Independent Service Review of SEND Home to School Transport
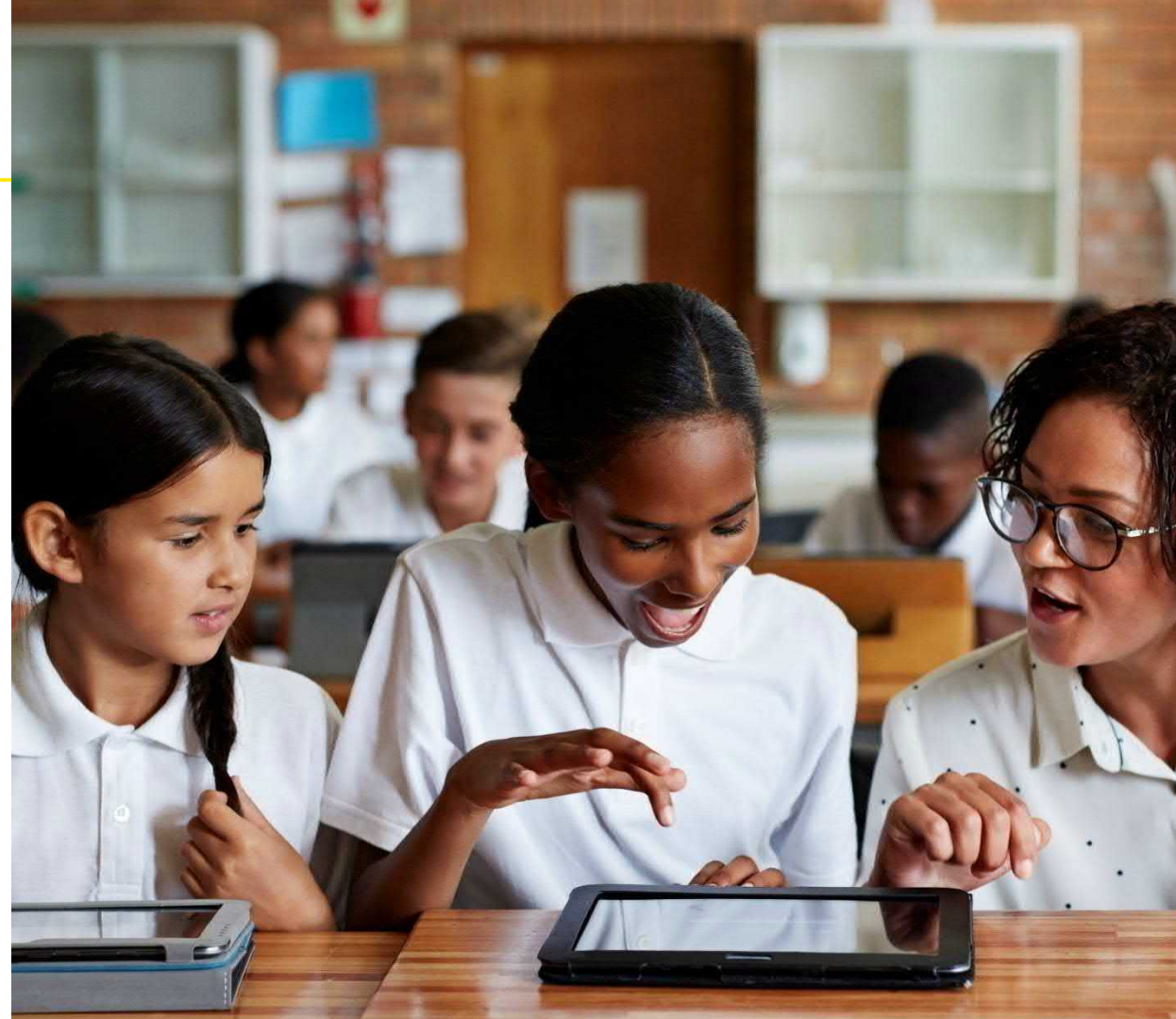
Key Findings and Future Improvement Plan

November 2020

EY

Building a better working world

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Independent Service Review of SEND Home to School Transport

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Executive summary

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BCC have commissioned EY to undertake an independent inquiry into the Travel Assist service

The current challenging position of the SEND Home to School transport service has been well documented in recent media and is a cause for concern amongst parents, schools, transport providers, councillors and SEND staff themselves.

Events unfolded at the start of the academic year that raised additional significant concerns for Members and the Corporate Leadership team. At Full Council on the 15th September, a motion was passed to initiate an independent inquiry.

This inquiry would run concurrently with three other pieces of work to help understand historic issues and undertake some immediate improvements.

At the time of our commission, BCC indicated that there were a number of possible contributing factors to the current failure of the service. These are identified as:

► Poor performance management of the service contract

► Routes poorly planned and changing last minute

► Capability and capacity issues within the Travel Assist Team, compounded by poor management of staff

► Poor contingency planning in light of the start of the new school year and COVID-19 arrangements in schools (e.g. 'social bubbles')

Objectives

1. To gain a better understanding of the historic and current issues relating to the service and the underlying causes

2. The remedial measures that will need to be put in place to implement service improvements and sustain these for the remainder of the current contract. This is to ensure that the service better meets the needs of children with SEND, their families and BCC

3. To understand the key considerations, based on lessons learned from the current contract and service model, to inform the development of the new service from July 2021 onwards

4. To understand the requirements, implications and activity to set up a programme of work to implement the new service by July 2021

Purpose

The purpose of this review is to establish:

► How the current service delivery model is performing and key aspects of accountability for this

► How the key elements of the service fit together and how safe and effective provision is owned and managed

► What improvements opportunities exist and which would be feasible for Birmingham

► How we improve the service in the short, medium and longer term

Scope

To undertake a review of all aspects of service delivery, from the point at which a child is determined to be eligible for travel support to school including:

► Referral process and associated pathways / communications both internally within the council and with the transport providers

► The current service operating model. The review will look at the customer access channels, people, process, technology, performance management, reporting and governance

► Develop an action plan for service improvement to be sustained for the remaining academic year

► Outline the required approach to determine the best service delivery model and programme of work to deliver the new service post June 2021

Out of scope:

► Detailed review and assurance of the assessment and support planning functions and the commissioning team

► Review and assurance of the DBS process and associated questions raised around compliance with these

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In September 2020, the service faced some significant challenges

As the school term in September 2020 began, it became apparent that the basic service provision was inadequate, and was not meeting the needs of children, parents or schools.

Due to route cancellations and delays, a significant proportion of children were either not being collected, or were arriving late to school. Some children were also dropped off at the wrong school, leading to potential safeguarding risks due to their levels of vulnerability. In addition, the service was sometimes unreachable or unresponsive when parents of vulnerable children tried to get in contact to discuss the issues outlined above.

Through conversations with key stakeholders, and through collation of various complaints and reports, it quickly became apparent that a number of things had gone wrong for pupils, parents and schools. A summary of these findings have been captured on the right.

What went wrong for Pupils and Parents in September 2020

Parents and schools had **lost confidence** in the service being able to deliver	"absolutely sick" of the "sub-standard provision" – **Parent** "transport for many children has been "complete chaos" at the start of this academic year. Head teachers …"no confidence" in organisations managing the system – **School Leadership Representative**
Pupils were not being picked up on time, delays to routes and pupils were **arriving late**	"Buses have been late multiple times at start and end of day and do not inform the school" – **Home to School Council Report**
Routes were being **cancelled** at short notice	Changes and cancellations to transport done at short notice without consultation, e.g. 68 routes were cancelled between the 14th–18th Sep 20 – **BCC Report to Council Leadership Team**
Pupils being dropped off at the **wrong school** or **home address**	"Two children were taken to the wrong school" – **Travel Assist Immediate Improvement Actions**
Some pupils with **medical conditions** were not being appropriately cared for	Discussions with 20 special schools indicate there have been incorrect care plans with missing information – **Travel Assist Immediate Improvement Actions**
Parents and schools were not informed of changes to routes and timings	More than 10% of families experienced delays in letters regarding changes to travel – **Travel Assist Immediate Improvement Actions** "Changes were made to transport provision without consulting parents … sometimes done at very short notice" – **Home to School Council Report**
There is a lack of **confidence in the capacity and capability** of guides	Discussions with special schools indicate equipment training for guides is inadequate – **Travel Assist Immediate Improvement Actions** Special schools' representatives spoke of "gross mismanagement" and significant safeguarding risks with guides are not being adequately trained – **Home to School Council Report**
People were **not getting a timely response** to enquiries	Parents and schools raised ongoing frustration in contacting the service, including phones and emails not being answered – **Home to School Council Report** Travel Assist have increased their phone lines from 4 to 6 to increase capacity – **Travel Assist Immediate Improvement Actions** – e.g. 30% higher demand on the service quoted on 3rd September 2020 report due to COVID-19

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The families and children who Travel Assist supports are frustrated by the consistent poor service provision

- **Travel Assist** supports **7,491 children** to get to school each day. This includes children with SEND, children looked after, children in temporary accommodation and children with other eligible needs

- There are a range of support options, however the take-up of more independent travel options has been relatively small for a city the size of Birmingham

- In recent months, children were not collected, arrived late and were dropped off at the wrong school. There were route delays and cancellations. In addition, the service was sometimes uncontactable or unresponsive when parents of vulnerable children tried to get in touch

- There were 14 providers for the service (as at 25th September)

> There is a **real risk to the safety** of the children through the **lack of training** and information given to the guides
>
> SEND School Head

> At 11.55am I received a call to say the **route had been aborted**. **No communication.** I was also told that there may not be a route available home from school either.
>
> Parent

> The bus did not turn up on her 11-year-old daughter's first day of term and she received **"zero communication"** about it
>
> Parent, from Great Barr

> **The lack of communication is unacceptable.** I really thought we had turned a corner. I needed to make a phone call on Aug 28th to find out if we had the same guide as last year. I was visited by our new driver on Tuesday Sept 1 (though unscheduled). It was a welcome thing and a relief.
>
> Parent

> At a meeting recently it was reported around 200 extra routes had been added and the **route sheets didn't turn up** to the school. The schools are still trying to get route sheets. **Drivers are turning up unannounced.** In one case a student that had left the school was still on route sheets. Providers should send these to BCC, guide attached and sent to guides/parents. Where does the **accountability** start what is the model?
>
> SEND School Teacher

> We **would like to see the underlying data** saying that above 96% of all routes / services are being delivered on time because quite frankly **we don't believe it**
>
> SEND School Head

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COVID-19 was an unprecedented situation, but only exposed more systemic weaknesses

Following feedback from parents and schools, we have collated and analysed data that sets out current performance. Prior to the instigation of the Situation Reports (SitRep) on the 28th September 2020, the availability of accurate, complete and timely data was a challenge. Therefore, we have had to use information that was available on the 21st September as a baseline for analysis. Data from the previous 12 months was requested as a comparator, but a detailed breakdown of information was not being collected at this stage. A breakdown of performance data from the 21st of September is therefore shown below.

Impact of COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has created an unprecedented situation for all services and there is no doubt that it introduces greater complexity in delivering a safe and socially distanced service. The additional capacity and revised practices required, coupled with daily changes to requirements, put significant pressure on the service.

Whilst COVID-19 was clearly a contributing factor to failings this academic year, government guidance supporting service delivery was released in June 2020, allowing adequate time for planning to be undertaken for the start of the September term. Given this context, it would suggest the nature of the pandemic exposed some more systemic weaknesses within the service, including a lack of robust and timely data, lack of clarity around key processes and who has overall ownership and accountability, challenges in commercial management of contractors and a lack of systematic compliance and planning approach.

Cancelled Routes

There are three reasons why a planned route may have to be cancelled or aborted:

1. The **Provider** is unable to complete the route either through the availability of staff or through the breakdown of a vehicle

2. BCC has a requirement to provide a guide to the majority of the routes. Where a **guide** cannot be provided, the route must be cancelled

3. Schools not being open due to COVID-19 or other means. Whilst this would lead to the cancellation of a route, it should not be considered as a failure of the home to school service

Lateness of Routes

Parents and schools have indicated that the length of routes was, at times, unacceptable for pupils and that some pupils were regularly arriving late, resulting in pupils missing vital parts of the school and home day. The data to analyse this element of the performance of the service were not routinely and systematically recorded, therefore it is not possible to comment or verify the statements made.

Performance of the service before recovery plan

Pupils planned (21/9)[1]	3,903	Home to school applications (25/09)	24
Pupils transported (21/9)	2,329	Overdue H2S applications (25/09)[2]	41
Cancelled route: provider (21/9)	8 (32%)[3]	Bus pass appeals (25/09)	104
Cancelled route: guide (21/9)	4 (16%)[3]	Safeguarding ongoing cases (25/09)	6
Cancelled route: COVID (21/9)	13 (52%)[3]	Positive DBS – Issue raised (25/09)	4
		Complaints (25/09)	4

Note:
1. Prior to the 25th September, 'pupils planned' did not account for school closures and cancellations due to pupil isolation/sickness. To account for closures/ isolation this has been addressed in the new Sit Rep by introducing the metric 'pupils transported that needed to travel to school'
2. Breakdown of application data not provided at this point
3. Percentage of total route cancellations

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There are some issues in the service that contributed to the performance in September

What were the operational reasons for the performance issues?

We identified 8 operational reasons why pupils, parents and schools did not receive the level of support they expected at the start of term. These can all be addressed through the 'Immediate Fixes Plan' with measures put in place to improve the performance in the short-term.

- No clear operating model in place that sets out the core delivery expectations across BCC and suppliers

- Route sheets not provided to guides setting out basic information

- Spike in demand and pressure on the service due to "social bubbles" being required

- Communication between BCC, providers, parents and schools was inefficient and ineffective

- Inadequate planning for the academic year. Insufficient time to mobilise suppliers/ guides with the right skills

- Basic management and performance information is not available to BCC

- The relationship, contract and contract management does not enable rapid achievement of required outcomes and improvement

- Lack of understanding, openness and transparency when reporting performance to stakeholders

What are the underlying causes?

We also identified a series of underlying causes that contribute towards a more systemic problem that has created a fragile service.

We have grouped the underlying causes that we believe underpin the performance of the service into six main themes as listed below.

- People (Leadership)

- Planning

- People (Delivery Teams)

- Functional Processes

- Data and Reporting

- Communications and Channel

Conclusion

The findings related to the underlying causes have evidenced some clear factors that contributed to service failures in September. These have been described as systemic due these being apparent at least a year ago and the situation at the beginning of the school year has indicated that they have not been resolved by the service. The key points in relation to this are listed in the key findings below.

Key Findings

- ► Lack of leadership oversight around the planning for delivery of home to school transport services at the start of the school year, in light of the complications and challenges related to COVID-19

- ► Absence of documented processes that outline how the service was being delivered during this time

- ► Staff capability and capacity to deliver the service expected by parents and schools

- ► Lack of timely communication with all stakeholders and customers regarding any changes to service delivery, and key accountabilities and responsibilities related to this

- ► Limited data to enable the effective performance monitoring of the service, during a critical and challenging time

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Many of these issues are not new and have been raised with the service before

March 2019: ATG Goes Bankrupt

► In March 2019, a key provider of Home to School transport services went bankrupt, threatening considerable disruption for the service,.

► Education and Skills contract review: identified some potentially serious cross-council issues in relation to the commissioning, contract management, due diligence, safeguarding and quality assurance processes.

► Internal Audit review: identified serious safeguarding concerns leading to the implementation of a multi agency response team to respond to the audit findings.

October 2019: Final Audit Report: 0504/022
Travel Assist: Commissioning, Safeguarding and Quality Assurance

Assurance:
Level 4

► **Education and Skills**: poor understanding of the importance of safeguarding, inadequate safeguarding arrangements, poor management control, no real contract management, poor quality management information and an absence of KPIs.

► **Corporate HR:** the findings indicate a poor understanding of the importance of safeguarding, concerns relating to safeguarding and Safer Recruitment and the status of the DBS policy and its implementation. These significant safeguarding concerns relating to the work of Corporate HR also must be addressed as a matter of urgency

6 Control objectives not met

19 High priority recommendations made for 2019 completion

The failings in September were also identified in the Internal Audit

Operational reasons for performance issues	Previously identified
Spike in **demand and pressure on the service**	N/A
No clear **operating model**	✓
Route sheets not provided	✓
Inefficient and ineffective communication	✓
Inadequate planning for the academic year. **Insufficient time** to mobilise	✗
Management and performance information not available	✓
Inadequate relationship and contract management	✓
Lack of **understanding, openness and transparency** in performance reporting	✗

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There were some immediate things that needed to be done to address service stability

The Immediate Fixes Plan was put in place on the 28th of September, following the City Council meeting, with the aim to address as a matter of urgency the issues that had arisen in the Travel Assist Service at the start of term. We do not provide any assurance or opinion on the delivery of these but feel that it is important to reflect the progress that appears to have been made since the start of term. The below outlines the four key components of the Immediate Fixes plan:

The four components of the Immediate Fixes Plan

The Immediate Fixes plan has been created around addressing four key and immediate concerns that have been identified with the service. Further information on each of these plans is included in this section.

Safeguarding

Ensuring that the systems and processes are in place to transport pupils safely to and from school each day. This includes putting in place the right processes and procedures across a range of safety considerations and ensuring all staff are clear on these.

Service Delivery

Ensuring that there is clarity within Birmingham City Council around roles and responsibilities, especially around the ways that calls from parents and pupils will be handled and managed.

Customer and Communication

Ensuring that there are appropriate ways to communicate with parents and schools in a pro-active manner. This includes both when routes are changed / disrupted during a journey and also where changes are made in advance of a journey e.g. the change of 'bubble' situations.

Contract Management

Ensuring that there is a positive and constructive contractual relationship with external providers, that they are providing the information required to effectively run the service and that they are safely delivering pupils to school on time.

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But some systemic issues remain that need to be resolved

Work to develop the Immediate Fixes plan highlighted some areas that will require more systemic change to sustain performance improvement. These areas have direct linkages to the current operating model of the service and formed the basis of an detailed assessment of this across 8 key components. The results of the assessment are outlined in Section 5 of this report.

Data and Information: Real Time Data

Whilst basic management information is being used to drive the performance of the service, further work needs to be undertaken to develop a wider set of performance metrics to allow this information to be reported in near real-time.

Processes

The lack of a comprehensive end-to-end process means that it is not clear who within BCC needs to input and be accountable for a successful service and where the role of the suppliers is part of this.

People and Teams: Functional Structure and Capability Model

The capability and experience of running a transport service is very different from a commissioning function. Some of the capabilities we would expect within a transport service are not present in the current service delivery model.

Planning: Supplier and Commercial Management

The current contract with suppliers has a number of commercial terms that make effective contract management difficult. In addition, the current approach and commercial capability means suppliers are not being held to account effectively.

Planning: Management of Guides

The management and allocation of guides is poor at the moment and has led to a number of cancelled routes.

Planning: Route Planning and Pupil Information

Route planning is not comprehensive and there is no information available on lengths of routes.

Communications and Channels

The lack of an effective communication system and approach between schools, parents and BCC means that guides and drivers are endeavouring to contact people to provide updates.

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Based on the review, some critical improvements need to be made

Through our independent service review of the current operating model we have identified a series of areas where improvements are required. These areas, set out below, represent fundamental causes for concern and are the underlying cause of the service failing to meet expectations in September. To address these in a sustainable way, we recommend that a new operating model is implemented. This is further detailed in Section 6 of the report.

Operating model component		Recommendation
Vision and Purpose	1.1	► Co-design a new vision with parents and schools that focuses on the pupil and promotes independence
Customer and Channels	2.1	► Redesign the needs assessment and support a planning engagement approach to focus parents, pupils and schools whilst appropriately managing demand
	2.2	► Implement a new approach to communicating changes to route information and real-time updates when routes are delayed or cancelled
Service Delivery Model	3.1	► Clarify roles and accountabilities of the strategic commissioning team
	3.2	► Set up a new integrated approach to the provision of transport services
	3.3	► Clarify roles and accountabilities of the contract and commercial functions
People	4.1	► Across all functions review the capacity and capability required and implement plans to increase as required
Functional Processes	5.1	► Ensure that there is an overall process map that is designed from the view of a pupil. This should clearly show accountabilities across BCC, schools and suppliers. Challenge / assure the individual process maps (see below)
	5.2	► Develop detailed process maps for each step of the transport provision including how calls are handled, the transfer to pupils to home/ schools and what to do in an emergency, and how the council can receive assurance on the DBS checks of drivers
IT Infrastructure	6.1	► Implement a route mapping system that allows routes to be effectively planned with suppliers and real-time communications dealt with (e.g. where is my bus?)
Data and Reporting	7.1	► Implement a database that tracks the needs and support plans of all pupils with SEND and make sure accurate and timely data is being provided from other services to manage the overall system
	7.2	► Implement a new set of PIs and a data management system to effectively manage the delivery of transport and intervene quickly where appropriate
Governance and Controls	8.1	► Design effective governance that allows the transport service independence to deliver whilst holding them accountable

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The scale of change is significant, therefore this review has made considerations beyond the current service model to achieve the improvements required

To deliver sustainable improvements to the service, consideration was given to implementing a new operating model for the service. The capability and change approach to deliver the required transformation, as well as the programme of activity to ensure this is delivered by the start of the next school year in September 2021 were also considered. These four elements are summarised below and further detailed in Sections 6 and 7.

Key consideration	Description
1. Future operating model	We have identified three options for an improved or new operating model that we have summarised on page 14 and expanded on in Section 6. In this section we discuss how the various elements of the system would be delivered in each of the three options. These options include: 1) Improve and Enhance the Current Operating Model, 2) Delegate the Transport Provision to Schools, and 3) Implement an IPTU for Transport Provision. We have assessed each of the potential options available to BCC against our critical success factor framework and future state design principles to ensure alignment of the future state model to BCC's strategic objectives.
2. Capability assessment	We set out the six factors that outline the required capabilities that need to be present within the service and wider council for the new operating model to be successfully implemented and the changes to ways of work embedded into the council. These capability factors included the following: 1) Senior Management Leadership 2) Financial 3) Delivery 4) Management of issues, risks and dependencies 5) Design 6) Change Management.
3. Change approach	We have outlined two options for a change approach that would address the systemic root causes that have been identified and deliver the required transformation for the service to the new operating model. The first option considers an approach where the programme is established through the existing structures, capability and capacity that are used to manage and drive towards the new operating model. The second option considers whether establishing three new programmes that would integrate into the wider portfolio of change across BCC, would manage and drive the changes more effectively. Our assessment of these options and recommended approach is summarised on page 16, and a further detailed overview is provided in Section 7.
4. High level roadmap	We have outlined a high level implementation plan that maps out the required activity to ensure that the immediate fixes to the services required to stabilise the service are in place, so that there is not a repeat in poor performance at the beginning of the term in January 2021. In addition, in line with recommendations made from the current assessment, we have outlined the activity required to further enhance the service and deliver the new operating model and associated transformational change by the start of the new school year in September 2021.

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Given the scale and nature of the improvements, BCC should consider different delivery models

We considered three operating model options that are available to Birmingham City Council and assessed these against 10 design principles that align with the vision statement. From the outputs of this assessment, we recommend Option 3 based on suitability for implementation. The three options are as follows:

Key Consideration	Description	Assessment	
1. Improve and enhance the current operating model	Continue as is, with only the implementation of the immediate fixes plan. BCC continues to run the service in the current format with disparate processes, resources and data to support. Commissioning, procurement and transport managing services will all continue to be delivered in the same manner, with little integration and little performance management. CPMO retain performance monitoring and risk management.	This is currently going through an immediate fixes programme to ensure the service reaches an adequate standard. However, there are systemic root causes that need to be addressed to ensure this service meets the needs and expectations that residents expect and deserve. Further consideration should be given to whether the level of investment to do this within the current operating model would reap the required benefits.	?
2. Delegate the transport provision to schools	BCC would continue to deliver the eligibility needs assessment and support planning functions. However, commissioning, procurement and managing transport services will be delivered by schools either in silos or through a shared service. BCC will devolve the budget for this to schools. Schools will also need to contract manage providers, monitor performance and undertake risk management related to the service. BCC will need to be accountable for delivery and monitor compliance.	It is unlikely that schools have the required capability and experience to deliver a transport function. However, any new operating model will need to consider how it improves joint working and collaboration to deliver the required outcomes from the service.	✕
3. Implement an IPTU for transport	Integrated Passenger Transport Units provide connected work packages that more easily align to a corporate transformation approach. This includes more closely integrated commissioning, procurement and delivery functions, providing stronger emphasis on business units. An IPTU will have strong commissioning and delivery plans, KPIs, unit cost data and clear performance management arrangements.	This option is being recommended as the most viable option for delivering the service going forwards. It would make the best use of existing council fleet assets and provide much needed knowledge, skills and capability to deliver a fit for purpose transport service. Given the delivery of this would more than likely sit outside of the E&S department, careful consideration should be given to ensuring a continued alignment with SEND operational services, to ensure the provision of transport best meets the needs (and strengths) of children and promotes their independence, thus better equipping them for adulthood.	✓

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To drive delivery of the improvements in a systematic way, ensuring the right capability to deliver the change is essential

The implementation of a new operating model seeks to address the underlying causes of the service failing to meet expectations in September in a sustainable way, and enable the service to become a leading practice service. We have set out the six capability factors required for the new operating model to be successfully implemented and to embed changes into work practices.

There are six factors which must be taken into account when assessing capability to implement a new operating model. A summary our assessment of these six areas is outlined below and demonstrating the council does not currently have the required capability to deliver the transformation activity required to implement the new operating model.

1. Senior management leadership capability

Lack of capacity and capability to deliver a transformation programme with a robust governance structure and oversight from an accountable sponsor. Key leadership behaviours are not being displayed.

| Basic | Emerging | Established | Advanced | Leading |

2. Financial capability

Limited ability to provide financial support in a timely manner, especially with pressures from working remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic. Inadequate grip on cost control as evidenced from the under-delivery of planned savings.

| Basic | Emerging | Established | Advanced | Leading |

3. Delivery capability

Until recently, there was not a programme / implementation plan in place which provided a view around the activity and resources to deliver the required transformation. Poor management of staffing resources.

| Basic | Emerging | Established | Advanced | Leading |

4. Management of issues, risks and dependencies

Lack of buy in, trust and confidence from key partners and stakeholders. Poor processes for managing, mitigating and escalating risks and issues, with a lack of understanding around dependencies and impact on BAU activity.

| Basic | Emerging | Established | Advanced | Leading |

5. Design capability

Limited documentation of key processes that underpin service delivery, with key weaknesses within all aspects of the current operating model. A lack of application of business contingency plans where there has been a service failure.

| Basic | Emerging | Established | Advanced | Leading |

6. Change capability

Limited communication from leadership on the reasons and key drivers for change and understanding from staff around the need for change to happen. No processes in place to plan for continuous improvement or culture change.

| Basic | Emerging | Established | Advanced | Leading |

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A robust approach to change is required due to the dependencies on other operational and change activity

The degree of change required to create a robust and resilient service will require strong programme management discipline. We have set out two change approach options which were assessed with their advantages and disadvantages considered in detail. The output of this assessment resulted in the recommendation of Option 2: 'integrate into the transformation portfolio' as the optimal change approach to deliver the required benefits and outcomes for residents.

