

# Welcome

- Rebecca Pendlebury

Transport Officer

SEN Team, People Directorate

- Pete Hardman

Operations Manager

Passenger Transport Unit, People Directorate

# Salford City Council

SEND Home to School  
Transport Service

# Brief history up to 2013.....

- SEN procurement and scheduling run as a task alongside Social Services, Adult Social Care Transport / MOW / Laundry etc
- 30+ vehicles 90 staff 5 x operational managers and 6x admin staff
- Following restructure 2013/14
  - 5 x staff moved into Childrens Services to manage the HTS operation and HTS Passenger Assistants (135)

# SEND Transport – People Directorate

School Provider Arm

Access & Inclusion  
SEN

Operations Manager PTU;  
Pete Hardman

SEN Transport Officer;  
Rebecca Pendlebury

PTU Staff  
(operations) x 4

Passenger Assistants  
Approx 90 + casuals

Travel Trainers (1  
permanent, 4  
casual)

2011 -2012 Academic Year

**140 routes**

**760 students**

**125 full time / 10 casual PA's**

# 2012 onwards

- Switched from old paper form/blank envelope 4 yr max closed framework to new electronic “Chest” - Dynamic Purchasing System, open procurement method, chose 10 yr duration so open until 2026
- Rewrote and amended all HTS tendering policy and procedures, redesigned all tender and route documentation, provided training for contractors, complete rescheduling of all routes.

- Change from verbal/written tender fulfilment to electronic bidding and documentation

- Prequalified – cheapest wins!

*competitive tendering allows the authority to procure services at a fair market price, but not dictate to or disadvantage the suppliers.*

- Transparency and parity for all providers – results table where requested
- Fast and accurate fulfilment of service needs, between 3 - 10 days dependent on requirement
- Simplified application - Positive responses

# Current Service Overview

- Provide appropriate access to education in line with legislation and policy.

Approx 880 students daily

78/100+ educational establishment

165 routes within and external to Salford

65 service providers (*increasing - simplicity*)

90 x PA's + casual

6 x operational managers/admin staff

More than 334,000 passenger journeys  
per academic year



To compare.....

