



Warrington Transport Policy

Response to the consultation – 31st January to 10th March 2024

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1. Introduction

- 1.1.** Home to school travel for eligible children is a statutory service that councils must deliver, and the council's home to school transport policy provides the framework for the services we provide.
- 1.2.** The updated home to school transport policy includes the eligibility, offer and application process for all children and young people up to the age of 19 years, and up to the age of 25 years for students with special education needs and disabilities.
- 1.3.** Warrington Borough Council has updated the home to school transport policy in order to take account of the Department for Education revised [guidance on travel to school for children of compulsory school age](#) in June 2023. In addition, a review of the current policy carried out between January and June 2023 has also been taken into account.
- 1.4.** The proposed Home to School Policy will apply for the 2024 to 2025 academic year onwards and will apply to both new and existing applications.

2. Consultation Process

- 2.1.** The consultation period ran from 31st January to the 10 March 2024 (meeting the 4 week minimum requirement). While the consultation guidance is not prescriptive it must however be a fair and open process, which can be accessed by a full range of people. While the consultation was promoted digitally, there was the option to call the council and request a paper copy.
- 2.2.** The full consultation and supporting information and guidance was put onto the council's website.
- 2.3.** The consultation was communicated as follows:
 - It was included several times in the weekly Directors Briefing that goes to all Warrington early years, primary, special and secondary schools – asking that they share with all parents and staff.
 - It was emailed directly to all special schools with a child attending from Warrington, asking to be shared with parents.
 - It was sent to Warrington Parent and Carer Forum for their consultation and sharing with Parents of children with SEND.
 - It was shared on council's social media for the general public.
- 2.4.** 17 people formally responded to the consultation on the School Transport Policy:
 - 13 were parent/carers who live in Warrington of a child who attends a Warrington School,
 - 3 were a child/young person who lives in Warrington or attends a Warrington school,
 - 1 listed as 'other'.

3. The council response to comments made in the consultation (see section 5 for the full results of the survey)

- 3.1.** The council recognises that while the majority of respondents were able to understand the policy, 18.8% stated that it was not easy to understand. The transport policy has been checked that it meets the 'plain English' requirements, however the council will:
- Review the sections mentioned in the feedback.
 - Include a 'contents' which will hyperlink to the section required, avoiding the need to scroll down the pages.
 - It will be made clearer that the policy is for all home to school transport – including all ages, children in care and SEND pupils.
 - Keeping the policy as one document ensures that families do not need to find the right transport policy for their child. This will be supported by an application form which provides clarity on whether a child is eligible for transport or not, as well as how to appeal.
- 3.2.** The council recognises that it is important to consider a child/young persons long term future when offering a transport solution. Preparation for adulthood is a key priority for the council which will be taken into consideration the closer to completion of education is reached.
- 3.3.** The council recognises that families and young people are keen to ensure that decisions are based on the individual needs of the child/young person. While eligibility criteria is set, the opportunity for appeal provides a full review of individual needs and will ensure the child/young person's situation is accounted for.
- 3.4.** A 50% split on responses regarding being provided the offer of a personal budget. The offer of a personal budget is included in the range of offers available, ensuring all situations can be provided a travel solution that meets the needs of child/young person.
- 3.5.** 66.7% agreed that the council should not have to pay for transport on days that a child/young person does not attend school or college. All transport contracts are based on paying for that transport every day, even when children do not attend school, this can equate to up to £225 a day. Other cost effective options need to be considered, which may include a personal budget.
- 3.6.** 73.3% agreed that single occupancy should only be considered under exception. At the present time 57% of single occupancy taxi's are for academic year 10 to academic year 20 (aged 15 to 24 years). The council will consider personal budgets, mileage and independent travel training as a priority offer where appropriate.
- 3.7.** 85.7% agreed that the council should use discretion in the provision of transport support.
- 3.8.** 46.2% agreed that addressing climate change, in relation to 'Home to School Transport' was important, the comments however stated that the child/young person transport needs needed to come first.
- 3.9.** Assessment of potential hazardous routes are carried out regularly. Where a route is assessed by the council as non hazardous, the council will provide advice on why this is the case.