Option 1 Implement through existing structures	Description	Advantages	Disadvantages	Assessment: Partially Viable
	▶ The option of rapid improvement to the existing structure that would develop into a longer term roadmap of transformation activity ▶ This option would look to leverage the structure of the SitRep cadence already implemented and seek to move towards more leading practices against the operating model outlined ▶ More focus would be on addressing operational and safeguarding issues documented with existing resource and capability ▶ The immediate fixes plan would drive the improvements in the near term but this option does not transform the service nor does it address the system issues fully	▶ Connected work packages that more easily align to a corporate transformation approach ▶ Service compliance and regulatory adherence monitored and checked against wider IPTU requirements ▶ Defined roles and responsibilities ▶ Quality minimum standards against all providers that are consistent and managed ▶ Improved risk and performance management through SitRep structure ▶ Clearer communication channels ▶ Stabilisation of issue management through immediate fixes plan	▶ Additional time and resource will be required in the near term to stabilise the service ▶ Dependencies not fully mapped and managed ▶ Costs not fully in line with financial plan with focus more on recovery than financial planning activity ▶ Cost-benefits not fully mapped and understood ▶ Hand-offs not mapped or documented in detail ▶ Capability will be limited with this option	This option is focussed more on **stabilising the current operational structure and service**, there is a risk that in the longer term without more structural and systemic change **that issues may return.**

Option 2 Integrate into the transformation portfolio	Description	Advantages	Disadvantages	Assessment: Viable
	▶ The recommended option is to rescope and restructure the portfolio into clearer and connected work packages that would more easily align to a corporate transformation approach ▶ The broader IPTU review being undertaken in neighbourhoods needs to be incorporated into the programme ▶ Given the profile of the service and the need to get this right, the correct governance, monitoring and capacity is essential ▶ The programme needs to be led by a dedicated sponsor and a transformation director, with appropriate capacity and capability put in place to deliver the outcomes	▶ This would have a reporting line into the Corporate Programme Management Office to ensure key delivery plan objectives and milestones are being met ▶ Programme managers to be allocated corresponding to each programme with reporting and monitoring capability included and corporate risks managed ▶ The ongoing safe running of the service will be monitored in this structure via the weekly SitReps ▶ Organisation aligned to design principles and operating model levers which transforms the service	▶ Additional time and resource will be required in the near term to stabilise the service ▶ Current capabilities would need structural changes to the organisation which would have to be managed extremely carefully through a change programme	Current **preferred option** and based on evidence and analysis would be the most efficient way to **stabilise and improve the service in the longer term** towards a **leading practice service.**

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The activity needs to start now to ensure that changes can align with any academic timelines

We have set out a high-level roadmap below that considers two key stages: (1) Do Now – these are the activities that are needed to continue to stabilise the service so that performance at the start of the January school term is strong and in parallel allows planning of the transformation across the three programmes to move towards the new operating model; (2) Do Next - the key activities required in order to deliver the new operating model, aligned to the start of a new academic term. This will be expanded on during "Plan the Transformation" with Project Initiation Documents, Project Plans and Benefit Plans developed.

Do Now – the immediate fixes plan

Do Next to Enhance the Service

Transformed Service

By the Start of January Term 2021

Stabilise the Service through the Immediate Fixes Plan
- ► Short term fix on capability and capacity
- ► Managing guides more effectively
- ► Manage contracts and change notices
- ► Set up and support an effective parent-pupil-teacher forum
- ► Improved pupil information for the buses
- ► Clarity around roles and responsibilities in BCC
- ► Implement new IT System to manage real-time communications and lower demand for call centres
- ► Establish positive and constructive contractual relationship with external providers

Plan the Transformation
- ► Design the transformation programme with plan and milestones (around school term dates) and agree resource plan to deliver this

By the Start of New Academic Year (September 2021)

Recommendations to enhance the service:
- ► Design a **new operating model** by implementing an IPTU
- ► Co-design a new vision for the service (1.1)
- ► Transform the Needs Assessment and Support Planning (2.1)
- ► Implement new communications approach (2.2)
- ► Clarify roles and accountabilities (3.1, 3.3)
- ► Establish an integrated approach for provision of services (3.2)

- ► Review capacity and capability required across all functions (4.1)
- ► Document and improve the process maps for each step of transport provision (5.1, 5.2)
- ► Implement route mapping system (6.1)
- ► Implement database for accurate / timely data (7.1)
- ► Implement a new set of PIs and a data management system (7.2)
- ► Design effective governance, promoting independence and accountability (8.1)

*( ) refer to operating model recommendation

Continuous Improvement of the Service

Culture Change

By the start of the new term, we will be delivering …

A service that is delivering the basics for pupils **with pupils not missing any school time** because of provider failure or availability of guides

By the start of the new academic year in 2021, we will …

Have made the initial changes to the **operating model** with the right capability and capacity running the service, and will have a grip on the basics and a positive relationship with parents and schools. Have **transformed the whole service** into one that is designed around meeting the needs of vulnerable adults and pupils, delivering against a purpose that focusses on their independence

EY

Mission

Independent Service Review of SEND Home to School Transport

EY

The Home to School travel service plays a key role in a child's life, providing not only transport to school but a route to independence

Access to education is not only a legal requirement, it is a vital part of ensuring children are able to achieve their full potential and have the best start in life.

The legal responsibility for ensuring children and young people receive education rests with their parents or carers. Generally, parents and carers are expected to make their own travel arrangements for children and young people to and from school, to guarantee they attend school regularly.

Local authorities must make transport arrangements for all children who cannot reasonably be expected to walk to school because of the distance, mobility problems or associated health and safety issues related to special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Eligibility for such support should be assessed on an individual basis to identify a pupil's particular transport requirements. Usual transport requirements (for example, the statutory walking distances) will not be considered when assessing the transport needs of children and young people who are eligible due to additional SEND requirements.

A key component of the SEND reform is to ensure children and young people are prepared for the transition into adulthood. Young people with SEND have aspirations to live a fulfilling life. As young people prepare for adulthood, getting ready for employment and independent living are important aspects and the ability to travel independently is crucial. The Home to School transport service plays a critical role in helping young people achieve their longer term ambitions as well as providing short term practicalities.

What should a Home to School transport service be looking to achieve?

► Local communities and service users have access to a **variety of transport options** that support the delivery of strategic outcomes and **promote independence and choice**

► Transport options are **integrated for effective journey planning and asset utilisation.** Information about them needs to be easy to access and local people need to be **supported to help themselves** and each other to **create resilient communities**

► Being a systems leader with a clear vision to support people to **access transport to meet all of their needs,** such as accessing healthcare

► Proactive market shaping and management through support to the commercial and community sectors to provide safe, high quality services on their behalf that meet the needs of children and young people

► A safety net of provision, for when the market may not be able to provide services that safely and effective meet the needs of children and young people

► An ability to **create income** that is needed for a wider social purpose, such as supporting front-line services for vulnerable people

EY

The provision of transport sits within a wider SEND transport service

As set out in the diagram to the right, there are four elements to how pupils' needs are met:

(1) **Strategic Commissioning**: is the main process for understanding, planning and delivering of services to meet the transport needs of children and young people in Birmingham

(2) **SEND Operations including Eligibility, Needs Assessment & Support Planning:** is the process for determining whether a pupil is eligible for transport assistance from BCC, and the most appropriate way of meeting their needs

(3) **Service Delivery**: is the way that transport services are provided to pupils, to deliver their required outcomes. A large component of this is the provision of Travel Cards and the routes delivered through external providers, but it will also include the provision of Independent Travel Training (ITT)

(4) **Supporting Functions:** are the professional functions across BCC that underpin and provide guidance and / or professional capabilities. These include legal, HR, procurement and commercial

Whist the focus of the service has been on the 'Provision of the Transport Function', it is important to understand how this sits within the wider system and operating model across Birmingham.

(1) Strategic commissioning policy and strategy

Policy and strategy	Market management	Safeguarding
Sets the outcomes, strategies and policies for how the needs of pupils with SEND will be met	Manages the external market and helps to translate the policies and strategies into contracts that can be delivered against	Maintains an oversight of the safeguarding provisions of the service

(2) SEND Operations

Needs assessment capability	Support planning function
Assesses the needs of the pupils against national legislation and local policies	Works with families, schools and providers to design a support plan that will meet their needs and promote independence

(3) Service delivery

Provision of transport services	Provision of other types of travel assistance
Delivers the services to safely transport eligible pupils to school	Deliver other services within the support plan including Independent Travel Training

(4) Supporting Functions

Provides professional guidance and support to the other three functions including HR, Finance, Legal, Commercial, IT and Procurement

EY

BCC have commissioned EY to undertake an independent inquiry into the Travel Assist service

The current challenging position of the SEND Home to School transport service has been well documented in recent media and is a cause for concern amongst parents, schools, transport providers, councillors and SEND staff themselves.

Events unfolded at the start of the academic year that raised additional significant concerns for Members and the Corporate Leadership team. At Full Council on the 15th September, a motion was passed to initiate an independent inquiry.

This inquiry would run concurrently with three other pieces of work to help understand historic issues and undertake some immediate improvements.

At the time of our commission, BCC indicated that there were a number of possible contributing factors to the current failure of the service. These are identified as:

► Poor performance management of the service contract

► Routes poorly planned and changing last minute

► Capability and capacity issues within the Travel Assist Team, compounded by poor management of staff

► Poor contingency planning in light of the start of the new school year and COVID-19 arrangements in schools (e.g. 'social bubbles')

Objectives

1. To gain a better understanding of the historic and current issues relating to the service and the underlying causes

2. The remedial measures that will need to be put in place to implement service improvements and sustain these for the remainder of the current contract. This is to ensure that the service better meets the needs of children with SEND, their families and BCC

3. To understand the key considerations, based on lessons learned from the current contract and service model, to inform the development of the new service from July 2021 onwards

4. To understand the requirements, implications and activity to set up a programme of work to implement the new service by July 2021

Purpose

The purpose of this review is to establish:

► How the current service delivery model is performing and key aspects of accountability for this

► How the key elements of the service fit together and how safe and effective provision is owned and managed

► What improvements opportunities exist and which would be feasible for Birmingham

► How we improve the service in the short, medium and longer term

Scope

To undertake a review of all aspects of service delivery, from the point at which a child is determined to be eligible for travel support to school including:

► Referral process and associated pathways / communications both internally within the council and with the transport providers

► The current service operating model. The review will look at the customer access channels, people, process, technology, performance management, reporting and governance

► Develop an action plan for service improvement to be sustained for the remaining academic year

► Outline the required approach to determine the best service delivery model and programme of work to deliver the new service post June 2021

Out of scope:

► Detailed review and assurance of the assessment and support planning functions and the commissioning team

► Review and assurance of the DBS process and associated questions raised around compliance with these

EY

The families and children who Travel Assist supports are frustrated by the consistent poor service provision

The current position of the SEND Home to School transport service has been well documented in recent media and is a cause for concern amongst parents, schools, transport providers, councillors and SEND staff themselves.

As the school term in September 2020 began, it became apparent that the basic service provision of Travel Assist was inadequate and needed to be urgently reviewed.

Key issues included children not being collected, being collected / arriving late, being dropped off at the wrong school and the service being uncontactable (or unresponsive) when parents of vulnerable children tried to speak to the provider to resolve these issues.

At the time of our commission, you indicated that there had been a possible number of contributing factors outlined to us, as to why the current service is failing. These have been identified as:

► Poor performance management of the service contract

► Routes poorly planned and changing last minute

► Capability and capacity issues within the TA Team, compounded by poor management of staff

► Poor contingency planning in light of the start of the new school year and COVID-19 arrangements in schools (e.g. bubbles)

" There is a **real risk to the safety** of the children through the **lack of training** and information given to the guides

SEND School Head

" At 11.55am I received a call to say the **route had been aborted**. **No communication**. I was also told that there may not be a route available home from school either.

Parent

" The bus did not turn up on her 11-year-old daughter's first day of term and she received **"zero communication"** about it

Parent, from Great Barr

" **The lack of communication is unacceptable**. I really thought we had turned a corner. I needed to make a phone call on Aug 28th to find out if we had the same guide as last year. I was visited by our new driver on Tuesday Sept 1 (though unscheduled), it was a welcome thing and a relief

Parent

" At a meeting recently it was reported around 200 extra routes had been added, the **route sheets didn't turn up** to the school. The schools are still trying to get route sheets, **drivers turning up unannounced** and in one case a student that had left the school was still on route sheets. 'Providers' should send these to BCC, guide attached and sent to guides/parents. Where does the **accountability** start what is the model?

SEND School Teacher

" We **would like to see the underlying data** saying that above 96% of all routes / services are being delivered on time because quite frankly **we don't believe it**

SEND School Head

EY

Method

Independent Service Review of SEND Home to School Transport

EY

A three step process was used to focus on the future by understanding key systemic causes

In undertaking the Independent Service Review, we have gone through three phases across a six-week period, as set out to the right.

At all stages, where improvements can be made, we have fed these back to service management so that they can be acted upon immediately.

The scope of our work focused initially on Provision of Transport Services, and establishing a single evidence base as to the level of service provided. Our latest work considers contributing factors across all of the functions within the operating model.
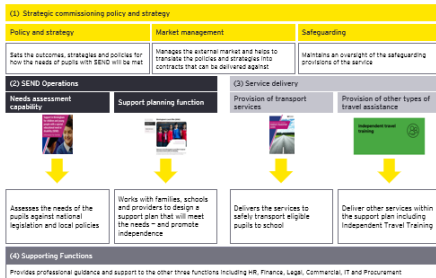
See diagram on page 43

Phase 1: What went wrong in September 2020

The first phase of our review focussed on understanding and articulating what went wrong at the start of the September 2020 term, what the contributing factors were, and whether there were any underlying systemic factors.

We consulted with staff (including the Travel Assist Team, social workers, contract manager, service leadership, commissioning and support services), schools and the primary transport provider to gather views and opinions on what went wrong.

We analysed and compared performance information and customer complaints to assess whether the issues outlined by key stakeholders could be substantiated from factual quantitative evidence.

Using the outputs from the above, we outlined operational reasons and systemic roots causes for the poor performance of the service at this time.

'What Went Wrong'

In Section 4 of our report we have set out:

i.   What went wrong for parents and pupils

ii. the facts around performance in the new term

iii. the underlying reasons and root causes that are systemic and need to be addressed

## Phase 2: The Current Operating Model

Given the systemic causes outlined in Phase 1, we undertook a maturity assessment of the current operating model. The assessment looked at the following areas within the current operating model:

► Vision and Purpose

► Customer and Channels

► Service Delivery Model

► People

► Functional Process

► IT Infrastructure

► Data and Reporting

► Governance & Controls

The maturity of each of the above areas was rated and compared to leading examples of best practice, outlining the rationale for the assessment rating, the impact the maturity is having on parents, children and schools, and key opportunities for improvement.

'Now' The Current Operating Model

In Section 5 of our report we have set out an overview of the current operating model, along with our assessment against eight key components.
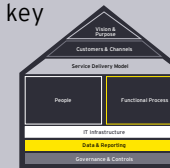
Phase 3: Future Service Delivery

We used the outputs from the previous 2 phases and undertook a future design workshop to understand:

► The scope of the new service

► The service operating and commissioning / management model

► The customer access channels, people, skills, technology, data and reporting required in the future design model
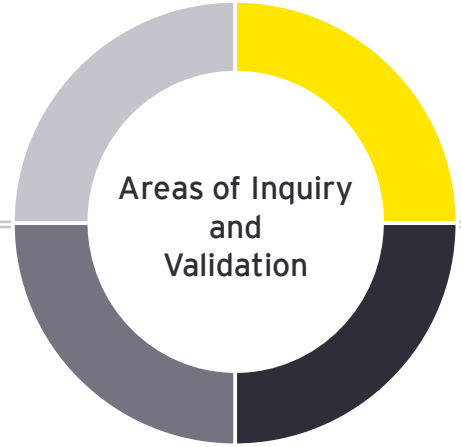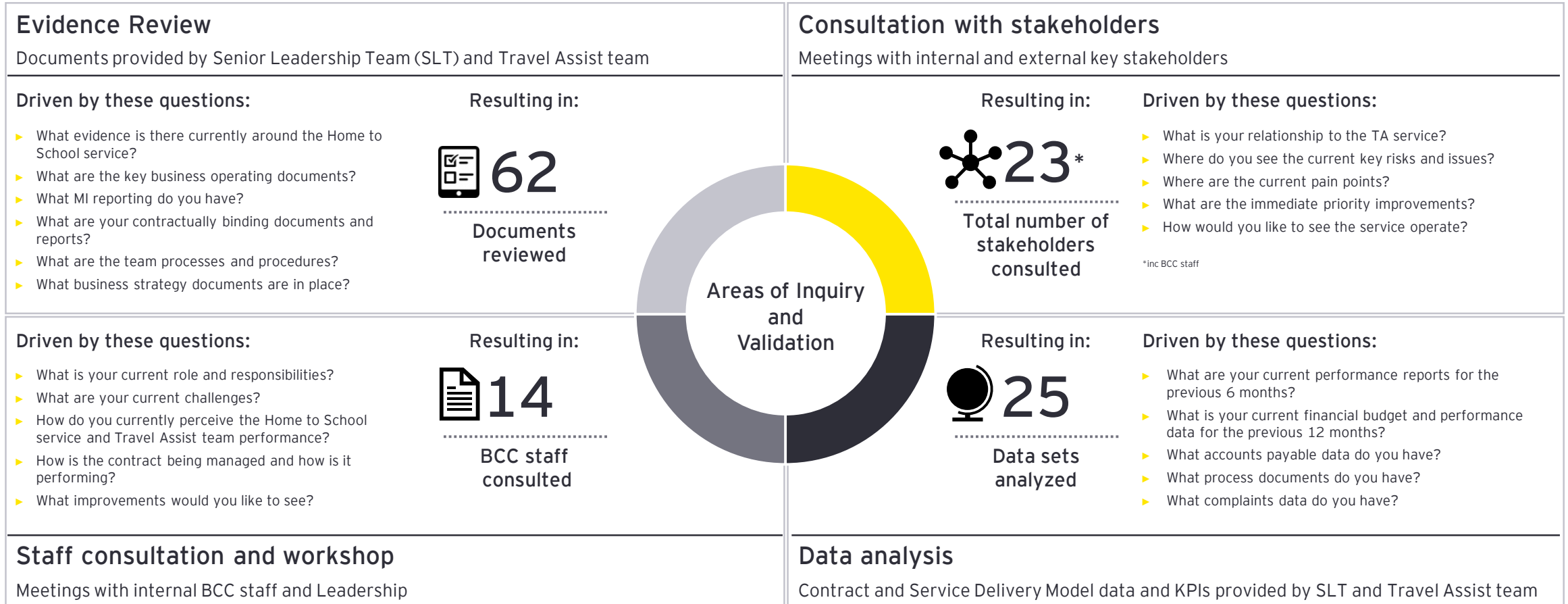
We developed 10 design principles for the new service delivery model. Using our experience of home to school transport models elsewhere and our understanding of the BCC current state, we provided 3 options for delivering the service. A qualitative assessment of each option (against design principles) provided a recommendation. We have then described the programme of activity needed to deliver the model, coupled with any ongoing immediate improvement work required to continue stabilising delivery for this academic year.

Next and Beyond and Delivering Change Successfully

Across the final two Sections (6 and 7), we set out an appraisal of three options for a new operating model before recommending a programme structure that will allow successfully implementation of the changes in a controlled and planned way.

EY

We have analysed the evidence from quantitative and qualitative sources to understand what happened and recommend a way forward

Over the course of the review, we formed a qualitative and quantitative assessment approach. This involved interviewing a number of key personnel from within the service, collecting key data inputs, interpreting these findings and making observations against contract and operating model performance metrics, financial data, processes and complaints. During the course of these activities, we developed our key lines of enquiry that shaped the review and helped us identify the causal pain points of the service.

Evidence Review

Documents provided by Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and Travel Assist team

Driven by these questions:

► What evidence is there currently around the Home to School service?
► What are the key business operating documents?
► What MI reporting do you have?
► What are your contractually binding documents and reports?
► What are the team processes and procedures?
► What business strategy documents are in place?

Resulting in:

62
Documents reviewed

Consultation with stakeholders

Meetings with internal and external key stakeholders

Resulting in:

23*
Total number of stakeholders consulted

*inc BCC staff

Driven by these questions:

► What is your relationship to the TA service?
► Where do you see the current key risks and issues?
► Where are the current pain points?
► What are the immediate priority improvements?
► How would you like to see the service operate?

Areas of Inquiry and Validation

Driven by these questions:

► What is your current role and responsibilities?
► What are your current challenges?
► How do you currently perceive the Home to School service and Travel Assist team performance?
► How is the contract being managed and how is it performing?
► What improvements would you like to see?

Resulting in:

14
BCC staff consulted

Resulting in:

25
Data sets analyzed

Driven by these questions:

► What are your current performance reports for the previous 6 months?
► What is your current financial budget and performance data for the previous 12 months?
► What accounts payable data do you have?
► What process documents do you have?
► What complaints data do you have?

Staff consultation and workshop

Meetings with internal BCC staff and Leadership

Data analysis

Contract and Service Delivery Model data and KPIs provided by SLT and Travel Assist team

EY

What went wrong?

Independent Service Review of SEND Home to School Transport

EY

Overview of the Provision of Transport Services

Travel Assist supports around **7,491 children** to get to school each day across **190 schools in Birmingham.** This includes children with SEND, children looked after, children in temporary accommodation and other eligible needs.

Over **3,500 children** are on contracted transport.

There are a range of support options, however the take-up of more independent travel options has been relatively small, for a local authority the size of Birmingham.

The focus of our report has been on the 3,856 pupils that are transported on buses at an annual cost of c.£16m.

These pupils have a range of needs, ranging from physical disabilities to neurological conditions and disorders. A full breakdown of needs was not provided.

The council has contracts with **17 external providers**. On the 21st of September, 14 of these providers ran a total of 778 routes. National Express Accessible Transport (NEAT) had ownership of 251 (32%) routes and was the main provider, followed by North Birmingham Travel (119 routes, 15%) and Green Destinations (106 routes, 14%), which were the only other providers with more than 100 daily routes. Analysis of the providers is included in the chart to the right.

* Data provided for buses did not provide a breakdown of buses and taxis separately

Service metrics

Service area	Children[1]	Annual spend[2]
Buses (includes taxis)*	3,856	£16.3mn
Bus Passes	2,708	£0.39mn
Personal Travel Budgets	102	£0.28mn
SEN/Centre Bus Passes	803	
Cash Equivalent	22	
	7,491	£24.6m

Total Routes (on 21st September)	778
Number of Guides	405

Number of routes per provider
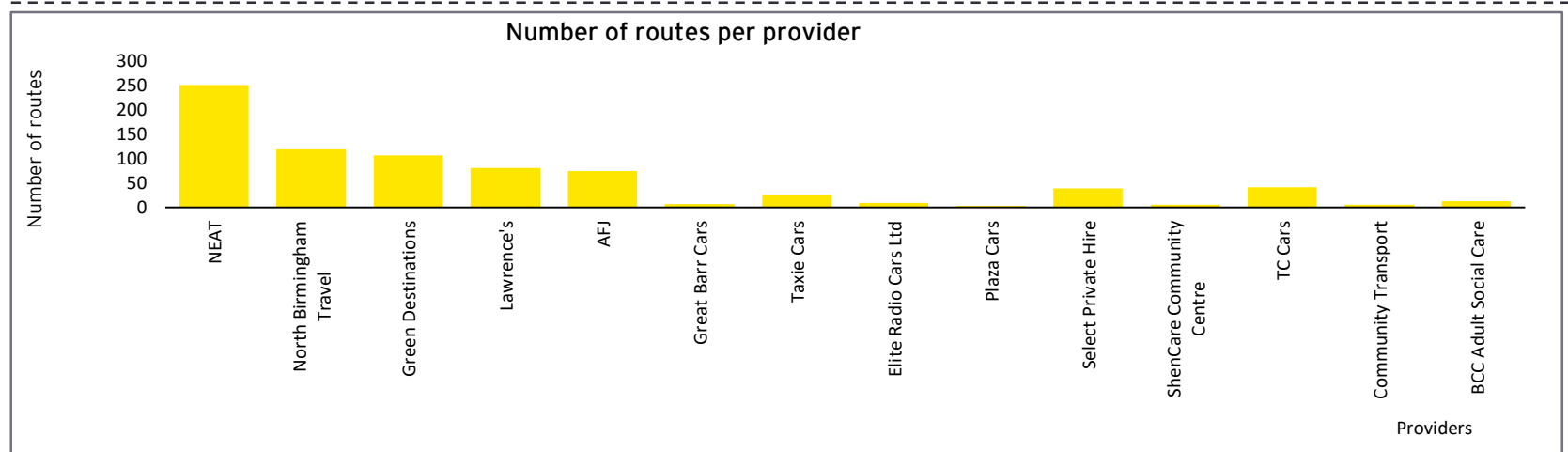
Notes:
1. Numbers of children quoted obtained from Home to School Dashboard – provided 24th of September
2. Spend data obtained from 2020/21 budget forecast spreadsheet

Independent Service Review of SEND Home to School Transport

EY

4.1 What went wrong for parents and pupils

Independent Service Review of SEND Home to School Transport

EY

In September 2020, the service faced some significant challenges

As the school term in September 2020 began, it became apparent that the basic service provision was inadequate, and was not meeting the needs of children, parents or schools.

Due to route cancellations and delays, a significant proportion of children were either not being collected, or were arriving late to school. Some children were also dropped off at the wrong school, leading to potential safeguarding risks due to their levels of vulnerability. In addition, the service was sometimes unreachable or unresponsive when parents of vulnerable children tried to get in contact to discuss the issues outlined above.

Through conversations with key stakeholders, and through collation of various complaints and reports, it quickly became apparent that a number of things had gone wrong for pupils, parents and schools. A summary of these findings have been captured on the right.

