

Initial Budget Equality Impact Assessment

1. The Project

Directorate: Environment, Assets and Transport

Theme or area: Home to School Transport

Lead Officer: Bella Fortune

Date: 3 December 2025

		Budget reduction (£)		
Budget Reference	Budget Proposal	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
EATS10	Home to school transport introduction of post-16 charges	36,000	36,000	

Description of the project:

The Home to School Transport Service recently introduced a new Post-16 policy, but excluded charging for Post-16 SEND transport as part of the new policy following engagement with key stakeholders at the end of 2024 and the start of 2025.

What is changing in relation to this project?

This EIA is being completed to assess the impact of introducing those charges for Post-16 SEND students/families. The Post-16 SEND charge would align to the Vacant Seat Payment Scheme charge (currently £817 per year) already in place on eligible routes for Mainstream students (both of compulsory school age and Post-16).

Are any of the proposals within this theme a continuation of a previous medium-term financial plan saving?

Yes No

If yes, please insert reference number and year of assessment?

Budget Proposal	Year of assessment	Budget Reference

If yes, please describe what steps you have taken to review the equality impacts from previous years?

<<Text here>>

2. Customer equality impact summary

Will the changes proposed in this project have a disproportionate impact (or bias) for any of these groups?

Insert X into one box per row, for impact level and type.

H = High, M = Medium, L = Low, N = None

+ = Positive, - = Negative

Protected or significant group	Impact Level				Impact type	
	H	M	L	N	+	-
Disabled people (Including the consideration of neurodiversity)	X					X
People from different ethnic groups				X		
Men or women (including those who are pregnant or on maternity leave)				X		
People who are LGBTQ+				X		
People on a low income	X					X
People in particular age groups		X				X
People in particular faith groups				X		
People who are married or in a civil partnership				X		
People who are undergoing gender reassignment				X		
Other significant groups, for example: Armed Forces Community, care experienced young people, carers, parents. Please specify: Parents and Carers		X				X

3. Explanation of customer impact

Please describe the reasons for the impact level in the table above, please include reasons for all areas, including those where you have assessed 'no impact' as it is important to understand why this is the case.

Protected/significant group	Brief reason
Disabled people (including neurodiversity)	Loss of free travel may introduce financial barriers to those attending education as detailed in their EHCP's
People on low income	New charge will be an additional expense for households, but those on low income will have a higher proportional impact
People in particular age groups (post-16 learners, 16-19, up to 25 in some cases)	The change is introduced to a specific age cohort accessing transport, removal of a free service could reduce access to education for these students
Parents and carers	A new charge will be an additional expense for households

No Impact

There is no disproportionate impact (or bias) to the below groups of people. These are not traits or characteristics that will directly be affected by the proposal for Post-16 charges, however it is noted that some of the below groups may be impacted, but this is not directly trackable as not data held by the Home to School Transport Service.

- People from different ethnic groups
- Men or women (including those who are pregnant or on maternity leave)
- People who are LGBTQ+
- People in particular faith groups
- People who are married or in a civil partnership
- People who are undergoing gender reassignment

Please describe how you will communicate these changes to those impacted.

Changes will be communicated through early engagement with key stakeholders, including the North Somerset Parent/Carer Forum and Post-16 Educational Providers. Additionally, direct communication will be had with those existing service users through letter reminders (which are sent anyway, but to include a section on charging), along with "prompt" letters for potential upcoming Post-16 Service Users that they must apply for transport (which is completed anyway, but to include a section on charging).

Furthermore, it will/can be advertised on the Local Authority social media pages, and specific reference to the new charges will be added before the application and details requested during the application (i.e. not hiding it).

4. Staff equality impact summary

Are there any staffing implications for this proposal? Yes

Explanation of staff impact

If yes, please describe the nature of the impact, including how many posts could be affected, please state whether they are vacant, or filled permanently or temporarily.

When the Post-16 Policy changed for September 2025, there was a noticeable increase in the volume of work for the Home to School Transport team – this ranged from higher volume of emails relating to travel offers not being as expected, queries on why the contracted service isn't available this year compared to previous, through to a significant uplift in appeals and additional work building individual Personal Travel Allowances (and the knock-on impact on finance colleagues through additional PO's and payments required throughout the year).

5. Cumulative equality impacts

Is this project linked to or likely to have an impact on any other service areas?

For example are you moving the location of a service that may also be impacted

6. Action Plan

Are there any further actions that should be taken because of this Equality Impact Assessment?

Issue Identified	Planned Action	Lead Officer	Time for review
Communication	Early engagement with schools / key stakeholders (including Parent/Carer forum)	Joshua Dean / Georgie James	TBC (not required if not proceeding)

7. Review and Sign Off

Service Manager Review

Insert any service manager comments here.

A further more detailed EIA is required to consider the impacts of this proposal on equality groups.

Is a further detailed equality impact assessment needed? Yes

Please note that if this assessment indicates a potential 'medium' or 'high' impact on any protected or significant group a further, more detailed assessment will be required.

If 'yes', when will the further assessment be completed? January 2026

Service Manager: Joshua Dean

Date: 05 December 2025