

Thursday, 15 December 2022

Home to School Travel Assistance: Learning Review

Purpose of report:

This report presents the findings of a review into pressures the Council faced in providing home to school travel assistance in the lead up to the 2022/23 academic year. Five themes of learning emerged from the review and are described in this report, along with 50 corresponding recommendations.

Introduction:

1. Approximately 160,000 pupils attend education settings each day in Surrey. A small proportion (around 6%) qualify for home to school travel assistance (H2STA). Provision of travel assistance is statutory in certain circumstances, as set out in the Education Act 1996.
2. Over several years the Council has sought to continuously improve the way that H2STA is delivered, focussing not only on the experience of families accessing and using the service but also on making it sustainable in the longer term.
3. Despite the improvements that have been made to date, the experience of families applying for travel assistance in the lead up to the 2022/23 academic year fell short of the standards the Council holds itself to deliver.
4. In September 2022, the Chief Executive's Chief of Staff and the Chief of Staff to the Executive Director of Children, Families and Lifelong Learning (CFLL) were asked to lead a learning review to:
 - 1.1 Capture a comprehensive picture of the pressures that materialised, the key drivers of those pressures, and the actions that were taken to mitigate the pressures.
 - 1.2 Confirm the arrangements that were in place to manage applications and enquiries.
 - 1.3 Look back at how pressures compared to the previous school years.

- 1.4 Develop recommendations to help the Council ensure that we learn from the experience of this year and are well prepared for the 2023/24 school year and beyond.
- 1.5 Inform and support prioritisation for the H2STA transformation programme.
5. The learning review was completed over an 8-week period between late-September and mid-November 2022.
6. The report of the review, including recommendations, is enclosed (Appendix A).

Recommendations:

7. The Select Committee is asked to note the findings of the H2STA learning review and endorse the recommendations therein.

Next steps:

8. The recommendations will be taken forward by the Home to School Travel Assistance Oversight Board, chaired by Councillor Clare Curran. That Oversight Board will report on progress to the Select Committee.

Report contact

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