What went wrong for Pupils and Parents in September 2020

Parents and schools had **lost confidence** in the service being able to deliver	"absolutely sick" of the "sub-standard provision" – **Parent** "transport for many children has been "complete chaos" at the start of this academic year. Head teachers …"no confidence" in organisations managing the system – **School Leadership Representative**
Pupils were not being picked up on time, delays to routes and pupils were **arriving late**	"Buses have been late multiple times at start and end of day and do not inform the school" – **Home to School Council Report**
Routes were being **cancelled** at short notice	Changes and cancellations to transport done at short notice without consultation, e.g. 68 routes were cancelled between the 14th–18th Sep 20 – **BCC Report to Council Leadership Team**
Pupils being dropped off at the **wrong school** or **home address**	"Two children were taken to the wrong school" – **Travel Assist Immediate Improvement Actions**
Some pupils with **medical conditions** were not being appropriately cared for	Discussions with 20 special schools indicate there have been incorrect care plans with missing information – **Travel Assist Immediate Improvement Actions**
Parents and schools were not informed of changes to routes and timings	More than 10% of families experienced delays in letters regarding changes to travel – **Travel Assist Immediate Improvement Actions** "Changes were made to transport provision without consulting parents … sometimes done at very short notice" – **Home to School Council Report**
There is a lack of **confidence in the capacity and capability** of guides	Discussions with special schools indicate equipment training for guides is inadequate – **Travel Assist Immediate Improvement Actions** Special schools' representatives spoke of "gross mismanagement" and significant safeguarding risks with guides are not being adequately trained – **Home to School Council Report**
People were **not getting a timely response** to enquiries	Parents and schools raised ongoing frustration in contacting the service, including phones and emails not being answered – **Home to School Council Report** Travel Assist have increased their phone lines from 4 to 6 to increase capacity – **Travel Assist Immediate Improvement Actions** – e.g. 30% higher demand on the service quoted on 3rd September 2020 report due to COVID-19

Independent Service Review of SEND Home to School Transport

EY

Parents and schools are frustrated and angry at the level of service

From our review of 62 key documents and interviews with 23 key stakeholders, we identified numerous reports of frustration and anger at the level of service provided by Home to School. This page contains highlights of quotes from parents and schools identified in document reviews, whilst the next page focuses on concerns aired by Travel Assist team members.

"
We **would like to see the underlying data** saying that above 96% of all routes/services are being delivered on time because quite frankly **we don't believe it**
"
SEND School Head

"
There is a **real risk to the safety** of the children through the **lack of training** and information given to the guides
"
SEND School Head

"
At 11.55am I received a call to say the **route had been aborted. No communication**. I was also told that there may not be a route available home from school either.
"
Parent

"
The bus did not turn up on her 11-year-old daughter's first day of term and she received **"zero communication"** about it
"
Parent, from Great Barr

"
The lack of communication is unacceptable. I really thought we had turned a corner. I needed to make a phone call on August 28th to find out if we had the same guide as last year and was then visited by our new driver on Tuesday September 1st (though unscheduled) was a welcome thing and a relief
"
Parent

"
There is no way for parents to understand if there is an issue with a route or if their child is safe getting to school
"
SEND School Teacher

"
A **parent** who set up a petition, said she was 'absolutely sick' of the 'sub-standard provision'
"

"
At a meeting recently, it was reported around 200 extra routes had been added but the **route sheets didn't turn up** to the school. The schools are still trying to get route sheets, **drivers are turning up unannounced,** and in one case a student that had left the school was still on route sheets. 'Provider' should send these to BCC, guide attached and send to guides/parents. Where does the **accountability** start and what is the model?
"
SEND School Teacher

Independent Service Review of SEND Home to School Transport

EY

BCC staff also expressed frustration at the level of service

> **"**
>
> Children cannot get to school and are missing their legal right to an education. Parents are not able to get to work
>
> TA Team Member
> **"**

> **"**
>
> The transport service is lacking clear leadership and is not currently fit for purpose
>
> Commissioning
> **"**

> **"**
>
> I am concerned about the lack of structure and training for guides given they are working with such vulnerable children
>
> Commissioning
> **"**

> **"**
>
> The Travel Assist team are stressed and poorly managed, they are struggling to clear the backlog and focus on the correct activities and tasks
>
> Customer Services
> **"**

Conclusion

It is apparent that the level of service provided in September 2020 did not meet their expectations and level of quality required.

Parents and special schools in particular are very frustrated and feel let down by the council. However, it appears that September was a watershed moment for stakeholders. There have been a number of concerns and complaints being raised over the past few years regarding the whole approach to providing travel assistance to pupils. These are detailed in the key findings below.

Key Findings

This has included:

1. A lack of confidence over whether DBS checks on drivers for externally provided transport have been completed
2. A lack of communication around changes in routes, policies and what parents need to do – parents, pupils and guides were often unclear or unaware of changes to routes causing delays and lateness
3. A lack of robust and reliable information on the length of time that children are spending on the buses, nor whether routes are running to time
4. An overly invasive and burdensome assessment and appeals process is currently in place

EY

4.2 Establishing the facts

EY

COVID-19 was an unprecedented situation, but only exposed some more systemic weaknesses

Following feedback from parents and schools, we have collated and analysed data that sets out the position on performance. Prior to the instigation of the Situation Reports (SitRep) on the 28th September 2020, the availability of accurate, complete and timely data was a challenge. Therefore, we have had to use information that was available on the 21st September as a baseline for analysis. Data from the previous 12 months was requested as a comparator, but a detailed breakdown of information was not being tracked at this stage. A breakdown of performance data from the 21st of September is shown below.

Comparison to 2019 and Impact of COVID-19

The COVID pandemic has created an unprecedented situation for all services, and there is no doubt that it introduced greater complexity in delivering a safe and socially distanced service. The additional capacity and revised practices required, coupled with daily changes to requirements, have put significant pressure on the service.

Whilst COVID was clearly a contributing factor to failings, government guidance was released in June 2020. This would have allowed adequate and timely planning to be undertaken for the start of the September term. Given this context, it would suggest the nature of the pandemic exposed some more systemic weaknesses within the service, including the lack of robust and timely data, clarity around key processes and who has overall ownership and accountability, commercial management of contractors and a systematic compliance and planning approach

Cancelled Routes

There are three reasons why a planned route may have to be cancelled or aborted:

1. The **Provider** is unable to complete the route either through the availability of staff or through the breakdown of a vehicle

2. BCC has a requirement to provide a guide to the majority of the routes. Where a **guide** cannot be provided, the route must be cancelled

3. The school not being open due to COVID-19 or other means. Whilst this would lead to the cancellation of a route, it should not be considered as a failure of the home to school service

Lateness of Routes

Parents and schools have indicated that the length of routes was, at times, unacceptable for pupils, and that some pupils were regularly arriving late, resulting in pupils missing vital parts of the school and home day. The data to analyse this element of the performance of the service was not routinely and systematically recorded, therefore it is not possible to comment or verify the statements made.

Performance of the Service before Recovery Plan

Pupils planned (21/9)[1]	3,903	Home to school Applications (25/09)	24
Pupils transported (21/9)	2,329	Overdue H2S Applications (25/09)[2]	41
Cancelled Route: Provider (21/9)	8 (32%)[3]	Bus Pass Appeals (25/09)	104
Cancelled Route: Guide (21/9)	4 (16%)[3]	Safeguarding Ongoing Cases (25/09)	6
Cancelled Route: COVID (21/9)	13 (52%)[3]	Positive DBS – Issue raised (25/09)	4
		Complaints (25/09)	4

Note:
1. Prior to the 25th September, 'pupils planned' did not account for school closures and cancellations due to pupil isolation/sickness. To account for closures/ isolation this has been addressed in the new Sit Rep by introducing the metric 'pupils transported that needed to travel to school'
2. Breakdown of application data not provided at this point
3. Percentage of total route cancellations

EY

Further understanding and analysis of the underlying reasons routes were cancelled

Comparison to 2019 and impact of COVID-19

The lack of performance information from 2019 means that we cannot comprehensively compare the performance with a similar point in 2019, and thereby ascertain the possible impact of COVID-19.

However, there are two points worth highlighting:

1. Guidance on reopening schools with safe travel was issued to all local authorities in June 2020 and set out the minimum requirements to create bubbles to safely transport vulnerable people. This should have provided the Travel Assist team with sufficient time to plan and communicate changes to routes with parents and schools

2. Other local authorities have had to deliver a home to school transport service under the same challenging circumstances, with limited impact on service delivery

Cancelled routes

A cancelled route (regardless of the reason) has an impact on the child who cannot attend school and their family. However, in reviewing the poor performance of the service and understanding the root causes for this, it is important that we understand the reasons for these cancellations, particularly given the variety of views from all stakeholders around where the fault lies for this. We have therefore analysed the data to understand what has contributed to routes being cancelled, as establishing a clear evidence base is essential to understanding what went wrong. A report to Council Leadership, covering the 14th September to the 18th September, stated that 68 routes were cancelled by the transport provider due to guides and provider resource capacity (however a split between the two was not provided, nor did we see data on the number of children affected). Over the same time period it was reported that 15 out of a possible 52 routes were cancelled by schools due to COVID-19. However, there are concerns regarding the accuracy of this data.

Provider cancelled

On the 21st September (the first day that we have accurate and reliable data) there were eight routes where the provider cancelled (0.01% of total routes that day). This impacted on c472 pupils not being able to be transported to school and therefore missing out on education.

This is within the KPIs set out by the City Council to manage performance and does not indicate significant provider failure.

Although route numbers were not logged in every instance, a reason was provided for cancellation for route number 1006 – driver illness. For the 7 other cancellations recorded that day, no route number or specific cause was logged by the council.

Guide cancelled

On the same day, the City Council was not able to provide suitable guides to four routes, which meant that these needed to be cancelled.

The reasons these four routes were cancelled was not logged in any detail by the council, e.g. no route number or reason.

In total, a further 6 pupils were not transported to school and missed out on education.

COVID cancellations

Again, on the same day, there were 13 cancellations due to COVID-19.

There was no distinctive breakdown of whether this was initiated by parent, school or BCC, so no firm categorisations can be made.

Again, for these cancellations, no route numbers were logged by the council and only one reason was logged as a positive test on a pupil.

The 13 cancellations however impacted c.1000 pupils and had a significant impact on children not getting to school that day.

EY

Observations of the lateness of routes

SitRep management information and immediate fixes plan have alleviated some of the causal factors behind service lateness

Lateness of Routes

It is a concern that there is no robust and reliable information on the length of time that children are spending on the buses, nor whether routes are running to time.
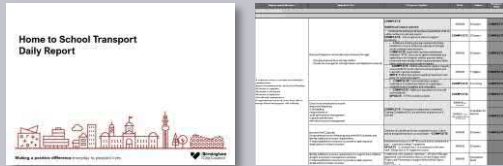
In the absence of data, we have had to rely on evidence gathered through route plans and stakeholders that has included:

1. Stakeholder reviews evidenced that parents, pupils and guides were often unclear or unaware of changes to routes causing delays and lateness

2. Stakeholder reviews evidenced that children were being asked to travel to the end of their road or similar, sometimes unassisted, to meet the transport

3. Communications between BCC and drivers / guides is poor and creating added complexities around providing emergency cover or reporting issues, all of which seem to impact the service on a weekly basis.

It should be recognised that there is some parent choice as to which school their child attends, and that this may be a contributing factor as to the length of routes and time spent on transport. However, the lack of a systematic approach to managing journey times and provider performance (in regards to timely transportation) is a key risk to the quality of service delivery.

There were some reports that routes not being planned effectively meant the planning and booking was open to additional mileage being factored in or drivers / guides taking longer routes.

The use of the SitRep reports has helped improve some of the management information regarding the above going forwards.

Conclusions

It is recognised that the extraordinary circumstances posed by COVID-19 and the implications for schools returning to the new normal added substantial complexity and challenge to the operational delivery of the home to school transport at the beginning of the new school year. However, there has seemingly been a lack of timely joint planning between the Travel Assist service, transport providers, schools and parents to mitigate the impact of the pandemic as much as possible – particularly given that government guidance around the re-start of schools was issued in June 2020.

Key Findings

1. Lack of confirmed, accurate data (particularly for the first two weeks of September, and prior to this) has made it difficult to draw conclusions on the reasons for the service failings.

2. From the data reviewed, it seems that the problems around route cancellations were primarily down to the transport providers having to cancel routes due to issues with driver and guide capacity.

3. However, towards the end of September the number of route cancellations had decreased, with an almost equal split between cancellations due to provider / guide capacity issues and school cancellations due to cases of COVID-19 within specific 'bubble' arrangements.

4. There is an ongoing issue around data related to the lateness of routes. The view from schools and parents has been consistent that this is an issue. A lack of communication between BCC, transport providers, schools and parents was sighted as the primary reason.

EY

4.3 Systemic causes that need to be addressed

Independent Service Review of SEND Home to School Transport

EY

A number of key operational failings have been identified as contributing to the poor performance of the service in September 2020

Through the evidence gathering we have identified eight operational factors / reasons that contributed towards the performance of the service being lower than expected in September. Addressing these should be the focus of the 'Immediate Fixes Plan' (see section 7).

In addition, we have identified a series of root causes that point towards a more systemic problem with the current operating model for the service. Failure to address these prevents the service from developing sustainable improvements, and delivering with confidence the level of service expected in the longer-term.

Failure to address these as part of a new operating model will essentially place a 'sticking plaster' on the operational reason for performance issues. These are set out in more detail on the next page and sections 5 and 6 of this report.

What were the operational reasons for the performance issues?

We have identified 8 operational reasons why pupils, parents and schools did not receive the level of support they expected at the start of term. These can all be addressed through the 'Immediate Fixes Plan' with measures put in place to improve the performance in the short-term.

No clear operating model in place that sets out the core delivery expectations across BCC and suppliers

Route sheets not provided to guides setting out basic information

Spike in demand and pressure on the service due to 'social bubbles' being required

Communication between BCC, suppliers, parents and schools was inefficient and ineffective

Inadequate planning for the academic year. Insufficient time to mobilise suppliers/ guides with the right skills

Basic management and performance information is not available to BCC

The relationship, contract and contract management does not enable rapid achievement of required outcomes and improvement

Lack of understanding, openness and transparency when reporting performance to stakeholders

What are the underlying causes?

However, we have also identified a series of underlying causes that contribute towards a more systemic problem that has created a fragile service.

We have grouped the underling causes that we believe underpin the performance of the service into six main themes as listed below. These are expanded on pages 39 and 40, with further detail in section 5 of our report.

People (Leadership)

Planning

People (Delivery Teams)

Functional Processes

Data and Reporting

Communications and Channel

Independent Service Review of SEND Home to School Transport

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But some systemic issues remain that need to be resolved

Work to develop the Immediate Fixes plan has highlighted some areas that will require more systemic change to sustain performance improvement. We go through this in more detail in the rest of section 4. These areas have direct linkages to the current operating model of the service, and formed the basis of an detailed assessment of this across 8 key components. The results of the assessment are outlined in Section 5 of this report.

Data and Information: Real Time Data

Whilst basic management information is being used to drive the performance of the service further work needs to be undertaken to develop a wider set of performance metrics and allows this information to be reported in near real-time

Processes

The lack of a comprehensive end-to-end process means that it is not clear who within BCC needs to input and be accountable for a successful service, and where the role of the suppliers is part of this.

People and Teams: Functional Structure and Capability Model

The capability and experience of running a transport service is very different from a commissioning function. Some of the capabilities we would expect within a transport service are not present in the current service delivery model.

Planning: Supplier and Commercial Management

The current contract with suppliers has a number of commercial terms that make effective contract management difficult. In addition, the current approach and commercial capability means suppliers are not being held to account effectively.

Planning: Management of Guides

The management and allocation of guides is poor at the moment and has led to a number of cancelled routes.

Planning: Route Planning and Pupil Information

Routes planning is not comprehensive and there is no information available on lengths of routes.

Communications and Channels

The lack of an effective communication system and approach between schools, parents and BCC means that guides and drivers are endeavouring to contract people to provide updates.

EY

There were a number of root causes that underpin these issues

The findings of the October 2019 Travel Assist audit report have highlighted a number of the operational factors that contributed to the failings of the service in the beginning of the school year were also present over a year ago. Despite assurances from the service that these were addressed, or in the process of being so, this clearly has not happened. We have described these issues as being systemic root causes, given the perceived permeance of these issues over a long period of time. These areas include:

► Planning

► Functional Processes

► Data and Reporting

► Communications and Channels

In addition, given that these systemic root causes have not been addressed over the last year, there is a question around the capability, capacity and structural implementation of the 'people' element of the service. Both from a 'leadership' and a 'delivery' perspective.

The following explores each of these systemic root causes in more detail, and provides context as to how they contributed to the failure of the service during the start of the academic year.

People (Leadership)

The leadership and direction provided to the Travel Assist team has been lacking at times.

This manifested through a lack of forward planning and horizon scanning that could have spotted the likely challenges posed to a new academic year combined with changes required through COVID-19.

Furthermore, the leadership and direction to move the service towards one that focusses on independence, and a pupil-focussed approach to the processes and systems has not been observed.

This includes:

► A series of interims that has led to no consistent structure or organisational ownership

► No effective performance management in place for either staff or providers

► Limited focus on strategic and forward planning

► Limited recognition from senior management around the complexity and challenge that COVID-19 would bring to the start of the new academic year, and accountability for ensuring that contingency plans were in place and arrangements communicated to all key stakeholders.

Planning

One of the root underlying causes is without a doubt the ability to plan for the start of the new academic term. Given that government guidance around planning for the start of September in light of the new normal was issued in June 2020, there was seemingly a lack of joint planning for the provision and coordination of home to school transport services between the council, transport providers and schools. Providers reported that routes were agreed only a week before the start of term, which left little time to communicate and discuss these with parents and schools. Other root causes, that underpin the issues faced by the service, include:

► Improvement programme in light of the audit report was not properly initiated, governed or controlled, contributing to the failure of the service in September 20.

► Lack of programme and project management understanding and capability

► Focus on reactive activity and 'fire fighting', rather than pro-active activity and joint planning

► COVID-19 planning was ineffective. Routes and Guides were secured, however business continuity plans, communication channels and timeliness of actions did not lead to an effective response to increased demand

People (Delivery Teams)

There are a number of services and teams across the council and with providers that need to come together in harmony to deliver the service to pupils.

It is apparent that there is no clear view of the roles and responsibilities across BCC / suppliers to deliver the service, and therefore a lack of understanding over who is accountable for delivering which components and, most importantly, what the impact, and contingency plans are for when a component fails.

► BCC teams were not structured and organised for effective, timely and responsive delivery

► No clear escalation channels that allowed performance issues and concerns to be highlighted early

► Capacity and capability gaps within the teams

► Inadequate training for new guides

Independent Service Review of SEND Home to School Transport

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There were a number of root causes that underpin these issues (cont'd)

Communications and channels

One of the fundamental root causes of parents and schools feeling let down was the lack of effective communication, particularly in light of the implications of the pandemic. The issues regarding communication can be grouped into three areas:

1. New routes and changes to existing routes were only communicated to parents and schools in late August for the September term. Some parents did not receive the written communication, despite reports of being promised this at a Parent-Carer Forum meeting on the 26th August 2020. This meant they felt ill-prepared, anxious and lacked confidence in the service before the term started

2. There is no systematic approach to communicating with schools and parents in real-time if a route is running late. This creates additional pressure on phone lines and leads to anxiety, frustration and lack of confidence in the service. The performance of the call centre, to handle parent and school queries, is a cause for concern and has been addressed in section 5 of this report

3. Operational timely communication with transport providers regarding routes and children allocated to them

Data and information

As highlighted in the previous section, the lack of basic, reliable and robust management information has limited our ability to understand the performance of the service.

Until recently there has been limited accurate data available on:

► The number of routes cancelled

► The reasons for routes being cancelled

► Lateness of routes

The service still does not have access to information regarding the length of time of routes.

This basic information was required to effectively run and manage the service. There is no evidence of a formal data architecture and structure linked to KPIs and required MI and data capture was very manual. This meant that information was not captured and reported in an structured way between BCC, schools, parents and providers. Furthermore, day-to-day information on routes and pupils was not reaching drivers and guides in a timely manner.

The limited availability of the above would make it very difficult for the service to performance monitor providers of the Home to School transport and to hold them accountable to meeting their contractual obligations.

Processes

There is a lack of a clear documented process that captures all the activities required, from when a parent applies for support for their child, through to how this service is provided safely and pupils discharged into the care of school or parents / guardians.

The absence of clear documented processes makes it challenging for the staff, providers and schools to understand defined roles and responsibilities, as well as associated dependencies between each other, to successfully provide the required service and produce the desired outcomes for children, parents and schools.

The situation was further exacerbated as a result of planning and delivery in light of COVID-19 arrangements. Without a clear baseline in place for the required processes, it is extremely difficult for staff and key stakeholders to understand any functional modifications, their role in the timely delivery of this, and ensuring that these process changes are communicated to service users to ensure they have a clear understanding of the service they will receive at the start of term.

The absence of the above, has meant that there was a clear lack of ownership over some of the most vital services being providing to the vulnerable children in the Birmingham.

Conclusions

The findings related to the root causes have evidenced some clear factors that contributed to service failures in September. These have been described as systemic, due these being apparent at least a year ago and the situation at the beginning of the school year has indicated that they have not been resolved by the service. The key points in relation to this are listed below.

Key findings

► Lack of leadership oversight around the planning for the delivery of H2S services at the start of the school year, in light of the complications and challenges related to COVID-19

► Absence of documented processes that outline how the service was being delivered during this time

► Staff capability and capacity to deliver the service expected by parents and schools

► Lack of timely communication with all stakeholders and customers regarding any changes to service delivery and key accountabilities and responsibilities related to this

► Limited data to enable the effective performance monitoring of the service, during a critical and challenging time

EY

This was not an isolated incident, similar issues with the service had been identified in previous reviews

In October 2019, the Education and Skills department asked the internal team to undertake an independent audit of the Travel Assist team – with a focus on the commissioning, safeguarding and quality assurance of the team.

This report found a number of concerns and gave it the highest risk rating (level 4 – 'controls evaluated are not adequate, appropriate or effective. Risks are not being managed and it is unlikely that objectives will be met').

This report identified 6 control objectives and made 19 high risk recommendations.

Worryingly, when these are compared to the operational reasons and the root causes that we have identified from September, a number were already flagged in the previous audit report.

March 2019: ATG Goes Bankrupt

► In March 2019 a key provider (48% journeys) of home to school transport services, went bankrupt. This threatened considerable disruption for the service

► Education and Skills contract review: identified some potentially serious cross-council issues in relation to the commissioning, contract management, due diligence, safeguarding and quality assurance processes

► Internal audit review: identified serious safeguarding concerns leading to the implementation of a multi agency response team to respond to the audit findings

October 2019: Final Audit Report: 0504/022
Travel Assist: Commissioning, Safeguarding and Quality Assurance

Assurance: Level 4

► **Education and Skills**: poor understanding of the importance of safeguarding, inadequate safeguarding arrangements, poor management control, no real contract management, poor quality management information and an absence of KPIs.

► **Corporate HR:** the findings indicate a poor understanding of the importance of safeguarding, concerns relating to safeguarding and safer recruitment, and the status of the DBS policy and its implementation. These significant safeguarding concerns, relating to the work of Corporate HR, also must be addressed as a matter of urgency.

6 Control objectives not met

19 High priority recommendations made for 2019 completion

What were the operational reasons for the performance issues?

Comparison of the eight operational reasons for the performance in September indicates that five were clearly identified as failures and control risks in the previous audit report.

Operational reason	Previously identified
No clear operating model in place that sets out the core delivery expectations across BCC and suppliers	N/A
Route sheets not provided to guides setting out basic information	✓
Poor control as service is unable to manage sudden change in demand, e.g. recent spike in demand and pressure on the service due to 'social bubbles'	✓[1]
Communication between BCC, suppliers, parents and schools was inefficient and ineffective	✓
Inadequate planning for the academic year. Insufficient time to mobilise suppliers / guides with the right skills	✗
Basic management and performance information is not available to BCC	✓
The relationship, contract and contract management does not enable rapid achievement of required outcomes and improvements	✓
Lack of understanding, openness and transparency when reporting performance to stakeholders	✗

Notes:
1. Control over social bubbles identified as an issue in September reports, inability to manage change in demand identified previously

Independent Service Review of SEND Home to School Transport

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Now – assessment of the current operating model

Independent Service Review of SEND Home to School Transport

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The provision of transport sits within a wider SEND transport service

As set out in the diagram to the right, there are four elements to how pupil's needs are met:

(1) **Strategic Commissioning**: is the main process for understanding, planning and delivering of services to meet the transport needs of children and young people in Birmingham

(2) **SEND Operations including Eligibility, Needs Assessment & Support Planning:** is the process for determining whether a pupil is eligible for transport assistance from BCC, and the most appropriate way of meeting their needs

(3) **Service Delivery**: is the way that transport services are provided to pupils to deliver their required outcomes. A large component of this is the provision of Travel Cards and the routes delivered through external providers, but will also include the provision of Independent Travel Training (ITT)

(4) **Supporting Functions:** are the professional functions across BCC that underpin and provide guidance and / or professional capabilities. These include legal, HR, procurement and commercial

Whist the focus of the service has been on the "Provision of the Transport Function", it is important to understand how this sits within the wider system and operating model across Birmingham.

(1) Strategic commissioning policy and strategy

Policy and Strategy (Lead: E&S Commissioning Team)	**Market Management** (Lead: E&S Commissioning Team)	**Safeguarding** (Lead: TA Compliance Team and Children's Safeguarding)
Sets the outcomes, strategies and policies for how the needs of pupils with SEND will be met	Manages the external market and helps to translate the policies and strategies into contracts that can be delivered against	Maintains an oversight of the safeguarding provisions of the service

(2) SEND Operations

Needs assessment capability	**Support planning function**
Assesses the needs of the pupils against national legislation and local policies	Works with families, schools and providers to design a support plan that will meet the needs and promote independence

(3) Service delivery

Provision of transport services	**Provision of other types of travel assistance**
Delivers the services to safely transport eligible pupils to school	Deliver other services within the support plan including independent travel training

(4) Supporting Functions

Provides professional guidance and support to the other three functions including HR, Finance, Legal, Commercial, IT and Procurement

EY

There are a number of interfaces between BCC and providers to deliver the service

The high-level process that starts when a parent completes an online assessment for receiving travel support, follows a five step process that incorporates:

1. **Application for Travel Support** – a parent or guardian is required to submit an application each academic year requesting travel support for their child

2. **Assessment Process** – the SEND Operations team undertakes an assessment against the council's policy as to whether a child is eligible. There is an appeals process that follows

3. **Support Planning** – the SEND Operations team will undertake a support plan for the child that sets out how their needs will be met. This could be through direct transport provision (e.g., bus or taxi) but also through independent travel training

4. **Travel Planning** – if the needs are best met through direct transport, the Service Delivery team will work with external providers to design an appropriate route and procure the service. This will include consultation with schools and families. This also includes appropriate DBS and other safeguarding steps

5. **Transport provided** – the final stage is that the external provider will transport the child to school

We have summarised this to the right and have provided a high-level view of where the four functions within Birmingham City Council and external travel providers, pupils, parents and schools engage with this process.