2011 -2012 Academic Year

**140 routes**

**760 students**

**125 full time / 10 casual PA's**

2016 -2017 Academic Year

**165 routes**

**880 students**

**90 full time / 15 casual PA's**

# Comparison 2011 - 2017

760 to 880 students = **16% increase**

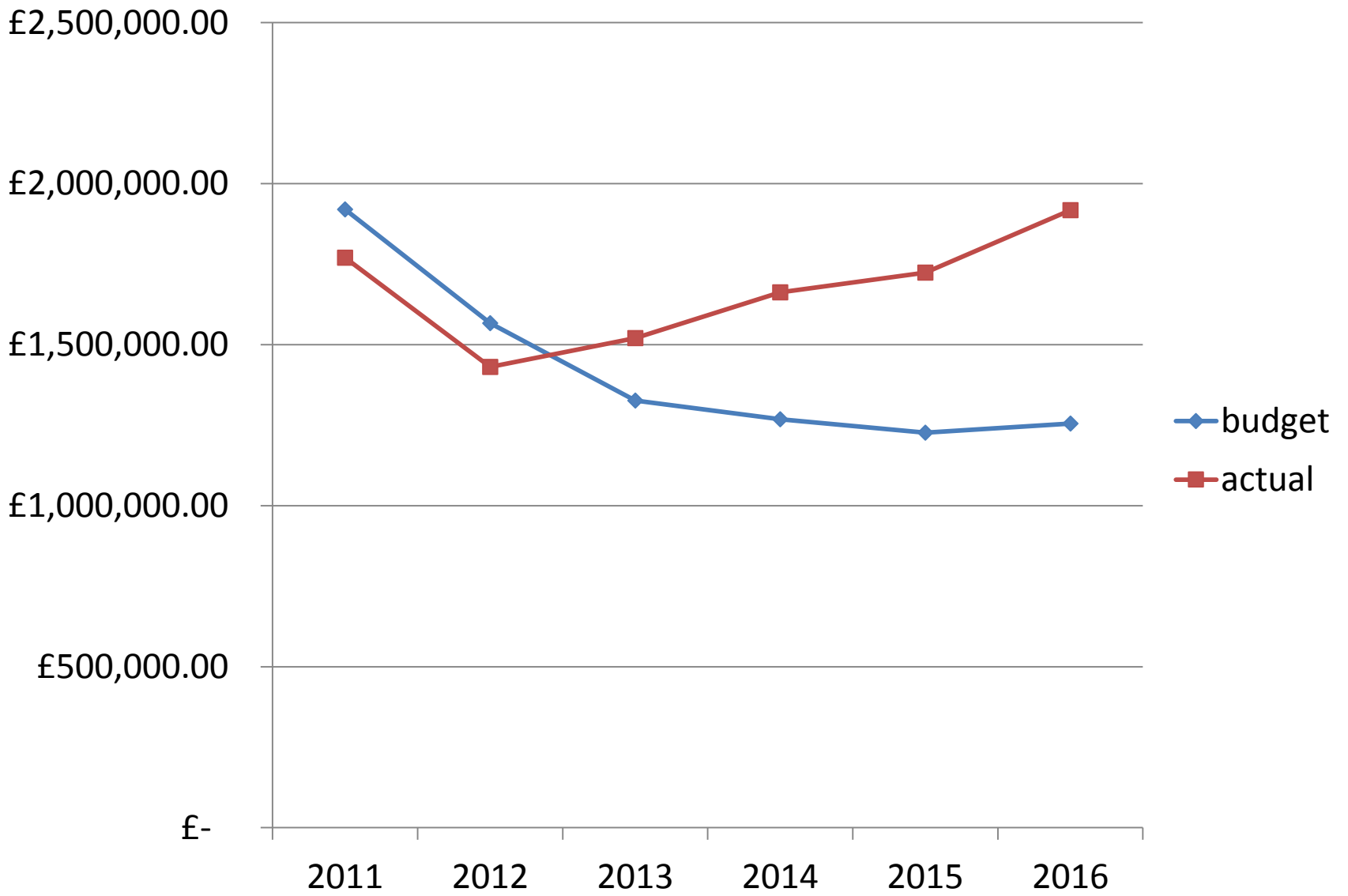
140 to 165 routes = **17% increase**

135 to 105 PA's (FTE/Casual) = **22% decrease**

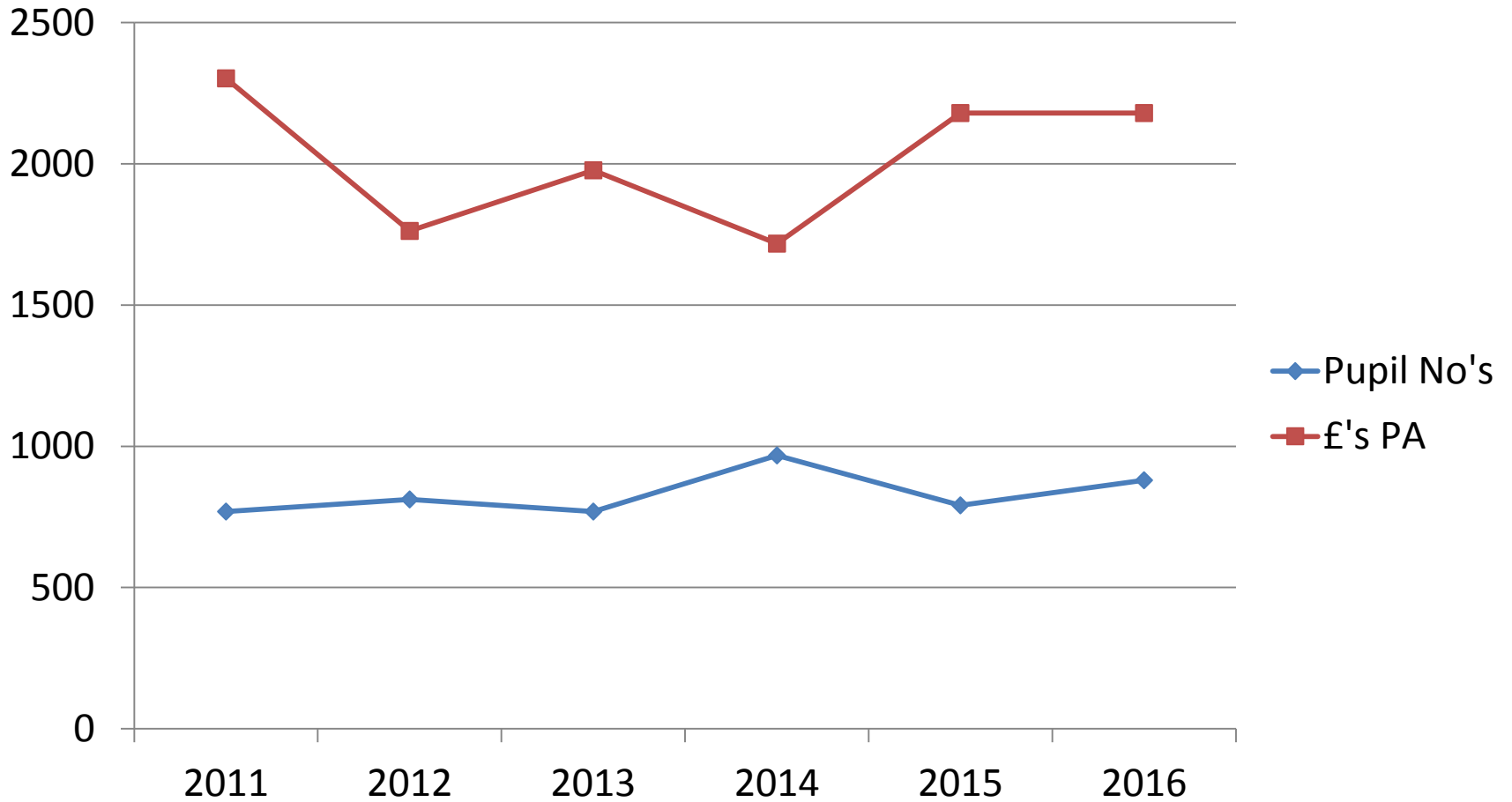
11 to 5 Op's manager/admin = **54% decrease**

