

### Record of operational decision

<b>Decision title:</b>	Award of contract for the provision of a Home to School Transport Planning and Management Software System.
<b>Date of decision:</b>	10 September 2025
<b>Decision maker:</b>	Chief Operating Officer, Resident Services, Economy and Environment.
<b>Authority for delegated decision:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To authorise the spend/investment of a new School Route Planning Software to support home to school, SEN (Special Educational Needs) and college transportation in Herefordshire. This decision follows the council's resolution at the full council budget meeting on 7 February 2025 to approve the Capital Programme for 2025/26. Documents relating to this decision are available on the <a href="#">council website</a>.</li> <li>Scheme of delegation Section 81. (Education Act 1996 Section 508) Award of contracts to operate services identified and procured in accordance with policy and allocated budget.</li> </ul>
<b>Ward:</b>	Countywide
<b>Consultation:</b>	None
<b>Decision made:</b>	To direct award a contract for the provision of a Home to School Transport Planning and Management Software System to PAX-QR under the Crown Commercial Service G-Cloud 14 Framework Agreement RM1557.14 to supply a cloud hosted School Transport Planning and Management Software System from 18 September 2025 for a 3 year period to 17 September 2028 with an option to extend for a further 1 year period at a total cost of £406,500.00 (including an optional 12-month extension).
<b>Reasons for decision:</b>	<p>This decision will ensure the delivery of a critical service, maintain compliance with statutory and contractual obligations, and will support the council's transformation strategy and its objective to change and transform the organisation to be fit for the future and deliver the efficiencies required.</p> <p>The benefit of having an optimised route planning software system means that the service can function efficiently within the limitations of having a fully contracted out transport service. The complexities of planning transport routes for all students, college students and SEN children across the county, to locations inside and outside the county is vast.</p> <p>Optimised route planning and management software system will improve the service offering and create efficiencies within the department, a system that provides a comprehensive, user-friendly, software solution specifically designed for school, college, and SEN transport and travel management, including integrated map-based route planning functionality required to aid efficient transport planning and management. In turn this will provide better understanding of demand, usage and forecasting through performance reporting.</p> <p>Improved transport route planning software will support ways of working, meeting needs of staff, to enable the provision of a quality service for users that minimizes the environmental impact.</p>

<b>Equality Considerations</b>	<p>The public sector equality duty (specific duty) requires us to consider how we can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations and demonstrate that we are paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services.</p> <p>The solution is fully compliant with WCAG 2.1 AA, the supplier is committed to achieving full WCAG 2.2 AA compliance within the next six months as tools and guidance evolve.</p>
<b>Highlight any associated risks/finance/legal/equality considerations:</b>	<p><b>Finance</b> The call-off contract charges associated with this contract award total £406,500.00 (including an optional 12-month extension).</p> <p><b>Risk Management</b> The risks identified with implementing a new software system have been appropriately recorded on the relevant risk register and escalated in line with the Council's Risk Management Strategy. Governance and monitoring arrangements are in place to ensure these risks are actively managed throughout the delivery of the programme.</p> <p>As part of the contract agreement, it will include a provision of acceptable service for ongoing support following the implementation of the system. Regular contract meetings with the provider as part of the contract management process.</p> <p>Thorough data validation and testing will be conducted and phased implementation where required to address potential compatibility issues.</p> <p>Comprehensive training and phased onboarding to mitigate impacting service efficiency during the transition to ensure a smooth transition and ongoing system proficiency.</p> <p><b>Legal</b> There are no specific legal implications.</p> <p>The use of the Crown Commercial Service (CCS) G-Cloud 14 Framework Agreement RM1557.14 to procure a Home to School Transport Planning and Management Software System provides a lawful and transparent mechanism for awarding a contract. CCS frameworks are accessible to Herefordshire Council, and they allow suppliers on the framework following a compliant desktop evaluation to identify the Most Economically Advantageous service offer, in this case to PAX-QR. The Council will review its arrangement for the provision of its Home to School Planning and Management System ahead of the expiration of the three-year contract to determine the most appropriate way forward.</p>
<b>Details of any alternative options considered and rejected:</b>	<p>Not to award. This has been discounted. There is a statutory duty to transport school-aged children and SEN children to educational establishments, if they meet the eligibility criteria. The risk to the service is significant, and the legal challenges Herefordshire Council would face for not delivering its statutory function would be immense.</p>
<b>Details of any declarations of interest made:</b>	<p>None</p>

Signed..... Date: 10 September 2025