This is broken down in further detail on the next page.

End to end process for children and their parents to access transport services

		Icon/Step	Description	Steps
1			Parents apply each academic year for travel support through the online tool	
2a			Assessment from SEND and eligibility check	
2b			If required, exceptional case review to check if case outside policy	
3			Support planning to develop the most appropriate way to meet the needs of pupils	
4a	Services procured			
4b	Route designed with operator			
4c	Provider selected and risk assessment completed			
4d	Guide assigned if required			
5			Travel Support Provided Collection of child and contact with parents — Key interfaces: Operations team, School and Parents	

		Description	Steps
	Pupils, Parents & Schools	Are the customers of the service and are the individuals who will benefit from the support	All Steps of process
Birmingham City Council	**Strategic Commissioning**	Has a key role in setting the strategy and policy for eligibility, as well as overseeing safeguarding and determining the procurement and contract approach	Steps 4a, 4c & 5
Birmingham City Council	**SEND Operations**	Manage the operational process to assess eligibility and complete support plans for children	Steps 2 & 3
Birmingham City Council	**Service Delivery**	Is responsible for managing the travel service and engaging with external providers	Step 4
Birmingham City Council	**Supporting Functions**	Provide specialist input and support in areas such as legal, HR, finance and IT	Various Steps
	External Provider	Is commissioned by BCC to provide the transport.	Steps 4 & 5

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Overview of the roles and responsibilities

Policy and Strategy	Policy and Strategy
	Legal Services

Develop the overarching strategy and policies that define this	Appeals process if there is an exception Key interfaces: exceptional case panel review

Policy and Strategy	Market Management
Travel Assist	Human Resources
	External Provider

DBS checks carried out*
Key interfaces: exceptional case panel review

Needs Assessment Capability	Support Planning Function	Market Management	Travel Assist	External Provider
		Travel Assist		

2a Assessment from SEND and eligibility check

2b If required, exceptional case review to check if case outside policy

3 Support planning to develop the most appropriate way to meet the needs of pupils

4a Services procured
External Provider
Travel Assist

4b Route designed with operator

4c Provider selected and risk assessment completed
Travel Assist

4d Guide assigned if required

5 Travel Support Provided Collection of child and contact with parents

Key interfaces: Operations team, School and Parents

Parents	Schools	Schools	Schools	Schools
	Parents	Parents	Parents	Parents
				Call Centre
				Travel Assist
				External Provider

1 Parents apply each academic year for travel support through the online tool

Engagement with parents and schools

Consultation takes place at school site if required
Key interfaces: provider, school and operations team

School and parents notified provision made and started – prioritised and compliance officer visit

Planning of meet and greet and introduction to guide*
Key interfaces: provider and Travel Assist team

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5.1 Our framework for reviewing an operating model

Independent Service Review of SEND Home to School Transport

Our findings are outlined in this section and will be presented as outlined by our operating model framework below. When reviewing a service, we typically consider eight key components of the operating model. This framework builds confidence that all aspects of future operations, regardless of delivery model, have been considered.

Defines the strategic objectives

Defines which channels will be used to interact with customers

Defines the high level organisation design, key roles, responsibilities and target culture

Defines the high level technical requirements (system, network and application architecture)

Defines who the customers are and what they want or need

Defines what services will be provided to which customers, and informs the cost base and through which mechanisms it will be reduced

Defines the high level processes to deliver the service to the customer

Defines the data required and the way this will be managed and reported

Vision & Purpose

Customers & Channels

Service Delivery Model

People

Functional Process

IT Infrastructure

Data & Reporting

Governance & Controls

Defines accountability, how to plan activities and how performance will be managed

The framework can be categorised into two key elements:

1. The **'Top of the Target Operating Model'** will help you set the strategy and vision for commissioning, procurement and contract management, considering your customers and the strategic service delivery model

2. The **'Foundation'** that sets out the changes in infrastructure and capabilities required to achieve the strategy and vision for the services

1 The Top of the Target Operating Model

a **Vision & Purpose**

b **Customers & Channels**

c **Service Delivery Model**
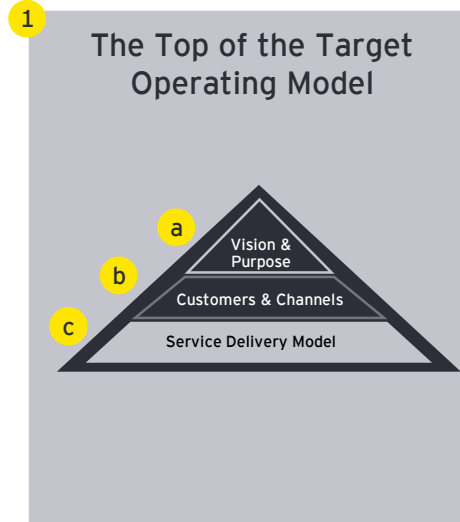
The three main components aim to define your:

► Strategy and objectives to provide focus for transformation

► Key internal customers and the way (or channels) that you wish to support them

► The services and their cost

This will enable you to consider the wider council transformation, to ensure your services can continue to support front line services whilst utilising digital channels and the most effective processes possible.

2 The Foundation

d **People**

e **Functional Process**

f **IT Infrastructure**

g **Data & Reporting**

h **Governance & Controls**
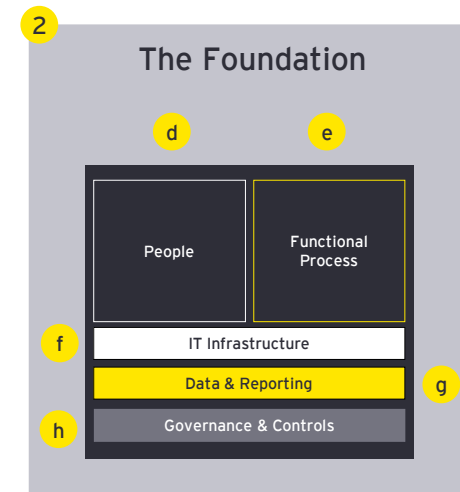
These five components underpin the operating model and provide the core foundations to ensure the required infrastructure is in place. These levers can be flexed and adjusted based on your requirements and potential changes that may occur over time.
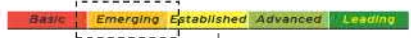
Each of these can have a major influence and impact on the effectiveness of the operating model.

High level operating model assessment

For each component of the operating model, we have collated evidence from documents and stakeholder interviews and assessed these findings against our view of what a mature operating model should look like.

Stakeholder Feedback & Evidence

Summarises the key findings from a review of 62 documents and 23 stakeholder interviews, which included members of Travel Assist, a key provider, special schools and other relevant staff from within Birmingham City Council

What Good Looks Like

Outlines the practices that would be delivered and be upheld for a mature and effective operating model

What is the impact?

Outlines the impact on BCC, providers and service users for areas that require improvement

Our Evaluation

Our key take home messages regarding this operating model lever

Assessment

Maturity assessment of the operating model lever in its current state – a **breakdown of this framework can be found on the following page**

Independent Service Review of SEND Home to School Transport

EY
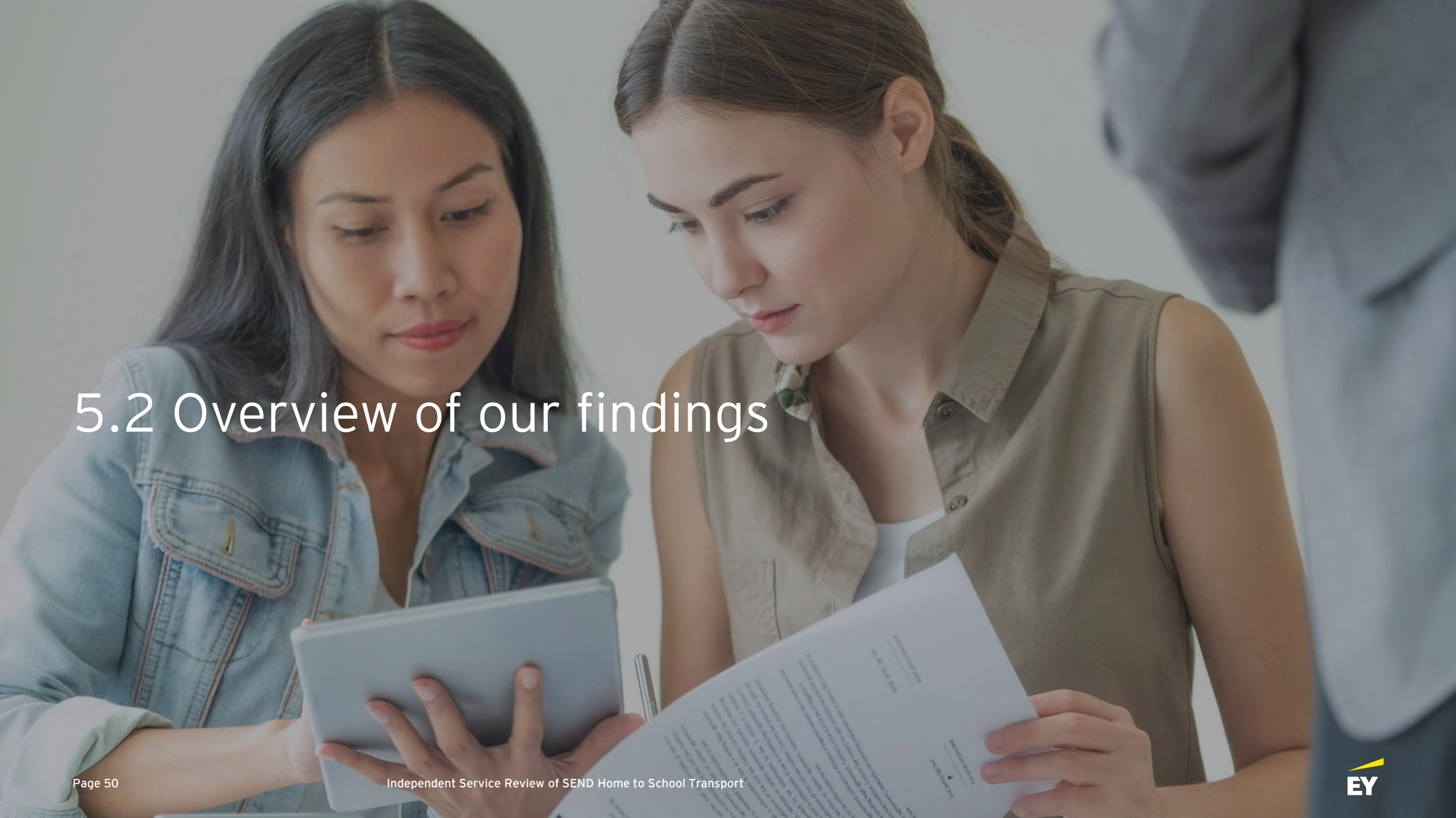
High level operating model assessment: Maturity assessment

A high level assessment of the Home to School service has been conducted through the components of the operating model framework, as set out on pages 47 and 48. The methodology below sets out the criteria that each component has been assessed against.

The assessment has been completed using interviews with key stakeholders from Travel Assist, NEAT, school faculty and wider within Birmingham City Council to understand the experience of service quality. This has enabled staff to understand perceptions of their role, their responsibilities and their performance and this was then triangulated with available data and information to ascertain if the feedback received could be evidenced quantitatively.

Framework:

Basic	Emerging	Established	Advanced	Leading
► Component in the operating model is either not developed or does not exist ► Process and policies are in place but no monitoring or documentation ► Performance measure is not used substantially for improvements and there is no oversight to monitor progress	► Component in the operating model exists ► Standard methodologies and processes are in place and there is documentation and monitoring ► The need for improvement is recognised but there has been limited action ► Cost and quality metrics are tracked to drive performance measure	► Formal plans are in place and implemented across the service ► Standardised policies and processes are documented and adhered to ► Tools/systems used are integrated ► Metrics are based on customer requirements, strategy and objectives, and are also used to benchmark performance	► Formal plans are in place, implemented and regularly monitored and tracked ► Competencies and centres of excellence are developed and align to the wider strategic visions and objectives ► Continuous improvement in any component of the operating model is present	► High levels of integration at strategic and tactical levels ► Highly automated and standardised processes ► There is confidence in every component of the operating model from the leadership and customers

Independent Service Review of SEND Home to School Transport

EY

5.2 Overview of our findings

Independent Service Review of SEND Home to School Transport

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We have summarised the conclusions from our maturity assessment

For each component of the operating model, we have given a rating for its current maturity against our view of what a mature operating model should look like. A summary of the results of the assessment is shown below. Pages 56-81 provide more detail around the reasons for the scores that have been given for each component of the current operating model.

Vision and Purpose
| Basic | Emerging | Established | Advanced | Leading |

Functional Processes
| Basic | Emerging | Established | Advanced | Leading |

Customers and Channels
| Basic | Emerging | Established | Advanced | Leading |

IT Infrastructure
| Basic | Emerging | Established | Advanced | Leading |

Service Delivery Model
| Basic | Emerging | Established | Advanced | Leading |

Data and Reporting
| Basic | Emerging | Established | Advanced | Leading |

People
| Basic | Emerging | Established | Advanced | Leading |

Governance and Controls
| Basic | Emerging | Established | Advanced | Leading |

Overall operating model assessment
| Basic | Emerging | Established | Advanced | Leading |

EY

We baselined our understanding of some facts around your organisation through the eight levers of our operating model

	Current practices	Key opportunities for improvement	What good looks like	Critical success factor
Vision and Purpose	▶ The council's vision for travel assistance is to **"ensure every eligible pupil can access safe and efficient services that are reliable and flexible and are appropriate to their needs"** ▶ Vision is not disseminated down through teams effectively or widely understood ▶ Only 3 stakeholders were able to articulate BCC's vision during our interviews	1. Implementation of score cards to ensure strategy and vision is disseminated down through teams 2. Ensure all documents pertaining to processes and strategy have vision clearly articulated and embedded within them	A clear vision in place which articulates that children should have access to a variety of transport options, that supports the delivery of strategic outcomes and promotes independence and choice. These transport options provide effective journey planning and asset utilisation. Information about them needs to be easy to access and local people need to be supported to help themselves and each other to create resilient communities.	A clear and documented vision and strategy with a corporate scorecard that drives KPIs and performance management
Customers and Channels	▶ The key customers for the Home to School service are schools, parents, carers and children ▶ Communication channels consist primarily of phone lines and letters to update on changes to service. There is a lack of sufficient communication channels, both internally and externally ▶ Staff are unclear on the services comms approach and the process to follow for escalations ▶ Customer journey is not appropriately documented	1. Review current the needs of service users and ascertain who requires support from guides 2. Responsive call / email processing to clear backlog and pro-active handling of risks/ issues as they arrive 3. Joint planning session to be held with schools and providers to agree joint working arrangements and associated communications approach 4. Development of effective communications plan with owners identified	The service should have a clear understanding of the needs of children and parents that are accessing the service and ensure that their travel needs are met in the most cost-effective way which promotes their independence. Clear lines of communications and channels for parents, carers and schools should be established to ensure timely access.	A clear and documented communications strategy with owners and escalation routes identified and agreed

Vision and Purpose rating: Basic | **Emerging** | Established | Advanced | Leading (marked at Emerging)

Customers and Channels rating: **Basic** | Emerging | Established | Advanced | Leading (marked at Basic)

EY

We baselined our understanding of some facts around your organisation through the eight levers of our operating model (cont'd)

		Current practices	Key opportunities for improvement	What good looks like	Critical success factor
Service Delivery Model		► The daily management of the service is overseen by Travel Assist who, following SEND eligibility approval and any appeals, allocate service users to routes and notify schools. Providers are responsible for routing and the provision of transport. BCC receive monthly performance reports from providers ► No clear service model documented that staff are working to and staff are unclear on their roles, and the roles of managers / supervisors ► No clear performance measurements	1. Ensure all transport providers, parent and schools are clear on home to school routes 2. Route based scheduling to shift to 365 system once implemented 3. Understand guide capacity requirement for routes and compare to available capacity (including contingency requirements). Discuss capacity gap with providers and schools and agree options for addressing	There is a commissioning framework, strategy and delivery plan in place, focussed on outcomes and delivering value for money. There is a deep understanding of existing and future demand, transport activity and costs, market conditions and benchmarking, which are used to scenario plan and drive changes based on data and behavioural analytics.	A service model that leverages current and procured technology and supports data that is responsive to the changing demands and conditions of the external customer environment
		Basic Emerging Established Advanced Leading			
People		► High staff turnover and use of interims leading to knowledge gaps, with no one available to strategically develop a long-term service approach ► Lack of training available for staff and guides ► The Travel Assist team consists of the assistant director, 1 team manager, 3 supervisors, 5 customer advisors and 15 coordinators ► Currently 387 permanent guides employed by BCC, with an additional 200 agency staff added as a result of COVID-19 and 113 relief guides	1. Review of staff roles and responsibilities 2. Capability and skills gap analysis undertaken of both staff and guides, ensuring appropriate training plans are in place to upskill to undertake roles. Collaboration with schools to identify additional training programmes for guides depending on the needs of service users	Staff have the required skills, knowledge, experience and aptitude to perform the work expected of them and to the required standard. Staff are clear around their roles and responsibilities, and there is an ethos around collaboration and customer centricity instilled within the workforce to ensure that they are focussed on meeting the needs of children, parents and schools.	A highly motivated and proactive organisational culture that puts pupils, parents and schools at the heart of decision making
		Basic Emerging Established Advanced Leading			

Independent Service Review of SEND Home to School Transport

EY

We baselined our understanding of some facts around your organisation through the eight levers of our operating model (cont'd)

	Current practices	Key opportunities for improvement	What good looks like	Critical success factor
Functional Processes	► No fundamental structure in place around business processes, with no global owners, controls or dependency mapping ► Route mapping is completed by providers, with BCC responsible for global view and providing details on pupils (i.e. addresses, medical and equipment) ► No team processes within TA Team, or processes around contingency planning for drivers or documented escalation paths ► There are no systems in place to implement a consistent procurement strategy across providers `Basic` `Emerging` `Established` `Advanced` `Leading`	1. All key processes within the business identified and a clear RACI completed and stored in a centralized and fully accessible information structure with global process owners identified and documented and dependencies to other processes and areas of the business fully mapped 2. Full SIPOC of process activity with SLAs agreed, identified between process areas and communicated	There is a documented efficient framework in which team members operate that covers the end to end process covering handling of referrals, understanding needs and commissioning the optimal transport service. This framework should ensure quality, define accountability and support successful delivery to meet business outcomes.	Fully documented functional processes for each area of the business with RACI and full SIPOC.
IT Infrastructure	► No overall centralised IT architecture strategy ► Many manual processes are still in use, e.g., timesheets are paper-based and many route maps are stored on word documents by BCC ► Legacy systems unable to support business requirements `Basic` `Emerging` `Established` `Advanced` `Leading`	1. Implementation of 365 IT system by December 2020 and development of change management processes to ensure all parties are fully equipped to make use of the new 365 system	There is the right digital infrastructure to enable efficient and timely access to the service for parents, carers, schools, and transport providers (including online real time information). Transport Management System that correlates passenger information, performance levels and costs, with ability to drill down in on individual and average costs.	IT Infrastructure that provides a centralised source of information with timely access.

EY

We baselined our understanding of some facts around your organisation through the eight levers of our operating model (cont'd)

	Current practices	Key opportunities for improvement	What good looks like	Critical success factor
Data and Reporting	▶ Data architecture not defined ▶ Lack of real-time data, poor reporting cadence ▶ Poor performance monitoring due to poor data quality and accessibility through current technology ▶ BCC issues providers with data, which includes addresses, parent/carer contact details, equipment requirements (e.g., harnesses and booster seats) and updated bubble information. There have been multiple issues with missing/incorrect information ▶ There are **7 KPIs** which are monitored weekly on a dashboard. Contractual KPIs are reviewed as part of the annual review process `Basic` `Emerging` `Established` `Advanced` `Leading`	1. Outline data and performance management requirements and data architecture that will underpin the new 365 software 2. Focus on data cleansing and data quality processes to ensure accurate data underpins all system and performance reporting	Up to date and accurate flow of information between the service and transport providers, parents and schools to ensure the effective operational delivery of the transport service. KPIs are defined requirements, and performance against these are monitored at regular performance reviews.	A data architecture that supports current IT and business needs and is scalable to support the business growth. A shared and centralised single source of information.
Governance and Controls	▶ Monthly performance meetings with officers from commissioning, BCC finance, Provider SLT and Travel Assist. Financial reporting to cabinet is quarterly ▶ Lack of operating and process controls with governance inconsistent across teams ▶ Lack of performance management in place for staff and guides ▶ No issues of penalties and fines ▶ Procurement operating through minimum DPS standards `Basic` `Emerging` `Established` `Advanced` `Leading`	1. Clear performance management framework defined and implemented to enable effective performance measurement 2. Utilise penalty points system outlined in DPS framework 3. Introduction of Head of Service, responsible for performance management of staff and processes	There is a robust governance structure in place that supports timely decision making and escalation of key risks and issues, and enables directors and senior managers to ensure the objectives are implemented and accountability is taken for their delivery. This needs to be supported by the flow of accurate management information to enable effective decisions to be made.	Robust governance and controls that meet compliance guidelines and are automatically updated in line with regulation

Independent Service Review of SEND Home to School Transport

EY

5.3 Vision and purpose

EY

We found there is no clear single **vision and purpose** in place that the teams are working towards effectively
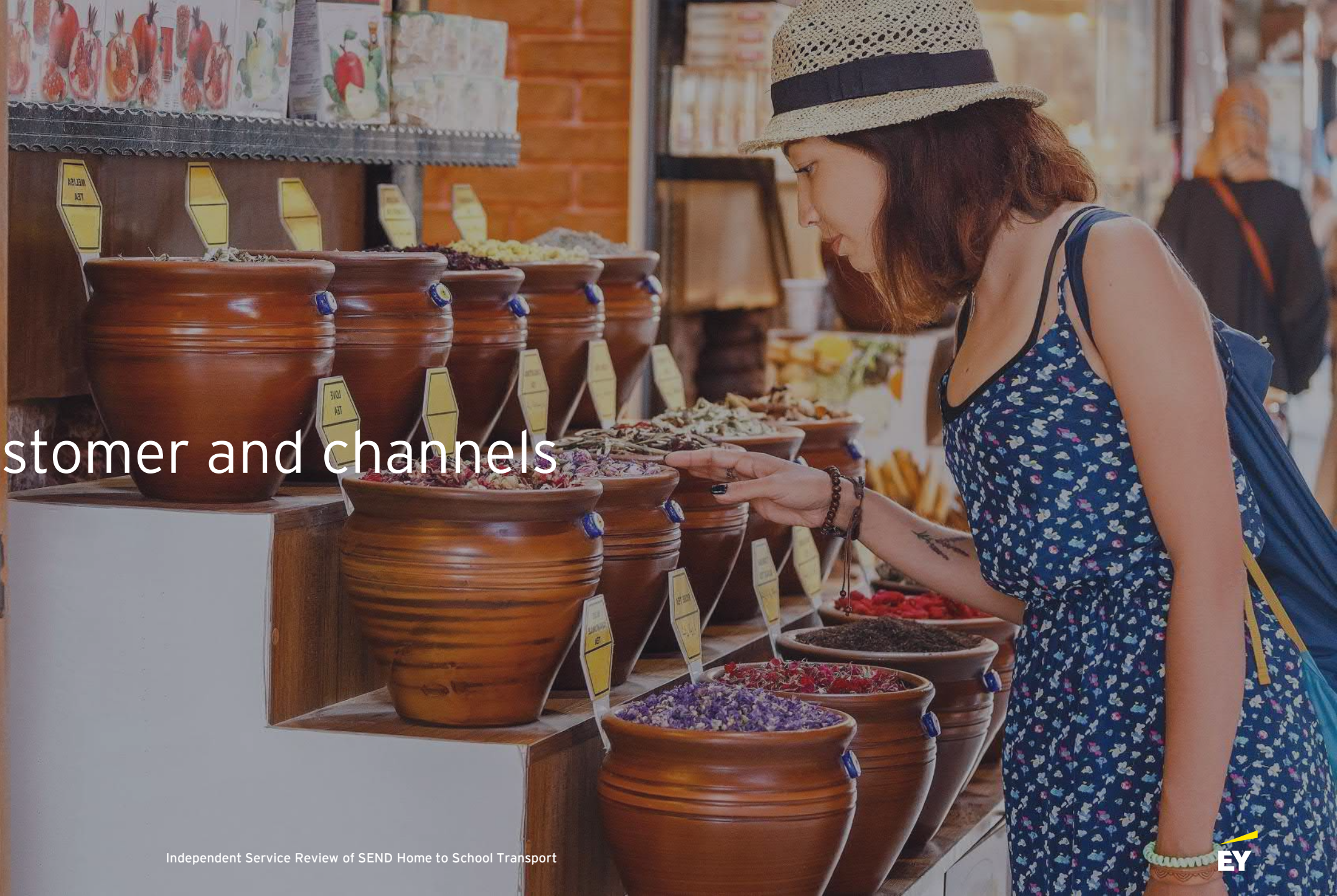
In the following sections, we have broken down the elements of the summary slides and assessed each component of "what good looks like" individually.