- Budget wise .....
- In the middle austerity period between 2011 to 2016 following reductions in budget available for service provision an *overspend* has been created that correlates almost exactly with the budget reduction.....

*Budget needs aligning with increased demand, currently providing **bigger** service for less money / same budget as 2011....*

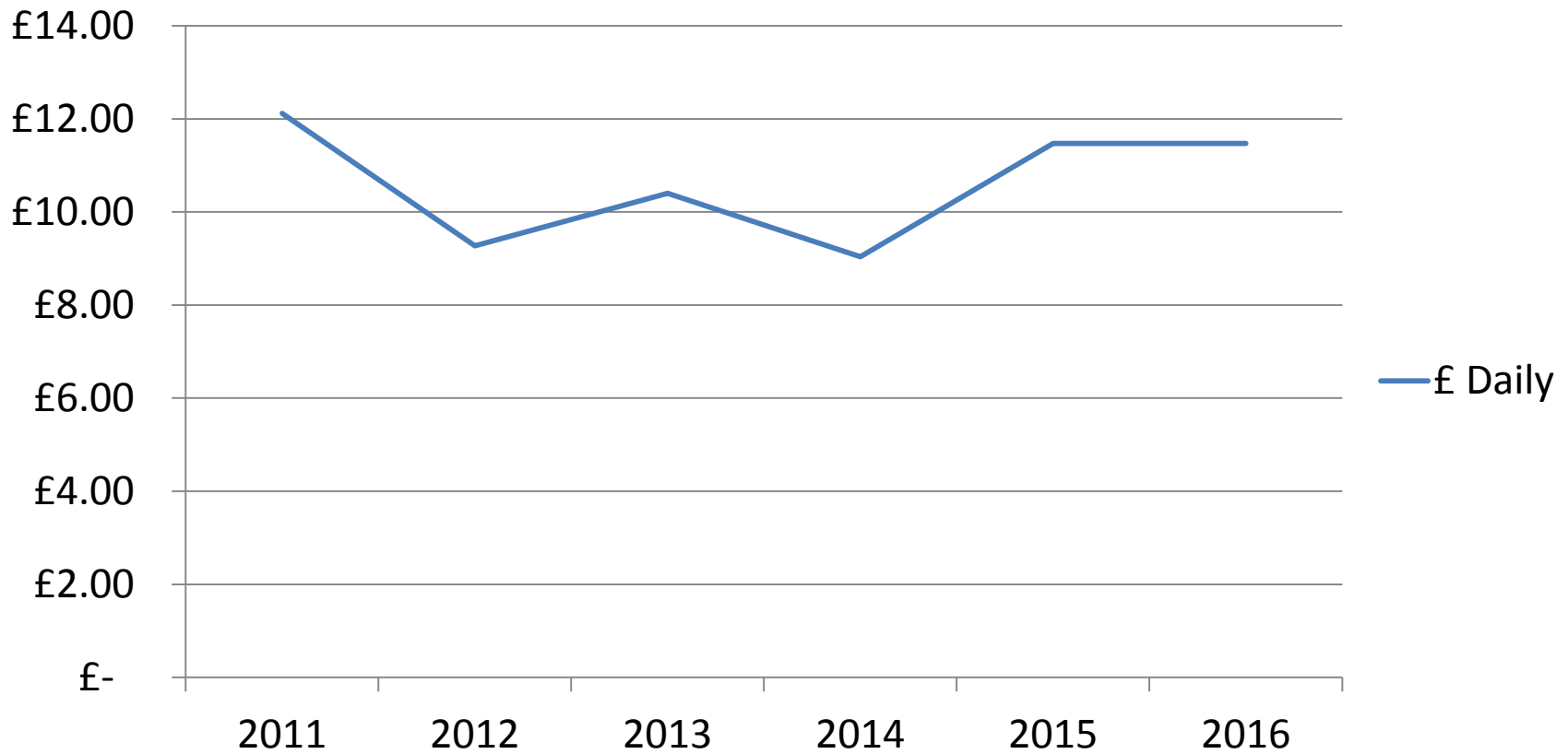


# £'s per pupil P.A (averaged)



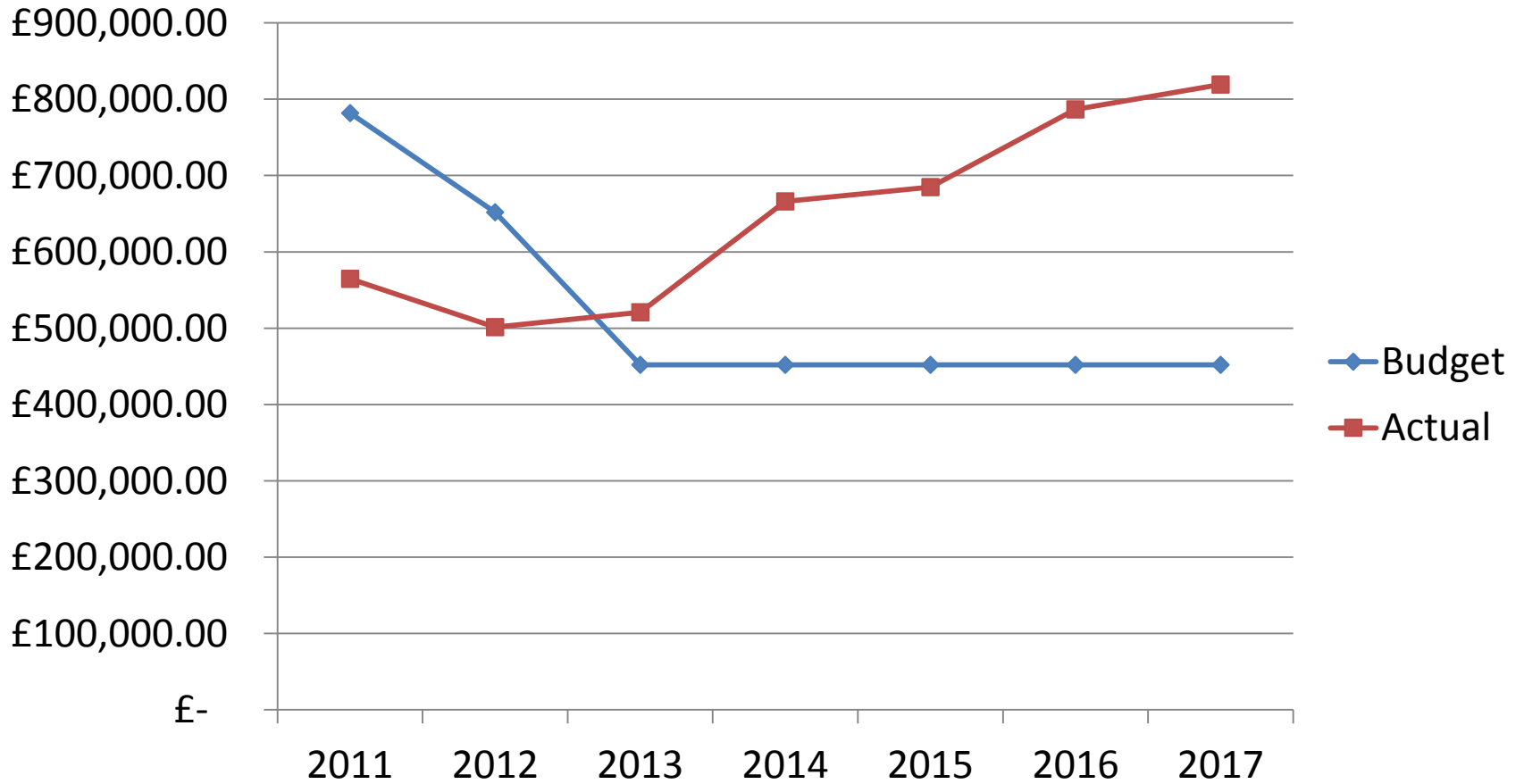
# £'s per pupil per day (averaged)

£ Daily





This does not take into account the “Outside District” provision which looks something like this...  
(367k over budget)



# January 2018.....

a *very rough* overall comparison showed us that  
although student numbers and routes  
have increased since 2012

Currently carrying all students at an average of  
.65p *less* per student per day

# How?

No Magic Wand!