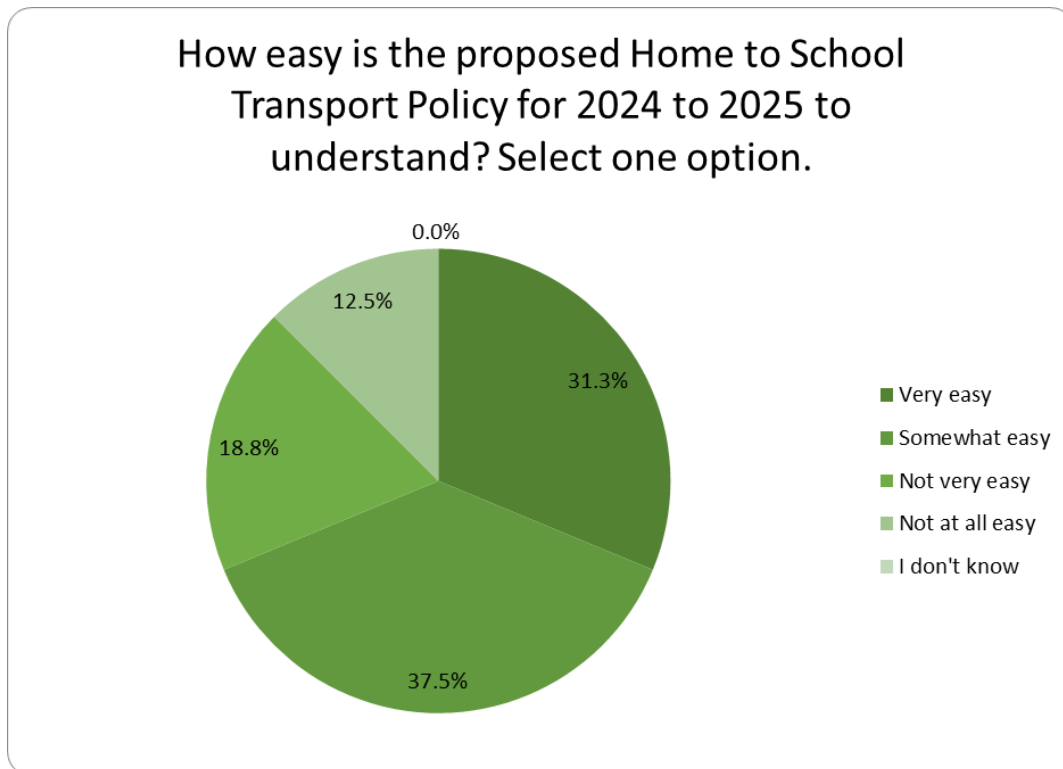
4. Conclusion – Warrington Borough Council Decision

- 4.1.** The council has carefully reviewed the responses to the consultation on the home to school transport policy and has provided a response to the comments made.
- 4.2.** While taking full account of the responses to the consultation, the council have concluded that the implementation of the proposed Transport Policy is approved.

5. Full Consultation Response

5.1. How easy is the proposed Home to School Transport Policy for 2024 to 2025 to understand?

- The majority of respondents 68.8% selected 'very easy' or 'somewhat easy,' however 18.8% selected 'not very easy' or 'not at all easy.'
- 16 respondents answered this question, whilst 1 chose to skip it.



5.2. How can we make the Home to School Transport Policy easier to understand?

- 5 respondents answered this question, whilst 12 chose to skip it.
- Actually make it readable, it is confusing, unclear and quite annoying actually.
- Be more specific and not so long. Just filter the relevant sections to the relevant groups
- Not sure why SEND is a separate policy
- It is an easy read however for some parents it might be confusing to see if they are eligible. There are a lot of grey areas.
- Page 14: advising about distances is overly complicated and could be simplified.

