

**EDUCATION & YOUNG PEOPLE
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
– 20 September 2024**

**SPARE SEATS SPRINT GROUP
Report by the Scrutiny Officer**

RECOMMENDATION

1. The Committee is **RECOMMENDED** to agree to the membership, scope, and schedule of meetings set out below.

Background

2. At its meeting on 20 July 2024, the Committee received a report on Home to School Transport. This included an update on the actions arising from recommendations the Committee had submitted to Cabinet in April 2023 and provided further information around the spare seats scheme.
3. The Directorate has proposed to bring a revised Home to School Transport Policy to the Committee in November before it is published for public consultation. The Committee agreed that the policy should be revised and agreed to establish a working group to consider the Spare Seats scheme aspect of the policy.
4. Rather than a series of meetings concluding with a report to the Committee proposing recommendations to Cabinet, the proposal is for members of the Committee to meet relevant officers so that they have the opportunity to influence the Council's proposals on the Spare Seats scheme before the policy goes out to public consultation.

The Sprint Group

5. Membership: All members of the Committee able to attend, with Cllr Simpson in the Chair.
6. Scope: A 'deep dive' into the Spare Seats Scheme. The group will gain a detailed understanding of how the Spare Seats scheme is funded and operates and will be able to recommend how and whether it should be implemented going forward. The group will not be considering other aspects of the policy.

7. An introductory meeting as soon as is practicable with the following officers invited:
 - Deputy Director for Education
 - Head of Access to Learning
 - Admission and Transport Services Manager
 - Head of Supported Transport
 - Home to School Transport Programme Manager
 - Finance Business Partners
8. At the first meeting, officers will advise members on current Spare Seats arrangements and provide a number of options for their consideration including how the current arrangements might be amended. Members will be able to scrutinise these proposals, make requests, and suggest changes.
9. The second meeting will provide an opportunity for officers to return with proposals that respond to members' requests. Members will be able to scrutinise and, if necessary, make further requests.
10. If it is deemed necessary, there will be a third meeting.

Richard Doney, Scrutiny Officer
September 2024