Mindset changes.....

Entitled provision only- niceties no longer affordable!

Rigorous application of HTS policy - requires SMT support

*No promise by other services that transport is a given*

- Needs assessment prior to placement
- Use of pick up points where safe and feasible to reduce vehicle mileage
- No waiting time paid
- Rationalisation of loading and scheduling methodology....mind maps!
- Ensure staff, drivers and parents all understand their part - *leaflets*

Negate parental or other service demand and perception led routing -  
*favourite PA/driver, after school clubs provision*

Requests/demands met with request for order numbers or guided to  
our procurement system for access to providers at own cost

*To discharge authority's statutory duty service needs to be;*  
***fit for purpose***  
***appropriate to the needs of the student***

Allows use of larger vehicles wherever possible including front seats  
where no safety issues

Introduction of Behaviour Protocols – *LT Approved*

Increase staff support and training – affirm and re affirm duties and  
working parameters

- Kerb Service
- 3 minute rule
- No return
- Students Conditions of Carriage
- Respite transport - only courtesy

*(subject to ongoing challenge)*

# Dedicated Passenger Assistants

Specialist medical provision no longer provided by authority including;

Tracheotomy

Vagal Nerve Stimulator

Hickman Line

Peg Feeds

No intimate care (includes shoes/socks)

No first aid training (999)

No successful challenge to date – personal budget options

# Service Providers

- Regular route reviews – subject to officer time
- Reschedule utilising empty seats, possibly splitting down or negating excess routes
- Request rate reductions where routes reduce in mileage
- Request upgraded vehicle – greater capacity
- Cancel and retender for more cost effective operational capacity



Rate reviews, limited by simple formula

*£'s route won / total daily mileage = £'s per mile*

fair across board

Same formula used where mileage reduces

No agreement – route retendered

# *“ADHOC”*

Where service requirements are uncertain or short term, use of “ADHOC” transport suppliers for fixed mileage pre costed journeys with no calendar month notice requirement.

*Emergency/Operational needs only  
and only short term*

# FE Transport challenges..

- Service provision required to start in September each year, but no confirmed student details or timetables
- Changes to student timetables, days & times attending....followed by even more changes due to class/staff changes shortages etc..
- Historically all students were provided with individual/group transport which reflected individual timetables

# Recently and additionally....

- Current provision (6th form/ALC) historically carried out on main school sites but now being moved to different geographical locations within Salford - additional £'sss/routes/staffing

# FE route comparison....

- 2014 -2015 22 routes
- 2015 -2016 22 routes
- 2016 -2017 16 routes
- 2017 -2018 12 routes
- 2018 -2019 further reduction?

# Rationalisation

- Due to changes in the hours each student is required to attend education, timetables vary acutely between students, therefore....
- 2016 onward FE's were scheduled to facilitate;
- Grouped multi location vehicle service
- AM transport and student places for arrival before or just prior to 0900hrs (dependant on multi site requirement)
- PM transport departs 1430hrs with some "extra" but grouped vehicles for students with later timetables

- For 2018 -19 onwards and following authority policy changes;
- 0900hrs Arrival (or earlier if multi site)
- 1430hrs Departure - no other provision offered unless extreme hardship proven.
- Expectation for use of domestic vehicle
- Information sent to parents
- Further reduction expected in demand
- Encourage more use of College Bus Services where students able/possible
- Pilot student Travel Trainers project promoting independence and reduce service requirement  
Rebecca will enlarge on this later....

## Following a recent audit of the HTS provision, main recommendations covered;

Forward placement planning / financial awareness  
Provision Level  
Parental Contribution/Bus Passes  
Internal Vehicle Commissioning  
Fuel Reimbursement  
Post 16 FE transport  
Fostering

In the audit report into the operational and planning viability of SEND transport the auditing officer concluded that there were no additional recommendations to make to achieve efficiency or savings than had already been proposed by the transport managers.

No recommendations were made in regard to the tendering or procurement methods used when commissioning vehicles.