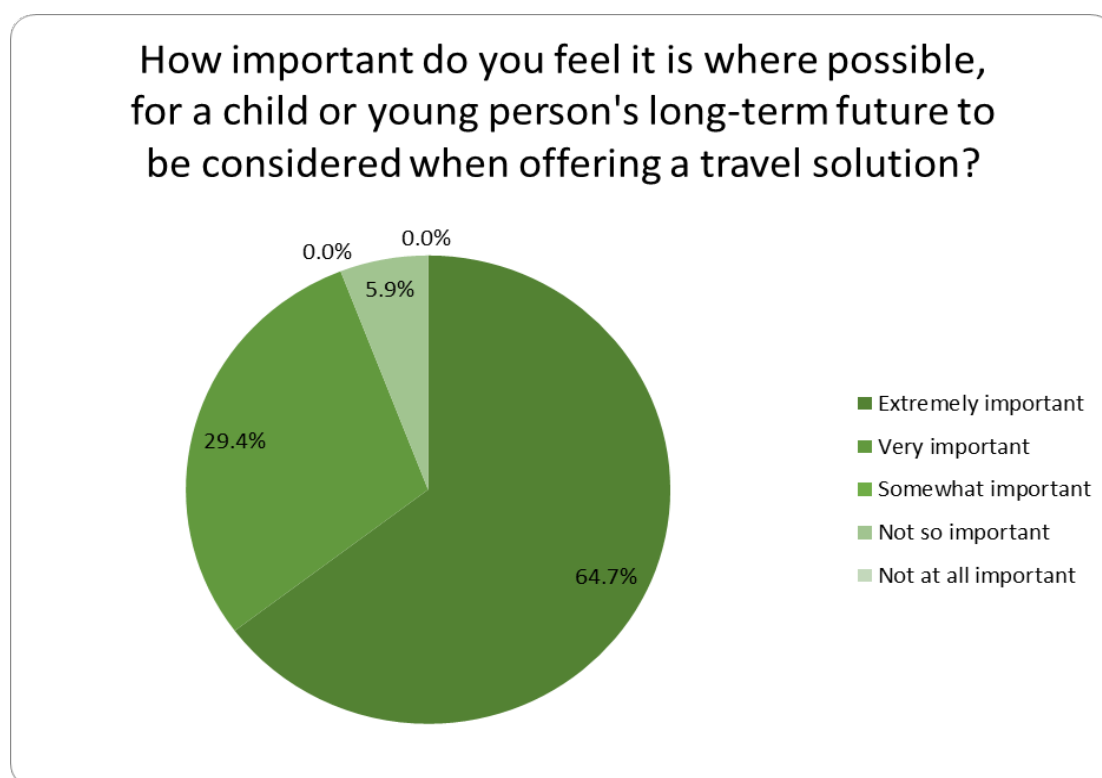
5.3. Do you have any comments about the proposed changes to the Home to School Transport Policy?

- 5 respondents answered this question, whilst 12 chose to skip it.
- As parents of a child with severe SEN it makes us very worried and you have completely misread your audience with a long wordy and confusing document.
- I've no idea what the changes are
- Some Children go to school from the age of 4 and the lock it reads that you can only get travel support from age of 5, it should be clearer that they can get transport from starting school.
- Give examples of eligibility so parents can understand what you mean in certain areas especially SEND.
- Page 12: Parental School Preference - This is condescending towards parents by stating "we encourage parents not to confuse" and asking parents to "bear in mind". This could be worded better.

- Page 15-16: Appears to demonstrate an opportunity for the LA to hold parents to ransom when discussing school placement and transport.
- Page 23: Please add in Distressed behaviour when discussing challenging behaviour. All behaviour is a form of communication, more often than not, the child or young person cannot control the behaviour shown. Challenging behaviour implies they have control. Behaviour of distress may occur when; An individual has problems understanding what is happening around them. A person cannot communicate what they want or need. A person is reacting to anxiety and stress.

5.4. How important do you feel it is where possible, for a child or young person's long-term future to be considered when offering a travel solution?

- 17 Respondents answered this question.
- The majority of respondents 94.1% selected 'extremely important' or 'very important,' however 5.9% selected 'not so important.'