Category	What good looks like and what is our evaluation against this?	Stakeholder feedback & evidence
Vision and Purpose **The strategic objectives**	**A clear vision in place which articulates that children should have access to a variety of transport options that support the delivery of strategic outcomes and promote independence and choice** We evidenced fragmented vision and strategy documents supported by key stakeholder feedback on what was documented in respective areas For this level of operating model maturity we would expect a clear documented strategy for the service with a scorecard that is used to create KPIs for the rest of the business Basic — **Emerging** — Established — Advanced — Leading **These transport options provide effective journey planning and asset utilisation** Basic — Emerging — **Established** — Advanced — Leading **Information about them needs to be easy to access, and local people need to be supported to help themselves and each other to create resilient communities** **Basic** — Emerging — Established — Advanced — Leading	▶ The council's vision for travel assistance is to "ensure every eligible pupil can access safe and efficient services that are reliable and flexible and are appropriate to their needs" and to offer travel training to promote independence, by utilising a team of travel trainers and working with schools. The aim is to ensure pupils arrive at their destination safely, giving them the best possible opportunity to start the day ready to learn ▶ Stakeholders describe an absence of strategies in place for Home to School Transport and feel that top management have a clear vision, but it is not disseminated down. Stakeholders further express concern around the focus of their Director and the amount of work currently under them We reviewed documents pertaining to 4 key strategies, discovering only 2 reference BCC's vision: ▶ We found the commissioning strategy clearly describes BCC's vision and states that BCC seeks to ensure "the voice of the child, young person, parents and carers influences all aspects of the commissioning work", however we found no clear methods in place to achieve this ▶ We found that the 365 Response strategy references the vision to "enable safer and more efficient transportation of vulnerable children", with clearly defined actions, roles and responsibilities ▶ We found that the Procurement Strategy for the Provision of Home to School Transport and the Interim Service Provision Arrangements strategy lack clear references to BCC's vision of improving access to safe and efficient transportation services

EY

We found there is no clear single **vision and purpose** in place that the teams are working towards effectively (cont'd)

Category	Our conclusion	What is the impact?
Vision and Purpose The strategic objectives	**Assessment: Emerging** **Vision and objectives linked to the core purpose of the service are not clear** Vision is not disseminated down throughout the Travel Assist service and teams are lacking a unified goal with no corporate scorecard in place. Teams are unclear on roles and responsibilities due to strategies not having the right focus and overall ambition, and an overall lack of culture in the service Basic Emerging Established Advanced Leading	▶ Teams lack a unified goal so there is no emphasis on collaboration to achieve better outputs and create a integrated culture within the service ▶ Teams are unclear on roles and responsibilities so cannot complete tasks to the best of their ability, with lack of accountability for poor performance ▶ Due to above there is a risk that the activity delivered by the team will not be aligned to the overarching vision and objectives for the service, which could entail the right outcomes around independence, choice and quality not being realised by children and parents accessing the service.

Independent Service Review of SEND Home to School Transport

EY

5.4 Customer and channels

Independent Service Review of SEND Home to School Transport

EY

We found that there is no clear understanding of **customers** or customer journey. With the main **channels** over-utilised due to the high volume of enquiries, ineffective communications is contributing to staff spending more time on non-prioritised work to clear backlogs

Category	What good looks like and what is our evaluation against this?	Stakeholder feedback & evidence
Customers and Channels Identity and needs of customers and channels used to interact	**The service should have a clear understanding of the needs of children that are accessing the service and ensure that their travel needs are met in the most cost-effective way which promotes their independence** We evidenced the lack of a clear customer journey throughout the business with substantial numbers of ongoing complaints and appeals, as described by key stakeholders `[Basic]` Emerging Established Advanced Leading **There should be clear lines of communications and channels for parents, carers and schools should be established to ensure timely access** We evidenced clear documented issues with current communication channels due to volume, supported by key stakeholder feedback on backlogs For this level of operating model maturity we would expect the business to be able to respond to requests and manage complaints and appeals in a timely manner, rather than allowing an accumulation to create a backlog and prevent new enquiries from receiving a response `[Basic]` Emerging Established Advanced Leading	**Contract Findings** ▶ NEAT are contractually obliged to lead on communications for the Home to School service. They struggle with compliance as up to date information is not always provided (i.e. contact details for all parents and service users) ▶ Stakeholders reported NEAT attempted to create their own contact database but faced blockages due to the limited information available ▶ NEAT must record all oral and written complaints received and take action to resolve issues, with any unresolved complaints investigated by BCC. NEAT are required to deal with complaints within a reasonable time of receipt and must notify BCC of the outcome within 5 working days. All complaints received by NEAT are recorded within their monthly performance reports. There was no evidence from the performance reports, that the 5 day turnaround for responding to complaints was being adhered to. ▶ Within the contract it states that formal complaints should be managed in line with the council's complaints procedures, which should have been provided at mobilisation **Operating Model Findings** ▶ We found that the customer journey is unclear throughout the business with key information, owners and hand-offs difficult to identify and manage ▶ Stakeholders report communication channels are confusing and inundated with backlogged information requests and complaints, made worse by poor segmentation of enquiries. Despite having complaint system in place, some complaints are being sent to individuals and failing to be logged. There were 8 outstanding Yellow letter and 4 ICASE complaints as of 24th September – *Home to School Dashboard* ▶ Stakeholders describe lengthy assessments and delays in appeals with inappropriate provisions offered (bus passes / pick up points / PTBs). There were 11 ongoing stage 1 appeals and 8 ongoing stage 2 appeals as of 24th September – *Home to School Dashboard* ▶ The main channels are telephone, email and letters. There has been a high volume of complaints over inability to contact TA via phone or email, with route cancellations and changes to transport provision made at short notice without consulting parents. We found reports that more than 10% of families experienced delay in letter confirming travel arrangements for child – *Travel Assist Immediate Improvement Actions* ▶ It should be noted that recent implementation of Cirrus telephony full omni system (on which 24 staff/supervisors are trained) has led to improvements in call handling, with the average wait time being only 44.84 seconds as of 12th October

EY

We found that there is no clear understanding of **customers** or customer journey. With the main **channels** over-utilised due to the high volume of enquiries, ineffective communications is contributing to staff spending more time on non-prioritised work to clear backlogs

Category	Our conclusion	What is the impact?
Customers and Channels Identity and needs of customers and channels used to interact	**Assessment: Basic** **Understanding of the customer is poor and communication channels are over-utilised** ► BCC are not currently providing the contractual communication commitments leading to a rise in complaints from parents and providers, with external stakeholders unable to access the service ► Communication channels currently in place are over-utilised and unable to cope with rising demand ► Lack of clear communication channels is making any management information reporting difficult to manage and prioritise ► It is our view that the council does not have the current IT capability to collate, monitor, report and share data. However, we do recognise that the council is planning to implement a new 365 system by December 2020 `Basic` `Emerging` `Established` `Advanced` `Leading`	► External customers and stakeholders have been unable to access the service in the case of an emergency. ► Delays in pro-active communications with parents, schools and providers have meant that they have been unaware of route cancellations or changes in a timely manner creating an unnecessary risk to their child accessing transport services. ► The above has led to over-utilised communication channels which is driving staff within the Travel Assist team to spend more time on reactive response ► Lack of recording and analysing of customer complaints prevents the service looking at ways to continually improve the service based on feedback given. ► Lack of priority given to management information results in reduced ability to collate and share data with schools and transport providers and effects key practices such as monitoring of performance. This will have an impact on the quality of service being experienced by the end user.

EY

5.5 Service delivery model

EY

Stakeholders described a broken **service delivery model** that needs organisation. A key issue around managing guides has been highlighted along with issues around route management

Category	What does good look like and what is our evaluation against this?	Stakeholder feedback & evidence
Service Delivery Model Services provided to customers, cost base	**There is a commissioning framework, strategy and delivery plan in place, focussed on outcomes and delivering value for money** We evidenced lack of defined processes and methods following stakeholder discussions about the service delivery model being not fit for purpose Basic | Emerging | Established | Advanced | Leading *(Basic highlighted)* **There is a deep understanding of existing and future demand, transport activity and costs, market conditions and benchmarking, which are used to scenario plan and drive changes, based on data and behavioural analytics** We heard evidence of lack of understanding and communications surrounding future plans and saw no evidence of scenario planning to drive changes For this level of operating model maturity we would expect confidence in the service delivery model from staff and customers and greater control over processes, with the ability to forward plan Basic | Emerging | Established | Advanced | Leading *(Emerging highlighted)*	► The service is viewed internally as not fit for purpose due to the unstructured way the service currently operates. Staff describe the lack of a single service model to hold up as guiding principles for how they operate. We found that processes and methods of working are generally poorly defined and developed in isolation without any clear dependency mapping ► Stakeholders describe a perceived lack of leadership and poor internal communications about future plans – from senior leadership levels down to the team level – which is creating confusion ► Guides are cited as a 'nightmare' by staff – we heard reports from providers that guides are taking longer routes for monetary gain, which could be circumvented through having clear structure in place for allocating guides to routes. Furthermore, stakeholders express concerns around safeguarding and the ability of guides to effectively support pupils on trips ► There have been frequent cancellations and route closures within the service, e.g. From 21/09-08/10 there were **123 route cancellations** that were not due to school closing due to COVID-19. There were a further 36 route cancellations on 08/10 that impacted **209 children** by them either being late or not attending school ► We found a lack of performance management in place for transport providers procured through the DPS. ► DPS providers have also been responsible for cancellations, e.g. on the 21st September DPS providers were responsible for 4 out of 8 cancellations due to internal resource constraints – Contractor Route Spreadsheet

EY

Stakeholders described a broken **service delivery model** that needs organisation. A key issue around managing guides has been highlighted along with issues around route management (cont'd)

Category	Our conclusion	What is the impact?
Service Delivery Model Services provided to customers, cost base	**Assessment: Basic** **The service delivery model is currently not fit for purpose** ► The service delivery model is highly dependent on the external transport providers and guides. However, there is sub-standard approach to managing the performance of both, and ensuring they are delivering on their contractual obligations. ► There is a lack of defined processes and methods and no single service model for staff to hold up as guiding principles Basic | Emerging | Established | Advanced | Leading	► Lack of performance management means providers and guides are not being held accountable for poor practices. ► The absence of strong leadership has meant that there is a lack of clarity and guidance for staff, affecting their ability to complete tasks / activities to a high standard and therefore in meeting expectation of children, parents and schools. ► The above is negatively impacting the education of children with SEND in Birmingham due to route cancellations and delays impinging on their ability to attend their respective schools.

EY

5.6 People

Independent Service Review of SEND Home to School Transport

EY

There is currently poor management of **people** within the Travel Assist team, high turnover and high use of interims. This is leading to knowledge gaps and lack of motivation among the team

Category	What does good look like and what is our evaluation against this?	Stakeholder feedback & evidence
People Organisation design, key roles, responsibilities and target culture	**Staff have the required skills, knowledge, experience and aptitude to perform the work expected of them and to the required standard** We evidenced high levels of staff turnover and high use of interims in key roles, supported by key stakeholder feedback on the knowledge gaps and lack of expertise among staff [Basic] Emerging Established Advanced Leading **Staff are clear around their roles and responsibilities** We evidenced the absence of clearly defined roles and responsibilities in strategy documents, supported by key stakeholder feedback [Basic] Emerging Established Advanced Leading **There is an ethos around collaboration and customer centricity instilled within the workforce to ensure that they are focussed on meeting the needs of children, parents and schools** We evidenced a lack of communication between staff at different levels and high blame culture, with no evidence of collaboration to achieve unified goals For this level of operating model maturity we would expect roles and responsibilities to be clearly defined for all processes, with staff possessing the knowledge and skills required to succeed in their role [Basic] Emerging Established Advanced Leading	► We found there to be a lack of capacity in the TA team, with high staff turnover escalating issues related to service continuity (e.g. now on third head of service). Stakeholders feel there is a need for more staff with the right knowledge and expertise relevant to their roles to manage and deliver processes they are undertaking. Staff reported that were feeling exhausted and stressed after working long hours. ► Stakeholders describe a lack of clarity over accountability and lack of performance management, with a propensity to instil a culture of 'blame' which has led to low morale and motivation. This has resulted in staff having to defend their actions rather than there being a collaborative approach to working together to seek solutions to problems as they arise. Staff describe feelings of strain and distrust and have stated that improvement suggestions are not well received. There are no regular supervisions, with some staff stating they have not had one in the last year and a half. ► Stakeholders describe a lack of communication between front-line staff and management, with management poor at delegating. Staff describe an absence of real leadership, with supervisors all doing very different roles. We found documented evidence to support this: 'ineffective communication within travel assist, inadequate training for staff delivering service and staffing ratio needs addressing.' – Travel Assist Immediate Improvement Actions ► We found there to be a distinct lack of training opportunities and guidance on how the Home to School service should be run, with staff describing a lack of understanding of their roles and key dependencies regarding who they should be working with. ► Stakeholders state that there are currently too many interims in key roles – some do not have access to certain systems and processes leading to delays (e.g. with invoicing) ► Stakeholders describe high levels of absenteeism amongst guides, evidence suggests 16% of route cancellations due to non COVID-related guide absence on 21st September – Contractor Route Spreadsheet ► Points were made that recent improvements are starting to be seen around management and roles are becoming clearer

EY

There is currently poor management of **people** within the Travel Assist team, high turnover and high use of interims. This is leading to knowledge gaps and lack of motivation among the team (cont'd)

Category	Our conclusion	What is the impact?
People Organisation design, key roles, responsibilities and target culture	**Assessment: Basic** **Management of people within travel assist is poorly executed** ► Managerial capacity issues has meant that there has been an inadequate ttransfer of knowledge, management and supervision of operational staff team. This has been exacerbated due to frequent changing of roles and over-reliance on interim staff in managerial positions within the TA Team ► There is limited ownership from a managerial perspective in meeting the learning and development needs of staff, even in terms of supporting staff to gain a better understanding of their requirements of the roles and processes they need to undertake to ensure the service is being delivered effectively and there is a consistent level in quality ► Staff are unhappy and demotivated, and whilst there is an acknowledgement of this from the service management, we could not see that there were any steps being taken to remedy this situation **Basic** | *Emerging* *Established* *Advanced* *Leading*	► The lack of managerial support has led to a demotivated workforce without the right skills, knowledge, expertise and in some cases basic understanding of their roles and how this fits into the delivery of the objectives of the service ► This has led to staff under-achieving in terms of the performance that they are expected to be achieving ► The above has resulted in a lack of focus in meeting the needs of the key customers to the services and a lack of collaboration with key delivery partners (e.g. transport providers and guides). This has been a major contributing factor in children and parents not receiving the service they expect and deserve

EY

5.7 Functional processes

Independent Service Review of SEND Home to School Transport

EY

We have found that there is insufficient documentation of functional business **processes,** with no mapping of activity dependencies and risks resulting in confusion of responsibilities and hand offs

Category	What good looks like and what is our evaluation against this?	Stakeholder feedback & evidence
Functional Processes Processes to deliver the service to the customer	**There is a documented efficiency framework in which team members operate in that covers the end to end process covering handling of referrals and understanding needs, commissioning the optimal transport service** We saw a distinct absence of detailed documented processes for key areas in the business, supported by key stakeholder feedback on lack of knowledge and general understanding around processes Basic · Emerging · Established · Advanced · Leading **This framework should ensure quality, define accountability and support successful delivery to meet business outcomes** For the processes that were documented, we saw no evidence of accountability, nor did we see dependency mapping or risk mapping. This was supported by stakeholder feedback For this level of operating model maturity we would expect clear documented processes, with risk and dependency mapping for all areas of the service Basic · Emerging · Established · Advanced · Leading	► Stakeholders describe there to be an absence of a fundamental structure in place around business processes, with no global owners, controls or dependency mapping. We found no evidence of a single map and GPO ► Staff were sometimes unable to talk through detailed areas of their processes during interviews – driving more questions around roles, responsibilities and accountability ► We viewed 4 functional process maps covering: assessments, bus passes, drivers and guides and considered them to be a basic representation of the processes required to deliver an effective service ► Concerns were voiced around the current DBS process. Whilst we have not completed an in-depth forensic audit into this, we have mapped out the current process that was described by BCC staff on page 71. ► Stakeholders describe a lack of documented processes for team the follow (e.g. documented processes around licence and DBS checks on NEAT drivers and escalation paths) ► Staff report that financial management processes are basic and cumbersome to extract the correct data when needed and obtaining value for money has taken a back seat. We found that all finance approvals going through one person, whilst all invoices over £10k required approval from the Assistant Director for the service area. Which could add delay and given the span of control under this individual ► We found there to be an established legal process and statutory process around Home to School appeals: appeals used to be presented to the councillor, however a new policy now means appeals are presented to an officer appeals panel (training for which was given last November). Travel Assist team does not receive instruction on individual cases, nor does it receive information around parents. We heard concerns over parents being unaware of their rights on appeals ► Stakeholders also raised concerns of the assessment and support planning processes being overly invasive and not undertaken in a compassionate but challenging manner. Particularly the need to reapply every year for support even when some children will have life long disabilities

EY

We have found that there is insufficient documentation of functional business **processes,** with no mapping of activity dependencies and risks resulting in confusion of responsibilities and hand offs (cont'd)
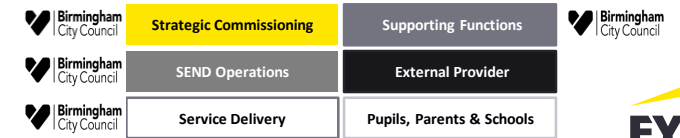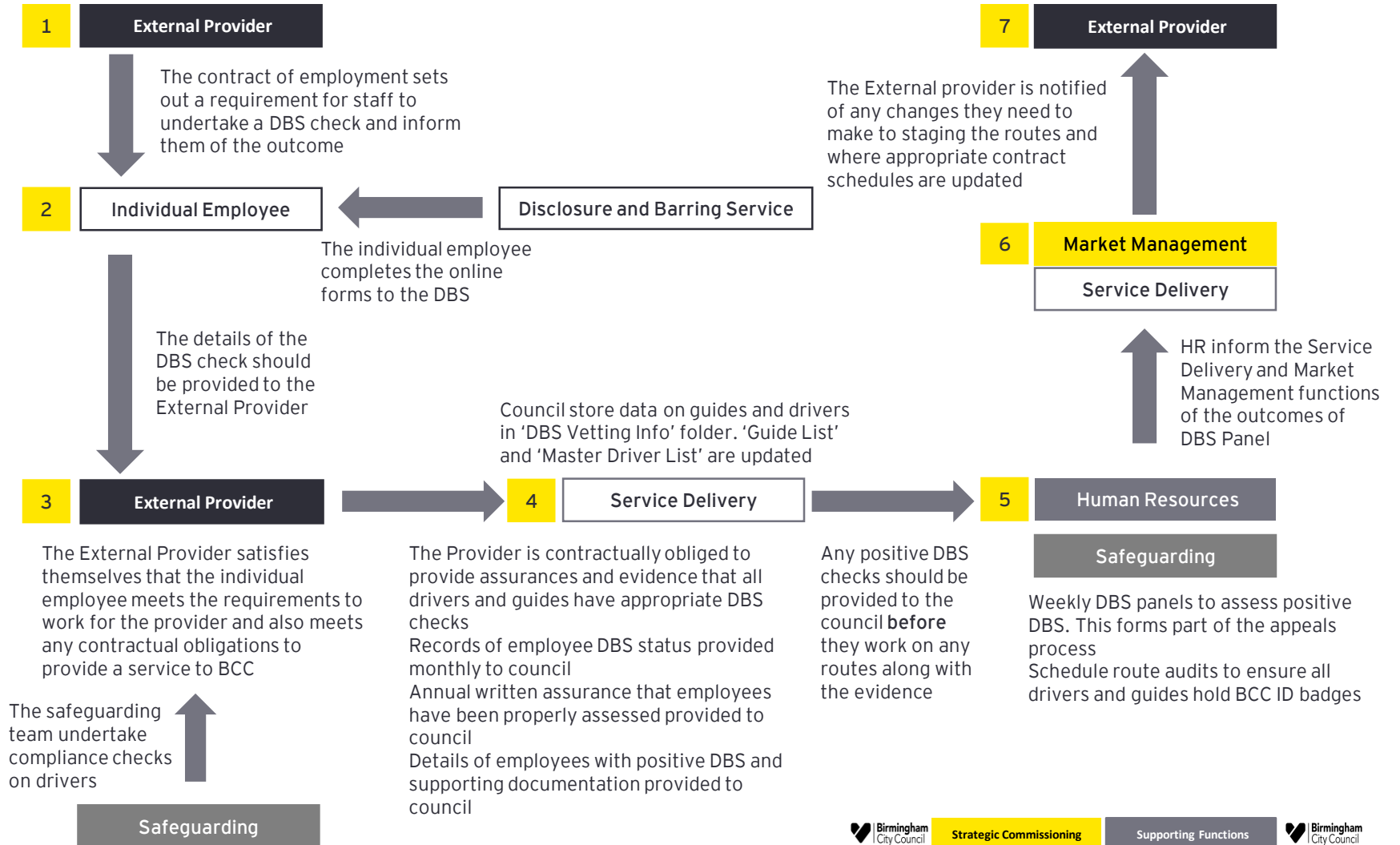
Category	Our conclusion	What is the impact?
Functional Processes Processes to deliver the service to the customer	**Assessment: Basic** **Documentation of processes is insufficient, with no evidence of risk and dependency mapping** ► Structure and owners for business processes are missing with no dependency mapping ► Whilst this maybe happening in practice, there is no evidence of full functional documented processes against financial planning, budgeting and forecasting. Finance reporting during the required cycles were at basic level and did not contain the required information to support the activity outlined above (e.g. payments information to transport providers) Basic Emerging Established Advanced Leading	► A lack of oversight and clear accountability within the processes increased the risk that important tasks and checks fall between teams and are not completed. The lack of an overall accountable officer with the right leadership increases this risk further ► Without structure and ownership of processes, implementation of practices will be poor, with nobody held accountable when things go wrong ► Dependency mapping is needed for clear visibility into all components of Travel Assist services and will aid in risk mitigation. Without this being in place there will be an impact on the consistency of service delivery ► The lack of an appropriate financial management processes and approval hierarchy prioritising can prevent invoice to providers being paid on time, which can impact their business and ► There significant safeguarding risks to children from the poor management and oversight of the DBS checks on drivers (please see following page)

EY

Following findings of insufficient documentation of key processes, we have reviewed the DBS process for DPS providers as we recognise this to be a crucial process to have in place

During our work it has become apparent that the DBS Process has created concerns and problems for the service. We have mapped out what we understand is the process for how DBS Checks should be undertaken by the external providers, how this information should be reported to the City Council, and how the City Council should make decisions and communicate these back to the External Providers.

We have not audited this process to understand if it is being applied in practice and are therefore unable to comment on the details. It is obviously important that the City Council assures itself that all Providers are delivering a safe service and that they are able to monitor and ensure compliance.

The statutory guidance is clear that it is the responsibility of the individual local authority to ensure the suitability of its employees and **any contractors or their employees** by undertaking the required safeguarding checks on those whose work or other involvement will bring them into contact with children, or more widely, vulnerable adults. This should include bus drivers, taxi drivers and escorts, as necessary.

1 External Provider

The contract of employment sets out a requirement for staff to undertake a DBS check and inform them of the outcome

2 Individual Employee ← **Disclosure and Barring Service**

The individual employee completes the online forms to the DBS

The details of the DBS check should be provided to the External Provider

3 External Provider → **4 Service Delivery** → **5 Human Resources**

Safeguarding

Council store data on guides and drivers in 'DBS Vetting Info' folder. 'Guide List' and 'Master Driver List' are updated

The External Provider satisfies themselves that the individual employee meets the requirements to work for the provider and also meets any contractual obligations to provide a service to BCC

The safeguarding team undertake compliance checks on drivers

Safeguarding

The Provider is contractually obliged to provide assurances and evidence that all drivers and guides have appropriate DBS checks
Records of employee DBS status provided monthly to council
Annual written assurance that employees have been properly assessed provided to council
Details of employees with positive DBS and supporting documentation provided to council

Any positive DBS checks should be provided to the council **before** they work on any routes along with the evidence

Weekly DBS panels to assess positive DBS. This forms part of the appeals process
Schedule route audits to ensure all drivers and guides hold BCC ID badges

7 External Provider

The External provider is notified of any changes they need to make to staging the routes and where appropriate contract schedules are updated

6 Market Management

Service Delivery

HR inform the Service Delivery and Market Management functions of the outcomes of DBS Panel

Strategic Commissioning | Supporting Functions
SEND Operations | External Provider
Service Delivery | Pupils, Parents & Schools

5.8 IT Infrastructure

Independent Service Review of SEND Home to School Transport

EY

We found there to be a very basic **IT infrastructure** that is struggling to meet the needs of the business and there is high internal demand for a centralised IT system to support better reporting capability

Category	What good looks like and what is our evaluation against this?	Stakeholder feedback & evidence
IT Infrastructure Technical requirements (system, network and application architecture)	**There is the right digital infrastructure to enable efficient and timely access to the service for parents, carers, schools, and transport providers (including online real time information)** We evidenced the absence of a suitable IT architecture, supported by key stakeholder discussion around a shared-drive based system where timely access is inhibited For this level of operating model maturity we would expect IT infrastructure in which technology is fully leveraged, with use of automated processes for reporting [Basic] Emerging Established Advanced Leading **Transport Management System that correlates passenger information, performance levels and costs, with ability to drill down in on individual and average costs** [Basic] Emerging Established Advanced Leading	**Contract findings** ► The home to school transport service currently uses multiple systems to carry out its basic functions, which has been reported as time consuming and inefficient. Currently in use are: CACI Impulse solution, OLM Eclipse, Capita One, Excel Spreadsheets, Q Routes ► The council are planning to implement a cloud-based 365 system which will report real-time updates on routes, pupils' arrival and departure times, allow parents/guardians to track journeys and will enable the service manager to transform the way routes are planned, delivered and monitored so they remain cost-effective. The new system will be up and running by the end of March 21 **Operating model findings** ► Stakeholders describe that technology has not been leveraged, with only Finance running specialist software (SAP Voyager) and a loose process. This was described as cumbersome and difficult to run any meaningful reporting, with inaccuracies in GL data sometimes cited. Finance will be moving to Oracle 1b ► We found no evidence of an overall IT architecture strategy. Stakeholders describe a shared-drive based file system, with no centralised system, that does not back into any other systems. We found that many processes are still manual (e.g. timesheets) and there is therefore a recognised need among stakeholders for a new IT system, or an increase in manual capacity ► Stakeholders are positive and responsive to the 365 solution, suggesting its implementation is generally well supported throughout the organisation ► We found that performance measurement is minimal with stakeholders describing data being scraped together for monthly management reporting

Independent Service Review of SEND Home to School Transport

EY

We found there to be a very basic **IT infrastructure** that is struggling to meet the needs of the business and there is high internal demand for a centralised IT system to support better reporting capability

Category	Our conclusion	What is the impact?
IT Infrastructure Technical requirements (system, network and application architecture	**Assessment: Basic** **The current IT infrastructure is too basic to meet the needs of the business** ► There is difficulty in accessing and reporting data due to under-utilisation of technology. ► Lack of real-time monitoring of guides and updates on routes ► Finance systems are providing very basic data and analysis Basic · Emerging · Established · Advanced · Leading	► Difficulties in accessing and reporting data increases the likelihood of information asymmetries amongst members of the Travel Assist Team/ service providers/ parents. There is also a high possibility of loss of data if located in a shared drive that is not backed up ► Lack of real-time monitoring leaves parents uninformed if sudden changes or cancellations occur to routes and which could lead to potential safeguarding incidents with children if the above occurs en-route ► Overly-basic finance systems result in a lack of pro-active budget management, which will impede the ability of leadership staff to manage their budget effectively

EY

5.9 Data and reporting

EY

Data reporting is not structured and we have found incidents where poor data handling has led to multiple safeguarding incidents