Becky will supply more detail on the recommendations for policy and practice change



# Many thanks

Over to Rebecca, then happy to take questions  
at the end 😊

# Brief history 2011

- Post specifically created as no capacity within SEN team to drive policy change
- Efficiency savings proposed for SEN transport 2011 onwards – extremely challenging
- Initial actions taken to achieve budget savings
  - Removal of discretionary duty for mainstream students
  - Implementation of application & assessment criteria for SEN students
  - New tender process
  - Ratification on all routes and escort reduction where possible
- Initially meeting challenge – increasing difficulty from 2014 onwards



# Current challenges

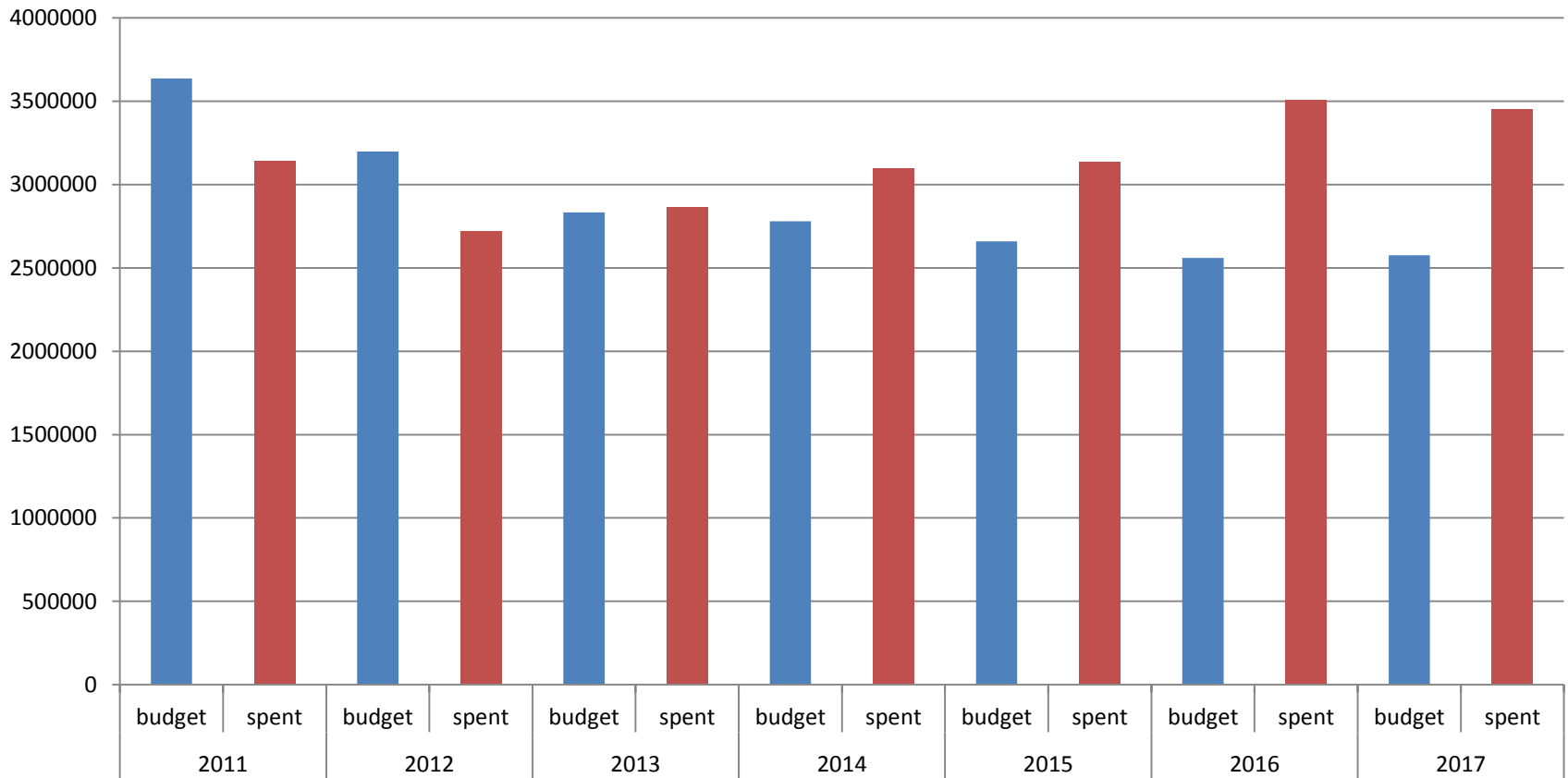
- Budget!
- Policy change/political process
- Increasing demand on service
- Transport to SEMH provision
- Social care SEN referrals
- Managing parental/school expectation – entitlement and service
- Recruitment and retention
- Changes to travel training

# Budget challenges

- Salford snapshot since 2011 onwards – slide 5
- Changes having an effect from 2011 up 2014/15
- Budget savings being met up to 2014
- Since 2014 -> increasing budget pressures and difficulties attaining requested savings
- Children and Families Act (2014) – LA's to have regard for continued education for SEN students 0-25.
- Increasing pressure on adult social care budgets - influencing parental expectations regarding achievable outcomes in education

# Budget vs spend 2011-2017

## TOTAL



What have we tried...