The following comments were left in response to this question:

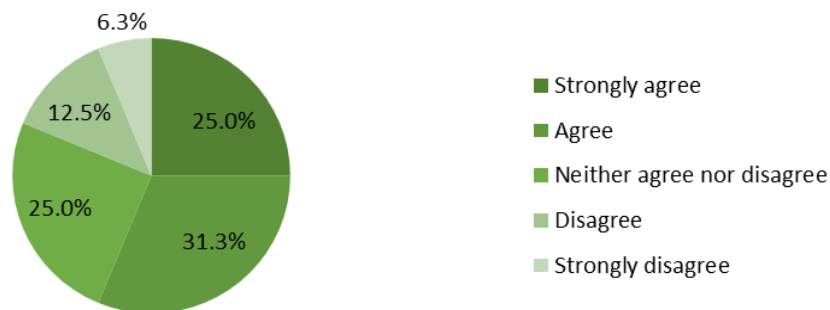
- Children and young people need to have stability and understanding as they progress through life. Considering their long term future will help build their bank of experience and knowledge.
- I am not sure about the point of this question. Does the long term matter when needs are not even met in the short term?
- Our child has RETT syndrome and would not be able to attend education without this assistance
- Why would it be anything other than extremely important?
- Children's needs can change over time but the support that is put in place now can also impact how a child's needs while develop so consideration needs to be considered both short and long term
- Continuity and ensuring needs are planned for future is essential. If you do not forecast future need and plan / train staffing we end up with botched services!

- I worry about my child daily the main worry being he is in a school across town. Without transport I could not work. It should be a given with SEND children as we have enough to worry about and fight for.

5.5. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statement: ‘In the interests of spending ‘Home to School Transport’ funding responsibly, the Local Authority should only consider ineligible applications where children cannot get to school, even if accompanied. For example, due to mobility problems a child is unable to walk to school even if they were accompanied by their parent/carer.’

- 16 respondents answered this question, whilst 1 chose to skip it.
- 56.3% of respondents ‘strongly agree’ or ‘agree’ with the statement above. On the other hand, 25% of respondents ‘neither agree nor disagree’ and 18.8% ‘disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’ with the statement.

In the interests of spending ‘Home to School Transport’ funding responsibly, the Local Authority should only consider ineligible applications where children cannot reasonably get to school, even if accompanied. For example, due to mobility...



The following comments were made:

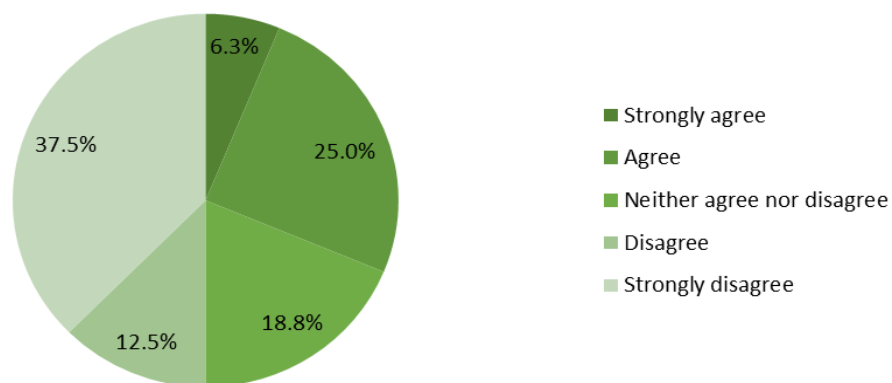
- I do not understand the point of this question. Of course I should support my mainstream child getting to school/college but we are discussing send children.
- I am not sure I follow this question; transport should be reviewed based on the needs of the child.
- All ineligibles should be assessed on individual basis. Needs are not always physical.
- Mobility is not the only issue. Consider impairment due to neurological issues.
- Other barriers should be considered such as the parents health.
- Not every family, child or situation is the same and therefore there ought to be times when discretion will be needed and I would support this, so long as it is to prioritise the needs of the child.

5.6. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statement: A parental payment travel solution, known as a 'Personal Travel Budget', should only be offered where there is no space available for the child or young person on an

existing shared transport route.

- 16 respondents answered this question, whilst 1 chose to skip it.
- 31.3% of the respondents 'strongly agree' and 'agree' with the statement above. Alternatively, 18.8% of the respondents 'neither agree nor disagree,' whilst 50% 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree' with the statement.

A parental payment travel solution, known as a 'Personal Travel Budget', should only be offered where there is no space available for the child or young person on an existing shared transport route.



