

People and Communities Select Committee

15 March 2024

Item 5; public questions

Question from Mark Knight:

Can the Committee explain why the Short Breaks service and Home to School Transport system for children with SEND has been targeted for costs savings in the 20204/5 budget with minimal co-production with the vulnerable families impacted?

Response from the Chairman:

There is no planned saving from the Short Breaks budget in the current Medium Term Financial Strategy. There is a new strategy and model that was presented at the previous committee meeting. That report included specific information about the engagement and co-production which took place prior to finalisation of the new model and all families accessing the Short Breaks service are involved in planning packages for their children.

The cost savings for Home to School Transport are primarily linked to the transformational plans that are increasing the range of specialist provision for children with SEND in Norfolk. This a positive move that will improve services for children and young people, significantly reducing their travel times and in turn reducing costs. Other elements of our Home to School Transport work is aimed at increasing independence travel training for young people, with associated benefits for them as they move to the next stage of their education. The next stage of our work is to make sure we build on this benefit with secondary age young people by rolling out similar approaches with primary age children. Both of these elements, reduced travel time and increased independence, are not only positive for children, young people and their families but reflect feedback we have had as part of our ongoing SEND strategic improvement work and, for example, through our annual SEND Survey. We believe, therefore, that they do reflect engagement with families and young people and this will be enhanced through discussions with individual families regarding their own children and the relevant point of transition.