasibility, including payment timing and actual travel costs, before agreeing arrangements. We would monitor participation and outcomes across different household circumstances.

Businesses

Type of impact

Potential benefit and potential disadvantage.

Impact

Reviewing commissioning and contracts could support a more competitive and resilient provider market and improve vehicle use. However, changes to commissioning or school-led transport could affect existing providers' contract opportunities, business planning and staffing.

How we will remove or reduce the impact

We propose to engage providers, assess market capacity and plan transitions before agreeing procurement changes. We would monitor provider participation and service continuity.

Geography

Type of impact

Potential disadvantage; any benefit remains to be assessed.

Impact

The suitability of independent travel, shared vehicles or school-led transport could vary according to where a person lives and the location of their education setting. Some people could have fewer practical options or face longer or more difficult journeys. We have not yet established which areas would benefit.

How we will remove or reduce the impact

We propose to assess routes, journey times, connections and accessibility for each option. We would compare outcomes across areas rather than assume an option is equally practical everywhere.

Community cohesion

Type of impact

Potential disadvantage; no specific benefit established.

Impact

People could perceive arrangements as unfair if differences in travel support are not clearly explained. We have not yet established a specific benefit for community cohesion.

How we will remove or reduce the impact

We propose to explain how individual needs inform arrangements, provide clear information about options and record concerns raised through consultation. We would review recurring concerns before agreeing changes.

Community safety

Type of impact

Potential disadvantage.

Impact

The proposed changes could mean that some young people travel more independently, use public transport, travel with others, or use different travel arrangements than they do currently.

For some young people with SEND, this could introduce additional safety risks during the journey, including vulnerability when travelling independently, navigating unfamiliar routes or environments, managing changes or unexpected situations, and interacting with other passengers or members of the public. The level of risk will vary depending on the individual young person and their proposed travel arrangements.

How we will remove or reduce the impact

We will continue our existing individual assessments. Before changing travel arrangements, we propose to review any additional journey risks and agree the support needed with the child or young person, their parents or carers and relevant professionals.

Reducing health and wellbeing inequalities

Type of impact

Potential benefit and potential disadvantage.

Impact

Independent Travel Training aims to improve confidence, mobility and independence and strengthen access to opportunities for young people aged 16 and over. However, unsuitable or poorly managed changes could increase anxiety or make it harder to access education and support.

How we will remove or reduce the impact

We propose to assess wellbeing and support needs, plan transitions with affected people and monitor confidence, attendance, access to opportunities and reported concerns.

Climate change and environment

Type of impact

Potential benefit and potential disadvantage.

Impact

Better vehicle use, shared fleets and appropriate independent travel could support the aim of reducing the carbon footprint of transport arrangements. The scale of any reduction is not yet established. However, some options could increase separate family journeys or vehicle mileage and offset expected environmental benefits.

How we will remove or reduce the impact

We propose to establish a baseline and compare total journeys, mileage, fuel use and emissions, including family travel rather than commissioned transport alone.