Category	What good looks like and what is our evaluation against this?	Stakeholder feedback & evidence
Data and Reporting Data required and the way it is managed and reported	**Up to date and accurate flow of information between the service and transport providers, parents and schools to ensure the effective operational delivery of the transport service** We evidenced multiple issues with the standard of data provided by BCC to providers, as supported by comments from key stakeholders We saw a lack of suitable reporting framework, with over-reliance on manual processes, following key stakeholder comments For this level of operating model maturity we would expect utilisation of automated, real-time reporting wherever possible, and use of centralised systems where information is easily accessible [**Basic**] Emerging Established Advanced Leading **KPIs are defined requirements, and performance against these are monitored at regular performance reviews** We saw evidence of weekly monitoring of 7 KPIs, with contractual KPIs reported annually Basic [Emerging] Established Advanced Leading	▶ We found evidence of extensive issues with quality of data passed to providers. Stakeholders describe that providers are thought to have more up to date data than BCC due to being issued with multiple sources (BCC/school/parents). Inconsistencies have led to 7 safeguarding incidents affecting 8 children between 8th and 17th September – Travel Assist Immediate Improvement Actions ▶ We found that the data provided to NEAT in August by BCC was not cleansed and contained errors, leading to high volume of late changes and delays to routes. Encrypted emails made late changes impossible to track, e.g. Brays Tile Cross fist data supply had issues with 25% of their data ▶ Stakeholders describe issues with obtaining data in a timely manner from the Travel Assist team due to the information system currently in place. The majority of data reporting is held within spreadsheets on shared drives and extracting information (on KPIs, compliance checks, DBS checks, guide sickness, etc.) is difficult ▶ We found that there are currently too many paper-based processes, leading to opportunities for human error, with no easy access to information on operational performance in real time, e.g. Paper-based timesheets are currently used by guides ▶ Stakeholders describe a lack of financial reporting by the TA team, leading to issues with budgeting and GL monitoring. We found that there are currently no KPIs in place for data reporting or financial monitoring and "no system, except spreadsheets to manage spend within the service" – 365 Business Case ▶ Stakeholders reported time lags with invoice payments due to poor data and that payments are also based on routes rather than looking at individual contracts. We reviewed payments. However, we saw only one case in which a payment was made more than 30 days from receipt ▶ The 365 solution seeks to address many issues by offering a cloud-based platform for real-time monitoring. However, stakeholders expressed concern that this is being relied upon too heavily as a resolution and that issues with accuracy of data (pupil information, driver/guide information, routing) need addressing for the system to be successful ▶ We reviewed the commissioning plan, which stated that by 2020 there would be financial modelling to enable evaluation of suppliers and opportunities for investing to save – no evidence of this

EY

Data reporting is not structured and we have found incidents where poor data handling has led to multiple safeguarding incidents (cont'd)

Category	Our conclusion	What is the impact?
Data and Reporting Data required and the way it is managed and reported	**Assessment: Basic** **Data reporting is poorly managed** ► Confusion and delays in route planning are a result of data that is poorly reported and is frequently inconsistent with other sources, therefore rendering it unreliable ► Poor data is also responsible for a lack of safeguarding for children – with bubble information and addresses for many unknown. Missing mobile data has resulted in 23 guides being unreachable when at work, leading to further safeguarding concerns `[ Basic ] Emerging Established Advanced Leading`	► Lack of real-time information about a child's whereabouts and destination can lead to increased anxiety for parents and compromise the safety of children, particularly when confidence in the ability of the service to deliver on transport requirements is low ► Poor data issued to providers regarding route sheets can impact their ability to deliver an effective transport service, leading to delays and cancellations which can negatively impact a child's education and the lifestyle of parents due children not being able to travel to school

EY

5.10 Governance and control

EY

We have found that there is a lack of **governance and control** over processes and people within the organisation. Teams are so busy with daily issue handling they are unable to support a structured cadence of meetings and reporting

Category	What good looks like and what is our evaluation against this?	Stakeholder feedback & evidence
Governance and Controls Accountability – how activities are planned and how performance is managed	**There is a robust governance structure in place that supports timely decision making and escalation of key risks and issues, and enables directors and senior managers to ensure the objectives are implemented and accountability is taken for their delivery** We evidenced a lack of of clarity over roles, responsibilities, behaviours and ways of working within Travel Assist, supported by key stakeholder discussions around a lack of governance We evidenced a lack of penalties or fines issued following key stakeholder discussions For this level of operating model maturity we would expect strong governance and control over all processes within the business, with performance and compliance measured regularly and individuals/providers held accountable for failing to meet standards `[Basic]` Emerging Established Advanced Leading **This needs to be supported by the flow of accurate management information to enable effective decisions to be made** We evidenced a lack of effective data reporting and information sharing cadence, supported by stakeholder feedback `[Basic]` Emerging Established Advanced Leading	**Contract findings** ► NEAT's performance is reviewed in monthly meetings which include officers from commissioning, BCC finance, NEAT SLT and Travel Assist. A pack of management information is developed jointly and presented in discussion including service performance data, financials, and mobilisation and project updates. NEAT also holds internal weekly operational reviews and monthly board meetings to review all aspects of their business performance ► Contractual KPIs are reviewed as part of the annual review process ► NEAT stakeholders described there was a strong relationship with E&S commissioning, however continued engagement with Travel Assist has been difficult due to management turnover. **Operating model findings** ► We found that the governance structure in September was not well established, individual teams were running their own meeting cadence but with no reporting or structure that logically flowed from leadership, or appropriate sponsorship from the accountable lead. ► Stakeholders describe a lack of governance within BCC and report a lack of clarity over roles, responsibilities, behaviours and ways of working within Travel Assist ► We have found no record of penalties or fines (the Home to School Dashboard shows no penalty points issued). The dashboard also shows only long-term illness of guides is monitored, with no reference to shorter term absences in KPIs ► We have found that budget management is currently based on a forecasting spreadsheet, and acknowledge this is a simplistic view of spend, based heavily on assumptions ► The 2019 audit report stated a lack of quality assurance checks against providers, however we have found there has been recent appointment of an interim senior compliance officer and daily compliance checks are now completed, covering 66 routes from 25th September to 8th October – SITREP Reports

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EY

We have found that there is a lack of **governance and control** over processes and people within the organisation. Teams are so busy with daily issue handling they are unable to support a structured cadence of meetings and reporting (cont'd)

Category	Our conclusion	What is the impact?
Governance and Controls Accountability – how activities are planned and how performance is managed	Assessment: Basic **Governance and control over processes is insufficient across the service** ► There is an overall poor understanding of responsibilities and what the appropriate governance and oversight should be to allow leadership to have the confidence and assurance that the service is performing well and safely ► Complaints are currently not being dealt with efficiently or effectively, often outside the timelines of complaints handling data ► Procurement standards are currently set at DPS minimum and need reviewing to increase quality of services received [Basic] Emerging Established Advanced Leading	► Poor understanding of responsibilities can result in sub-standard completion of tasks and activities with nobody held accountable within Travel Assist ► Lack of penalties and fines mean providers are not held accountable for shortcomings and are not deterred from continuing any bad practices in future – detailed quality assurance checks are needed to ensure providers meet required standards and to promote safeguarding of children ► Poor handling of complaints leads to dissatisfaction of service users and weakens confidence in the service ► The lack of governance and controls, and accountable leadership and oversight, underpinned by robust and timely information, means that the leadership cannot be assured that their teams and transport providers are delivering a safe and high performing service to pupils and families. This also prevents the leadership and management of the service from making effective and timely decisions to resolve problems and issues as they arise

EY

The following areas have been identified during our **contract assessment** as key focus areas

Terms	Evidence	Our observations	What is the Impact?
Contract management	► The contract details a three phased approach to managing performance, i.e., Rectification Notice, Default Notice and a Second Default Notice ► The contract establishes a penalty point system which can be applied to the providers should performance fall below a certain level.	► We found strong procedures detailed in the contract in order to remedy inadequate performance. ► However, stakeholders describe a perceived absence of rectification or default notices issued to suppliers, by BCC when performance does fall below the level set out in the contract.	► Lack of accountability with regards to performance ► Children's education is negatively affected by cancellations and route closures, despite this providers are not being penalised for unsatisfactory performance ► Risk of reputational damage to the council if there are high numbers of complaints
Contract pricing	► The contract adheres to the pricing schedule detailed in the First Schedule Part Five – block monthly payments. Both parties agreed an annual contract value then divided by 12 to reach their monthly invoice total.	► We have not seen any evidence that adjustments were made for changes to the services, i.e. number of routes operated through COVID and that these were captured in change notices by BCC	► Finance systems are providing very basic data and analysis resulting in a lack of pro-active invoice management
Pupil guides	► Pupil guides are allocated to routes by the Travel Assist team. The provider is responsible for collecting the pupil guide before the service user they are required to supervise ► There are currently 387 permanent with an additional 200 agency guides added as a result of COVID-19 and 113 relief guides within the home to school service	► Stakeholders describe that previous contractors had employed guides themselves at one school and this arrangement continued with the new suppliers ► However, we found that a majority of suppliers have recurring issues with guides that contribute towards delayed or cancelled routes	► There are too many methods in place for employing and managing guides, with data held by different parties
Change management	► The council may issue a request by completing and submitting a Variation Request Form to the Provider for a Variation to the contract.	► We saw no formally recorded evidence for change changes that were agreed, and only one example of a change management process in place ► In response to COVID-19, an additional 181 daily routes were identified to be delivered but we saw no evidence of variation to the contract	► Poor documentation of change management processes prevents seamless adoption of new processes and leads to confusion over roles and responsibilities
Key performance indicators	► There are 10 KPIs outlined in the contract covering vehicles, staff, risk assessment, routes and the Birmingham Business Charter for Social Responsibility ► Where both parties agree (acting reasonably) that performance is affected by circumstances outside of the provider's control these incidents will not contribute to any breach of this agreement or service failure	► The evidence we saw indicated that providers remain on target against their contractual KPIs (<5%) with a cancellation rate of 4.1% from 3rd September to 18th September	► Provider may not be held accountable for poor performance if it is due to extenuating circumstances or sits within their KPI requirements

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EY

5.11 Conclusion and recommendations

EY

Conclusion and recommendations

Through our independent service review of the current operating model we have identified a series of areas where improvements are required.

Areas that represent a more fundamental cause for concern, and are the underlying cause of service failing to meet expectations in September, are set out to the right. To address these in a sustainable way, we recommend that a new operating model is implemented across the service that clearly defines the three main roles referenced earlier in our report (Strategic Commissioning, SEND Operations and Transport Provision).

Within Section 6 of this report we have set out three options for a new operating model that will address these concerns, and in doing so deliver the recommendations that we have set out to the right. The recommendations have not included those that address the short term (such as improving safety for the transport of children), as these are already consolidated into the 'Immediate Fixes Plan' which is being managed and governed.

Within section 7 of this report, we set out the programme management approach along with a series of recommendations for how the programme should be established to succeed. Pages 105–111 cover a more detailed look at implementation of the immediate fixes plan, whilst pages 112–121 cover implementation of a new operating model, to address the underlying causes of service failure.

Operating Model Component		Recommendation
Vision and Purpose	1.1	► Codesign a new vision with parents and schools that focuses on the pupil and promotes independence
Customer and Channels	2.1	► Redesign the needs assessment and support planning engagement approach to focus to parents, pupils and schools whilst appropriately managing demand
	2.2	► Implement a new approach to communicating changes to route information and real-time updates when routes are delayed or cancelled
Service Delivery Model	3.1	► Clarify roles and accountabilities of the strategic commissioning team
	3.2	► Set up a new integrated approach to the provision of transport services
	3.3	► Clarify roles and accountabilities of the contract and commercial functions
People	4.1	► Across all functions review the capacity and capability required and implement plans to increase as required
Functional Processes	5.1	► Ensure that there is an overall process map that is designed from the view of a pupil. This should clearly show accountabilities across BCC, Schools and suppliers. Challenge / assure the individual process maps (see below)
	5.2	► Develop detailed process maps for each step of the transport provision including how calls are handled, the transfer to pupils to home / schools and what to do in an emergency, and how the council can receive assurance on the DBS checks of drivers
IT Infrastructure	6.1	► Implement a route mapping system that allows routes to be effectively planned with suppliers and real-time communications dealt with (e.g. where is my bus?)
Data and Reporting	7.1	► Implement a database that tracks the needs and support plans of all pupils with SEND, and make sure accurate and timely data is being provided from other services to manage the overall system
	7.2	► Implement a new set of PIs and a data management system to effectively manage the delivery of transport and intervene where appropriate quickly
Governance and Controls	8.1	► Design effective governance that allows the transport service independence to deliver but also holds them accountable

EY

The scale of change is significant, therefore consideration was given to how the improvements could be achieved

To the deliver sustainable improvements to the service, consideration was given to implementing a new operating model for the service. The capability and change approach to deliver the required transformation, as well as the programme of activity to ensure this is delivered by start of the next school year in September 2021 were also considered. These four elements are summarised below and further detailed in sections 6 & 7.

Key consideration	Description
1. Future operating model	We have identified three options for an improved or new operating model that we detail on pages 92-102, regarding how the various elements of the system would be delivered in each of the three options. These options include: 1) Improve and Enhance the Current Operating Model, 2) Delegate the Transport Provision to Schools, and 3) Implement an IPTU for Transport Provision. We have assessed each of the potential options available to BCC against our critical success factor framework and future state design principles to ensure alignment of the future state model to BCC's strategic objectives.
2. Capability assessment	We set out the six factors that outline the required capabilities that need to be present within the service and wider Council, for the new operating model to be successfully implemented and the changes to ways of work embedded into the council. These capability factors included the following: 1) Senior Management Leadership 2) Financial 3) Delivery 4) Management of issues, risks and dependencies 5) Design 6) Change Management.
3. Change approach	We have outlined two options for a change approach that would address the systemic root causes that have been identified and deliver the required transformation for the service to the new operating model. The first option considers an approach where the programme is established through the existing structures, capability and capacity that is used to manage and drive towards the new operating model. The second option considers whether establishing three new programmes that would integrate into the wider portfolio of change across BCC, would manage and drive the changes more effectively. Our assessment these options and recommended approach is summarised on page 117.
4. High level roadmap	We have outlined a high level implementation plan that maps out the required activity to ensure that the immediate fixes to the services, required to stabilise the service, are in place so that there is not a repeat in poor performance at the beginning of the term in January 2021. In addition, in line with recommendations made from the current assessment, we have outlined the activity required to further enhance the service and deliver the new operating model and associated transformational change by the start of the new school year in September 2021.

EY

Next and beyond

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EY

We have outlined the options available to Birmingham City Council and listed the benefits to be achieved by a change in model

In this section we consider three operating model options that are available to Birmingham City Council that require fundamental change and will address the issues we have raised in this report. We outline our approach to assessing these three options against 10 design principles that align with Birmingham City Council's vision statement and produce a recommendation based on suitability for implementation. The three options are as follows:

1. Improve and enhance the current operating model	2. Delegate the transport provision to schools	3. Implement an IPTU for transport

We have identified a number of high-level benefits, beyond addressing current issues, that we anticipate will be achieved by moving towards a new model and instigating a fundamental change. These are articulated below:

Organisational flexibility and accountability
► An integrated approach allows the organisation to be more flexible, services to be better integrated, improved asset utilisation and a systems-wide approach to costs
► Improving and clarifying accountability across the service including roles and responsibilities
► Greater use of capability to focus on key areas (e.g. contract management) with the leadership and management required

Future proofing
► Collaborative, integrated working supports the organisation to take a systems view and to future-proof itself – better understanding and responding to future needs, and using resources more effectively across the whole system
► Strengthening the community and commercial transport market share in the Mixed Economy Delivery Model supports the move towards personalised budgets, and the future-proofing in this context

Value for money
► Potential to improve value for money through:
► Greater integration and utilisation
► Reducing duplication of roles across services
► Modal shift and recommissioning to lower cost options

Utilisation
► Potential to improve utilisation of vehicles through improved operational practice and an integrated approach, supported by increasingly available demand responsive opportunities
► Potential to improve utilisation of personal assistants and guides through changes to terms and conditions

Decision making
► Clear plans, performance measures, data and insight are essential to support effective commissioning and operational decision-making.
► These are not in place across the whole service and are a key gap that needs to be addressed

Control of risk
► Models have associated risks – changing models offer an opportunity to control the level of risk, including: asset ownership, vulnerability to demand changes and possibility of market failure

Culture
► An integrated approach helps to embed the council's 'One Team' values
► Virtual teams realise the benefits of collaborating on service-user-centric commissioning (whole care package) and integrated transport commissioning and delivery

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Overview of three options for a new operating model

We have identified three options for an improved or new operating model that we have summarised below, and expanded on in pages 92-102. In the diagram below, we have summarised how the various elements of the system would be delivered in each of the three options. The elements highlighted in red represent variations from the current operating model.

Option 1 Improve and Enhance the Current Operating Model — This would not change the structures of the current operating model but would focus on developing the underlying systems, processes and capabilities to improve performance

Option 2 Delegate the Transport Provision to Schools — In the second option, responsibility and budgets for transporting children would be delegated to schools, with support provided from BCC for procurement of vehicles where required.

Option 3 Implement an IPTU for Transport Provision — The final option would change the structures of the operating model as well as the systems, capabilities and processes. This would focus on developing a new Integrated Passenger Transport Unit (IPTU) who could manage and deliver all passenger transport across BCC

	(1) Strategic commissioning policy and strategy	(1) Strategic commissioning market management	(1) Strategic commissioning safeguarding	(2) Needs assessment capability	(2) Support planning function	(3) Provision of transport services	(3) Provision of other types of travel assistance
Option 1 Improve and enhance the current operating model	E&S Commissioning Team	Lead: E&S Commissioning Team	Lead: Travel Assist Compliance Team and Children's Safeguarding	Lead: SEND Operations	Lead: Travel Assist Team	Lead: Travel Assist Team	Lead: Travel Assist Team
Option 2 Delegate the transport provision to schools	E&S Commissioning Team	Lead: E&S Commissioning Team	Lead: Travel Assist Compliance Team and Children's Safeguarding	Lead: SEND Operations	Lead: SEND Operations	Lead: Schools	Lead: Schools
Option 3 Implement an IPTU for transport provision	E&S Commissioning Team	Lead: IPTU	Lead: Travel Assist Compliance Team and Children's Safeguarding	Lead: SEND Operations	Lead: SEND Operations	Lead: IPTU	Lead: Travel Assist Team

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6.1 Our approach to assessment of options

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We have drawn upon the vision, strategic objectives and statutory requirements to develop 10 design principles

In order to assess the three options against a clear framework, we have co-developed a series of 10 design principles with you that are set out on the next page.

In developing these design principles, we drew upon three components of what currently sets the strategic direction for the services:

1. The Vision Statement for the overall City Council

2. The Key outcomes for the City Council; and

3. The statutory requirementss for a local authority to deliver a safe and effective SEND transport service

These are set out to the right.

Birmingham City Council Vision Statement

'We aim to be a city of growth where **every child, citizen and place matters** – and Birmingham City Council wants to **make a positive difference**, **every day, to people's lives**. This underpins everything we do, whether that's setting our priorities, making decisions or delivering services.'

Key outcomes will be based on the strategic objectives of Birmingham City Council

1. **Prevention** – redirecting our energies and resources into working with communities to stop problems developing and reducing dependency

2. **Targeting** – protecting and nurturing vulnerable people, and addressing the needs of disadvantaged communities in the city. We call this 'closing the gap' between different sections of the city, in terms of issues like prosperity, safety, health, education, and social and digital exclusion

3. **Personalisation** – ensuring we tailor our services to people's needs

4. **Sustainable development** – improving the quality of life of our citizens and achieving a sustainable economy whilst living within our environmental limits

... and also based on the statutory requirements of SEND transport in local authorities

► An audit of the sustainable travel and transport infrastructure within the authority's area that may be used when travelling to and from, or between schools / institutions;

► A strategy to develop the sustainable travel and transport infrastructure within the authority so that the travel and transport needs of children and young people are best catered for;

► The promotion of sustainable travel and transport modes on the journey to, from, and between schools and other institutions;

► The publication of Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy

EY

We have developed a set of design principles and outcomes that clearly link to the vision statement of BCC

During the service review, it became apparent that although pockets of strategic work had been carried out and implemented by BCC, e.g. IT and Commissioning, the service was lacking a set of design principles that were in harmony with the strategic principles of BCC, and the vision for the provision of SEND services in general. We constructed a set of design principles that will propel the creation of the new service operating model and provide clear strategic direction.

We have developed a set of design principles that aim to meet the strategic objectives and vision of BCC…

DP1: We will provide **cost effective transport solutions** to support eligible children in Birmingham, and promote child independence

DP2: We will work **collaboratively with key partners,** both internally and externally, to deliver a better service

DP3: We will ensure **safe, good quality and timely transport services** are provided to children in Birmingham

DP4: We will ensure the service will establish and build on **key strategic relationships** with transport providers to increase the value returned to BCC

DP5: We will ensure the **objectives of the service** and the outcomes delivered are aligned to **the council's wider corporate plan**

DP6: We will ensure the service operates within the council's overall financial and budgetary context

DP7: We will provide transport that is environmentally sustainable and optimises use of green fuels and energy

DP8: We will manage risks to mitigate impacts to both the council and service users

DP9: We will utilise technology to maximise quality and efficiency of key activities

DP10: We will work with disadvantaged communities, with emphasis on prevention, to manage demand and promote a sustainable future outlook

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We have reviewed the 3 options against our critical success factors and design principles

We assessed each of the potential options available to BCC against our critical success factor framework and future state design principles to ensure alignment of the future state model to BCC's strategic objectives

1. Assess first to determine strategy viability

Option 1
Improve and Enhance the Current Operating Model

Option 2
Delegate the Transport Provision to Schools

Option 3
Implement an IPTU for Transport Provision

2. Strategic options assessed using 1st Level Assessment Criteria

Assessment of options against design principles

DP1: We will provide **cost effective transport solutions** to support eligible children in Birmingham, and promote child independence

DP2: We will work **collaboratively with key partners,** both internally and externally, to deliver a better service

DP3: We will ensure **safe, good quality and timely transport services** are provided to children in Birmingham

DP4: We will ensure the service will establish and build on **key strategic relationships** with transport providers to increase the value returned to BCC

DP5: We will ensure the **objectives of the service** and the outcomes delivered are aligned to **the council's wider corporate plan**

DP6: We will ensure the service operates within the council's overall financial and budgetary context

DP7: We will provide transport that is environmentally sustainable and optimises use of green fuels and energy

DP8: We will manage risks to mitigate impacts to both the council and service users

DP9: We will utilise technology to maximise quality and efficiency of key activities

DP10: We will work with disadvantaged communities, with emphasis on prevention, to manage demand and promote a sustainable future outlook

3. Shortlisted options appraisal and implementation consideration

Shortlist of viable strategic options

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6.2 Option 1: Improved Service within current Travel Assist operating model

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EY

Key

Color	Meaning
🟥	Does not support design principle
🟧	Partially supports design principle
🟩	Fully supports design principle

Category	Description	Advantages
Option 1: Improved service within current Travel Assist operating model	► Continue as is with only the implementation of the immediate fixes plan. BCC continues to run the service in the current format with disparate processes, resources and data to support ► Commissioning, procurement and transport managing services will all continue to be delivered in the same manner, with little integration and little performance management ► CPMO retain performance monitoring and risk management ► Capability and capacity issues would continue with demand spikes creating added stress into the service	► Retains the current resource profile with a focus on the immediate fixes ► Shorter implementation time, reduced transition costs and resources ► Commercial arrangement with providers will not be significantly disrupted

Assessment	Disadvantages
The current service has demonstrated that with some focus on immediate fixes it is possible to see a short term improvement. This does not address the fundamental structural issues and would eventually see a return of the same issues and causal factors over time, giving a rise in complaints around the service.	► End to end processes not clearly owned and dependencies not understood or mapped in detail ► No clear communications strategy to manage internal / external stakeholders ► Emphasis on DPS to act as a minimum service standard for 16 providers, NEAT continue to operate on a legacy contract with no minimum performance management standards ► No prioritisation of enquiries into the service creating stress on current resource and service ► Very basic data architecture that is highly manual and difficult to extract meaningful insights from ► No clear customer journey

RAG count

🟥	3
🟧	7
🟩	0

Assessment: This option remains largely partially or not supporting all of the design principles of the service

Qualitative assessment

DP	Principle	Description
DP1	Cost Effective Transport	Proactive approach required around managing demand
DP2	Collaborative Working with Key Partners	Improved communications with key partners
DP3	Safe, Quality, Timely Transport	Key focus is on immediate fixes
DP4	Strategic Relationships	Stabilisation of current relationships
DP5	Corporate Plan	Improves links to wider corporate plan

Qualitative assessment

DP	Principle	Description
DP6	Financial and Budgetary Context	Re-baseline financial position and more detailed budgeting and forecasting
DP7	Environmentally Sustainable	Maximise current contracted arrangements
DP8	Risk Management	More proactive control and prioritisation of current risks. Improvements required in regards to contract management
DP9	Technology	Implement quick fixes to enhance how data and technology is supporting the service
DP10	Prevention	Closer monitoring of pupil safeguarding

EY

6.3 Option 2: Delegate to Schools

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EY

Assessment of the model options – Option 2: Delegate transport provision to schools

Category	Description	Advantages
Option 2: Delegate transport provision to schools	► BCC would continue to deliver the eligibility needs assessment and support planning functions of the service due to statutory responsibilities ► Commissioning, procurement and managing transport services (including guides and personal assistants) will be delivered by schools either in silos or through a shared service. The council will devolve the budget for this to schools ► Schools will also need to contract manage providers, monitor performance and undertake risk management related to the service ► Given the council's statutory responsibilities, BCC will need to be accountable for delivery of the service and monitor compliance	► Schools who have the most contact with pupils and the best understanding of their needs and strengths will be in charge of commissioning services for them ► Issues around schools being involved in effective planning for their students and communications regarding route changes and delays will be minimised, as schools will be overseeing the management and delivery of transport services. Schools also have more frequent communications with parents, which may be more conducive to joint planning and effective communications

Assessment		Disadvantages
Delegating to schools will bring practical challenges around capability and capacity to commission, procure, plan and manage transport services, given the lack of experience that school's have in doing this. In addition the disaggregation of the service will lead to challenges around assurance for the council that transport is delivered in line with statutory duties, which the council is accountable for	**RAG count** |	
---	---
	7
	3
	0 | **Assessment:** This option does not support the future design principles for the service, and would be very complex to implement with no real perceived benefit.	► Will increase fragmentation of the end to process for the provision of transport services ► Schools lack the necessary experience and capability in terms of strategic commissioning, procurement, contract management and transport logistic planning and management ► Increased complexity around performance monitoring and compliance due to schools not being accountable for meeting statutory duties regarding home to school transport ► Increased administrative burden for schools, which could detract from their primary function ► Schools are not set up in same way as councils, particularly in regards to the level of provision of support services (e.g. legal, finance, HR, ICT) which may hinder the efficient delivery of the service ► Given the significant change in how the transport service would be provided, this delivery option will require a longer implementation time, which will probably go beyond the start of the new school year in 2021

Qualitative assessment

DP1	Cost Effective Transport	Schools lack skills and expertise around effective procurement of transport services. Services maybe better aligned to needs
DP2	Collaborative Working with Key Partners	School have already worked with all the key stakeholders involved in the transport service, but not in regards to delivery
DP3	Safe, Quality, Timely Transport	Schools do not have the required expertise around transport logistic planning and management
DP4	Strategic Relationships	Schools have not built key strategic relationships with transport suppliers
DP5	Corporate Plan	Potential weaker linkages to the corporate due to there being less control over service delivery

Qualitative assessment

DP6	Financial and Budgetary Context	Less control over spend, as budgets would potentially be devolved to schools to manage
DP7	Environmentally Sustainable	Potential for misalignment with the council's environmental sustainability plans as Schools will be commissioning transport
DP8	Risk Management	Schools may not have the required skills to manage and mitigate all risks related to the delivery of transport services
DP9	Technology	Schools will potentially not have access to the same level and capability regarding staff and infrastructure related to IT
DP10	Prevention	Transport services could be commissioned more in line with pupils' needs, although potential for there to be more risk aversion when commissioning services.