# Addressing budget pressures - timeline

- 2014 – recognised budgets slipping and target not being met
  - Discussions around discretionary duties/tightening applications - taken through to HOS – NFA – little support for change at time
- Nov 2015 – proposal for tightening of application process post 16 & contribution request taken to LT/LM
  - Declined to take any further at that time
- Nov 2016 – increasing budget pressures – proposals revisited
  - Full report prepared outlining challenges to HtoS transport put before LT/LM requesting steer
  - Included all current challenges being faced by this budget stream and recommendations to address these – detailed later
- July 2017 – final agreement by Mayor to go forward with proposals
- Consultation ran from Oct-Dec 2017
- Consultation results, proposed policy change, CIA reports back through political process Spring 2018
- April 2018 – agreement by Cabinet for changes in policy



# Policy Change & Process

- Time taken to get from proposal to policy to implementation
- Reluctance to make changes before other LA's tested
- Because of increasing budget pressures since 2014, we had to revisit discretionary areas in order to make requested savings
- Very little training, if any, given in how to put forward policy change – personal experience is to learn as you go
- Paperwork and process changes all the time – have to keep up
- Thorough research and reports required for presentation to Cabinet - often very small staff teams completing the paperwork (in this case - 1)

# Effecting change

- Proposal to implementation will always remain a difficulty due to the work required to get through the stages
  - Proposals now gone through full political process – agreed by Cabinet and will be implemented September 2018
    - 16-19 contribution
    - Increase in travel trainers
    - Offer of personal budgets to post 16 complex cases
  - Proposal rejected – contribution from nursery age children
- Staff training, improved information sharing e.g.purdah
- Staff having confidence to move forward with ideas for change – how do LA's foster this enthusiasm and promote this as common practice among officers

# Increasing demand on service

- SEN 0-25 implications
- Consideration of transport when decision made re placements
- Lack of places in local specialist provision
- Increase in OSD places required
- No independent schools within Salford
- Increasing need/individualised transport – over past year seem to have been a spike in complex SEMH cases

# Meeting increasing demand

- Increase in SEN involvement regarding suitability of continuation of post 16 places
- Consideration to the cost of transport to be used to inform decision making – this has now started to be common practice at panel level
- Requirement for future strategic planning re specialist provisions locally put forward to LT/LM in reports including attracting privately run specialist provision
- Proposals put forward to HOS re approaching schools/colleges to increase use of transport already available
- Why are we seeing both numbers and complexities of SEN increasing nationally?

# SEMH transport - challenges

- Following new policy introduction in 2012 initial reduction in qualifying students
- Slow increase to pre 2012 levels due to social care/school involvement in writing applications
- Increased behaviour issues on transport due to needs of students
- Other CS staff becoming involved and creating unrealistic expectations among parents of service delivery (bespoke)
- High level of service change requests – to be met on a daily basis

# Resolutions proposed SEMH

- Taken to LT/LM with recommendation for HOS to explore devolved budget to SEMH provision with a bar and they would hold responsibility for bringing in on budget
- Reduce use of transport for those cases where it is a nicety not a necessity
- Strict adherence to behaviour policy
- Management discussions around expectations with staff and school

# Complications associated with social care referrals

- Cost – can be as much as £25k per pupil
- Refusal of carers to act as escort
- Fait accompli
- LA 'held to ransom' – difficulty of social care placements/placement breakdown

# Work with social care

- Decision taken at Director level for AD of service to address
- Meeting at AD level to reach resolution
- Processes now in place to stop direct social care requests to transport
- Work done with heads of service communicating with social workers not to make offers of SEN transport to foster carers
- All referrals now go through HOS (LAC team) before agreement to refer to transport



# Parental/school expectations

- Other LA officers get involved and make promises to parents
- False expectation of entitlement to school transport due to having EHCP issued
- Unrealistic expectation of service once allocated
  - parental working times, childcare, pick up times, alternative drop offs, bespoke service
- Complaints when service does not meet expectations