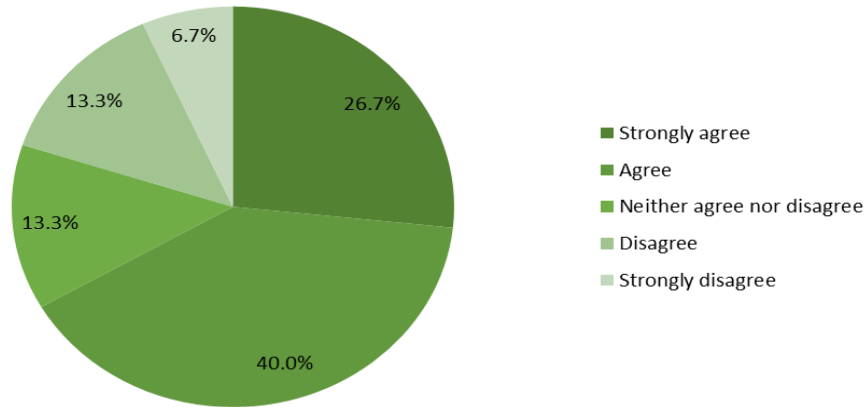
The following comments were left in response to this question:

- Not sure what information you are looking for here. Of course the CYP should be offered support- do parents actually want a personal budget when there is nothing to purchase?
- It should be an option from the choice of shared transport or personal budget.
- Some children's needs mean they cannot share a transport route, the decision should be made based on the needs of the child.
- It should be an option available based on child's needs and how best to meet them! Not the child fitting in with the service.
- Individual taxis should be organised by the council.
- This should also only be considered with regards to a child or young person who has send if no other options are available such as a local taxi firm.
- There are some situations where discretion may be needed. For example I could understand a parent of a particularly vulnerable child may have hesitations for their child to travel by some modes of transport. Every case is different.

5.7. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statement: 'No payments should be made where children do not make a journey to and from school to attend'

- 15 respondents answered this question, whilst 2 chose to skip it.
- 66.7% of the respondents 'strongly agree' and 'agree' with this statement. Conversely, 13.3% 'neither agree nor disagree' with the statement and 20% 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree'.

No payments should be made where children do not make a journey to and from school to attend



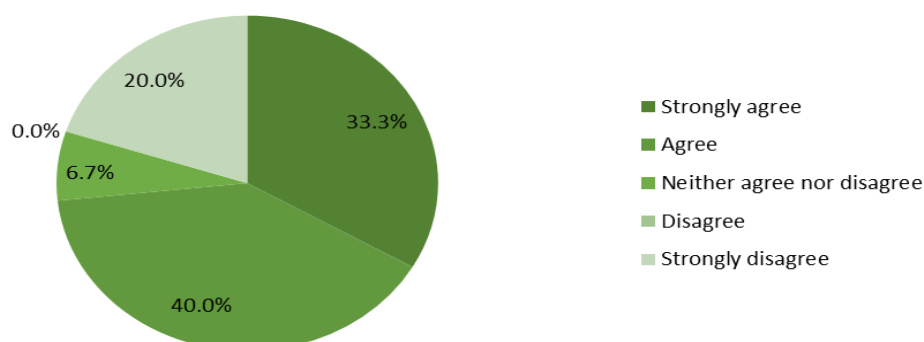
The following comments were left in response to this question:

- I am worried about what you are trying to elicit here.
- I do not understand the question.
- Parents and carers will need to have the ability for covering travel, if the child cannot cope on the day and therefore cannot make the journey I do not believe parents /carers should be penalised.

5.8. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statement: A single occupancy taxi should only be offered where there is no space available for the child or young person on an existing shared transport route, or an alternative travel solution is not suitable.

- 15 respondents answered this question, whilst 2 chose to skip it.
- 73.3% of the respondents to this question 'agree' or 'strongly agree' with the statement. On the other hand, 6.7% 'neither agree nor disagree' and 20% 'strongly disagree' with the statement.

A single occupancy taxi should only be offered where there is no space available for the child or young person on an existing shared transport route, or an alternative travel solution is not suitable.