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6.4 Option 3: Transformation programme – IPTU

Independent Service Review of SEND Home to School Transport

What does a typical IPTU look like?

A number of councils have developed Integrated Passenger Transport Units that include more closely integrated commissioning, procurement and delivery functions. This model has been developed further in a small number of councils to include transport policy functions. An IPTU provides stronger emphasis on business units, with commissioning and delivery plans, KPIs, unit cost data and clear performance management arrangements. Below and in the diagram to the right, we summarise what an IPTU could look like for Birmingham

Headline of option

► Forming an integrated transport unit to coordinate all directorates involved in transport and fleet services. The organisation and purpose of which depends on the level of maturity of IPTU implemented:
► Low maturity – brings together commissioning and procurement within an organisation, staff are brought together under one team structure and permanently relocated
► High maturity – brings policy, commissioning and procurement together, develops a team with a shared plan to deliver shared outcomes by co-locating some of the time, and using IT infrastructure while maintaining existing line management arrangements

Summary of opportunity

► Improve collaboration and joint working, which will deliver improved outcomes for service users and the delivery of savings, as well as better asset utilisation
► Collaborating is likely to enhance the understanding of options available and promote independent choice for service users
► Reducing duplication of roles
► Sharing skills, capability, experience and information. More conducive to effective business planning and innovation
► For more mature models, the policy of the council is more likely to be informed by insight and intelligence from a range of service areas

Services within scope

► Consideration should be given to the breadth of services that should form the IPTU. These could be as simple as place for commissioning all passenger (buses, taxis) across BCC (e.g., Adult Social Care Transport), through to building a mixed economy approach that commission and manage all vehicles on behalf of BCC (including some outsourced provision)

Summary of risks

► Current working arrangements are siloed, which may hinder the collaboration and integration required to develop this service model
► Risk to staff morale from the uncertainty that maybe caused from restructuring the service
► Risk that councils IT infrastructure will not support the easy integration of systems, with expensive and time consuming implementation

Capabilities within the IPTU

Provision of Services

Services Within IPTU

- ASC Transport
- SEND Transport
- Community Transport
- Street Vehicles

Route Planning · Communication · Contract and Commercial · Data Analytics · Procurement · Operational Management · In House Vehicle Providers · External Vehicle Providers · Vehicle Maintenance · Taxis
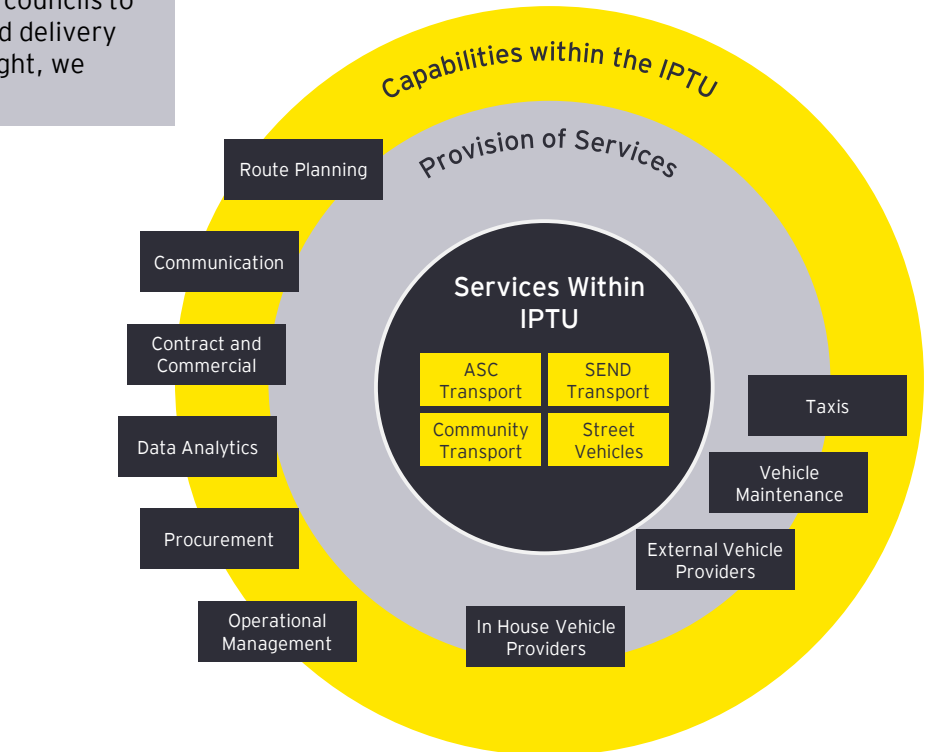
Implementation timescale

► Mature – 6 months initially with a longer timescale required to meet IT and winder infrastructure requirements
► Immature – 6 months existing changes give possibility of quicker organisational changes

EY

Key

Color	Meaning
Red	Does not support design principle
Orange	Partially supports design principle
Green	Fully supports design principle

Category	Description	Advantages
Option 3: Transformation Programme – IPTU	► The option of a multi-programme transformation portfolio gives transformation activities focussed on the key issues and structural problems that the service is experiencing ► A clear customised programme of activity on: strategic commissioning, assessment and support planning function, design of the IPTU, and skills and supporting functions including contracts/ commercial would be implemented with ownership and PMO management ► Ongoing running and monitoring of the service will have greater governance and control and feed in intelligence from the wider IPTU review	► Connected work packages that more easily align to a corporate transformation approach ► Service compliance and regulatory adherence monitored and checked against wider IPTU requirements ► Defined roles and responsibilities ► Quality minimum standards against all providers that are consistent and managed ► Ability to 'sweat' assets and maximise utilisation and potential income generation ► Will provide the right capability, knowledge and expertise to plan logistics and manage transport services ► Improved contract management, supplier relationship management and commerciality

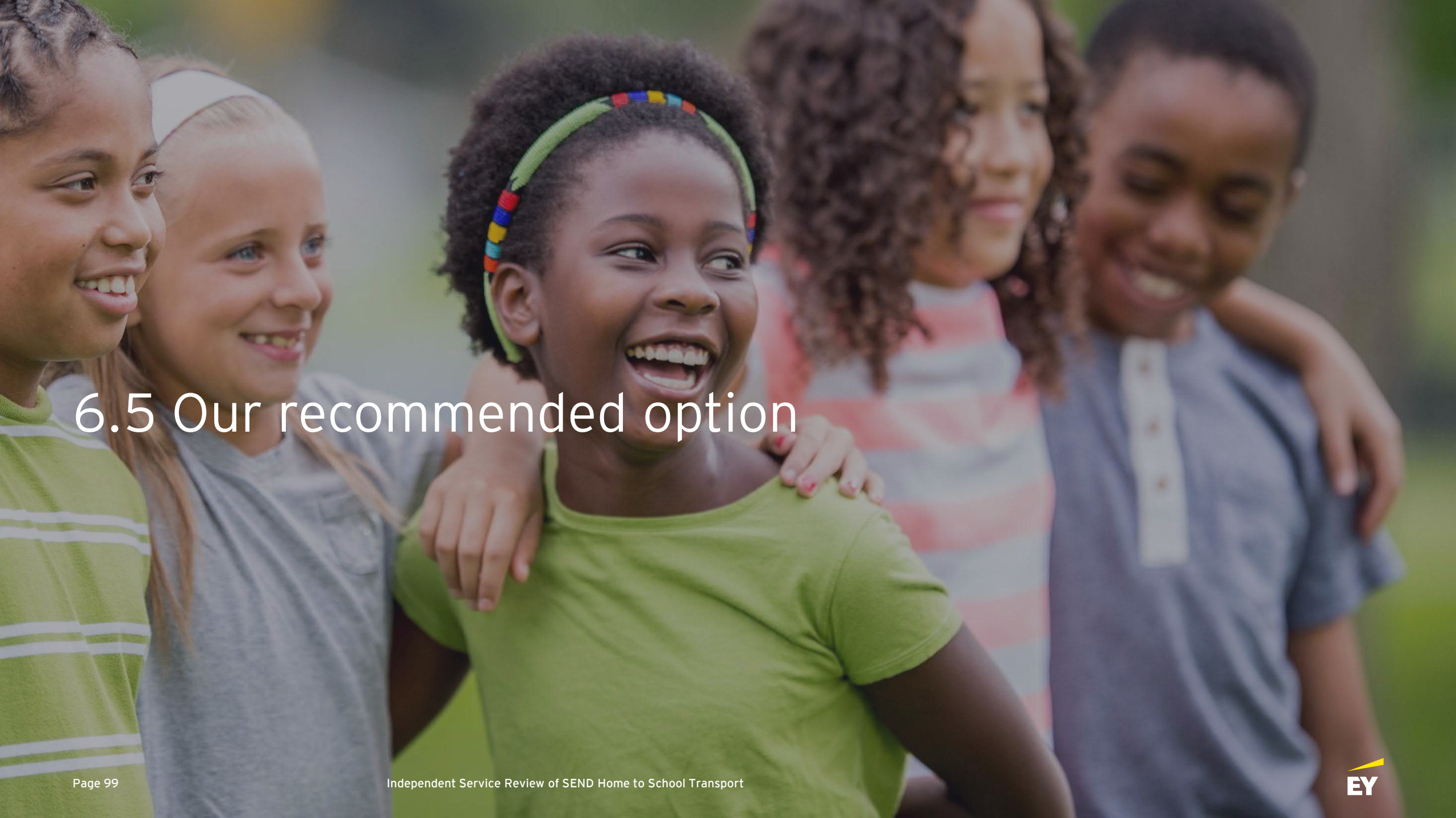| Assessment	Disadvantages
Current preferred option and based on evidence and analysis would be the most efficient way to stabilise and improve the service in the longer term towards a leading practice service. **RAG count** Red: 0 Orange: 4 Green: 6 **Assessment:** This option would be designed and structured around the design principles. Environmental sustainability and technology architecture would evolve over time.	► Additional time and resources will be required in the near-term to stabilise the service ► Potential lengthy implementation, that may mean the new service might not be fully operational by the start of the new school year in 2021 ► Needs assessment, and support planning would sit in a different service area to the transport logistic planning and management, which if not managed properly may lead to misalignment between needs and provision, as well as limited focus on prevention ► New relationships with providers will need to be formed which could create disruption

Qualitative assessment

DP	Principle	Description
DP1	Cost Effective Transport	Fully costed and optimised fleet and service contracts. Need to ensure transport solutions promote independence
DP2	Collaborative Working with Key Partners	Integrated partnerships that develop and deliver mutual benefit
DP3	Safe, Quality, Timely Transport	Active performance management in tune with daily priorities for the service that are responsive
DP4	Strategic Relationships	Co-development of key strategic relationships for new service model
DP5	Corporate Plan	Team activities fully mapped to wider corporate plan

Qualitative assessment

DP	Principle	Description
DP6	Financial and Budgetary Context	Full financial planning, budgeting and forecasting
DP7	Environmentally Sustainable	Maximises operational and fleet sustainability
DP8	Risk Management	Risk matrix mapped, owned and managed by new teams. Will need to align safeguarding measures
DP9	Technology	New technology and data architecture that supports real time MI reporting
DP10	Prevention	Need to develop an approach to demand management and promoting independence

EY

6.5 Our recommended option

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	DP1 Cost effective transport solutions promoting independence	DP2 Works collaboratively with key partners both internal and external	DP3 Safe, good quality and timely transport services are provided to children in Birmingham	DP4 Effective approach to market management and drives value from establishing key strategic relationships	DP5 Contribute to the council's wider corporate plan	DP6 Provides value for money/operates in Council's overall budgetary context	Status	Overall Comments
Option 1: Improved service within current Travel Assist operating model	🔴 Proactive approach required towards managing demand and driving value from the current market	🟠 More focus towards external collaborative relationships, need for more internal accountability to build relationships	🟠 Sustainable improvements required around contract and performance management and quality assurance	🔴 Council has resources available to effectively manage policy, commissioning, and procurement	🟠 Internal service so potential for achieving wider strategic goals, however external providers may not align with these objectives	🔴 Budget requires effective monitoring, forecasting and control	🟠 Consider	▶ This option would deliver more value against budgetary commitments, but only if sourced correctly and to budget. Better performance management would mean more control over VFM and, with the need to leverage specialists within transport, it would also develop the council's strategic commissioning, procurement and contract relationships. It would be a more expensive option and would need to be fully costed and understood.
Option 2: Delegate transport provision to schools	🟠 Schools have a lack of experience around strategic procurement. Services may be better aligned to needs	🟠 Schools lack experience in working with partners to deliver transport services	🔴 School do not have the experience, knowledge or capability to run logistics and planning related to a transport service	🔴 School have not built key strategic relationships with suppliers or experience of managing a market of transport suppliers	🔴 Potential for misalignment due to disaggregation of the transport function and outsourcing to schools	🔴 Less control over spend. Could lead to issues around budget management and potential overspend	🔴 Reject	▶ This option would not be viable due to the experience, knowledge and capability that schools have to commission, procure, plan and deliver transport services. Whilst schools would be best placed to understand the needs of pupils, they have not built the required strategic relationships with suppliers to drive value from the market. Delegating budget management responsibilities would reduce control.
Option 3: Transformation Programme – IPTU (Preferred option)	🟠 Utilises clear delivery model to deliver solutions cost effectively. However, need to ensure alignment to needs	🟢 Leverages both internal and external partners and drives clear and distinct ownership	🟢 Proven model that is delivering leading practice service elsewhere	🟢 Brings policy, commissioning and procurement together	🟢 Develops a team with a shared plan to deliver shared outcomes	🟢 Budget can sit in one area for better monitoring and management	🟢 Accept	▶ This option would leverage the best value for money to BCC and deliver robustly against your strategic objectives. Commissioning, procurement and policy would all be brought together leveraging leading practice technology and performance management. This option would involve considerations on where budgets, that currently sit across different directorates, sit in future.

Status key: 🟢 Fully meets requirement 🟠 Partially meets requirement 🔴 Does not meet requirement

We have reviewed the potential future state options against the key design principles and rated their suitability for implementation – Option 3 has been selected as the preferred option

	DP7: We will provide transport that is environmentally sustainable and optimises use of green fuels and energy	DP8: We will manage risks to mitigate impacts to both the council and service users	DP9: We will utilise technology to maximise quality and efficiency of key activities	DP10: We will work with disadvantaged communities, with emphasis on prevention to manage demand and promote a sustainable future outlook	Status	Overall Comments
Option 1: Improved service within current Travel Assist operating model	Current outsourced fleet not optimised for fuels or sustainable transport	Substantial improvements required to pro-active risk management and mitigation	No consistent IT architecture or strategy and current IT is not meeting the current business need	Demand shifts are increasing stress on the current service and not being handled effectively	Consider	► This option would result in difficulties in implementing more sustainable fleet transport or fuels, and likely to continue the reactive risk profile that is not being properly managed. Current IT architecture is immature and not enabling the necessary management information and reporting to help manage the service at an acceptable level.
Option 2: Delegate transport provision to schools	Increased potential for misalignment with the council's plans for sustainability	Increased lack of control for the around risk management and mitigation. Due to substantial change in the delivery model, this may lead to an increased likelihood of risks occurring	Lack the required capability and infrastructure for delivering the required digital shift.	Potential for better alignment with pupils needs. However there could be a risk averse approach taken to commissioning transport solutions.	Reject	► This option would not provide the required skills, knowledge capability to effectively manage risks, and deliver a digitally transformed service. Delegation of the function may lead to a misalignment with the council's overarching plan and approach to environmental sustainability. Whilst schools will have the best working knowledge of pupils' needs, there is potential for this to lead to a risk averse approach in commissioning transport services, which may be detrimental to their future independence.
Option 3: Transformation Programme – IPTU (Preferred option)	New service would look to develop a sustainable energy and fuels plan	CPMO structure would provide active risk management	A structured technology architecture that enables insightful reporting	Developing key stakeholder relationship into optimised partnerships	Accept	► This is the preferred option and one that will look to implement a coherent single approach to the service, with a discrete programme of activity that can be centrally managed. The service will move towards a leading practice service.

Status key: ● Fully meets requirement ● Partially meets requirement ● Does not meet requirement

EY

Conclusion and Recommendation

We have assessed the 3 future delivery options for the service against the 10 design principles, and a summary of the resulting outcomes is detailed below:

1. **Improve the current operating model:** The operating model is currently going through an immediate fixes programme to ensure the service reaches an adequate standard. However, there are systemic challenges that need to be addressed to ensure this service meets the needs and expectations that residents' expect and deserve. **Further consideration** should be given to whether the level of investment to achieve this using the current operating model would reap the required benefits.

2. **Delegate the transport service to schools:** This option **has been rejected** as schools do not have the required capability or experience to deliver a transport function. However, any new operating model will need to consider how to improve joint working and collaboration with schools to deliver the required outcomes from the service.

3. **Transformation programme – IPTU:** This option **is being recommended** as the most viable option for delivering the service going forwards. It would make the best use of existing council fleet assets, and provide much needed knowledge, skills and capability to deliver a fit-for-purpose transport service. Given the delivery of this would more than likely sit outside of the E&S department, careful consideration should be given to ensuring a continued alignment with SEND operational services, to ensure the provision of transport best meets the needs (and strengths) of children and promotes their independence, thus better equipping them for adulthood.

In Section 7 we set out how you can structure a programme to deliver against any of these three options.

Option 1: Improving the current operating model

Qualitative assessment		
DP1	Cost Effective Transport	Proactive approach required around managing demand
DP2	Collaborative Working with Key Partners	Improved communications with key partners
DP3	Safe, Quality, Timely Transport	Key focus is on immediate fixes
DP4	Strategic Relationships	Stabilisation of current relationships
DP5	Corporate Plan	Improves links to wider corporate plan

Qualitative assessment		
DP6	Financial and Budgetary Context	Re-baselines financial position and more detailed budgeting and forecasting
DP7	Environmentally Sustainable	Maximise current contracted arrangements
DP8	Risk Management	More proactive control and prioritisation of current risks. Improvements required in regards to contract management
DP9	Technology	Implement quick fixes to enhance how data and technology is supporting the service
DP10	Prevention	Closer monitoring of pupil safeguarding

Option 2: Delegation to schools

Qualitative assessment		
DP1	Cost Effective Transport	Schools lack skills and expertise around effective procurement of transport services. Services maybe better aligned to needs
DP2	Collaborative Working with Key Partners	School have already worked with all the key stakeholders involved in the transport service, but not in regards to delivery
DP3	Safe, Quality, Timely Transport	Schools do not have the required expertise around transport logistic planning and management
DP4	Strategic Relationships	Schools have not built key strategic relationships with transport suppliers
DP5	Corporate Plan	Potential weaker linkages to the corporate due to there being less control over service delivery

Qualitative assessment		
DP6	Financial and Budgetary Context	Less control over spend, as budgets would potentially be devolved to schools to manage
DP7	Environmentally Sustainable	Potential for misalignment with the council's environmental sustainability plans as Schools will be commissioning transport
DP8	Risk Management	Schools may not have the required skills to manage and mitigate all risks related to the delivery of transport services
DP9	Technology	Schools will potentially not have access to the same level and capability regarding staff and infrastructure related to IT
DP10	Prevention	Transport services could be commissioned more in line with pupils' needs, although potential for there to be more risk aversion when commissioning services.

Option 3: Develop an IPTU

Qualitative assessment		
DP1	Cost Effective Transport	Fully costed and optimised fleet and service contracts. Need to ensure transport solutions promote independence
DP2	Collaborative Working with Key Partners	Integrated partnerships that develop and deliver mutual benefit
DP3	Safe, Quality, Timely Transport	Active performance management in tune with daily priorities for the service that are responsive
DP4	Strategic Relationships	Co-development of key strategic relationships for new service model
DP5	Corporate Plan	Team activities fully mapped to wider corporate plan

Qualitative assessment		
DP6	Financial and Budgetary Context	Full financial planning, budgeting and forecasting
DP7	Environmentally Sustainable	Maximises operational and fleet sustainability
DP8	Risk Management	Risk matrix mapped, owned and managed by new teams. Will needs to align safeguarding measures
DP9	Technology	New technology and data architecture that supports real time MI reporting
DP10	Prevention	Need to develop an approach to demand management and promoting independence

EY

How?
Delivering change successfully

Independent Service Review of SEND Home to School Transport

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We have outlined how we intend to deliver immediate and longer term change

Our report identifies a series of operational reasons as to why the level of service fell below the level expected, and well as a series of systemic issues that have led to fragility of the service. In this section we outline these reasons and consider how change can be successfully delivered to address the issues faced. We set out the programme management approach, along with a series of recommendations for how the programme should be established to succeed. This covers a detailed look at the implementation of the immediate fixes plan as well as the implementation of a new operating model.

Implementation of the Immediate Fixes Plan

The operational reasons behind the substandard level of service are addressed through the implementation of the Immediate Fixes Plan. In this section we have summarised the plan, capability and capacity in place to deliver this, as well as the governance that has been established.

Implementation of the New Operating Model

As set out in the previous section, addressing the systemic issues that are resulting in a substandard level of service will need the implementation of a new operating model. This is a fundamental and significant programme that will incorporate changes to structures, processes and supporting IT, but also a change in the cultures and ways of working across Birmingham City Council. As such, it should be established with strong programme discipline from the outset, and it is likely to require additional capacity and capability to supplement and support.

In this section of our report, we use BCC's Programme Assessment Framework (see right) to understand where additional capacity and capability is required and recommend how the programme should be established for success.

Birmingham City Council's Programme Assessment Framework

Senior management leadership aligned with financials plans

Senior Management Leadership Assessment

Financial Assessment

Cost of Change

Senior management leadership aligned with change

Leadership trade offs

Financial trade offs

Delivery aligned with financial plans

Change Assessment

Change Management trade offs

Risk Exposure and Trade Offs

Delivery trade offs

Delivery Assessment

Change management aligned with design

Design trade offs

Risk mgmt trade offs

Delivery aligned with risks, issues and dependencies

Design Assessment

Benefits from Change

Mgmt of Issues, Risks and Dependencies

Design aligned with issues, risks and dependencies

EY

7.1 Implementation of the Immediate Fixes Plan

EY

Background and introduction to the Immediate Fixes Plan

The Immediate Fixes Plan was put in place on the 28th of September, following the City Council meeting, with the aim to address as a matter of urgency the issues that had arisen in the Travel Assist Service at the start of term. Throughout our work with you, we have endeavoured to highlight any operational reasons that led to the issues, whilst focusing on extending the timeline of the Immediate Fixes Plan, rather than proposing changes to it. As such, we do not provide any assurance or opinion on the delivery of these but feel that it is important to reflect the progress that appears to have been made since the start of term, based on the Immediate Fixes Plan. We have divided this section into the following three elements:

The four components of the Immediate Fixes Plan

The Immediate Fixes Plan has been created to address four key and immediate concerns that have been identified within the service. Further information on each of these is included in this section.

Safeguarding

Ensuring that the systems and processes are in place to transport pupils safely to-and-from school each day. This includes putting in place the right processes and procedures across a range of safety considerations and ensuring all staff are clear on these.

Service delivery

Ensuring that there is clarity within Birmingham City Council around roles and responsibilities, especially around the ways in which calls from parents and pupils will be handled and managed.

Customer and communication

Ensuring that there are appropriate ways to communicate with parents and schools in a proactive manner. This includes both when routes are changed/disrupted during a journey and also where any changes are made in advance of a journey – for example the change of a 'bubble' situation.

Contract management

Ensuring that there are positive and constructive contractual relationships with your external providers, that they are providing the information required to effectively run the service, and that they are safely delivering pupils to school on time.

Improvements achieved

It is pleasing to be able to report that we have already seen the Immediate Fixes Plan have a positive impact on the service provided to pupils.

In this section, we provide an update on performance that is now being managed and driven through a series of daily Situation Reports (SitReps) and point towards a significant decrease in the number of routes being cancelled due to providers or a lack of guides; we also share some of the positive feedback from parents and schools that we heard first hand at a recent Parent Carers Forum.

Approach to sustaining the improvements

It is important that the Immediate Fixes Plan continues to be implemented with the right capacity and capability, certainly until the start of the January term, until it is subsumed into any wider improvement programme (this is covered on pages 112–121).

In this section, we set out a series of basic elements that have been put in place and should remain so with the right level of leadership and support to ensure the performance of the Travel Assist service does not go backwards.

It should be noted that these remain a temporary solution and do not address the underlying causes affecting the performance of the service. Without the wider operating model changes recommended the service will remain fragile and dependent upon additional capacity and capability.

EY

Overview of the Immediate Fixes Plan

Since mid-to-late September, we understand that there has been an increased focus and dedicated capacity brought in to support the development and implementation of an 'Immediate Fixes Plan'. This plan has two objectives:

► Firstly, to put in place remedial measures to ensure that all pupils are transported safely to school

► Secondly, to ensure that appropriate planning is in place for the start of the spring term (January 2021), to ensure that there is not a repeat of the performance that left parents, pupils and schools feeling let down by the service

Whilst we have not completed an in-depth review of the progress made since September, we have on the right hand side summarised some of the actions that have been put in place as a result, and highlighted the impact that these have had on subsequent pages.

We attended a Parents-Carer Forum on October 22nd, and heard that some improvements were being seen but there is much more to do.

