

Cabinet Response to the recommendations of the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board – Spotlight Review on Education

Recommendation 1:

that the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Board request the Cabinet to source alternative funding to replace the NTI grant (ends in March 2026) for the SEND employment forum.

Response/Update:

Cabinet notes the request from Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny. Due to the budget proposals having already been fully developed there was not the opportunity to consider this proposal as part of the budget setting process for 2026/2027, there is no scope to identify alternative funding from within the wider Council budget at this time. Cabinet further notes the cessation of the grant funding and recognises the positive impact it has had locally. Responsibility therefore rests with Children's Services to consider whether alternative funding options can be identified to support continuation of the service following the withdrawal of central government funding.

Recommendation 2:

that the Cabinet be requested to consider options for amending the start time of concessionary bus fares for disabled people to enable them to engage in work.

Response/Update:

Cabinet notes the request to consider options for amending the start time of concessionary bus fares for disabled people in order to support access to employment, education and training. Cabinet recognises the potential impact of the current off-peak arrangements on those seeking to engage in work, education or training.

However, Cabinet further notes that responsibility for concessionary fare policy sits at Combined County Authority level. Any amendment to the start time would therefore require consideration and agreement by the Combined County Authority, as any change would have wider implications across the CCA footprint. Cabinet agrees that this request should be formally raised with the Combined County Authority for consideration.

In the meantime, Cabinet notes that alternative schemes, including employment-focused support such as Connect to Work, may offer complementary support to individuals affected by current concessionary fare arrangements.