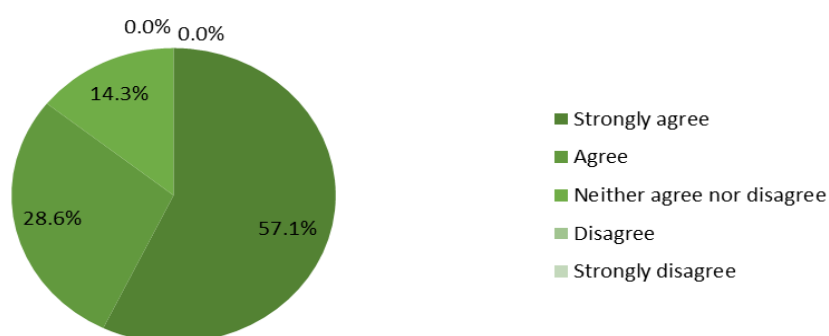
The following comments were left after this question:

- Why are you asking this question? Feels like being forced into a simple answer. Surely most parents are not demanding this. Isn't the issue that you are not providing transport to those that are entitled to it?
- Should be based on child's needs, not all children can cope with sharing transport it also means a longer travel time.
- Again individual assessment of need. Our children are not just numbers. Everyone should be working together to find a reasonable solution.
- On the grounds of safety I would suggest shared transport is preferred.

5.9. How strongly do you agree or disagree that the Local Authority should use discretion to grant transport support, even when a child or young person does not qualify?

- 14 people answered this question, whilst 3 chose to skip it.
- 85.7% of the respondents 'agree' and 'strongly agree' with the statement above. The remaining 14.3% 'neither agree nor disagree.'

Understanding that the Local Authority only has limited funds available, to ensure every child should fulfil their potential, how strongly do you agree or disagree that the Local Authority should use discretion to grant transport support, even when a chil



The following comments were made in response to this question:

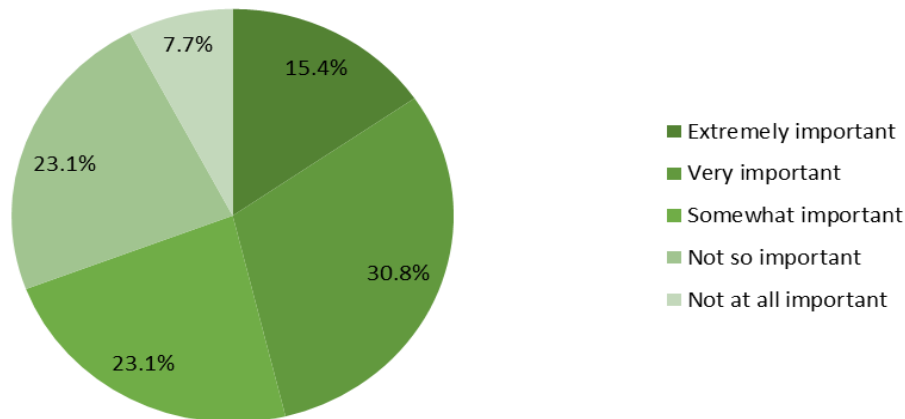
- If transport is needed and USED then it should be provided.
- I am not sure in what circumstances a child would not be eligible which makes me think the criteria should be looked at but I do believe discretion should also be available.
- Individuals and circumstances are different the impact on the family should be considered.
- There will always be exceptional circumstances that should be assessed on a case by case basis.
- Not every family, child or situation is the same and therefore there ought to be times when discretion will be needed and I would support this, so long as it is to prioritise the needs of the child.

5.10. How important do you feel addressing climate change, in relation to 'Home to School Transport' is for the children and young people in our Borough?

- 14 people answered this question, whilst 3 chose to skip it.
- 46.2% of the respondents believe it is 'important' and 'extremely important.' 23.1% said it is 'somewhat important' whilst 30.8% felt that addressing climate

change in home to school transport is 'not so important' or 'not important at all.'