As a word of caution, however, it is noted that although these actions have addressed some of the operational reasons for service failure, they have not addressed the root causes.

The immediate activities and remedial actions that have been identified have resulted in the service is showing early signs of stabilisation, supported with positive feedback through the PCF.

Safeguarding

Purpose: Capable and well managed workforce

What were the operational reasons for the performance issues?

- Route sheets not provided to guides setting out basic information

- Spike in demand and pressure on the service due to 'Social bubbles' being required

- Lack of understanding, openness and transparency when reporting performance to stakeholders

Service Delivery

Purpose: Improved responsiveness and communication

What were the operational reasons for the performance issues?

- No clear operating model in place that sets out the core delivery expectations across BCC and suppliers

- Inadequate planning for the academic year resulting in insufficient time to mobilise suppliers/guides with the right skills

- Basic management and performance information is not available to BCC

Customer Voice and Communication

Purpose: Robust and meaningful communications to provide assurances to families

What were the operational reasons for the performance issues?

- Communication between BCC, suppliers, parents and schools was inefficient and ineffective

Contract Management

Purpose: Robust Contract management and compliance is in place

What were the operational reasons for the performance issues?

- The relationship, contract and contract management do not enable rapid achievement of required outcomes and improvements

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The Immediate Fixes Plan is having a positive impact on ways of working

Over the previous four weeks an Immediate Fixes Plan has been developed. This is being used to focus attention on a small number of key actions that need to be taken to drive improvement in the short term.

Improved ways of working observed within the team

Improved Team Working
Teams are energised and showing a commitment to delivering rapid improvements

Capacity and Capability
Additional resources - experienced in running and transforming transport services - have been injected to support the service

Greater Governance, structure and focus
The introduction of SitReps have provided clarity about priorities, performance and actions in the immediate term

Visibility of Key Performance Data
The weekly highlight reporting has improved
the visibility and management of key performance data. Metrics have been developed to focus on where the service really needs to drive improvement

Meeting Cadence
The introduction of regular key meetings has improved the daily management of risks and issues

Team Engagement
Feedback has been overwhelming around the need for change, people are passionate about SEND and want to play a future role in the service

Engagement and Challenge
People are being very open with their feedback and showing transparency: they are starting to communicate on some difficult areas. Other areas of the council are offering support and are being used to drive improvement. There is
a greater level of constructive challenge and support, and team members are making expectations of staff performance clearer

EY

We are seeing through SitRep reports that the Immediate Fixes Plan is having some impact on aspects of performance

The SitRep meetings and reporting have given internal teams structure and are helping people to focus on the right issues, at the right time.

The Immediate Fixes Plan is helping the team to stabilise.

Previous Service Performance Reporting

Pupils planned (21/9)	3,903
Pupils transported (21/9)	2,329 (59.7%)
Cancelled Route: Provider (21/9)	8 (32%)
Cancelled Route: Guide (21/9)	4 (16%)
Cancelled Route: School/Other (21/9)	13 (52%)

Current Service Performance Reporting

Pupils planned[1] (23/10)	4,095 3,768
Pupils transported (23/10)	3,761 (99.9%)
Cancelled Route: Provider (23/10)	0
Cancelled Route: Guide (23/10)	2 (6%)
Cancelled Route: School/Other (23/10)	33 (94%)

Since the 8th October, when the revised SitReps were implemented, there has been an overall improvement in:

► Safeguarding – new cases and outstanding incidents

► Performance in delivering the routes that were needed

► Performance in transporting the children that needed to travel to school

► Performance in answering telephone calls

There are some areas that remain a challenge:

► The number of bus passes outstanding, including applications overdue

► The number of transport applications outstanding

► The number of complaints outstanding

	08/10	23/10
Safeguarding	0 new 9 ongoing	1 new 5 ongoing
Routes Delivered[2]	99.75%	99.75%
Pupils Transported[2]	99.61%	99.82%
Calls Answered	88.7%	90.62%
Bus Pass Applications	1,180 Outstanding 750 Overdue	1,282 Outstanding 880 Overdue
Transport Applications Outstanding	135 Ongoing 107 Overdue	62 Ongoing[3] 19 Overdue[3]
Complaints Outstanding	25 Yellow Letter 14 ICASE	15 Yellow Letter[3] 15 ICASE[3]

[1]Pupils planned that needed to be transported, i.e. not including those whose schools were closed or those who were self isolating. This breakdown was not measured on 21/9
[2]Routes delivered that were needed and pupils transported that needed to get to school
[3]Data taken from 22/10

EY

We have outlined an approach to sustaining the improvements seen as a result of the implementation of the Immediate Fixes Plan

We have observed six changes that have enabled and underpinned the improvement in the Travel Assist Service over the past six weeks. These have had a significant impact on the delivery of the Immediate Fixes Plan. We consider it imperative that whilst the detailed design and subsequent implementation of the new operating model is completed, these changes are continued. Whilst the immediate fixes will not deliver the sustained changes to the operating model that are required to address the fundamental challenges identified, they are essential to ensuring that the service stabilises and is able to deliver the level of service for the rest of this term, and the start of the January term.

Leadership

The service has no doubt benefited from additional officer leadership, both directly from the Chief Executive, but also from additional capacity that has been brought in. This has allowed the right focus and attention to be applied to improving and managing the service and in ensuring data and planning are managed.

This additional leadership should not be removed until the Immediate Fixes Plan is completed, and the wider improvement programme is in place.

Management and Performance Information

The introduction of daily Situation Reports (SitReps) has put a clear focus on measuring the right and most up to date performance data, and using this to drive improvements. Through this process, the availability and quality of basic data has been improved and the service can now confidently report on the performance of the service each day.

This focus should continue on a daily basis until at least the service demonstrates appropriate performance at the start of the January term.

Governance and Reporting

The SitReps have also provided a focal point for greater governance and reporting over the Travel Assist service.

As with the SitRep reports, this governance and reporting approach should continue until at least the service demonstrates appropriate performance at the start of the January term and the improvement plan implements an updated approach

Compliance and Assurance

Additional capacity has been provided to undertake targeted compliance activities to provide assurance to the council. These have included spot checks on the standard of vehicles and also checks to ensure that the drivers and guides have the appropriate DBS clearance. It is important for maintaining the appropriate level of safeguarding that these checks are not only continued, but a temporary process put in place that establishes robust controls over the clearance of drivers and guides. This will require contractual conversations with suppliers to ensure the information and evidence that is required for the council to fulfil its statutory obligations can be met.

IT and Infrastructure

There is no doubt that the management of service performance has been held back by the lack of infrastructure to plan and manage routes and to communicate effectively. Whilst there are plans in place to introduce new technology (including 365 software to help with routing and Cirrus to help with communications), the lack of robust programme and requirement management threatens the timelines and realisation of benefits.

It is therefore important that the appropriate technical input is resourced onto the projects, as well as programme management to control and direct these.

Project Management and Business Analyst

The overall Immediate Fixes Plan should continue to be managed with the project discipline that has been established. This should include an appropriate level of business analysts, to continue the development and reporting to management of performance information that has formed the foundation of managing performance.

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Based on the longer term ambition of an IPTU, and what is needed in the short term, the following short term risks, dependencies and related activity need to be managed to sustain improvements

In line with the approach to sustaining improvements and our six key areas of focus, we have highlighted here the areas that will require closer monitoring and managing. We have broken this down into:

► Key risks that could destabilise and deteriorate the service if not managed

► Key dependencies internally and externally – mapped in detail and managed

► Six programmes in the corporate delivery plan that have a direct interface with the service

As part of any immediate fixes and longer term transformation, it will be important to have an owner and detailed plan around these three areas that monitors status at both operational and leadership levels.

Key Risk and Performance Metric Management Tools

Key risks

1. Service performance could deteriorate given the fragility of the service, particularly if additional change resources are no longer available
2. Staff motivation could decrease and staff absence could increase due to key capacity and capability issues, which are affecting wellbeing
3. The financial and budgetary position could worsen with the current control level
4. The service could be subjected to further complaints if performance deteriorates or if assurances aren't sufficient to stem the significant number of member enquiries and complaints

Key dependencies

► SEND local provision in mainstream schools
► Effective administration of EHCPs
► Home to School restructure, as part of a wider review and implementation of a new Target Operating Model
► Strategic commissioning redesign
► Early intervention support
► The effective delivery of an IT&D Infrastructure Improvement Programme, including Cirrus Phase 2, 365, Mobile Capabilities for Guides, and Bus Pass processing capabilities

Other activity

There are currently six programmes in the corporate delivery plan:

1. SEND local provision in mainstream schools
2. Administration of EHCPs
3. Home to School restructure (this needs to be delivered under a wider programme to create a new Target Operating Model, if this is approved)
4. Strategic commissioning redesign
5. Early intervention support
6. 365 roll out

EY

7.2 Implementation of the New Operating Model

Independent Service Review of SEND Home to School Transport

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Background and introduction to the new Operating Model

Building on the six positive changes we have identified in the Travel Assist team (leadership, management and performance information, governance and reporting, compliance and assurance, IT and infrastructure and project management/business analysis), we have used these areas as the basis for a high level design of our future operating model. To move towards a leading practice service, we have set out the key operating model levers that we would expect to see detailed strategy and operational planning around. The model considers interactions and trade offs, and delivers a service in line with financial and budgetary planning with controlled change and risk management.

The six factors required to make the new operating model

In the following page we will set out six factors required for the new operating model to be successfully implemented. In this section we have outlined a high level assessment of the current capability gaps that exist.

Leading Practice Operating Model

Options for Delivering the Change

Having considered the current state findings, and how we move forward to improving the service, we will discuss the two clear viable options available:

Option 1 – Implement through existing structures

► In this option, the changes to the operating model will be delivered and governed through the existing structures that are in place across BCC

Option 2 – Integrate into the transformation portfolio

► The second option will create three dedicated programmes of change that will transform the transport service and operational infrastructure. All levers will be designed strategically, with full planning and costing in line with a new operational resource plan to deliver a leading practice service, and be coordinated by the portfolio office across BCC

Roadmap for delivering a new operating model

In the final section, we will set out the roadmap for how you can move towards the recommended solution of an Integrated Public Transport Unit (IPTU).

The roadmap of activity will cover the plan for immediate fixes over the short term and the longer term transformation programme that will promote the transformation into a leading practice service.

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There are six factors which must be taken into account when assessing capability to implement a new operating model

The implementation of a new operating model seeks to sustainably address the underlying causes which led to the service failing to meet expectations in September, and enable the service to become one that is leading in this area. We have set out six factors for the new operating model to be successfully implemented and to embed the required changes into work practices.

The six factors

There are six factors which must be taken into account when assessing capability to implement a new operating model. A summary of our assessment against these six areas in outlined below.

1. Senior management leadership capability

I. Differing understanding of statutory requirements, vision not communicated through the service, lack of focus on prevention

II. Gaps in performance data still exist. Lack of understanding around current and future demand and using this inform commissioning decisions

III. Lack of capacity and capability to deliver a transformation programme

IV. Lack of robust governance structure and oversight from an accountable sponsor

V. Key leadership behaviors are not being displayed

2. Financial capability

I. Concerns have been raised with us around the capacity to provide financial support in a timely manner, especially with pressures from working remotely over COVID-19

II. Limited grip on cost control as evidenced from the under delivery of planned savings

3. Delivery capability

I. Until recently, there was not a programme/implementation plan in place

II. Limited view around the activity which contributes to delivering the strategic vision for the service

III. Minimal existence of productive working relationships between the service and external and internal partners

IV. Low staff morale, lack of understanding of their roles,

V. No system for performance management

4. Management of issues, risks and dependencies

I. Lack of buy in, trust and confidence from key partners and stakeholders

II. Poor processes for managing, mitigating and escalating risks and issues

III. Limited understanding of leadership around dependencies with other projects

IV. Poor understanding around the planning, management of the impact of transformational activity on BAU delivery

5. Design capability

I. Limited documentation of key processes that underpin service delivery

II. Lack of application of business contingency plans, where there has been a service failure.

III. Key weaknesses within all aspects of the current operating model with a limited view on areas for improvement (except around technology and IT)

6. Change capability

I. Limited communication from leadership on the reasons and key drivers for change

II. Lack of understanding from staff around the need for change to happen or their role in delivering this.

III. No processes in place to plan for continuous improvement

IV. Lack of an approach for the delivery of the required culture change for members of staff.

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7.3 Implementation of the New Operating Model
Options for Delivering the Change

Independent Service Review of SEND Home to School Transport

What is the suggested change approach, required capacity, and how does this interact with the current service leadership?

At a recent Parents-Carer Forum (PCF) on October 22nd, we heard some observations on positive movements in the delivery of the service, and in the collaborative approach the service is taking whilst acknowledging there is much more to do.

The Immediate Fixes Plan and SitRep structure has implemented governance and performance management changes to stabilise and enhance the service.

Longer term, the organisational structure, culture, communication and escalation channels will be critical to transforming the service with a reporting line into CPMO to ensure plan control and delivery.

Option 1 Implement through existing structures
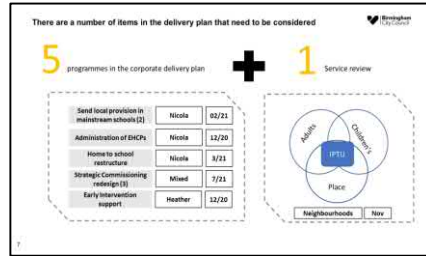
The first option considers an approach where the programme is established through the existing structures, capability and capacity that is used to manage and drive towards the new operating model.

► There are currently a number of disparate activities across the SEND service focused on service improvement, these could continue in line with the current suggestions in the delivery plan
► There are owners allocated but not a clear plan for managing interdependencies and milestones
► In this option, the immediate fixes and ongoing safe running of the service would continue to report into the CPMO capability to ensure no slippage in performance

However:
► There is limited overall ownership of the end to end programme in the service and there are dependencies with activities outside of Education and Skills that are not currently being looked at and managed (Separate IPTU review as well as activity in SEND)
► Service leadership has recognised a gap in capacity and capability in terms of programme management across a number of the initiatives currently in flight, suggesting risk to the current milestones and outcomes

Option 2 Integrate into the transformation portfolio
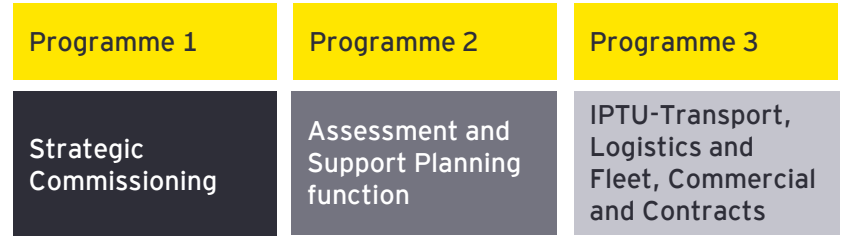
Programme 1	Programme 2	Programme 3
Strategic Commissioning	Assessment and Support Planning function	IPTU-Transport, Logistics and Fleet, Commercial and Contracts

The second option considers whether establishing three new programmes, that would integrate into the wider portfolio of change across BCC, would manage and drive the changes more effectively.

► The recommended option is to rescope and restructure the portfolio into clearer and connected work packages that would more easily align to a corporate transformation approach
► The broader IPTU review being undertaken in neighbourhoods needs to be incorporated into the programme
► Given the profile of the service and the need to get this right, the correct governance, monitoring and capacity is essential
► The programme needs to be led by a dedicated sponsor and a transformation director, with appropriate capacity and capability put in place to deliver the outcomes
► Programme managers to be allocated corresponding to each programme, with reporting and monitoring capability included
► This would have a reporting line into the CPMO to ensure key delivery plan objectives and milestones are bring met, and corporate risks are managed
► The ongoing safe running of the service should also be monitored in this structure via the weekly SitReps

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Assessment of these two options has resulted in the selection of Option 2 (Integrate) to deliver a truly transformational and leading practice service

The change approach and options have been assessed and the advantages and disadvantages of these considered in more detail.

After reviewing the options it is clear that, to address the systemic failures within the service, a transformational change programme is needed to deliver a leading practice integrated transport service.

To deliver a transformation programme and transition to the IPTU solution a full strategic redesign and change management programme would need to be included, ideally integrated into the transformation portfolio.

Option 1 Implement through existing structures

Description

► The option of rapid improvement to the existing structure that would develop into a longer term roadmap of transformation activity

► This option would look to leverage the structure of the SitRep cadence already implemented and seek to move towards more leading practices against the 6 factor operating model outlined

► More focus would be on addressing operational and safeguarding issues documented with existing resource and capability

► The immediate fixes plan would drive the improvements in the near term but this option does not transform the service nor does it address the system issues fully

Advantages

► Connected work packages that more easily align to a corporate transformation approach

► Service compliance and regulatory adherence monitored and checked against wider IPTU requirements

► Defined roles and responsibilities

► Quality minimum standards against all providers that are consistent and manged

► Improved risk and performance management through SitRep structure

► Clearer communication channels

► Stabilisation of issue management through immediate fixes plan

Disadvantages

► Additional time and resource will be required in the near term to stabilise the service

► Dependencies not fully mapped and managed

► Costs not fully in line with financial plan with focus more on recovery than financial planning activity

► Cost-benefits not fully mapped and understood

► Hand-offs not mapped or documented in detail

► Capability will be limited with this option

Assessment: Partially Viable

This option is focussed more on **stabilising the current operational structure and service**, there is a risk that in the longer term without more structural and systemic change **that issues may return.**

Option 2 Integrate into the transformation portfolio

Description

► The recommended option is to rescope and restructure the portfolio into clearer and connected work packages that would more easily align to a corporate transformation approach

► The broader IPTU review being undertaken in neighbourhoods needs to be incorporated into the programme

► Given the profile of the service and the need to get this right, the correct governance, monitoring and capacity is essential

► The programme need to be led by a dedicated sponsor and a transformation director with appropriate capacity and capability put in place to deliver the outcomes

Advantages

► This would have a reporting line into the CPMO to ensure key delivery plan objectives and milestones are bring met

► Programme managers to be allocated corresponding to each programme with reporting and monitoring capability included and corporate risks managed

► The ongoing safe running of the service will be monitored in this structure via the weekly SitReps

► Organisation aligned to design principles and operating model levers which transforms the service

Disadvantages

► Additional time and resource will be required in the near term to stabilise the service

► Current capabilities would need change and structural changes to the organisation would have to be managed extremely carefully through a change programme

Assessment: Viable

Current **preferred option.** Based on evidence and analysis this would be the most efficient way to **stabilise and improve the service in the longer term** towards a **leading practice service.**

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Option 2 (Integrate): The key activities that would need to be covered in the programme of activity are set out below

The preferred option is to rescope and restructure the portfolio into clearer and connected work packages, that would more easily align to a corporate transformation approach.

The broader IPTU review being undertaken in neighbourhoods needs to be incorporated into the programme.

Given the profile of the service and the need to get this right, the correct governance, monitoring and capacity is essential.

The programme needs to be led by a dedicated sponsor and a transformation director, with appropriate capacity and capability put in place to deliver the outcomes.

Programme managers need to be allocated to each programme, with reporting and monitoring capability included. This would include a reporting line into the CPMO to ensure key delivery plan objectives and milestones are bring met and corporate risks are managed.

The ongoing safe running of the service should also be monitored in this structure via the weekly SitReps.

Programme 1

Strategic Commissioning

- ► Set the overall strategic vision for the new service
- ► Undertake pre-emptive and strategic planning across the service, managing interdependencies
- ► Provide leadership and direction to future commissioning activity
- ► Create and own the end to end process map and customer journey for the service
- ► Create clear and distinct role profiles and specifications
- ► Undertake IT and data architecture assessment and put in place plans to address any weaknesses
- ► Lead and embed the change, creating the commitment and capabilities needed for successful adoption
- ► Create and own a clear communications strategy
- ► Accountable for the governance, controls and compliance of the service

Programme 2

Assessment and Support Planning function

- ► Set the overall strategic direction for the service
- ► Undertake pre-emptive and strategic planning across the service, managing interdependencies
- ► Lead and embed the change, creating the commitment and capabilities needed for successful adoption
- ► Develop the detailed operational process mapping for the service with RACIs, dependencies and risk accounted for
- ► Create and own a clear communications strategy
- ► Conduct needs assessment and support planning activity
- ► Ensure a recorded and auditable DBS process is in place, including appeals
- ► Undertake IT and data architecture assessment and put in place plans to address any weaknesses
- ► Accountable for the governance, controls and compliance of the service

Programme 3

IPTU -Transport, Logistics and Fleet, Commercial and Contracts

- ► Set the overall strategic direction for the service
- ► Undertake pre-emptive and strategic planning across the service, managing interdependencies
- ► Lead and embed the change, creating the commitment and capabilities needed for successful adoption
- ► Develop the detailed operational process mapping for the service with RACIs, dependencies and risk accounted for
- ► Develop and manage new performance indicators
- ► Ensure a recorded and auditable DBS process is in place, including appeals
- ► Create and own a clear communications strategy
- ► Undertake IT and data architecture assessment and put in place plans to address any weaknesses, including implementing 365, Cirrus Phase 2, Mobile Capability for Guides, Bus Pass processing software and, where possible, IT&D improvements to support DBS processes
- ► Accountable for the governance, controls and compliance of the service

Independent Service Review of SEND Home to School Transport

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Managing and directing the three programmes will require the right programme discipline and governance and we have aligned this to your current governance structure

Portfolio. programme and project governance captures all of the key elements that will help oversee and drive the changes required to improve the service.

We have suggested three levels of governance that should be established to oversee the delivery and we have aligned these to current governance structure:

1. **Portfolio Oversight**: this should provide confidence to corporate leadership that the three individual programmes are delivering the benefits anticipated to the agreed timelines, but also that any design of new operating models is aligned to the wider design of BCC

2. **Programme Governance**: this will focus on managing the delivery of the individual programme and providing the SRO with assurance and a mechanism to support the delivery of these

3. **Project or Work Stream Governance**: the final tier focuses on how individual projects or workstreams should be governed. These are likely to be varied in size and complexity and there will not be a single approach to structure

Portfolio Oversight

Oversight Group

The oversight group should focus on governing the operating model across each of the three programmes and ensuring alignment to the wider operating model of BCC

Programme Sponsors

The programme sponsors should focus on managing the delivery of the programme and ensuring that interdependent activities across portfolio are managed

Programme Governance

Each of the three programmes should have it's own Programme Delivery Manager and the team's progress reports are to be given at fortnightly meetings with the Corporate Programme Management Office, which is in turn reported to the MTFP and Delivery Group. This will give the SRO for each programme visibility and confidence on delivery and allow them to hold the programme team to account and support where appropriate.

Programme Delivery Manager	Programme Delivery Manager	Programme Delivery Manager
Strategic Commissioning	Assessment and Support Planning function	IPTU -Transport, Logistics and Fleet, Commercial and Contracts
Project Managers, Admin Support, Design and Planning Manager, Business Analysts	Project Managers, Admin Support, Design and Planning Manager, Business Analysts	Project Managers, Admin Support, Design and Planning Manager, Business Analysts

Projects or Work Stream Governance

Each project should hold it's own project group/team meetings. These groups will report upwards to the workstream board. It is likely that each project will vary in size and complexity and therefore a single size approach across the three programmes is not appropriate. However, the programme boards will need to approve the project governance to make sure this is appropriate

Daily Stand Ups

SitReps

Project Boards

Independent Service Review of SEND Home to School Transport

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7.4 Implementation of the New Operating Model
Roadmap for delivering a new operating model

Independent Service Review of SEND Home to School Transport

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What is the timeframe to move to this new model? Are there any key dependencies (e.g., other risks across parts of the service)? What else needs to be kept up in the meantime?

We have set out a high-level roadmap below that consider two key stages: (1) Do Now – these are the activities that are needed to continue to stabilise the service so that performance at the start of the January school term is strong; and in parallel allows you to plan the transformation across the three programmes and move towards the new operating model; and (2) Do Next - the key activities that you need to do in order to deliver the new operating model, aligned to the start of a new academic term. This roadmap will be expanded on and detailed out during 'Plan the Transformation' with Project Initiation Documents, Project Plans and Benefit Plans developed.

Do Now – the Immediate Fixes Plan	Do Next to Enhance the Service	Transformed Service

By the Start of January Term 2021

Stabilise the Service through the Immediate Fixes Plan
- ► Short term fix on capability and capacity
- ► Managing guides more effectively
- ► Manage contracts and change notices
- ► Set up and supported an effective parent-pupil-teacher forum
- ► Better pupil information on the buses
- ► Clarity around roles and responsibilities in BCC
- ► Implement new IT System to manage real-time communications and lower demand for call centres
- ► Establish positive and constructive contractual relationship with external providers

Plan the Transformation
- ► Design the transformation programme with plan and milestones (around school term dates) and agree resource plan to deliver this

By the Start of New Academic Year (September 2021)

Recommendations to enhance the service:
- ► Design a **new operating model** by implementing an IPTU
- ► Codesign a new vision for the service (1.1)*
- ► Transform the Needs Assessment and Support Planning (2.1)
- ► Implement new communications approach (2.2)
- ► Clarify roles and accountabilities (3.1, 3.3)
- ► Establish an integrated approach for provision of services (3.2)

- ► Review capacity and capability required across all functions (4.1)
- ► Document and improve the process maps for each step of transport provision (5.1, 5.2)
- ► Implement route mapping system (6.1)
- ► Implement database for accurate/timely data (7.1)
- ► Implement a new set of PIs and a data management system (7.2)
- ► Design effective governance, promoting independence and accountability (8.1)

*( ) refer to operating model recommendation numbers

Continuous Improvement of the Service

Culture Change

By the start of the new term, we will be delivering …

A service that is delivering the basics for pupils **with pupils not missing any school time** because of provider failure or lack of availability of guides

By the start of the new academic year in 2021, we will …

Have made the initial changes to the **operating model** with the right capability and capacity running the service, and will have a grip on the basics and a positive relationship with parents and schools. Have **transformed the whole service** into one that is designed around meeting the needs of vulnerable adults and pupils, delivering against a purpose that focusses on their independence

Independent Service Review of SEND Home to School Transport

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Glossary

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Glossary

ASC	Adult social care
ATG	Accessible Transport Group
BCC	Birmingham City Council
CPMO	Corporate project management office
DBS	Disclosure and barring service
DP	Design principle
DPS	Dynamic purchasing system
H2S	Home to school
IPTU	Integrated public transport unit
ITT	Independent travel training
NEAT	National Express Assisted Transport
PCF	Parent-carer forum

RACI	Responsible, accountable, consulted and informed
RAG	Red/amber/green
SEND	Special educational needs and disabilities
SIPOC	Suppliers, inputs, process, outputs, and customers
SitRep	Situation report
SLT	Senior leadership team
TA	Travel assist
VfM	Value for money

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