



Ein cyf/Our ref KSNWT/01855/25

Councillor Ann Crimmings
Cabinet Member for Environmental Services
Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council

cabinet@rctcbc.gov.uk

25 November 2025

Dear Cllr Ann,

Thank you for your e-mail of 06 November regarding the Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council Notice of Motion – Home to School Transport.

It is important to ensure that our children and young people do not face barriers to accessing education. Local authorities are key delivery partners for safe, reliable and affordable school transport.

The Welsh Government believes in the devolution of responsibility, power, and resources in line with our commitment to ensure that decisions about local communities can be made at a local level by their local representatives. As you are aware, we provide funding to local authorities for learner travel provision through the Local Government Revenue Settlement in the form of the Revenue Support Grant (RSG). The RSG is not ring-fenced and is a funding mechanism that enables local authorities to prioritise their spend, according to local need.

However, I recognise the pressures that are on local authority budgets, which are driven by an increase in costs of transport contracts and the complexity of ALN requirements, as raised by the WLGA's recent State of Education in Wales report.

We are also taking a cross-governmental approach to home to school transport. This Government has increased the household income threshold for the Education Maintenance Allowance, providing financial support to an addition 3,500 students. We have invested £6.5m this financial year in Family Engagement Officers to help support attendance. I have secured £22 million to introduce £1 bus travel for all our young people – over 30,000 16-21 year olds have already signed up, which is fantastic. I have also committed £110 million this financial year to active travel routes, the active journeys programme and safe routes in communities grant. All this will help make our school streets safer. This is all in addition to the £6.1 billion the Welsh Government has provided to local authorities in core revenue funding and non-domestic rates this financial year to spend on delivering key services, including learner transport.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Learner travel has been a constant theme raised throughout the scrutiny of the Bus Bill. I have been clear throughout this whole process that the Bill can support better integration between local bus services and learner travel provision. However, I have also been clear that the Bill cannot address all of the challenges around learner travel. It is an important lever, but not a one-stop solution.

The Bill will facilitate improved learner travel provision on the local bus service network by ensuring that schools, colleges and universities are properly considered when planning the local bus network.

During scrutiny of the Bill, I committed to publishing a policy paper on the links between learner travel and the new model for delivering local bus services. This will be published in the coming weeks and will detail how learner travel is integral to our ambitions of creating an accessible, affordable, and sustainable bus network that supports education access across Wales.

I appreciate your suggestions, and they have been fed into the revised Learner Travel Operational Guidance consultation. I would also like to thank the Rhondda Cynnon Taf County Borough Council for their response to the consultation, as well as their engagement within ATCO Cymru's collaborative response.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ken Skates', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Ken Skates AS/MS

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Drafnidiaeth a Gogledd Cymru
Cabinet Secretary for Transport and North Wales