How important do you feel addressing climate change, in relation to 'Home to School Transport' is for the children and young people in our Borough



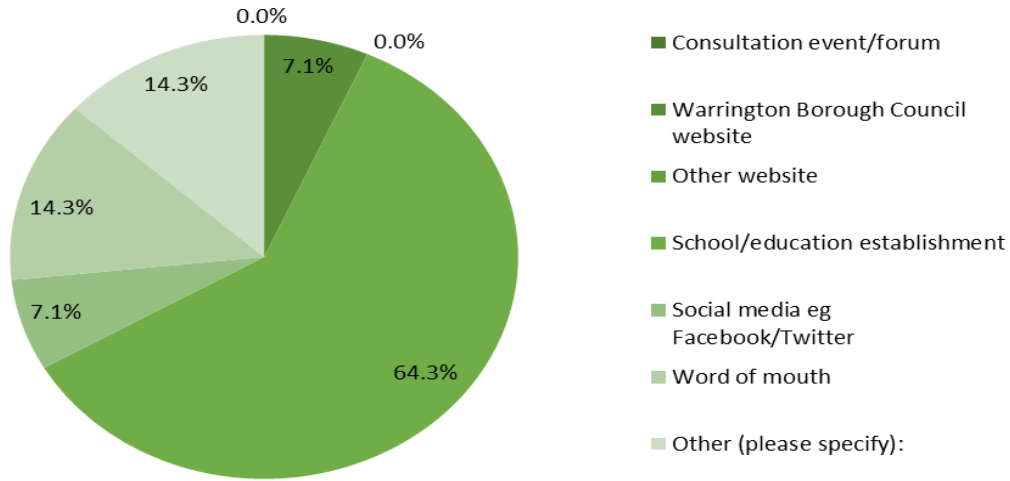
The following comments were made in response to this question:

- The child's needs need to be put first.
- Children's needs come first even if this means it is not the most cost effective or 'green' way of doing things!
- Yes of course it is but let us look at the reality of a small number of specialist places for the area.
- Unfortunately though, if less children become eligible for transport support (such as bus passes) and they are being required to walk up to 3 miles each way each day there is every chance more parents will take children in their car (particularly in poor weather), negatively impacting the climate, negatively impacting safety as it would increase congestion around schools and reducing independence for young people.

5.11. How did you hear about the Home to School Transport Policy consultation?

- 14 people answered this question, whilst 3 chose to skip it.
- The respondents were asked to select all that apply to them from the following categories: 'Consultation event/forum,' 'Warrington Borough Council website,' 'Other website,' 'School/education establishment,' 'social media e.g. Facebook/Twitter,' 'Word of mouth' and 'Other.'
- 7.1% of the respondents heard about the Home to School Transport Policy consultation via the 'Warrington Borough Council website,' whilst the majority of respondents 64.3% heard about it through the 'school/education establishment.'
- From the remaining respondents, 7.1% heard about it through 'social media,' 14.3% discovered it via 'word of mouth' and another 14.3% found out about it elsewhere (other).
- Both 'Consultation event/forum' and 'Other website' received 0% of responses.

How did you hear about the Home to School Transport Policy consultation? Select all that apply.



See more information from the respondents that selected 'other' below:

- Email
- Foxwood

5.12. If you have any comments about the Home to School Transport Policy for 2024 to 2025, or anything about the questions asked in this survey write in the space below.

- This question received a total of 6 responses. The responses read as followed:
- I stopped answering these questions. I didn't like the tone of the survey. Questions were forcing obvious but insensitive answers. Young people are not getting their transport needs met and this survey is your priority?
- SEND children should have transportation up to the age of 25 provided and paid for by the local council. Their lives are hard enough as is it.
- Make the process easier for parents , they have enough to juggle with, if a child is going to a SEND provision can't the transport process be sorted straight after, parents and carers are juggling enough without having more processes and wiring to hear back.
- Vital that staff are trained in basic understanding of things like communication/ ASD etc... some drivers of outsourced contracts need to have a better understanding of how to be polite, pleasant to young people with additional needs.
- The home to school transport team need to ensure they review the information provided fully. There has been many cases where this has not happened causing additional unnecessary stresses to families of send children and young people. It often takes a professional from another dept within the LA or another organisation to intervene on behalf of that family. In addition, these oversights cause additional unnecessary work for the home to school transport team.
- Where an application is made under eligibility criteria 3 (children whose walking route to school is unsafe) and the council has been able to identify a route that is non hazardous (within the specified distances), please could the identified safe route be shared with the decision? This might prevent the need for an appeal to be made (as the family would have a better understanding of the decision), or if the family feel an appeal is needed it would enable them to collate any evidence needed for the appeal.

- 11 people chose to skip this question, leaving no further comments.

