

Appendix 6

General Update on the Education Transport Financial Position and the Work Programme

1. Education Transport Work Programme

1.1 In addition to reporting on the Draft Education Transport Policy consultation, the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee also asked for an update on the progress against the Education Transport Work Programme requirements submitted to the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee in December 2024, as well as an update of the financial position as a result of historical overspend in the field of education transport.

1.2 The table below provides a brief update against the requirements of the work programme submitted to the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee in December 2024:

Education Transport Work Programme	Progress up to December 2024	Progress up to June 2026
Update the Education Transport Policy and Equality Impact Assessment	An initial draft of the Education Transport Policy has been drawn up. Once the draft Policy is complete, it is intended to consult on it. This policy will meet the statutory requirements in the same way as the existing policy. In parallel, an Equality Impact Assessment has been produced.	A draft of the Education Transport Policy and the associated Impact Assessments have been produced, and on 26 January, the Cabinet's approval to hold a consultation was received. A 6-week consultation period was held between 9 February and 20 March 2026, and consideration has been given to all the observations received. There is an intention to return to the Cabinet to report back on the consultation and submit a final version of the Education Transport Policy before 1 October 2026, for the amended policy to come into force on 1 September 2027.
Review existing education transport contracts to identify efficiency savings	This is ongoing work, and below are examples of what has already been achieved	This is ongoing work; all of the transport contracts are reviewed every term. With a reduction in the number of learners in the near future, it is anticipated that many amendments will be made to the contracts, and reduce the capacity of the routes, thus leading to a reduction in costs.

<p>Identify an education transport pilot scheme that would be able to be implemented in conjunction with a Language Centre</p>	<p>Initial pilot scheme partially implemented this term</p>	<p>As a result of prioritising the Ysgol Hafod Lon pilot scheme, we have been unable to implement another pilot scheme jointly with a Language Centre during the period.</p> <p>However, Eifionydd Language Centre staff have provided customer care and language refresher sessions to the staff employed as part of the Ysgol Hafod Lon Transport Pilot Scheme.</p>
<p>Identify an education transport pilot scheme that could be implemented in conjunction with a special school</p>	<p>Initial discussions have been held with Ysgol Hafod Lon and potential opportunities have been identified but further work is to be undertaken, aiming to start a pilot in the Spring Term 2025.</p>	<p>Pilot scheme with an electric minibus, driver and chaperone directly employed by the Council implemented since January 2026. Feedback from the pilot is very positive.</p> <p>Recruitment difficulties have led to a delay in being able to implement a second pilot scheme with the second minibus at Ysgol Hafod Lon, but we are continuing to try to recruit at present.</p>
<p>Revisit ALN learner transport arrangements</p>	<p>The process of revisiting the timetable for identifying the transport needs of ALN learners has commenced to ensure the best conditions for tendering the provision to ensure value for money.</p>	
<p>Consider the affordability of Post-16 Education Transport as a result of the abolition of the 16+ Travel Pass</p>	<p>Initial discussions have taken place with Grŵp Llandrillo Menai.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post-16 Transport has been included as one of the proposals when consulting on the Draft Education Transport Policy. • Discussions have been held with Grŵp Llandrillo Menai, but the college has no intention to contribute to post-16 transport costs at present.
<p>Renewable Electric Vehicles</p>	<p>A grant application submitted to the Welsh Government by the Council for financial support to purchase 2 electric minibuses, which would provide potential opportunities to provide education transport in an alternative way.</p>	<p>A grant application for two electric vehicles has been successful, and two further electric minibuses in the Council's ownership to pilot the provision of education transport in an alternative way. (See a special school pilot scheme above).</p>

2. Education Transport Financial Position

2.1 In terms of the education transport financial position, the table below shows the budget for Gwynedd education transport since 2016/17, as well as the actual expenditure to address the education transport requirements over the same period:

	Taccs a trennau			Bysus			Cyfanswm		
	Cyllideb	Gwir	Gor/(tan) wariant	Cyllideb	Gwir	Gor/(tan) wariant	Cyllideb	Gwir	Gor/(tan) wariant
2016/17	2,064,210	2,038,424	-25,786	2,554,540	2,582,690	28,150	4,618,750	4,621,113	2,363
2017/18	2,021,500	2,223,188	201,688	2,558,770	2,545,402	-13,368	4,580,270	4,768,590	188,320
2018/19	2,335,140	2,471,034	135,894	2,609,570	2,805,616	196,046	4,944,710	5,276,650	331,940
2019/20	2,342,610	2,516,348	173,738	2,821,950	2,884,973	63,023	5,164,560	5,401,321	236,761
2020/21*	2,323,850	1,969,468	-354,382	2,931,910	2,560,678	-371,232	5,255,760	4,530,145	-725,615
2021/22	2,615,480	2,790,864	175,384	3,149,730	3,092,720	-57,010	5,765,210	5,883,585	118,375
2022/23	2,841,050	3,147,025	305,975	3,279,460	3,521,664	242,204	6,120,510	6,668,690	548,180
2023/24	2,743,340	3,427,763	684,423	3,646,240	4,457,345	811,105	6,389,580	7,885,109	1,495,529
2024/25	3,907,460	3,661,661	-245,799	4,182,150	4,619,603	437,453	8,089,610	8,281,264	191,654
2025/26	3,553,671	3,552,096	-1,575	4,223,530	4,709,941	486,411	7,777,201	8,262,037	484,836
2026/27 - amcan	3,528,810	3,522,053	-6,758	4,886,236	4,886,236	0	8,415,046	8,408,289	-6,758

* b/lwyddyn eithradol

2.2 The education transport budget seen in the table above has increased £3.8m since 2016/17 as a result of inflation and permanent bid applications to the Council by the Education Department to meet the increase in costs to provide transport over the period in question.

2.3 In 2023/24, the field of education transport overspent by £1.5m, on a budget of £6.4m. This was mainly due to implementing a process to re-tender school buses during the year, the impact of the economy in general, along with increased costs for bus providers associated with accessibility requirements. Furthermore, there is increasing pressure on the requirement for taxis, mainly related to Additional Learning Needs.

2.4 In response to the overspend, the Council provided the Education Department with a permanent additional budget of £895k, and a one-off budget of £895k for 2024/25 only. Furthermore, a one-off budget was provided for 2025/26 only to fund the overspend in that year.

- 2.5 This means that there was no overspend in 2024/25 and 2025/26, giving the Education Department the opportunity to identify opportunities to try to rationalise the costs associated with providing education transport. At the same time, it must be acknowledged that implementing modifications to transport contracts and changing the way we provide education transport is a matter that will take some time to implement and fully see its impact. An Education Transport Manager was appointed in April 2024 to ensure a dedicated resource to be able to respond to the situation, and in the same period, the field of education transport has been the subject of a Strategic Review, and a work programme has been created to focus on creating practical solutions to the challenges faced in the field of education transport.
- 2.6 Based on the September 2025 contracts data, a cost of £8.4m was anticipated to provide education transport for the 2026/27 financial year. The cost can be divided into 2 main categories, namely spending on bus contracts of £4.9m and spending on taxis contracts of £3.5m. Based on these costs, a bid was submitted to fund the overspend of the bus contracts that was equivalent to £664,000 for 2026/27, which includes additional costs outside the Department's control, and limited opportunities to implement savings on the heading. As a result of plans implemented to save money, no taxi contracts bid was submitted, expecting the heading to be kept within its budget in 2026/27.
- 2.7 Efforts will continue to identify opportunities to save money / keep costs within control where possible, remembering that the significant pressure on the field remains in accordance with what was noted in 3.9 above.