# Managing expectations

- LT notified re issues of other LA staff making promises which we are unable to fulfil
- Work at AD level to ensure mindset was changed by dissemination of information through Heads of Service
- Clear correspondence and protocols provided to parents at commencement of service to ensure they have realistic expectations
- Transport managers meet regularly with schools to minimise unrealistic expectations being communicated to parents or referral to HOS for resolve
- Complaint procedure firmly in place and followed by all staff with a clear upward referral process/LADO involvement

# Recruitment and retention

- Working to achieve a safe staffing level since 2014/15
- Continuous rounds of recruitment with (feels like) little progress
- Fire fighting
- Worries regarding safety of routes/cancellation of routes
- Stepping stone, high turnover, onward movement

# Recruitment and retention

- Early liaison with HR – slow progress
- Engagement of LT with issues
- Work with DWP
- Adverts – media boosting, job centre
- GM jobs – potential move away
- Ongoing discussion with HR re creation of more permanent staff posts

# Travel training

- 1 x Travel trainer in post since 2010
- Staff retirement leading to recruitment difficulties – length of process
- 1 travel trainer unable to make noticeable difference and change mindset
- Was having positive effect of students moving to public buses and off LA transport but numbers trained & effect on savings small

# Proposals - Travel Trainers

- Creation of casual Travel Trainer role
- Internal recruitment from interested PA's
- Identified 4 potential staff members
- Trained by Pure Innovations
- Idea is to have an in-house bank of staff with potential to train others in future for rolling programme of TT – future increased use of PA's - personal development
- Interest now from adult services/SRFT re setting up a charged service for potential buy-in from service users (using PIP monies) - income generating potential
- VERY MUCH - in developmental stages at moment

# GM group

- Sharing good practice and working through issues
- Benchmarking
- Issues
  - Capacity to attend
  - Reporting back – pressures of work

# National picture

- Challenges we are facing are reflected nationally
  - *50% decrease in numbers on school transport in England (includes those qualifying under SWD)*
  - *To manage budgets LA's are cutting discretionary transport , raising charges and tightening entitlement*
  - *Marked decrease in transport provided through LA's for post 16 students*
  - *LA's also reporting undertaking other measures to manage costs and improve efficiency. Most frequently cited – planning and re-tendering of networks and changes to procurement systems*

***Conclusion – “the austerity of the past 10 years has been devastating to school transport provision, particularly for post 16 pupils living in rural areas.”***

Source – Transport Matters Survey 2018



# Quotes from transport matters survey 2018

*"The biggest strain on our already reduced budget is the lack of suitable local school placements, meaning more students are placed at a school a considerable distance away. Usually these are solo, or low numbers on transport. This leads to a significant increase in cost – currently 20% of our budget is now spent on out of area school transport) and significantly longer journeys for vulnerable children and young people.*

**Met district**

*"There is increased parental expectation of travel assistance, particularly 19-25 for SEN as a result of EHCPs"*

**Shire authority**

# Quotes from transport matters survey 2018

**“The law needs an urgent review as the expectations are not workable within budgets “  
Met district**

**“Increasing pressure on availability of SEN places means children are having to be transported further distances increasing transport costs”  
Unitary authority**

*“Parents expect transport to work around the family’s ideal routine i.e. the times other children go to school. They also expect transport to take their children to any address e.g. childminder’s, other family members. This is to work around their childcare choice.”*

**Met district**

# The future

- Is there potential to effect change nationally – picture repeated across the country
- Need is for transport to be valued as a service – rather than last thing to be thought about
- Increasing pressure on central government to value the far reaching effects cuts to home to school transport budget has had and make cases for increasing the spend in this area (peak hour traffic, employment, drop out implications)
- Solution does not lie within transport alone and impossible to effect change without considering the wider influences – social care, adult care, placements, increasing need
- Difficult, if not impossible, to control budgets with the amount of external influence over which there is no control
- Requirement to think strategically across the departments – these changes require holistic planning within the directorate/council and can be difficult to get discussions going and implement due to requirement for high level involvement e.g. AD/Head of service due to their workloads
- Increasingly difficult to continue to try to remain within the budget parameters whilst maintaining a statutory service that is safe for service users and regulation compliant

# Round up

- Not experts!
- Understand the issues involved and trying to reduce financial burden, whilst improving the service with realistic outcomes for students
- Clear & logical thought to simplify processes
- Long standing LA members will remember days gone by
- No longer in those times – positive
- We are working more efficiently to achieve appropriate service delivery for all students
- Efficient working = value for money services

Questions? Or comments

